Winning the Day Spiritually

Revelations 3:14-22

Dr. Arnie Cole

So what does it all mean? It all means that if you want to win the day, you've got to get and stay connected...I mean connected in a big way! Around my office we've got this saying, "If you snooze you lose, baby." But, by the end of the day, the only connection that really matters is your spiritual connection.

Hello, my name is Arnie Cole. I'm the CEO of Back to the Bible. And more importantly, for this presentation today, I'm the Director of Research for The Center for Bible Engagement. I spent my professional life researching and developing programs that help people "win the day".

Really, I've studied so much I consider myself an expert on two different population groups in the world. My first 24 years of being a researcher and designing programs were with people with disabilities. Back then it was called mental retardation. We call it now "developmental disabilities". But we worked with people with IQs of 30 down to zero. And they had to be dual-diagnosed because the other side of the diagnosis was that they were violent. Some of them were so violent that they had IQs of zero, not because they couldn't function, but they were so violent it couldn't be measured. And these people were called in the legal system "5150"...that means they're a danger to themselves or others. And we worked with this population on a way to help them "win the day". We were able to develop, through our research, this methodology that had about a 98% cure rate.

The other group of people that I work with, or that I studied and that I've researched, is actually, in some regards, far more dangerous than this first population. I study Christians, okay? And you know what we're charged to do, at The Center for Bible Engagement, is to find out why so many people who claim to be Christians own Bibles and never read them. More importantly, I studied why some people who claim to be Christians "win the day" spiritually, and other people who claim to be Christians just totally "lose the day". So we look at what makes the difference.

Many of you here today are doing everything you can to get connected. You attend church every Sunday, but we know church attendance is not an indicator of spiritual growth. You may attend a small group. We've seen that less than 1% of the people will tell us that small groups help them "win the day".

Hmm…attend church every Sunday, so it's not about attendance. Go to small groups...no. Oh, what about volunteering? We have found that people that do volunteerism, they tell us it doesn't help them "win the day" as far as their spiritual life goes. As a matter of fact, we look and we see that some people think to win the day spiritually is all about "doing", and they've become God's little human "doers". Then they look around and they see, at the end of the day, they're really not winning the day spiritually.

You aren't alone if you're one of those people, because we know this is actually a phenomena going across the Christian nation in America today. Being spiritually disconnected is a widespread phenomenon that I spent my life studying.

We know that more than 70% of all men from 18-34 visit pornographic sites in a typical month. And maybe you saw the ad in Christianity Today. Fifty percent of all men that attend church dabble with pornography. That means one out of two. It's like, guys, we are in total, total trouble.

And you know it's having an affect on our sons and daughters because we're seeing that eight out of ten young people, by the time they're 24 years old, walk away from their faith. Boom…they're gone.

Now sometimes when I tell pastors this, they say, "Oh yeah, but they come back, right?" Yeah...about two percent. The rest have totally walked away from their faith. They've become totally disconnected.

So I'm a researcher. You know most of my stuff is done on PowerPoint. But you'd have a 280 point PowerPoint today, and that doesn't work very well.

So you've got eight out of ten young people walking away, and that is a conservative number. Some people are saying, 'No, no, it's more like 95% of the kids." But take my word for it: eight out of ten. And then you start putting all of this stuff together. We've got some pretty slick computers, and you can start figuring that with the amount of kids walking away, with the amount of men in trouble spiritually, that by 2040, the United States will no longer have Christian values. It's huge!

One thing that I find very encouraging in all of this is that everybody is concerned about winning the day spiritually. As a matter of fact, I can ask the question, "What does it mean to win the day spiritually?" to people that claim to be Christ followers and they'll tell me what they think it means. And I can ask people who have no idea about Jesus Christ and ask them the same question and they will tell me what it means.

Let's take the example of pornography. Whether you're a Christ follower or not, if you're in a relationship, the other side of the relationship doesn't want you lusting after somebody else. So when you ask someone how they can win the day, well, one of the things is, "I need to keep my mind out of the gutter so I can focus on my spouse." So this winning the day thing isn't something that just Christians are worried about, but most people in the United States are worried about their spiritual connection.

I have very good news for you today because we actually have scientific proof that shows people that when we look at groups, we can see the difference between Group A and Group B. And if you're into research, you know that that's huge. Matter of fact, our findings were so astounding we brought in the guy whose company does SPSS (it's scientific research) to make sure we hadn't made a mistake. There was that much difference. And the difference was that somebody who engages Scriptures—that means reads or listens to Scripture four or more times a week—their life is completely different than someone who doesn't. Not someone that attends church; not someone who is in small groups; not someone that worships Buddah. But if you take this population and you compare it to everybody else, there is a significant difference. There is a life-changing difference between these two. It's almost too simple. So what I'm talking about is something that really a child could follow.

So to "win the day spiritually" we're talking about a relationship. What's a relationship? Okay, guys, what's a relationship? I talk to my wife, right? Char and I have a great relationship. I talk to her...and whenever I talk to her, I want her to listen, right? But that's not relationship, and she's really the first one to point that out. The relationship is you "talk to" and you "listen to"...got to talk to, and listen to. I "listen" to her. We have a two-way relationship.

Now I know some of you already have your text phones going off. You're starting to get distracted. So, if you miss anything and everything about this, I want you to get **this point**! If you want to hear from God, if you want to hear from Jesus Christ, if you want to have a spiritual relationship, then the only way you know for sure that God is talking to you is through the Bible. That's the only way you can know for sure. So it's just like you got a text message and the text message says, "If you want Jesus near, then daily His voice you need to hear."

Now how hard is that? Well, actually it's pretty hard. I'd like you to turn with me to Revelation 3:20, and we can kind of go through the process. Well, we're not just talking "legal-beagle" kind of stuff. We're talking about reading, reflecting, applying...adding a step. But one thing I see that most people do and this scripture is so classic (matter of fact it ties with our research, which makes it wonderful) is like the Bible is relevant today! It's like, "Whoa, baby, okay, here we go."

> **Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me**. **(***NASB, Rev. 3:20)

Okay, that means Jesus knocks at the door of our hearts, right? Knock-knock-knock. And if we listen, if we let Him in, everything changes, right? It's all about a "decision". That's what it says here. And at the end of the day you go to Heaven, right? I mean, that's it? When I survey people that's what they tell me. "Yeah, I'm a Christian; I believe in the big guy in the sky." It's all about a decision. Well, really, if we're talking about getting connected, it's like what people are saying today is, "You get connected once and that's all you ever need."

So we're going to run with this passage, and I'm going to talk a little bit about myself so you can see where the scripture intersects with my life and really how I took this totally out of context.

Yes, Jesus knocked on the door of my heart and I went forward at camp. Matter of fact, I was a little worried about salvation, so I went forward in my younger days four times...you know you've got to make sure that that's right. And my parents were worried about me; they sent me to a Christian school. Matter of fact, they did everything they possibly could to see that I would grow up walking as a Christ follower. So I went to Christian school; I went to church every Sunday; we had prayer meeting on Wednesday nights; we had Youth Group. We had all of this stuff. I was even student body president of Brethren High School, so I was representing the Christian thing and it was all about a "decision".

Around the age of 21, 22, wow, that's kind of like the statistics today...now I know I don't look that old, but I'm an old guy, so around 22 I turned my back on my faith and I walked out the door and I hated anything that ever had to do with Christians or church. It was a complete waste of time because I was a psychology student and into humanism, humanistic psychology. (Oh by the way, all roads lead to Heaven.) I mean yeah, it's about a "decision". It's about that "guy in the sky," and so "all roads lead to Heaven".

Well you know, when you have that kind of a philosophy, it's a little bit empty. It's like, *"Wow, maybe there's more than just a decision."* You know, think a little bit about that. And about that time my parents became missionaries. My dad was a dentist. He sold everything and went to the mission field. And I thought, "What an idiot! Why in the world would you ever want to do something like that when you're right at the peak of your earning years?" But off he goes to the mission fields.

So I started worshipping money. I started worshipping success, because money really made me happy. And also I thought, *"Well, you know, if you're gonna be miserable, you might as well have a lot of money because it's more fun being miserable when you've got places to go than to just sit around and be miserable."*

But about this time I was doing research, working in programs, helping people. There was this guy named Geraldo Rivera that came out. We're not going to let you get distracted with your text messages so I'll use some props. So Geraldo Rivera came out to a state hospital and he had a sports bag. You know, they didn't have little cameras back then. So he walked around and he filmed in California what was going on in the state hospitals, and there were horrible atrocities going on. But basically, Geraldo put me in business. Our thing was because the governor of California was so embarrassed, and part of the headline was, "Here's What $120,000 a Year Buys You", and it showed one worker with his feet propped up, and a shower with 50 people in it—males/females showering—and the rest of the workers sitting around playing cards. Okay, that totally embarrassed the governor.

So this population group that was violent, the mode of treatment when I started it, was we would use straightjackets which buckled up. Nicole's my assistant here, so this is part of her job to show you what I'm talking about. So if Nicole is violent, we can't "talk" her into putting on this straightjacket because she knows we may leave her in it for hours. So the other thing we used—I forget what the scientific term was—but us kids, we called them cattle prods. And so we would "shock" Nicole to get her to cooperate. And you know, if that didn't work, then we would use some heavy-duty psychotropic drugs called Haldol or Thorazine, and we would define that as "winning the day" for Nicole; it was to keep her out of your life. A lot of people died under this kind of thing.

Well we came around and started researching how can we help Nicole win the day? How can we get rid of the straightjacket? How can we make her not so violent? And we ended up finding out ways that would really help her.

One thing about researching people that are violent, you know if your research is off pretty quick. You know what I mean? I mean you get all these theories, but it's like, "Oh wow, that didn't work!"

So life was good. You know, we would get glimpses and I was pretty much a money-grubbing pig. I can remember having a Rolls Royce and I had a driver, and I made him wear those high boots. And I don't know who looked more stupid—me or him—but we would go around and I'd think, "*You know, isn't this great? Isn't life wonderful?"* But everyonce in awhile I would think that all roads just didn't seem quite to lead to Him.

I can remember one time I had this big huge house and, looking up at the outdoor balcony I thought, "*You know, it'd really be cool to hang myself."* So you know that's a little bit of an indication of what "winning the day" was like when you live your life for money and all that

success had. One of the boats I had was named Unimot, which means “one more”. And life really became kind of like a joke.

Peter Jennings, *World News Tonight*, did a big thing on our graduates, and our business became pretty well known overnight. That was really exciting. But you know, during this time I had a setback...matter of fact it was over a three-year period. I got this diagnosis that I had advanced Alzheimer’s disease. That was like, “*Whoa*!” Matter of fact, they told me that I needed to get out of the business because I had about three years left to live, based on someone whose brain was exactly like mine.

So we sold the business. We bought a boat and we went cruising; we went to Mexico, did Marlin fishing, did all this stuff. And my last trip—because I did not want to die in a nursing home—was to go to Alaska. And from Newport Beach, California, to Alaska are some of the heaviest seas in the world. It’s like that last big challenge. As a matter of fact, they call Alaska one of the world’s last great frontiers.

So we decided to go up, (me and three guys in our boat), and we headed out. Right when we get past California we’re in some really pretty heavy seas, so we’ve got a weather router. The weather router tells you when to come in, when to go out, so we’re ducking in and ducking out. Now we’re 160 miles from Juan de Fuca. We’re coming around the corner, just 160 miles away, and we’re ducking this storm, and the weather router says, *“Go for it! You’ve got a window. Go for it now.”*

Well you know, we’re party boys. We had to go have that one last dinner, have a few cocktails, and then we’d go. So we headed out about eight hours later. I mean, what’s eight hours among friends, right? Well we get out there and we get caught in this horrendous storm! And just to give you some perspective what it’s like to be in a storm, I know some of you have never been in a storm, but I bet a lot of you have ridden a horse.

Well I have a horse named Mexicali Cash, and I was riding him once and he started getting this habit of taking the bit in his mouth, turning his head and going at a full gallop. Well that’s scary, right? So I thought, “*You know I’m a behaviorist*”, and I remember the old cattle prod days. I don’t have a cattle prod, but I’ve got spurs. So I took my spurs and I thought, “I’m gonna teach you a lesson.” So I hit him with my spurs. I didn’t know that when you go bronco riding, when they come out the chute, that’s what they do. Well Cash put his ears down, and when his ears go down my hand goes right here and I’m grabbing for this saddle horn and Cash just totally explodes.

That’s like being in the ocean, because when you ride a wave, you go down the wave and you're in the gully. And when you're in the gully, it looks like the wave is way bigger than that. Our ceilings here are about 40 feet tall. Well we were in 50 foot seas, and you’re looking up at that wave, and that’s like the old ears go back. Nothing’s happening, but you know everything bad is gonna happen really pretty quick. So you hold on to the spokes of the wheel, hang on for dear life, and you ride through it. And at the end of the wave, you come back and you reset again.

Now it’s a little different than horseback riding because, if you're lucky and you don’t fly off the horse, you're smart enough to get off the horse right after that. When you're cruising, you “ain’t” getting off...matter of fact you go through it for hours and hours and hours.

Well, I'm driving; it's late at night. We're on our way but we're stuck. Our satellite system is down. We can't get to the weather router. And boom…the signal comes up and it says, "*Turn back! There are roadblocks in your area!"* So we're in this wave, and that means waves are coming "this way". Then, if you look at that wall up there, that means the wave comes from a different direction about twice as high. And I realized that we were not going to survive it. So I gave my life to the Lord, made that "big decision". Jesus knocked on the door. I'm not too S-M-A-R-T, but He knocked on the door and I listened. I gave my life to the Lord. Now my watch is over. We have a bunk bed in the back, named the bunk "Kindred Spirit", so I sleep right in the pilot house.

Next morning I'm driving the boat. I'm not dead! Wow! Maybe I jumped the gun on making this "decision"! I don't want to go anywhere. And just as I'm thinking maybe I jumped the gun on this "decision", this wave comes. I couldn't see it because it came from behind and it picked up our 65-ton boat and threw it on its side. Now you have no steering; you have no propellers, no screws, no nothing, and you're going down this wave. I used to surf, and there's a point in a wave, you know that song, *Wipeout*, where you're looking straight down and you know there's no way you're gonna pull out; actually your board purls. Boats do exactly the same thing. We were headed down, and it's like, *"Lord, Lord, okay, it must be more than a decision!"*

So, let's get back into the Scripture. But basically we know that it's more than scripture. Oh and also, I never prayed for healing because we thought healers were a joke. But I had some healing. But let's get back into the scripture now for the spiritual basis, for if it's not about a "decision", it's "What's Jesus doing here?"

Let's start in verse 14:

> **To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot...(**vs. 14-15a)

Wow, that's what I do! I study deeds! I study behaviors!

> **So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.** (vs.16)

So Laodicea was fed by a water supply, and the water supply was a mineral hot spring. And when you were at the hot spring, the water was hot. But the further away you got from the source of the heat, it became cooler. It became lukewarm. So this church in Laodicea was neither hot nor cold. And when we study people in America, you know, we ask people and they are not a religious fanatic, but they did make the "decision"; they're neither hot nor cold.

So, you know it's like, "*Wow, this Laodicean church is like what we're seeing in people today."*

> **Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing…"** (vs.17a)

It's kind of like what we say: "God has blessed us so much. God has blessed America, God has blessed my life; we need nothing." That's kind of like what we're hearing the Laodiceans saying.

> **Because you say I'm rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.** (vs.17)

So it's these Laodiceans—are they a bunch of idiots? Well, we've got a little illustration here that normally we would do on a computer. So I've brought with me my neighbor, Byron Brown, and he's a great neighbor. He always helps me out. So when I called Byron he didn't know what he was getting into but, basically, he's the illustration of the average person today who claims to be a Christian.

In our research we ask people to tell us if they're Christians. And I'm not a theologian but I firmly believe that once saved, always saved. You've got the helmet of salvation, right? Okay, so basically Byron represents you and me. He's saved. He has the helmet of salvation and Satan cannot take it off.

So what we find and what we create is called Satan's Veil, and really it happened in the Laodicean Church and it's happening here across America. People think that they're Christians and they've got the helmet of salvation. But immediately there is this veil, and this veil is held on by four parts. I really want you to get this because this is what happens in most people's spiritual lives.

The first part is that most people today don't know what the Bible is or what it's for. They don't know that if you want to hear from God, it's in the Bible. Most people think that if they're having a relationship with God, it's because they pray. You pray to God. You tell Him what to do and He does it. They don't know that you get to hear, so they don't know what the Bible is or what it's for. They don't know that to hear from God, it is in the Bible.

The second part is most people don't have any time. Oh my goodness, you can't imagine the things we hear. "Yeah, you know, I guess maybe you hear from God in the Bible, but I have no time. I've got four kids and I work for a ministry. I have no time to read the Bible at all. But that's okay because I'm serving Jesus." And really what they're telling you is they're basing things on their notion, not on what Jesus has to say to them.

The third group of people that we're seeing are the "tempted", and this trait is that people are so tempted that they take themselves out spiritually, whether it's pornography, cutting, all kinds of different things. It doesn't matter what, but they become so tempted it blocks their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The last group is people need help. And what we're finding is a lot of great pastors, like Bryan Clark and Jeff; they nail it and they're growing. They're in the Word every week. It's the rest of us. So the further they get away from us, the harder it is to see.

So we have this thing going on, and actually they are all interrelated because this can actually be one person. This could actually be you because you didn't know that it was all about Jesus talking to you in the Bible. You don't have time anyway because you're so busy being connected to the world that the way you hear from God is through your friends or whatever. And you struggle with temptation, and when you sit here on Sunday you don't quite understand what the Pastor is saying because he's at a completely different level.

Let's go to verse 18:

> **I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may become rich…**

Gold refined by fire is talking about salvation, and *refined by fire* is really persecution. Well, we've got it pretty good in the United States because we don't have persecution...if you think it's good because persecution is part of that refining by fire. So the first thing you have to have is salvation. You do have to make a decision for Jesus Christ.

> **… and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed…(**vs. 18b)

What it's talking about here is righteous deeds. So there is something that's right about doing things and righteous deeds.

> **… and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.** (vs. 18c)

They prided themselves as being blessed by material wealth, yet Jesus offers them something more and that is spiritual wealth, by opening their eyes, but they've got to hear from Him—talk to, listen to.

> **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.** (vs. 19)

And here comes the scripture, now in context.

Verse 20:

> **Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.**

If you aren't listening to Jesus daily, He's waiting patiently for you to do so. It's so much more than a "decision". It's really about a relationship. "So if you want Jesus near, then daily His voice you will need to hear."

You've seen the veil. You've heard the statistics. So we need to come up with something that's going to help you get engaged, to keep you from becoming one of those statistics.

(Presentation using two people):

"About a year ago, Back to the Bible started a ministry called 411 God, and it's basically borne out of the research they were doing at The Center for Bible Engagement, trying to figure out why so many people owned Bibles but never read them. What we kept hearing over and over again is 'I just don't have time. I have no time to read my Bible.' "

"So that was our challenge: To come up with a tool that didn't take a lot of time, that took a little effort from you, but didn't really require a big lifestyle change. And for someone who was engaging with the word of God, it took and made it so that it wasn't just a segmented portion of

your day, not something you did at the beginning or at the end, but was a regular part of your day the whole way through."

"And what do you have with you every day all day? Your cell phone. So 411 God is the Bible on your cell phone. Now it's a little different than what you're probably thinking. It's not a downloadable application. It's actually a phone call, so it doesn't get any easier than that, right? You pick up your phone; you listen. And one minute later you've engaged the Word of God for that day. It kind of starts a habit."

"What does that actually look like though? Well, we brought a little video to kind of give you a better idea."

(Video)

The idea for 411 God was borne out of the research we were doing at The Center for Bible Engagement. We found people just didn't have time to read their Bibles..."No time, no time. I don't have any." "Okay, we got that."

But how do we help you with that? How do we create a Bible engagement tool that literally takes no time? How do we help people read their Bible?

"One of my hardships (according to one person using 411 God) is just I don't have enough time to read the Bible. So it's nice that I can kind of get the phone call or the email now, and it reminds me not only to listen to it, but, if I really like it and the passage applies to me for that day or something, I might go back in my Bible and research more about the subject or whatever. I was like, seriously, it's that easy to get the scripture on your cell phone? And now I look forward to hearing from God every morning."

"411 God. It's 60 seconds of the Bible on your cell phone."

"It's a passage; it's about 'the life'. We have actors that we bring in. All you've got to do is pick up your phone and listen for one minute."

"It's actually kind of incredible just to get this phone call, answer it, and there's the Bible right there. It's crazy."

"When I first heard about 411 God I was so excited because I knew that so many people would be completely drawn to it because it's so easy. It's so simple."

"Everyone's got 60 seconds. You check your email; you check up your Facebook; you pick up the phone...do the things you're already doing."

"Every single one of my students has a cell phone, so it's like you're using media that they have immediate access to all the time."

"And one minute later they got some engagement with the Word of God."

"This is 411 God. And you know, there is something in your head that causes tons of problems. No, it's not your Abdulla Oblongata. It's your tongue. Here's what James Free says:

> "So if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect. We could also control ourselves in every other way. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire."

"You can tame a lion, and if you can find one, even a Velociraptor. But the tongue? Tough stuff! Self-control doesn't come in a can. But you can pray and ask for some—for free too."

"You know, what you hear throughout your day is, you know, rattling around in your head, whether it's news or whatever. So if you're hearing Scripture earlier in your day, you know, it'll provide like a context or a framework when you look at the things that happen in your day."

"It makes it more a normal part of life rather than being like, 'This is my devotion time…this is my work time…this is my home time,' because when it comes, it just is sort of a part of your day, so it breaks it out of the segmented life that maybe now you might live."

"The second thing I thought of when I heard about 411 God was mothers who have little children at home. If they think about it and they want to get God's Word at a crucial time in their life, I thought, "Wow, you know, between 4-6 in the afternoon, when a mom is just ready to pull her hair out, getting a call from God is just gonna be the soothing ointment in her day that she gets through until bedtime. We know it's not the answer, but…"

"It's a first step. It's 60 seconds of listening to the Word of God. It's more than you were doing before. Step one: Pick up the phone. All you gotta do is pick up the phone, like, 'Hello? Ahh…Scripture!' And I don't have to think about it, you know. It makes it automatic for you."

"Well, just having that day-to-day connection with God's Word, you know, sometimes you don't always have the time to open up the Word or maybe you're not disciplined enough to get into it every day. But when you can just answer a phone call or click on an email and there it is. It's great."

"It'll change your life."

"It's the living breathing word of God."

"I love it!"

"This is 411 God."

(End of video)

(Continuing presentation between 2 presenters):

"Ready to sign up? Pretty easy to do. A few things to keep in mind. Number one, it's free and it only takes a couple minutes of your cell phone plan. And too, this is step one. It's not the final thing. It's the first thing to help you start creating the Word of God more and more into your life."

"So we're gonna help you sign up this morning using our cell phone. So step one is: Pull out your phone. And what we're signing up for this morning is just a one-week trial. So you can get a 411

Gotta Try. Not a huge commitment. You'll get it for one week, and then if you like it, we'll tell you how to keep getting it."

"All right, so we've got our phones out. What we're gonna do is we're gonna send a text message. So go to your text message screen. You're going to create a new text message and you're going to send it to the number: 313131 (no spaces). Then text the word "Berean" in your text messaging screen. Push "Send" and you've done it! You've signed up for the one-week trial of 411 God, so you will get your first phone call on Monday at 8 a.m. and your last phone call will come on Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m. However, if you like it, you can sign up to continue receiving 411 God at 411god.net. Now, when you do this, you can totally customize your settings. You can change it to a land line if you want. You can do it on your email. You can do it on your Facebook. And if you forgot your cell phone this morning, don't worry because in the *Life In the Loop* we have instructions on how you can do it at home so you can be a part of it as well. This is just a fun way."

"When you do it, it's totally personal. It's totally free, and it starts a habit in your life. It keeps you from becoming a statistic. It keeps your family from becoming a statistic. Because the truth is 8 out of 10 kids are walking away from their faith by the time they're grown."

(Kids song, beginning with 10 kids and by the end of the song, only two remain)

Those kids illustrate that it's more than just statistics. It's people's lives. It's our kids' lives that are walking away, and the solution is so easy. It's just to get engaged with Scripture, hear from Jesus daily through reading your Bible. Could you please stand with me for our closing prayer?

Our dear Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this beautiful day, Lord, and we just want You to know that we truly do want to have a relationship with You, Lord. And just help us. You've made it so easy that even a child, Lord, can understand it. And, Lord, just as easy as it is, it's so very complicated in our busy lives to listen to You daily. We've got the thing about praying to You daily, and telling You what to do, but listening to You, Lord, that's huge. It just helps each and every one of us, Lord, that we can listen to You daily and that we'll apply it and make steps in our lives to honor and glorify You. And, Lord, we just pray some of these terrible trends that we've discussed today, that we've looked at, that they can be turned around, that there can be a miracle if we can get engaged with You, Lord. And we just thank You for promising that You will be near to us, that You will knock on the door of our hearts and You will wait patiently, Lord, until we let You in. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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Lincoln Berean Church, 6400 S. 70th, Lincoln, NE 68516 (402) 483-6512
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