

February 2012 Life FOCUS Parent Newsletter

This Month in Bible Study: Christ the Center

Why This Study?

This study is important because we live in a culture that does not acknowledge the centrality and sufficiency of Christ. Some students, because they do not have a good grasp of the truths of the gospel, are easily shaken when the exclusive claims of the gospel of Christ are challenged. Other Christians do not live Christ-centered lives. Their lives are centered on their own self-centered ambitions. This study will challenge students to recognize and submit to the centrality of Christ in all of life.

Students will be challenged to KNOW God. *Lordship* is a category under the umbrella of KNOW, and this study lifts up the centrality, supremacy, and lordship of Christ. (For more information on the strategy to know God, see the Student Strategy at <http://www.lifeway.com/studentstrategy/>.)

What parents can do:

- Use the suggestions in this newsletter to engage your teenager in discussions about the importance of living a Christ-centered life.
- Organize a group of parents of teens to participate in a four-week study of *Indelible Parenting: Keys to a Lasting Impression* by Bob Bunn (LifeWay Press, 2009). The study leads parents through the biblical principles of spiritual leadership found in Deuteronomy 6.
- Sign up for Heart Connex, a free bi-weekly family e-Devotional for parents to share with their teens: www.lifeway.com/heartconnex. The devotionals include solid Bible teaching and a relevant prayer focus, which will help you make Christ the center of your home.

Networking resources designed for parents and/or teachers:

- For a social network to help parents keep it all together, visit <http://parentzparent.ning.com>.
- Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lifefocus.
- Do you twitter? Check us out at <http://twitter.com/lifefocus>.
- Find parenting encouragement and helps at <http://livingwithteens.com/>.

Connect with Your Teenager

According to a survey of 500 top colleges conducted by Kaplan (an education company) in 2008, 10 percent of the admissions officers admitted they checked social networking sites as they were considering applicants. Of those persons who checked online information, 38 percent admitted that what they saw negatively affected their view of applicants; only 25 percent claimed it improved what they thought. Some applicants were rejected because of material posted on their social network sites.

It is becoming a common practice for employers to check social networking sites too. According to *Careerbuilder.com*, 20 percent of companies admit to checking potential employees' online profiles, and more claimed they were making plans to implement a similar review in the future. Twenty-four percent of employers hired a person based on the social network profile, but 33 percent revealed they had chosen not to issue job offers based on profile content.

Discuss with your teenager whether or not he or she needs to make some changes in the content shared on those sites. Remind your son or daughter that what gets posted not only affects his or her witness for Christ, but may have an impact on future choices and opportunities!

(Sources: "CFO Journal" from *The Wall Street Journal* [www.wsj.com]; *PCWorld* [www.pcworld.com])

Family Bible Connection

Sunday School affirms the home as the center of biblical guidance. Family Bible Connection is a strategy for you, as a parent, to discuss with your teenager—and the whole family—the biblical truths and principles discovered in their small group Bible study.

The class your teenager participates in uses a Bible study curriculum called Life FOCUS. You may participate in an adult Bible study that uses one of the adult counterparts in Bible Studies for Life (Life Truths, Life Values, Life Ventures, Life Lessons, or Life Words). Because you are studying the same passage, you and your teenager can both contribute to a family conversation about how God's Word applies to your lives as individuals and as a family.

This Month in Bible Study: Christ the Center

This study is about the centrality and sufficiency of Christ.

February 5: Center of Everything – Colossians 1:9-23

The Question: *Why is Christ the center of everything?*

This session will lead students to understand that Jesus Christ is Creator God who gives us wisdom, power, and salvation. Students will be challenged to live in submission to Christ, the center of their lives.

Take time one evening to look at old family photos or videos. Evaluate how your teen resembles others in your family. Consider how something visible, such as parent/child look-alikes, proves the existence of something invisible, like DNA. Explore how the visible Jesus proved the existence of the invisible God. Ask: **What do you think our family needs to do in order to make Jesus the center of our home?**

February 12: Center of My Church – Colossians 1:24–2:7

The Question: *How do I keep Christ the center of my church involvement?*

This study points out that Christ is to be the center of everything we do as a church. Students will be led to identify ways the youth group can help them grow in Christ.

As your family discusses how Christ needs to be the center of everything that's done as a church, make sure you're edifying the church, the staff, and other leaders. Avoid critical and negative comments. It's helpful to remember that you play a big role in helping your teenager develop thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that will influence him or her for the rest of his or her life. Discuss how Christ can be kept at the center of your church involvement by asking:

- **What do you enjoy most about youth activities at our church? What do you enjoy the least?**
- **In what ways do you think Christ is the center of everything you do as a youth group?**
- **What do you think you could do to help make/keep Christ the center of everything that's done as a youth group?**

February 19: Center of My Beliefs – Colossians 2:8-23

The Question: *Isn't Christianity just following a bunch of rules?*

This session helps students understand that Christ is the center of the Christian life, not traditions, rituals, nor man-made rules. Students will be encouraged to evaluate all spiritual truth claims in light of The Answer.

As a family, list rules that have been established for your home. Discuss the importance of rules, such as for the protection and well-being of family members. Rules, overall, are good and necessary in life. Point out that many rules and traditions related to the Christian life aren't necessarily bad, but they become a problem when they become more important than Christ. Ask:

- **Who are Christians supposed to measure themselves against?**
- **Do you think we obey Christ because we're supposed to or because we're becoming more like Him?**
- **What do we need to do in order to be able to evaluate all spiritual claims in light of Christ?**

February 26: Center of My Life – Colossians 3:5-10,14-15,17-21; 4:5-6

The Question: *How do I live a Christ-centered life?*

This study points out that a Christ-centered life is seen in our character, words, and family relationships. Students will identify areas of their lives that need to be centered in Christ.

Read Colossians 3:18-21. Encourage your family members to evaluate your family in light of the passage. Point out that each family member has a part to play in contributing to a Christ-centered home. Ask the following questions to encourage discussion with your teenager:

- **What do I do that exasperates you?** (This question is only for the strong-hearted parent!)
- **How can I be more encouraging to you?**
- **If you were a parent, how would you handle this specific situation that you and I have been dealing with?**