



I'm Doing This for the Kids— Or Am I?

You're sick as a dog with a fever and your mechanic said that you shouldn't be driving your car until you can get it in to him. You've sacrificed your time and money. Your spouse is worried about paying the bills because you just had to have that new book on ministry to children and that great new puppet you've been wanting. The church won't pay for it because the board doesn't want to go that direction in children's ministry (which you interpret to mean that they don't want to spend that much of the church's money on a silly puppet). You fight and scratch to make it to your class to give it your best even though you feel your worst. You teach and preach the Word of God to the children that Sunday morning and then get home and fall into a heap on the floor. Then, for a fleeting moment, you wish you'd never taken the job or volunteered for the position. But your thought is interrupted by your saying to yourself, *But I'm doing this for the kids*. Then you quietly fall asleep until Monday morning.

Many of us have used that famous line with our pastors, friends, spouses, family, or fellow

children's ministers and colleagues: "I'm doing this for the kids." Sometimes we declare it from the mountaintops as if we wanted everyone to know. And sometimes we say it when we're desperate for a reason to hang on a little longer.



Stop Saying It

All right, settle down. I'm not talking about leaving the ministry or moving on to become a senior pastor or something else. But I've come to this realization—I'm not doing it for the children; I'm not doing it for me, for my pastor, for my wife, or for those who have been my mentors.

The Word of God warns about this very subject. Galatians 1:10 states, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ."

"What about the kids?" Good question. In looking at the word *men* in the original Greek text, we find it is a generic expression for any member of the human race. Children fit that description.

Look at Colossians 3:23,24: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Why are we doing this for the kids? What can the kids give back? We as children's workers rarely receive any praise, acknowledgment, or appreciation from adults. There are times that we do, but generally not. Why, then, would we expect any more from the children?

Yes, it is a joy to see the fruit of our labor in the children. It's exciting to see the development and improvement that the

children have made since we've started working with them. I see all kinds of things all the time that shout out to me that I must be doing something right. But don't look at your task as simply a chore you're doing for the kids.

Keep in mind that what you are doing is for the Lord. When you submit to that truth, God will honor you, and you will see rewards from Him. Remember to keep your priorities in order so you can receive correct recognition from God.

Priorities

First and foremost: Never sacrifice your relationship with

Jesus Christ for anyone—not even a child.

Next, place a high priority on the relationship you have with your spouse. God placed you together and you made a covenant with that person—a promise. Keep that promise, and continue to grow and go new places in your relationship together.

Then should come your immediate family, meaning your children. You could win the entire world of children to Christ, but if you lose your own children to the devil, you have just become as ineffective as if you had never answered the call of God.

You should be concerned with fulfilling the vision that God has given you for children's ministry. After this point it's up to you to set the proper priorities to see that vision fulfilled. This is where proper planning and time management can help you out. Strive to see that vision come to pass. Remember, that's why you're doing this—because of a vision that God has given you.

Remember, it's still going to be a struggle at times when the week gets tough. Just keep this in mind—you are ministering unto the Lord. When you do, He will make your ministry to the kids the most effective it's ever been.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Evaluate your own ministry to children. Have you ever said to yourself, "I'm doing this for the kids"? Who should you be doing it for?

2. How can you reestablish proper priorities?