

A CHRISTIAN PARENT'S GUIDE TO

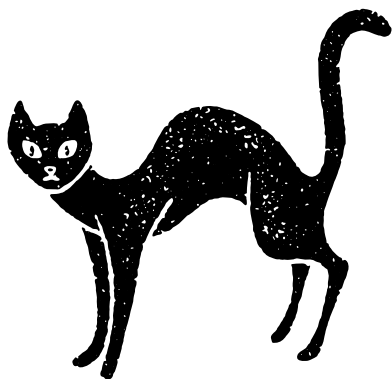
HAL LOW EEN



A CHRISTIAN PARENT'S GUIDE TO HALLOWEEN

“What is Crosswalk.com’s position on Halloween?” we’re sometimes asked. Well, our editors and contributors have as many informed-by-faith-and-Scripture opinions about October 31 as we do Bible translations and Santa Claus. And that’s by design: within the non-essentials of Christian living, we try to gather as many biblical and well-researched positions as we can to help YOU make your best, prayerful decision for your family.

To that end, we’ve chosen 13 of the best quotes from our Halloween archives that represent the gamut of what might be called “Christian Halloween Strategy” for parents, grandparents, and others wrestling with what to do around Halloween.



Halloween is *not* ‘Satan’s birthday’

“Every day, we can proclaim, ‘This is the day the Lord has made.’ Instead of giving Satan a particular day of the year, I say we reclaim October 31 as a beautiful day that the Lord has made... Satan probably loves the idea that we have labeled one of God’s created days as his birthday. In fact, the Great Deceiver, who has come only to steal, kill, and destroy, wants nothing more than to steal one of God’s days as his own. And truthfully, he doesn’t deserve even one minute of celebration! It’s one thing to recognize and reject pagan celebrations. I am certainly not promoting evil ceremonies or ghoulish events that take place on Halloween. But to hand the day completely over to Satan is also not a realistic way to handle it. As believers in Christ, God’s mercies are brand new every morning—even on October 31.

Halloween is left in the dust at the magnitude of God’s faithfulness. With the Lord’s mercy renewed day-by-day, we cannot help but proclaim every single day as his. I would personally love to see believers view October 31 as another day of opportunity to honor God and build others up. In fact, there are many ministries out there who offer Gospel tracts and other Christian-based materials to hand out on Halloween. These may be worth examining and utilizing as a family ministry or outreach.” —*Jennifer Waddle*

But not celebrating Halloween isn't about right and wrong

“When you’re young, you want to be the same as everyone else. You want to fit in. As an adult, you know that Christians live in contrast to the world’s ways of living. Christians are light in the darkness, pilgrims not of this world, called to ‘come out from among unbelievers’ (2 Corinthians 6:17). Yet even many Christians celebrate or participate in Halloween activities in some way. It isn’t ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ to want to fit in. It is simply part of the human community experience to desire closeness and sameness on some levels, especially socially.”

—Alicia Purdy

**And even non-Christians manage to celebrate
Christmas and Easter non-religiously in their own way**

“Christianity and pagan religions have a habit of competing with each other for holidays. For example, Christmas was probably moved to December 25 to counteract a Roman festival of the gods, Easter sometimes falls on the traditionally pagan spring solstice, and All-Saints Day follows Halloween. Why do you think people who aren’t Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter without mentioning Jesus? What do you think Christians should do about celebrating a holiday like Halloween with pagan roots?”

—Amy Green

Should we repurpose and redeem, ala Paul?

“Is Halloween a religious holiday? Yes and no. It’s safe to say the original holiday doesn’t have a Christian origin. The holiday stemmed from Celtic traditions, which involved a pantheon of gods and spirits. However, over time, the church attempted to repurpose the holiday, so it could, in some ways, redeem it... We could very well analyze other holidays we celebrate and purge all elements that don’t have roots in Scripture. One could also point to the fact that Christians did attempt to repurpose Halloween (and other pagan traditions when it comes to holidays like Christmas) and give them a purer meaning and purpose. For instance, when Paul was speaking with a Greek audience, he noticed that they had a statue dedicated to an unknown god (Acts 17:22–31). Instead of chastising them for engaging in clear idolatry by worshiping a pantheon of gods, he repurposes this statue. He tells them about a God they do not know and gives a Gospel presentation.”

—*Hope Bolinger*

But a former satanist suggests staying away

“John Ramirez shares how he and his fiancé, who were both involved in satanism, chose the day of Halloween on which to get married. ‘My mind goes back to the night of October 31, 1987, when I had the most diabolical wedding on the planet. My fiancé and I decided to get married on Halloween, in a demonic ritual that lasted all night, and the wedding bells were heard all the way down to the gates of hell,’ he writes. He warns Christians that it is impossible to separate the dark origins of Halloween from the seemingly harmless practices of today. ‘As devil worshipers, Halloween was very special to us, and we looked forward to celebrating it because we knew the implications and the dark power behind the night. It is very different from every other night in the witchcraft world. It would be like me saying to believers today, “How important to you are Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday?” Halloween has that much weight and importance to those who dwell on the dark side.’ Ramirez firmly believes that Christians should not partake in this holiday; not even if they rename it as ‘Harvest Fest’ or any similar Christianized version of Halloween. ‘The only harvest we should celebrate is the harvest of souls,’ he writes.”

—*Veronica Neffinger*

And Wicca and witchcraft are not to be ignored

“The Bible talks about witchcraft in all of its forms, whether it’s ‘black magic’ or Wicca. Because no matter its form, the dynamics are the same. And the Bible speaks to those dynamics. It speaks to those who engage in sorcery, those who try to use magical formulas or incantations, and those who try to exercise control over the world or themselves through some type of paranormal power. This is very dangerous because there is no ‘power’ floating around out there. There’s God or Satan, there’s heaven or hell, there’s good or evil. And all forms of witchcraft are strictly forbidden in the Bible as being tied to the occult and the work and world of the evil one... Let’s have remorse that there are more Wiccans than Presbyterians. Let’s regret that culture has made witchcraft so mainstream. But let’s repent that there is even a hint that any of this can be considered Christian.”

—*Dr. James Emery White*

7**Be a light in the darkness instead**

“When your kids ask why your family doesn’t celebrate Halloween, don’t focus too heavily on the darkness, like its pagan roots and the fact that witchcraft plays heavily into its origins. Focus on the light. Talk to the kids about what you have learned about being the ‘light of the world’ as Jesus wants them to be, too—like the moon, reflecting the light of the sun. The moon’s job is to shed light into the dark places, into the night. But the moon doesn’t come down to earth to do it. Instead, the moon stays above the darkness and sheds its light.”

—*Alicia Purdy*



**There is an alternative reason for many
Christians to celebrate October 31**

“On the Reformation Day, we pause to give thanks to God for Martin Luther and for the recovery of the gospel truth that we are declared righteous in the eyes of God solely on the basis of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in his bloody death and victorious resurrection. We are saved:

By grace alone,

Through faith alone,

In Christ alone.

To God alone be the glory.”

—*Dr. Ray Pritchard*

And another...

“For children, the allure of the holiday has been the trick-or-treating—dressing up in costumes and receiving candy. However, there are ways to help your children re-orient their thinking to be more Christ-centered in the midst of Halloween. ‘Halloween is an expression of our faith life,’ says Kim Wier, author of *Redeeming Halloween*. ‘It was put on the church calendar in 610 as a celebration of all those men and women who gave their lives for their faith. We think that’s worth celebrating. We want our children to know about their Christian heritage.’ The Wier family uses Halloween as a springboard to talk about the history of the early church and its martyrs. ‘Let’s start by letting our kids know the stories of these great men and women,’ she says.”

—*Sarah Hamaker*

**Charles Schulz tells great holiday stories,
so watch *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown***

“Christians can take a lesson from Linus about keeping the faith. There are many times when what the world is doing looks much better than what we are doing. As we walk our Christian way, we are often waiting in a proverbial pumpkin patch. The secular world sees us as people who don’t know how to have fun. Like Linus, we should always be in the pumpkin patch, keeping our faith, as we wait for the Lord’s return. What is even more poignant is that Linus is smiling in the pumpkin patch—and he continues to smile even when the Great Pumpkin doesn’t come.”

—*Ashley Hooker*



Use the day wisely as a church

“Churches can use Halloween as a time to build community, to show compassion and to share the message of Christ. Our church celebrates “Boo-gers and Hallo-weenies,” where communities in our area hold cookouts with free food for neighbors, while sharing the Good News of Christ. Many churches around the country have harvest festivals or other events to provide a safe place for families to celebrate. Communities need to know that Christians are not isolationists. They can welcome trick-or-treaters with ‘Snickers and a smile.’ Halloween, however, should not be celebrated in ignorance. We need to teach its origins and contrast it with biblical truth.”

—*Dr. Julie Barrier*

Keep a place for grace and conscience

“Here’s my take: What Paul wrote in Philippians 4 should guide all our celebrations, no matter what day it is. Christians should think on ‘whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and commendable.’ It’s hard to imagine that axe-murderer get-ups and sexually provocative costumes pass that test. And we should also consider his teaching on meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 9. Idol worship is always wrong, but eating meat sacrificed to idols is a matter of conscience. If you can’t in good conscience participate in Halloween, there are plenty of other things to celebrate this time of year: Reformation Day, All Saints Day, the beauty of Fall’s changing colors, and as always, the sovereignty of God and the victory of Christ over everything. And if you and your kids do enjoy a little spooky stuff, just remember, as Paul Pastor wrote, ‘Monsters should point us to God... No story worth listening to lacks a villain. And no villain worth fighting lacks monstrosity.’ And there’s no story with more monstrous villains or darker darkness than the story of Scripture.”

—*John Stonestreet*

**The bottom line, whether you party
or turn out the lights and pray...**

“The important element to remember is not to judge other families, talk negatively about them behind their backs, or mock their choices. Halloween can be dark enough without adding division to the body of Christ. Choose what’s best for your family from your convictions and move forward in faith.”

—*Betsy St. Amant Haddox*

For more articles about Halloween, check out our special coverage on Crosswalk.com.

