

## A Saltless Ministry

*The challenge of keeping the ministry "salty"*

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The Church seems to sit comfortably in its pews and watch as the world around them crumbles into a seemingly planned pile of moral destruction. Christians don't often march in the streets. They don't often stage non-violent rallies. They are just praying quietly at home or at church. Prayer is the most powerful tool we can wield against the moral warfare, but why are Christians doing it silently?



Kids today are becoming more and more "tolerant" of sin. They are being told that every choice that a person makes is "okay." Even if the children know that something is not right, they are being taught by society to not say something about it.

There are two things that are "contributing factors" to the silence of the Church, and the hesitancy of the kids to speak up about "spiritual" things: The "church" wants to be so "popular," and "welcoming" ("A church anyone can come to") that it has become bland! Jesus mentioned that we are the salt of the earth...but when the salt has lost its saltiness, it is useless and only good as a form of "gravel" that is used on roads. (Mt. 5:13-16) The other factor that feeds into this is the fact that today's world (including the Church) is obsessed with "being tolerant." We have become so "tolerant" that everything is gray! There are no absolute "rights and wrongs"! The kids (from ages 4 or 5 and older) are getting this message loud and clear from the media, their parents, their school teachers, and their peers. Where are those who proclaim, "Repent" anymore? They are silent for fear of being labeled "intolerant," or not politically correct! So, today's youth grow up thinking they can choose anything that pleases them.



We have so legislated God out of our lives that His standards have become "old fashioned," or not "current" with our society. This is dangerously sad!

The pastors of both children's ministry (CM) and youth ministries (YM) face a dark and destructive enemy: compromise! If we speak too loudly or clearly about God's standards of right and wrong as stated in scripture, we are risking offending some members or visitors to our programs. We would be called into the senior pastor's office and questioned! Today's Church doesn't want to offend anyone! We want to be bigger, and that means not offending anyone! So, we "teach" nice, safe, Bible stories or character lessons, and we don't talk about rights and wrongs! The kids grow up and are sucked into worldly things because we have become saltless!

We don't "outfit" our kids (both children and youth) with the armament and weapons they need to wage war with the world! This results from the "saltlessness" that our ministries have come to accept! Where are the Christian students when teachers and students both proclaim that homosexuality is okay with God? What are the Christian students saying to those peers who hate others who are of a different race or culture? Too many of them are silent for fear of being labeled "radical," or "intolerant."



Speaking up for God is critically important, but dangerous! The scriptures talk a lot about persecution. When are we persecuted? We are persecuted when we are salty and speak up and out about the choices others make! We are cautioned about being persecuted for being offensive or evil, but we are encouraged to put ourselves into the positions of being persecuted for standing up for God! (Matthew 5: 1-20; I Peter 3-5)

So, what should we do? We should "turn up the heat" on Biblical standards of rights and wrongs in our ministries to counteract the effects of the media on our kids! WE MUST HELP THEM LEARN TO DISCERN between right and wrong, and then be strong enough to speak up and do something about it!

We also need to train our children and youth how to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). This means being very clear about right and wrong and doing it in a friendly, loving way. Our children and youth need to learn from missionaries who work hard to “earn the right to speak” when they encounter people who view life differently. This takes time and much patience; but Jesus was also an excellent example of this approach. He spent time with those who viewed life differently and He actually “got in trouble” for doing it. Look at His interactions with “sinners” in Matthew 9:10. This is the way to have influence on people! Do we train our children and youth to do this?



We must do all we can to create tools for both the parents and ministry leaders to use in "vaccinating" our children against the sickness of society! We must create, with the Lord's leading, strategies for supplying children with the appropriate environments and teachings so when they face the temptations later in life, they will say, "Why would I want that? I have everything I need!" It all boils down to the family's time together and spiritual strength. In Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, God gives a clear prescription for raising kids who are “immunized” against the viruses of the world. No longer can we simply tell our children, “No, no” without explaining why something is not right, and helping them develop their own systems of discernment with God's help.

If something is saltless, we can either throw it out, or add more salt to it! The Church, and specifically, the children's ministry, needs to be heavily salted! We need to teach the Bible with conviction! We need to be clear about what God says is right and wrong. We need to do all we can to invade the kids homes with salty parent training and family activities! We need to take advantage of every minute we have with every kid in our ministries. We need to become known as the church that is outspoken for God's Biblical values! We need to encourage our kids to be vocal and risk being persecuted for God. We need to risk offending some visitors to our church who might be looking for a saltless ministry!

