

WHY DO SO MANY PREACHERS' KIDS WALK AWAY FROM THE FAITH?

S. Michael Houdmann Supporter Got Questions Ministries

When preachers' kids, so-called PKs, walk away from the faith in which they have been brought up, it is a sad thing and a poor testimony to the truth of Christianity. Although true Christians cannot lose their salvation, many, including some raised the homes of pastors and ministers of the gospel, can and do walk away from the faith, at least for a period of time. By the grace of God who gives the gift of faith to His own, those who are truly in the saved will return (Ephesians 2:8-9). Preachers' kids who leave the faith may do so for a variety of reasons. Many preachers' kids are deeply hurt by the way church members treat their parents. Young people see the anger and conflict that can arise in even the best of congregations, and they conclude that the "religion" these people profess can't be real. Young people see these conflicts as hypocrisy. They then begin to question their own faith. Preachers' kids are often under a lot of pressure to be perfect, or at least to act like it so they won't disgrace the family and the church. So they try to live up to everyone's expectations and this can lead them to practice the very hypocrisy they see in others. Especially in smaller churches, the pastor's family is put on a pedestal with everyone watching their every move. The children of clergymen often believe the church is stealing their father's time away from them. Pastors typically work 50-hour weeks, leaving their children fighting for attention. Statistically, most pastors change churches every five years. This can mean a child moves 3-4 times during his or her childhood. They experience the stress of losing their homes, their schools, and their friends, and they intuitively blame God or the religion for the upheaval. But these children often have no one to turn to. Their parents are dealing with the stress of finding a new job, the financial insecurity, and the causes for the move, which are universally negative. So not wanting to add to the stress, kids can keep their anger and frustration hidden. But the resentment built up against God and the faith play into the natural rebelliousness of the teenage years, which is why many preachers' kids leave the faith during that time, or immediately upon entering college. They appear to "conform" to Christianity, saying all the right things and performing all the required duties. But the moment of freedom brings many to reject the hypocrisy of their own lives and their faith along with it. How often we hear sad reports of those who start out so well in the things of religion. Those children who are praised by their parents and relatives for their apparent godliness and zeal at their local church, only to leave home for the first time by going away to university or a new job only to later return spiritually barren and cold? What can be done to stem the tide of preachers' kids leaving the faith? First, it's important to realize that this is part of Satan's overall strategy against the church. When ministers' children leave the faith, the church loses future leaders. The families of those closest to the spiritual battles are prime targets to attack. If the world sees pastors' families in a shambles, it doesn't speak well of the faith they profess. To counter this situation, pastors must schedule time for their families and children that parishioners cannot interrupt. When kids know that their time with Dad is a priority, outweighing all else, the sense of security they attain from it is enormous. The congregation must also be made aware that their pastor's time with his family will make him a more effective pastor and

safeguards against incursion into family time must be strictly enforced. The world is a very hard place for Christian believers to grow up in, especially in Western societies. Materialism and all its glamour easily satisfy the senses of the carnal nature. This is all the more true for ministers' children who have perhaps been brought up with some degree of 'naivety' because their parents would have them be spared the excesses of this life. They naturally want to inquire into the things once forbidden by their parents. Therefore, it's all the more crucial for pastors and their wives to spend time preparing their own children for the temptations they will face and this can only be achieved by spending adequate time with them. Perhaps the real issue is the new birth. If any man is in Christ, He is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Indeed, he is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), whereby he is occupied by One who is greater than the one that is the world, the devil (1 John 4:4). As a result of this, he can not go on sinning (1 John 3:6), although the carnal nature will 'war' and 'rage' against those new spiritual desires that follow as a consequence of regeneration (Galatians 5:17). A 'true' believer may indeed fall away - sometimes for many years. Indeed, he may show no credible signs that he ever was converted but it is God who always takes the incentive. The true child of God is never lost forever (John 6:39; Jude 24). Finally, the importance of prayer cannot be overstated. Both pastors and the congregations they serve should make it a priority to pray continually for their pastor's children. We must bring our pastor and his family to the throne of grace regularly, asking that they be protected from the evil one by putting on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17). By doing so, we help them remain "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" and not depart from the faith in which they were raised.

D W Supporter

Apostasy is rampant all over the USA. Millions are approaching faith, then turning away. Millions genuinely, authentically profess faith, then drift away. The reasons in both cases are many. The allure of power, prestige and riches. Popularity. "Just one of the guys" (or gals). Drugs. Loneliness. Something new and different floods into the lives of college students right after they leave high school. Peer pressure is overwhelming. The quick answer is that they were not "grounded in the faith." One then needs to examine the cause of their lack of staying power. The answer is clear: They relied on themselves and others to create their "world." The phrase "let go and let God" became "let go of God." Have fun. Be in the IN crowd. In most cases the "wake up call" doesn't arrive until they have burned out on "fun" and hear Him calling, "I'm here. I will never leave you or forsake you. Come home." Lest we forget, there are those who are grievously depressed, tragically alone, no one to turn to. Life doesn't seem worth living. We hear "Where is God? Why does he let people suffer? My prayers bounce off the ceiling. Who am I? Why am I here?" Sadly, there are millions of folks like that. Who offers them help? TV evangelists, soothsayers, psychics, cults. Everytime you watch the news, PRAY out loud for every news item. You'll find yourself praying without ceasing.

Tim Beeker

Because they were never truly "in the faith" to begin with? With this being so, they never left to begin with. There is another question out here that relates to "fake" Christians. There is a strong tie between the two.