

RESHAPING SUMMER

BY ROBBYN HOLMES

2019 is halfway done and summer vacation (for most) is already in full swing. For most teens they rejoice in the idea of freedom from responsibility. They have made plans with friends, prepared a list of tv shows to binge watch, getting jobs to save money, and are looking forward to the long drives and flights for trips to out of town destinations. Some are even preparing for college and using this time to say their last goodbyes to long relationships. But in the middle of making these plans, what about God? When we start making plans, God often becomes an after thought or quick task we throw into our schedules. Summer may be a break from school for most teens, but it doesn't have to be a break from God.

I'm always brought back to the responsibility we as parents, and as spiritual leaders in our home, have been given. We have been entrusted to raise kingdom minded children to be kingdom minded adults. In Joshua 24:15 (NET) we see this statement; *choose today whom you will worship*. This is a powerful statement when we understand that our actions show what we truly worship. When we make plans that don't start with God but start with our personal desires, we have made a choice to worship our self and we teach our children to do the same. But Joshua doesn't stop there, he goes on to say in the end of this verse; *But I and my family will worship the Lord*. Joshua made a declarative statement that was followed by action. Their lives would include God in every aspect from planning to living out those plans. So how can we reshape our mindsets and schedules to have God not be an after thought in the busyness of life?

Here are some ideas we have considered to help shape our summer with our kids:

- **Meal Conversation:** Everyone in your home may be on different schedules throughout the day. Running to sport/music practice, camps, sleeping in late and taking naps, and work can quickly pull our time and make us feel stretched thin. A meal together once the day can provide an opportunity to read God's word and to talk about big topics in a natural way.
- **RightNow Media series:** RightNow Media has a vast catalog of apologetic series, bible studies, and life application series that can set the tone for the coming school year and start challenging conversations you may have been trying to have with your teen. There are participant guides that come with almost every series.
- **Family Activity:** One day a week may be more manageable for most busy Families. Finding a time when everyone can be together in the same place, remove the temptation of smartphones, and do an engaging activity together. This can be board/card games, a family video game, or an outing together. These activities build relationships with your teens and provide opportunities to speak truth into their life.
- **Summer Trips:** In our youth ministry we learned the value of traveling without smartphones. The first day or two is a little rough as everyone tries to adjust to a life without constant information being thrust into our face through our gadgets. Eventually conversation begins to flow and memories and inside jokes take place. This is a great opportunity to be a family that is all present and not disengaged.

We have an opportunity to make this summer one that is Christ focused and God driven. The ideas on this list take perseverance to keep going when they become hard to do. You may even have push-back from your teens, but we encourage you to stay strong. We have a choice to teach our children to say; as for us we will choose the Lord.