



Some people go **BUY** the Book.
Some people go **BY** the Book.
The difference?
Getting rid of the "U"!

followers of Christ 

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Sunday Classes at 10:00 am ~ Sunday Worship at 11:00 am ~ Wednesday Bible Study at 7:00 pm

But there's another kind of identity theft involving children, with effects that are equally tragic. It happens when parents either assume the lives of their kids in a vicarious bid to relive their own childhoods, or when they compromise the spiritual identity of their youngsters.

The first scenario plays out all too often in sports, music, dance, acting, martial arts, or hobbies of almost every description. From beauty pageants to the boxing ring, many kids are participating, not because they want to, but because their parents are using them to live out *their* dreams or put to rest the disappointments of their own childhood.

Some have dollar signs in their eyes that blind them to the true passion, prowess and personality of their children. They push their kids relentlessly, just in case a Justin Beiber is just in reach, and they justify it by telling themselves they're merely instilling discipline and a strong work ethic. But such blind ambition strains family relationships, robs the kids of joy and individuality, and often mars their future.

On another front, every human being is a child of God. Instead of insisting our kids follow in *our* footsteps, we should encourage them to follow in his. But many parents who take great care with the physical, emotional and material well-being of their kids ignore the spiritual dimension entirely. If we're spiritual beings at our very core — created in the image of God — such neglect compromises their identity.

It doesn't help when so many activities are now held on Sunday mornings, forcing Christian parents to choose between them and worship, but one thing is clear. If children learn early that God and his church come second, that priority is unlikely to change, ever.

All believing parents have an obligation to insist their children go with them to worship until they're on their own, just as they insist those kids go to school and do the other things that help them grow and become happy, secure and successful. Parents are guardians of spiritual identity, until their kids are ready to use it on their own. No exceptions. No excuses. No compromise allowed. If we make sure our children truly know who God is, they'll know who they are, and that's one identity no one can steal.



RICK GAMBLE

~ sharing Jesus and the journey ~



Cross Current real help for real life

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I.D. and the Ego

Ten-year-old Shiloh Puckett has 17 credit cards, debt worth thousands of dollars, and approval for a loan of \$42,000.

But don't blame the fourth grader. According to NBC News, she's just one of half a million American kids victimized this past year by identity theft. Even more shocking, it was Shiloh's own mother who used the girl's social insurance number and assumed her identity to buy what she wanted. That got Cindy Puckett six months in jail. "At the time, I didn't really think... I was hurting my child," she said.



Astonishingly, this is not unique. Officials estimate relatives are involved in more than half of all child identity thefts. That's because kids are perfect targets. They have clean records and, since they aren't using their credit, the identity theft can go unnoticed for years.

That's what happened to Elizabeth Paradez. When she was ten, her godmother stole her credit and Elizabeth had no idea until she went to buy a car eight years later. The dealership wouldn't sign the papers because she had a negative credit history 14 pages long. Though her godmother has tried to make amends, Elizabeth's credit is still a mess.

To prevent such problems, parents must protect the vital information of their kids, taking care not to carry it in a wallet, give it to others, or put it on non-essential forms like sports team applications. All papers listing a social insurance number should be shredded.

But for some families, it's too late. A recent investigation looked at the credit profiles of 40,000 children and found that 4,000 of the youngsters had gun licenses, mortgages, drivers' licenses, car loans or phony telephone and electricity accounts. Those victims will pay a heavy price for years to come.