

# The Tangled Web of Christian Tolerance

by Josh McDowell

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*Josh McDowell discusses the cultural transformation of truth and tolerance, highlighting the challenges Christians face in a rapidly changing society.*

**Duration:** 59:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

**Topics:** "Tolerance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of covering up adult crimes and offers five simple things that can be done to address this problem. The first is for husbands to love their wives, emphasizing the importance of showing affection and support. The second is for fathers to spend quality time with their children, recognizing the significance of building strong relationships. The third is to heal through forgiveness, acknowledging the power of forgiveness in overcoming past hurts. The fourth is to know why you believe what you believe, emphasizing the importance of understanding and defending one's faith. Lastly, the speaker highlights the need to understand the culture and adapt to it, recognizing the importance of relevance in sharing the message of Christianity. Throughout the sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of personal testimonies and the impact of genuine Christian marriages and families in spreading the gospel.

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## Transcript

The following is a message by Josh McDowell, entitled The Tangled Web of Christian Tolerance. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, he made this statement. But after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.

Amid much opposition. I think many of you could testify here, many of the speakers who have been here, but I'm convinced we are just beginning to see the opposition. And what I'd like to do tonight is share with you some of the opposition we're going to face, and then what I believe is the answer to it.

And the answer, much of the answer is not going to be what you expected to hear from me. The last group I spoke to, they were kind of shocked with the answer that I gave. But it's because culture is changing so fast.

First, one of the areas that we're going to face opposition in, and I mean a lot, is in the area, or because of the area of truth. Of truth. Truth is going right this moment through a total transformation.

The day before yesterday I spent about an hour on the phone with Chuck Colson. And we were discussing this new book on truth. And I said, Chuck, there's probably one area that I disagree with you on.

And when you said in your introduction that if Jesus confronted Pilate again today, he would say the same thing, what is truth? I said I disagree with you. I do not think Pilate would ask that question today, whether in mockery or in sincerity. If Pontius Pilate was to meet Jesus today, he would not say, what is truth? But rather, is there truth? Now hear me, he would not ask what is true, but rather, is there truth? Truth is going through a total transformation right this moment.

All of us, in fact, in this room, all the speakers that have been up here, we were trained that truth was there to be discovered. You discovered truth. You would go to a book, whether the Bible or any book, any of the books that are out there, and you'd go to a book, you'd open it up, and you'd say, well, what's the truth the author's trying to get at? What's he trying to say? What's the evidence she's presenting? Because why? You would go to a book to discover truth that is no longer true.

And we better wake up to that. Truth, according to culture, is no longer there to be discovered. You now go to a book, not to discover truth, but rather, to create truth.

Now you are trained at graduate schools everywhere, and the upcoming generation, it's almost 100% ingrained in them. Truth isn't there to be discovered. There is no truth apart from you.

When you go to a book, whether the Bible or what, you don't ask yourself, what is the truth the author's trying to get at, but rather, what does this say to me? And whatever it says to you is just as true as whatever the author was writing. It could be diametrically opposite. The author could be saying that it's black, you believe it's white.

White is just as true as black, period. The new phrase you're going to hear more and more of is that the author must die so the reader can live. That's one of the new phrases.

Truth is there to be created. A youth director at a Baptist church, when I visited, said, I've always thought that you were right on the last two to three years. I've come to realize that you've hit the nail on the head.

Said, read what one of my 16-year-old girls, one of those most spiritual kids at his church, leading in evangelism and everything, she wrote an article for her campus newspaper, 16 years old. And this is what she wrote. And look, 80 to 85% of all Christian kids will write this same thing for the most evangelical, fundamental church.

She wrote, what is truth? Is it always the same? I don't think so. Truth changes constantly with time. It always varies from person to person and from different circumstances.

What is true today will not be absolutely true tomorrow. What was true yesterday is not absolutely true today. Therefore, there is no absolute truth.

80 to 85% of Christian kids would write the same thing. It is now pluralism. There are many truths.

Whatever you create is truth. I remember the first time I drove to DIA, Denver International Airport. And at a distance, it looked like scores of Indian tents.

I like the airport. I really do. I enjoy traveling in and out there.

I don't enjoy the trip to Denver. It's easier to go to Chicago than get in a car and drive to Denver. But at a distance, it looked like scores of Indian tents.

Historically, if they put a tarp like that over an airport, it would be a big one like this. And when I saw that, I thought, wow. That is the concept of truth.

They have taken one big covering as truth and made a whole bunch of teepees. And they're all equal. In John 4, Jesus talked about worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

Do you realize in Christianity today, the emphasis has become more spirit than truth? It's where all culture is going. You don't worship God now in truth. You worship God in spirit.

And I believe one of our greatest challenges in this area is an area of what's called a felt need. Big thing with churches today, and it's healthy if they do it right, is to be seeker-sensitive. You need to meet felt needs.

And that's legitimate. We do need to meet felt needs. But men and women, I believe in the next 5 to 15, 20 years, one of the greatest challenges will not be to meet felt needs, but the challenge will be to make needs felt.

The need for truth is going to be one of our greatest challenges. When Jesus said, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free, to make people even sense that will be one of the greatest challenges in the next 5 to 15 years. Another area that we're facing opposition in is the area of tolerance.

In many ways, I believe tolerance is probably one of the most, one of the greatest challenges and one of the greatest threats in the history of the church to Jesus Christ. Tolerance has become the number one virtue of 80% of all the cultures in the world today. In fact, tolerance is probably the number one virtue in all of history.

I believe by so many people. Tolerance. Reichstag Legutko said without any exaggeration, It can be said that tolerance is the ultimate and only accepted litmus test of morality.

No other single category, not justice, not equality, not even freedom, has won such wide moral support in the world. Gustav Menging says the problem of tolerance is one of the great and most urgent challenges now confronting our world. Some of you say, wait a minute, I thought tolerance was good.

That's the problem. That's the problem. Little Johnny comes home from school and that very sincere Christian mother from the most fundamental evangelical church meets little Johnny and says, honey, how was school today? Oh, mommy, what did you talk about? We talked about tolerance.

And that Christian mother goes, oh, that's wonderful. You know, Jesus taught us to be tolerant. Absolutely not.

That mother is undermining everything that she believes and it won't take years. It will only take months to come back and halt her. You say, wait a minute, I don't get this.

The reason is this. We are in a window historically of maybe seven, eight months left to it, maybe nine at the most through the school year, of dual definitions of critical words. Right now there's two distinct

separate definitions of tolerance.

One, I call historical or traditional tolerance. It's one that almost every one of us here has been conditioned to think by and how you're listening to me through traditional tolerance, I am speaking from a whole new definition of tolerance. Traditional tolerance would be defined by Webster.

To bear or put up with someone or something not especially liked. Or in our circles we'd say, you know, God has called me as a Christian to love the sinner but to hate the sin. That's one of the most bigoted statements you can make today.

You make that statement in an average classroom today and that entire class would turn on you. The bigotry, the intolerance to say, love the sinner, hate the sin. The reason is there's a second definition of tolerance.

And I would say 80% of the time outside the walls of the church when you hear the word tolerance, whether the media, magazine, school or what, it is not the tolerance you're conditioned to think by. It's a whole new definition of tolerance. 80% of the time it's a new definition.

The tolerance you were brought up with is now referred to as negative tolerance. The new tolerance is called positive tolerance. It's defined this way.

Every single individual's values, beliefs, lifestyle and claims to truth are equal. Then repeat that. All values, all beliefs, all truth, all lifestyles are equal.

And if you dare to say there's a value belief, a lifestyle or claim to truth greater than another, that is called hierarchy and that's the new definition of bigotry. A bigot today has nothing to do with racism or anything. A bigot today is someone who's committed to moral hierarchy that there's difference in values, beliefs, lifestyle or claims to truth.

You say, wait a minute, Josh, you're trying to say that all beliefs, all values, all truth is equal? The British philosopher R.M. Harris said, Tolerance is a readiness to respect or praise other people's ideas as if they were your own. Fernando Salvatier, the Spanish philosopher, in his new book, Nations Within a Nation, says tolerance, the doctrine in vogue, now listen to this, is that all opinions are equal, values, beliefs, lifestyle, claims to truth, all are equal. Each one has its point and all should be respected or praised.

That is to say, there's no intelligent way to discern between them. Dr. Harold O.J. Brown put it this way. All convictions about values are of equal validity, which says in effect that no convictions about values have any value.

The scholastic dictionary, see, all your dictionaries are being rewritten, the definition of tolerance. The new scholastic children dictionaries used in schools all over the world says tolerance is a willingness to accept the custom, beliefs or opinions of others. To accept.

You see, the tolerance in you and I was brought up with used the word permission. Individuals or groups that say we want permission from society to live our lifestyle in peace. You probably haven't heard that for three years.

Positive tolerance adds the word praise. And what it means is this, we not only want your permission, we demand your praise. And if you do not praise my value, my lifestyle, my claim to truth as equal to your

own, now listen to this, as equal to your own from the heart, you are a bigot and you are intolerant.

From the heart. It's called positive tolerance. In Parents Magazine, October issue, 1996, Secular Magazine, I saw it on a newsstand at an airport and it had teaching values that got my attention.

So I wasted \$3.95. I turned to the article. I just cannot believe the author really meant what he wrote. But he did, I know.

His name is Dr. Ron Tafel, T-A-F-F-E-L, Ph.D. in Family Marriage Counseling. Listen carefully to what he says. This is tolerance full-blown.

Now you've heard this in your community all the time. In fact, you walk out of here already with just what I've said and you start listening to the news now, reading the newspaper, I'll guarantee you it'd be like thousands of people write me a letter back and say, Josh, I can't believe it. It's like putting on another set of glasses when you start to understand what tolerance means.

He said this, Now it's not my business, or anyone else's for that matter, to tell you what you should stand for. That's as a parent. It is my job as a family therapist to help families communicate about the issues that mean the most to them and express their values.

And what he just did, he just legitimized sex abuse. What if that's my value as a parent? He says, He should never tell me what my value is. I determine what my value is.

As a family therapist, he's to help me communicate my family value. Why? All values are equal. All truth is equal.

You don't discover truth. You create truth. But you know, this is the, I better not say what I'm thinking.

In the last paragraph, Dr. Tafel says this, In the face of today's highly charged rhetoric about values, little moments like these contain the one parental value that always matters. Wait a minute. He just said he is never to impose any value upon you.

His only purpose. No, in fact, he said, No one has the right to tell you what you should believe. As a family therapist, he is to help you to institute your values.

And now he's saying the one parental value that always matters. In other words, that's an absolute truth. True for all people in all places at all times.

It always matters. Our loving compassion is the most important thing we stand for. Who says? Dr. Ron Tafel? Let me show you just how it's hit the church.

Just a little briefly. Can you tell me historically what's been the number one verse quoted from the Scriptures by Christians, non-Christian, Christian young people, non-Christian young people, the media, everything. What's the number one verse quoted historically by the Scriptures? John 3, 16.

Do you know what it is now? Have you all been listening? Have you been listening to your own young people? Can anyone tell me now, by far way out front of everything, what's the number one verse quoted even by Christian young people from the Bible? Number one now, what is it? Judge not that you be not judged. Listen! Why? The moment you make a judgment, you're saying there's hierarchy. And that makes you a bigot and intolerant.

And it makes you stand against the number one virtue in culture, tolerance. All is equal. Over the years, I've given over 22,000 lectures in about 1,000 universities in 80-some countries.

And up into about 4 1/2 to 6 years ago when I was challenged. You're always challenged. You were heckled.

Nothing wrong with heckling people. You don't have to be a Christian to be heckled. But when you're heckled, and I speak on the deity of Christ and the resurrection of God, this is how I was heckled.

I don't believe it. Prove it to me. Give me some evidence.

Come on, how can you say a man was raised in the dead? Show me. I was 100%, 100% of the time challenged on my substance. Let's see how fast culture has changed.

You almost never, ever are challenged on your substance now. Almost never. Now I make a statement to high schools and universities about the deity of Christ, the resurrection, the existence of God, the reliability of the Scriptures.

This is how you're heckled. What right do you have to say that? You're a bigot. You have no right to say that.

You're intolerant. Who do you think you are that you have the corner on truth? A total switch. Listen.

A total switch from substance to style. So to substance, from the substance of is it true to the issue, what right do you have to say that? Who do you think you are that you have the corner on truth? Look, you determine what is right for you, what is wrong for you. Don't share and pose your values upon me.

You need to give me the... Come on, you've heard this from your kids or you're a blind parent and deaf too. But you need to let me determine what is right for me and wrong for me and live it out unhindered. Why? Because all is equal.

Whatever you believe you've created as truth. Whatever I believe I have created as truth. Perception is more important than substance.

I really believe. Well, look at Jesus. Let me just show you one illustration of tolerance in today's culture.

In John 4, Jesus met the woman at the well. I am convinced when Micah 6, 8 said, What does the Lord God expect of you? And then he answered that you act justly and exercise loving kindness that if you do either one of those things right now in most areas of our own culture for the two to three years you act justly or exercise Christian love you will be labeled a bigot, an intolerant and a heretic. He said, come on, Josh.

How can you say that? Very easy. Christian love and the number one virtue of culture today cannot coexist. In fact, I'll go as far to say that Christian love is the number one enemy of the number one virtue in culture, tolerance.

In fact, men and women, I'll say this. I believe now it's a point as a pastor, evangelist, someone like that, it is very difficult to be popular and faithful. Jesus loved that woman at the well.

And in loving compassion he said to her, Go call your husband. She said, Sir, I don't have a husband. In loving compassion Jesus said, that's right.

You've had five husbands and the one you're living with now is not your husband. Jesus exposed her lifestyle. He was witnessing to her.

He exposed her lifestyle. Now speak to me. Did Jesus expose her lifestyle as an alternate lifestyle or a sinful lifestyle? You're a bigot.

What right do you have to say that? You're intolerant. Who do you think you are to have the corner on truth? What right do you have to make any moral judgment on someone? He didn't love. If you don't believe me, that's not true.

You tried anywhere in culture right today. You just traveled me one week into the high schools and universities. And Jesus did it in love.

Christian love and tolerance cannot coexist. Justice and tolerance cannot coexist. See, just a few years ago justice was the number one virtue in culture.

Not now. Justice and tolerance cannot coexist. For this reason, justice demands a moral basis apart from yourself to discern right from wrong.

Tolerance says there is no moral basis. There's only tolerance. Tolerance and justice cannot coexist.

Then another, we're facing opposition in the area. Francis Schaeffer came onto the scene and I miss Francis. And he made this statement.

He said we no longer live in a Judeo-Christian culture. Many of you heard him say that. He said we now live in a post-Judeo-Christian culture.

Judeo-Christian culture meaning Judeo-Old Testament Christian. New Testament ethics and mores in society are derived from the Old and New Testament. He said we now live in a post-Judeo-Christian culture.

Men and women, if Francis Schaeffer was standing here today, I can guarantee you he would not only be echoing this, he'd be declaring it. We better wake up. We no longer live in a post-Judeo-Christian culture.

We now live and minister in an anti-Judeo-Christian culture. And if you can resolve this simple riddle, it's an historic riddle, this simple riddle. You understand everything that I've said tonight.

And you'll see that what I'm talking about is not something that's going to happen. What I'm talking about has already happened. The simple riddle.

Why? Try this here in veil. Why is an illustration by the Hispanic artist Serrano of a crucifix degraded in a jar of his own urine called the Pischrist was declared a work of art, received thousands of dollars from the National Endowment of Art, and was declared a work of tolerance. But a rainbow, a gay symbol, degraded in a jar of urine.

You try this anywhere in 80% of the countries of the world. A rainbow degraded in a jar of urine would immediately be declared an abomination, would not receive one penny from the National Endowment of

Art, and be declared a work of intolerance. And you could probably not show it in any major art show in the world.

That's already happened. We better wake up. What do we do? You're going to hear a lot of answers at the conference here.

But I want to give you an answer that might be a little different from what you intended to hear. Continuing 1 Thessalonians 2, where he said, Speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. Then in verse 7 it says this.

Listen carefully. But we proved to be gentle among you as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you.

Now listen to this. To impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives. Before most people today in 80% of the cultures of the world will accept anything that we teach as truth, we're going to have to simultaneously impart our very lives to them.

And this is what I mean. One, love. I believe in the next 5 to 10 years one of the greatest testimonies of Christianity will be Christian love.

Even though it's going to be labeled a heretic, bigotry, and intolerance. Christian love is the one thing that will break down the barriers and reach into the hearts and minds of non-believers. Today's culture is one of the most shattered, painful, stressed, emotionally hurt cultures in history.

And I can guarantee you, especially with young people, they're not going to care how much you know until they know how much you care. Period. You can stand up and preach the truth all you want.

Loving compassion. As Paul wrote in Romans 12, 9, and 15, that love be without hypocrisy, weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice. Compassion.

And yet so many today, and this is my fear, I see this in a number of seeker-sensitive churches, parachurch organizations, individuals. It is starting to be acceptable within the body of Christ to set aside truth for the sake of love. And that's my greatest fear, what's going to happen.

I see it happening right now. Look, when you talk about doctrine, that's divisive. Jesus said we are to speak the truth in love.

And we are to love truthfully. And that's going to be a fine line we walk in the next 5 to 10 years. Then second, in parting our lives, I believe one of the greatest instruments, apart from the Word of God, that God the Holy Spirit is going to use in the next 5 to 10 years to break down barriers, to open people's minds, to sensitize their hearts, will be your testimony of what Jesus Christ has done in your life.

A personal testimony. Most young people today, before they listen to what you say, they want to know, are you authentic? Are you for real? They want to look in your eyes and see, do you really believe it? Do you really believe it? I've been sharing my testimony for years. And I've always seen a tremendous response.

But in about the last 3 years, I cannot believe the response to my testimony. It's overwhelming with young people. When I start to share my testimony, I mean with 5, 6, 7, 8 thousand out, it's like an awesome awe comes over the audience.

I've never seen anything like it. And my testimony is one of the two greatest things going in my life to win young people to Christ. Because so many kids today are not related intellectually, they're related emotionally.

And I really believe so much of today's theology, philosophy, everything, is not the result so much of rational process, but emotional shattered relationships. This is what you see in so much new theology today, and philosophy, everything. And man, when you stand up and you start to share what the God of creation, the God of glory has done through you, in your life, through His Son Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you, people will listen, especially kids. And I believe our testimonies is gonna be one of the most powerful ways to impart our lives as we preach the gospel. Then another third imparting our lives is marriage and family.

I believe Christian marriage, genuine Christian marriage and family will be one of the most powerful tools of the Holy Spirit to win people to Christ. In fact, it'll probably do more than all the intellectual processing you do. All the defense you can give the resurrection, the deity of Christ, whatever.

A joyful, Christ-centered, fulfilled marriage and family will open the door for them to listen to you. What do 13 to 15-year-old teens want in life? One of the latest studies, 86% said a happy home life. Out of 24 values of 10 to 14-year-olds, 10 to 15-year-olds, do you know what the top two are? Number one, a happy home life.

Number two, a good job as an adult. They did a survey of university students. It blew the surveyors' mind when they found out the number one desire of university students, not a great job of anything else, it's a happy marriage.

A happy marriage. A recent survey, Roper Starch worldwide surveys, of 1,000 high school seniors done for junior achievement at Amway, 91% of high school seniors said that a good family life is the American dream. Not a house, not stock, a good family life.

The American dream. Of those teens from divorced families, 75% said it's too easy to get a divorce. 74% said their own parents didn't try hard enough and 75% said the major stress in their lives is their parents' divorce.

Oh, let me tell you, young people would rather be married 40 years than 40 times. And if we don't demonstrate that as Christians, who is going to? The Mormons? The Soul Asylum rock group. One of the hit songs called Homesick says, the lyrics are, I am homesick for the home I never had.

Rock Asylum, Soul Asylum, the rock group. I'm homesick for the home I never had. We're dealing with a fractured, splintered generation.

It's hard for them to intellectually grasp truth when they're so hurting emotionally. It says, husbands, love your wives in Ephesians. I'll make a statement here.

I'm referring to my own life, I guess, because I ministered to young people. I'm probably the oldest youth evangelist you ever met. No, I'm serious.

Not youth worker, youth evangelist. I'm 58 years old. I know I don't look it.

Last Sunday I turned 58. I'm probably the oldest youth evangelist most of you have ever met. Look at your own denominations.

Almost straight across, 36 to 38 years of age, almost every single youth evangelist goes into adult ministry. Why? That's where the big bucks are. Look at the history of your denomination.

Somebody said to me the other day, Josh, you're reversing everything. Usually the older you get, the older your audience is. The older you get, the younger your audience.

I don't even want to speak in universities anymore. I want to speak to teeny boppers, 12 to 16 year age, who are now making choices and facing decisions that you and I faced when we were in the second, third, fourth year of the university. They're now facing 12, 13, 14 years of age.

Kids will listen to me now more than ever 20, 30 years ago. I mean, man, they eat right out of the palm of your hand. You know why? Because I'm a dad.

A dad. I believe right now the most powerful position to reach kids with is not as a rock star, as influential as that is. It's not as a great athlete like Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan.

As powerful as that is. It's not as a movie star. The most powerful position today to influence kids is as a father.

A father. Kids are crying out for the love of their dad. I travel the number of quote contemporary Christian music groups.

Started out with Petra and then Newsboys and now in a couple weeks starting with Rebecca St. James. Man, they're loud. The other night we had 218 saved and 340 lost their hearing.

Somebody says, don't you think they're too loud? Yes, I do. But I'm 58 years of age. But when you're a 58 year old evangelist traveling with something like the Newsboys and there are 7, 8, 9, 10,000 screaming, yelling teeny boppers out there listening to some of the greatest Christian music there is and I'll match it against any hymnal.

All the young people read your hymnals but you haven't listened to their music. And then you criticize them. They have a right to criticize you.

They've read your hymnals. I mean, it's unbelievable. We want our pastor to get up and give a 20th century sermon but we want everyone to sing 18th, 19th century music.

Unbelievable. It doesn't even make sense. It doesn't make... Anyway, that's another story.

But you're traveling. Man, this is high energy and Newsboys are out there about 30 minutes and they're going strong and they're on a roll and they introduce you and you walk out there. Boy, one, you better be good.

Second, you better have a higher energy than the band. And third, you better be relevant. You know what you do? It's unbelievable.

I'll walk out, I'll chitchat for about 30 seconds and I'll say this. I'm not going to give a talk tonight. What I want to do is share my heart as a father.

And I'll point off to the left and I'll say, I wish you could be my son, my daughter. I could be your dad, your father. You could be my son, my daughter, my son, my daughter.

It's unbelievable. Guys will start waving their hands for you to point to them. At the break they'll go, Love you, Dad.

Thanks, Dad. See you at the break, Dad. We finished a number of months ago what in Canada they said is probably the largest, most successful youth tour ever of Canada.

Every night, packed out. Biggest concerts for many. I mean, we turned twice as many away in Toronto as we could even get in.

Now, most places we only turn away about the same number as we get in. But there it doubled it. Same way in Vancouver, BC.

And we were in Calgary at the Jubilee Auditorium. I saw something in 35 years of ministry I've never seen and I'll probably never, ever see it again. The place was jammed out with 3,600 screaming teeny boppers and the newsboys were on a roll.

And they introduced me and I walked out there and I chit-chatted about 30 seconds. Then I said, Tonight, I don't want to give a talk. What I want to do is share my heart as a dad.

And only one time, just one time, I pointed to my left and all I said one time was, I wish you could be my son. And I couldn't believe what happened. All over that packed auditorium, the balcony, two to three hundred kids jumped to their feet, started screaming and running forward.

Just like you see at a rock concert. And I literally, I got confused. No, I'm serious here.

I thought the newsboys had come back out to get their guitars or something. I turned all the way around. Nobody was there.

And as I turned back around, I heard what they were screaming. All over, running down the stairs, everywhere they were screaming. I want to be your son.

I want to be your daughter. Be my dad. I want you to be my father.

I want to be your son. Three hundred lined up from one end of that huge stage to the other end. And as far as I could tell, every single guy was crying.

All I said one time was, I wish I could be your dad. Now usually I stand back but they can't touch you or you're preaching in Hanes. This time I broke that rule and I went up and I started shaking hands.

With every single guy, when I put my hand in their hand, I had to put my hand in their wrist and pull my hand out. It was in Indianapolis. We were at the big arena at the fairgrounds.

And right when I finished, we take about a 15 to 20 minute break for counseling. Then the newsboys come out and I come back and then the newsboys. So I just finished speaking.

I walked down off and as soon as you get down, I mean hundreds of kids just mob you. And I looked down, saw this girl sitting in the ground just crying. I put my hands up for everyone to stop and I sat down next to her, put my arm around her.

I said, Are you okay, honey? And she said, Yes. And I said, What's wrong? She said, I'm 16 years old. And for the first time tonight, I felt like there's been a father who loved me.

Every kid desires that. And every kid deserves that. To know there's a father who loves me.

We were in Branson, Missouri at the biggest auditorium there. And boy, something else I've never seen before. Newsboys introduced me.

I walked down before I said a word. I lost the audience. Now, it's pretty hard to lose a teenage audience.

I mean, you go out there with 10,000 kids, you raise your hand, they stop. Unbelievable. You just go, Shh.

I don't know why my kids can't do that at home. But in a crowd, it's unbelievable. I just raised my hand.

Pew. Put your hand down, they talk, put your hand up. They stop.

I mean, it's unbelievable. It's thrilling. But I walked out before I said a word.

I lost the audience. And this is what happened. About seven or eight girls in about six rows back jumped to their feet and they screamed out, We love you, Dad! And then a bunch of guys did it over here and groups over here.

And for six to seven minutes, they wouldn't stop. I could not stop them. I was in high school.

And the only time I could do an assembly here was at noon. So they said, let's have it outdoors so the kids can eat. So I stood up on a rock so I could be above the crowd.

And just as I started speaking, a group of punkers came up, four guys. And I mean, they had all the colored hair and mohawk haircuts and all the chains around their neck, everything. And I'd heard about them.

They'd warned me about them. And they stood about from here to that speaker in the stage in front of 2,000 students. And they were just like, I dare you.

Oh, I love that. Oh. Boy, that turns me on.

I spoke an intimacy. Gave an invitation to trust Christ. When I stepped down off the rock, the head of the punk guys, just, I mean, like he leaped to me.

And the whole crowd of students went, Oh! You would too. And the leader came right up to within six inches. And I mean, he had buffalo breath.

I'm serious. Within six inches of my nose. And what the 2,000 students didn't see in here, they didn't see this punker with tears just running down his cheeks, say to me, Mr. McDowell, would you give me a hug? I no sooner said yes and before I could even lift my arms up, right in front of the whole school, he grabs me, puts his head on his shoulder and just cried like a baby.

And the whole school just went silent. And when he lifted his head, he whispered my ear. He said, My father never once has ever hugged me or told me he loved me.

Family and marriage would be one of the most powerful testimonies of the truth of the scriptures. It will open up doors in this new culture to win a hearing for Jesus Christ. In the Boy Scouts new handbook, it says, There's no one family style for everyone.

What's... What's behind this decade... That means 15 minutes left. I thought for a minute shut up for a minute now. What's behind the decade of children now declared? What's behind what appears to be compassion for boys who are fatherless? I know I'll get criticized by many groups for saying this.

Most of the compassion for children is an adult cover up for adult crimes. I don't really believe. I don't really believe.

There's a whole lot of true compassion out there for children. But it's a way to legitimize adult irresponsibility. Now you think this through.

To promote adult choices, see that's the big thing. Adult choices, adult choices, adult choices. To promote adult choices we extol that it's the adults who are emotionally fragile.

And it's the kids who are emotionally resilient. You listen to me. It's now being said by the greatest experts.

It's the adults who are fragile. And you know your kids are really resilient emotionally. What used to be said to adults is now by counselors throughout the world being said to children.

Your parents are going through a tough stage. You need to be patient with them. You know you need to try to be understanding.

The history of our culture and many cultures is where children are brought into the world to obtain emotional security from mom and dad in the home. Do you realize in over half the homes right in America that's been reversed? And this is what I mean. It used to be kids drawing upon the parents for emotional security.

Now it's parents drawing upon the kids for emotional strength. How many times, and even some of you here have probably said it who've been through divorces, I don't know what I'd done without the strength of my daughter. I don't know how I'd made it through this without the strength of my kids.

When I had my annual physical I'd go to about five different doctors and this one doctor was saying about just going through a divorce. I said, how are your kids handling it? He said, oh, he said, I don't know what I'd do without them. They are so strong.

I sat up on that, whatever that thing was and I sat up and I said, sir, your kids are not handling it well. I have never met a kid who has handled it well. And I've met a lot of them.

Kids can put on that surface appearance. I don't care if your kids are 35 years old when you divorce, it wipes them out. And what we're seeing today instead of the kids being able to draw upon mom and dad, it's a divorce mom, divorce dad drawing upon the kids for strength.

Kids weren't built to handle that. Every kid experiences their parents' divorce as a tragedy. Every kid experiences their parents' divorce as a tragedy.

I don't care if they're 40 years old. Experts and adults seem to think, oh, this hurts. They seem to think that it makes a child feel better to hear that fathers don't matter much.

Divorce and unwed motherhood are as normal, desirable, as any happy married family. I'll tell you one thing. You'll find it mighty hard to convince any kid of that.

Most compassion shown towards children today is to excuse adult crimes. Choice, choice, choice. Who are we really trying to convince? Kids or parents? That it doesn't matter to a kid if he's fatherless.

And that divorce and unwed motherhood is as good as a traditional family. We're not trying to convince kids. We're trying to convince adults to cover up their irresponsibility and adult crimes.

You see this. You see this. And I can get criticized for this.

And I see Colin Powell and others, former presidents, going to Philadelphia. How many of you know where Philadelphia is? They asked 23 kids in high school in a, in a, they were nine years old, how many of you know where Philadelphia is? Only one kid raised his hand and said, where is it? And the other kid said, in the last place. No, I'm serious.

Colin Powell goes to Philadelphia. And he stands up there. President Clinton stands up there and others.

Says, one said 8 million, another said 12, another said 15 million kids are at risk. They're on the edge. We've got to have volunteers.

And then they had the gall. They had the gall. Colin Powell and others to say, we need mentors for these fatherless children.

Except for Colin Powell, almost everybody else on that platform. Six years ago when Dan Quayle questioned Hollywood and Murphy Brown. And he made the statement about single parenthood and said the country cannot survive it.

President Clinton and all the others mocked him, laughed at him. The media made him look like a fool. And now just six years later, these same men and women in the media is saying, we can't go on living this way.

We can't go on with these fatherless children. They are at risk. We need mentors.

You know what they're doing? They're making excuses. Let's get mentors so adults can cover up their crimes. That's what Colin Powell is doing.

We are covering up adult irresponsibility. Yes, we need mentors. I believe in volunteers.

Of all my children volunteer. My daughter just applied to med school when I read her application. Man, I start bawling.

Man, I don't think there's any kid in America that's volunteered more than Mike Kelly. From AIDS hospices, everything. Yes, we need volunteers.

But not to cover up adult crimes. These very same people six years ago made a mockery of Dan Quayle when he was a prophet. Because there had hardly been any sociological studies released at that time about what happens to fatherless children in broken homes.

Now they're out. Everyone I've studied totally 100% supports Dan Quayle and even President Clinton now comes out and supports what Dan Quayle said. But you know what's happening? Instead of going back

saying, man, let's start making these fathers responsible.

Let's start making Mary's responsible. Let's start holding it. They're saying, let's get mentors.

We're covering up adult crimes. What do we do? Let me leave you with this. It's so hard in 55 minutes to speak on this.

I could just talk damn truth for five hours without notes. Usually when the speaker says I could go on forever it means he's run out of material. It does.

Someone said to me recently, Josh, you're taking life a little too seriously. I said, yeah, I know. I'm taking it seriously.

About 24 to 30 months ago and my wife concurred with me. I put on a battlefield mentality. A battlefield mentality.

Here are five simple things you can do. It's not what you thought you'd hear from me. Husbands, love your wives.

Fathers, love your children. Just saw a man reach over and take his wife's hand. That makes my day.

Husbands, love your wives. Second, fathers, spend time with your children. Somebody says, Josh, you travel too much and I travel a lot.

I'm on the roll a lot. Said, you travel too much. I said, you think so? He says, yeah.

Says, you name another father, your son playing basketball, 72 games over four years and you make 64 of them. Said, you name another father that comes home every night at five o'clock that made 64 of his sons 72 basketball games over four years. I caught a flight, Lufthansa, flew all the way back to San Diego, jumped in the car, dashed to the La Jolla gym, got there seven minutes before it started.

Game was over, my son ran up crying, threw his arms around me, said, Dad, thank you for being here. Got in the car, dashed to the LA airport and flew back to Moscow. All in 36 hours.

But let me tell you, my son knew one thing, I'm more important to my dad than all those orphans in Russia. Third, heal any hurts. Heal any hurts.

He'd say, time heals. No, it doesn't. Time stuffs it down.

Time does not heal. Heal through forgiveness. Then fourth, know why you believe what you believe.

If ever we needed a time where Christians understood the truth of the scriptures in light of, quote, truth of the culture, it is now. This is what keeps me going right from wrong to everything else. To help Christians know what to believe.

Starting all the way down with a topsy-turvy kingdom of four, five, six year olds, all the way up to grandma and grandpa. Know why you believe what you believe. And then fifth, understand your culture.

One reason I'm here is I believe in many ways conferences like this can be so healthy to help you to understand your culture. If ever Christianity has had to do consumer research, it's now. It's now.

You know why? We are the first generation to have a total, complete cultural revolution right in a matter of a few years. Your children are in a totally, completely different culture than what you are. They say, oh Josh, we've always had generation gaps.

I'm not talking about a generation gap. I am talking about a cultural gap. We do not now have the clashing of generations.

We have the clashing of cultures. So I pray that maybe what I shared tonight about truth, about tolerance, the anti-Judeo-Christian culture, about imparting our lives, not just the gospel, but our lives with you. I trust that you, even tonight, begin to understand a little that one of the critical elements in this new culture coming up is imparting our lives as well as imparting the gospel.

I want to thank those who put on this conference for the privilege of being here. I don't take speaking lightly. And I don't take you lightly.

It's people like you that can make such a significant difference, but a better-picked context in imparting your lives because we have affection towards you. Thank you. God bless.

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