

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: I'm really worried that my son is neither motivated nor responsible enough to go to college. He says he wants to go, but I suspect it's not for the academics. What can I do to have some kind of guarantee he won't just blow-off the year?

ANSWER: I have to make some assumptions here.....(1) Your son is not paying for his college. (2) Your son has had most things in life handed to him....by you. (3) Your son lacks the experience of hard work and accomplishment. (4) You tend to rescue him. (5) His lack of motivation and responsibility is chronic.

As always, a Christian parent must ask the following question: **"In this situation, how do I love my child in the very best way?"**

Love is a spectrum. It runs from the soft aspects of love (compassion, forgiveness, empathy, nurture etc.) to the strong side of love (accountability, responsibility, firmness, discipline etc.). In this situation, loving your son in the best way will mean using the strong end of the spectrum of love. Instead of spending the money, fretting about how he will do, having arguments, and making threats....**love him well** by giving him the opportunity to chart his own course, be a responsible adult, and learn the rewards and lessons of accomplishment.

Find a time and a quiet place to tell him your plan for loving him. **Motive is everything. If your son perceives that you are not doing these actions out of love, they will lose much of their power.** Pray hard and examine your motives first! Then, tell him because you are excited and hopeful for the man is becoming, you have decided to let him demonstrate his independence, maturity and steadfastness through the following: He is to save enough for the first semester of college (even if he has to wait a year to earn the money). If he does well, you will reimburse him for his expenses (Please, not the whole amount!). He may use the money for the next semester, or for whatever he wants. Each semester will be treated the same.

Usually, parents can tell if their particular child needs this kind of love very early in life. It harder to learn at 18 than 5, but it is still possible. Believe you are loving your son well by holding him accountable and helping him enter the "real world" more appreciative and mature. He just might appreciate Christ's hard work and sacrifice of forgiveness a little more too!

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