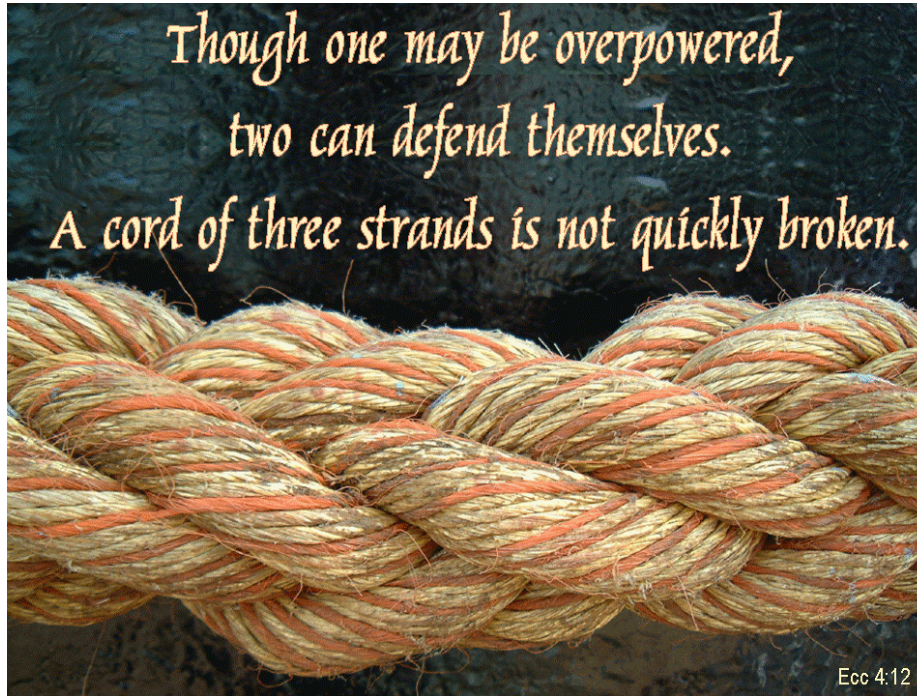




August 2016



## *A Cord of Three: Home, School, and Church*

Dear Parents:

Once a month you can expect a letter from me that addresses a topic germane to our PreK-12 community; the school's principals and the cocurricular department heads in fine arts and athletics will also alternate sending letters to you every other month. The purpose of these letters is to share with you topics and issues relative to your *investment* in a Christian education, thereby helping to strengthen the bond between home and school. This leads me to the topic I would like to speak with you about this month as we begin this new and exciting school year: kingdom education. This holistic approach to your child's development is accomplished through the triad of home, school, and church.

During preplanning, I shared a presentation with the faculty and staff that highlighted the synergy created by this *partnership* in order to illustrate how this triad's whole is stronger than the sum of its individual parts. The presentation was also accompanied with a warning that without this network of support, students are more susceptible to the pluralistic influences of today's post-modern society.

The emphasis parents today must place on upholding Christian standards for moral conduct in opposition to society's *relative norms* requires considerable and deliberate effort, and I commend you for this commitment. The depth of the chasm between what society regards as morally acceptable and what is defined in God's word is growing at an exponential rate.

Today, Christ followers are being labeled as socially disconnected for upholding biblical truths that have sustained communities for millennia, and litigious efforts to force Christians to privatize their faith and remove it from the public square are legion. These factors, combined with Americans' often exhaustive work schedules, can create periods of spiritual drought where parents unknowingly begin to embrace secular practices that are camouflaged in the fabric of today's society.

Secular education openly encourages students to explore and formulate their own opinions on moral conduct based upon what society deems as socially acceptable. As believers, we plainly see this is a dangerous, dark path. Not surprisingly, 83% of self-professing born again teenagers report they embrace relative morality with the justification that decision making should be based upon doing whatever feels right (Barna, 1997).

God's unchanging Word remains clear that parents are ultimately accountable for their child's education (Deut. 6:7-9, 11:19; and Ephes. 6:4). From the Supreme Court's rulings in 1962 and 1963 that eliminated prayer, reading the Bible, and hanging the 10 commandments in public schools, to today's rapidly expanding case law relative to bathroom choices tied to student gender identification, parents still remain accountable to God for their child's education. Your *investment* in a distinctly Christian education helps ensure a consistent moral message is being taught to your child at home and at school, a school where God's presence is *welcomed* as we *partner* to nurture and cultivate the seeds of our Christian faith.

While the majority of a child's waking hours are spent at home and in school, the inclusion of the church is essential for a student's spiritual, moral, emotional, and social development. The church has been strategically placed in a position of great importance within our communities to do His work, and the importance of helping your child identify his or her spiritual gifts is critical to ensure they become an *active participant and not observer* in your church body. Recently, our new Director of Spiritual Life, Rev. Ben Wallis, and I visited with local church leaders in an effort to strengthen the partnership between the school and those churches most frequented by our students. We are encouraging the presence of children's and youth pastors, as well as WyldLife and Young Life Leaders,

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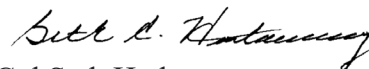
***“Your investment in a distinctly Christian education helps ensure a consistent moral message is being taught to your child at home and at school, a school where God's presence is welcomed.”***

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to come to campus to attend award ceremonies, athletic competitions, and fine arts events. During lunchtime, our cafeteria is open to these important community believers to meet with and encourage our students as they work to instill Christian character traits.

Each day as I enter my office, I have the privilege of seeing the school's mural of Romans 12:2 that reads, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (NIV). It is a constant reminder that while we pursue excellence in scholastics, the arts, and athletics in accordance with our school's mission statement, “as Christians we must always remember that education, no matter how good it is, can never transform a life. Only the redemptive work on the cross can perform such a miracle” (Schultz, 2015). Our partnership between family, school, and church provides three cords that help support this transformational process to prepare tomorrow's leaders for Christ.

Warm regards and in His Service,



Col Seth Hathaway

Head of School

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Notes:

Several of the themes contained in this letter were presented in Glen Schultz's book *Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations*. Life-way Press, 1998, reprinted in May 2015.

Barna, G. (1997). *What Effective Churches Have Discovered*. Baton Rouge, LA.