How to Raise a Pagan Kid in a Christian Home

[By:](http://restore-ministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/pagankids.jpg)[Barrett Johnson](http://infoforfamilies.com/?author=50ec7e96e4b09d0f8c1ccf91)

We end up teaching the wrong thing because we have the wrong objectives.

This sentiment was stirred in me afresh when I read an interview with Veggie Tales creator Phil Vischer. He was reflecting on how the “Christian message” he was trying to teach wasn’t Christianity at all…

“I looked back at the previous 10 years and realized I had spent 10 years trying to convince kids to behave Christianly without actually teaching them Christianity. And that was a pretty serious conviction. You can say, “Hey kids, be more forgiving because the Bible says so,” or “Hey kids, be more kind because the Bible says so!” But that isn’t Christianity, it’s morality. . .

And that was such a huge shift for me from the American Christian ideal. We’re drinking a cocktail that’s a mix of the Protestant work ethic, the American dream, and the gospel. And we’ve intertwined them so completely that we can’t tell them apart anymore. Our gospel has become a gospel of following your dreams and being good so God will make all your dreams come true. It’s the Oprah god.”

So what is your objective?

Do you teach your kids “be good because the Bible tells you to” or do you teach your kids that they will never be good without Christ’s offer of grace? There is a huge difference. One leads to moralism; the other leads to brokenness. One leads to self-righteousness; the other leads to a life that realizes that Christ is everything and that nothing else matters.

I want my kids to be good. We all do. But as our kids grow up, the truth of the gospel can easily get lost somewhere between salvation (where we know we need Jesus) and living life (where we tend to say “I’ve got this”). My experience is that the vast majority of parents are encouraging moral behavior in their kids so that God will bless their (usually self-centered) pursuits. It’s the American Dream plus Jesus. And it produces good, moral pagans.

Consider the key objectives you have for your kids. Seriously, take a minute to think about what would deem you a successful parent. If your goals are focused on your kids’ behavior, their happiness, or their accomplishments (but don’t include a dependence upon Christ and a submission to His will and work), then you might want to make some adjustments.

Because the world has enough pagans. Even plenty of really nice ones. What we need is kids who fully grasp the reality that they have nothing to offer, but who intimately know a God who has everything they need.