

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Biblical Parenting for Teenagers

1 The second message in our series concerning biblical parenting centers on parenting biblically for teenagers.

I didn't present these messages as a psychologist or medical professional, but as a Christian parent who wrestled with parenthood. During these years I researched parenting resources available at the time. Then, I studied the Bible because my wife and I wanted our children to become responsible Christian adults.

As a result of this study, as a pastor and army chaplain, I taught parenting courses to other struggling parents. These messages are a partial summary of those efforts.

Remember our last message, Biblical Parenting for Pre-Teens. I presented stages that many pre-teens go through. 2

First, a communication barrier was erected because some children became bitter as a result, losing parental trust. 3

The second stage was children becoming ungrateful because parents, sometimes, fail to be honest or habitually break promises. Instead of admitting fault and asking forgiveness, they over-compensate by giving gifts. Children sense that. They come to the point where they feel society owes them everything. 4

This results in children becoming rebellious. They begin looking to others, rather than their families, for support.

Then, your child becomes a teenager! 5

The next stage many enter into is . . .

I. The Teenager Engages in Immorality

The teenager engages in immorality. ⁶

Immorality is rebellion against righteous conduct. ⁷

The real cause is rebellion against everything dad and mom stand for.

Genesis, chapter 5, verses 19 through 21, puts it this way, **The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.** ^{1 8}

Romans, chapter 1, verses 26 and 27, show that sometimes immorality can lead to homosexuality. **Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also**

¹ Common rebellion today is underlined!

abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. ⁹

Then, they become proud of their immorality! ² They begin to conform to the worldly culture. ¹⁰

The problem is that the teen looks for acceptance and identity from others outside of the family circle. ¹¹

Acceptance is found from enjoying the same music and doing the same things as their peers. ¹² Identity is found by dressing alike, having the same hair style and being seen together. ¹³

But the Bible says, **Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”** ³ ¹⁴

So what's a parent to do?

Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 32 through chapter 5, verse 2, give us a great parental example, Be kind and

² Philippians 3:19 - Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

³ I Corinthians 15:33.

compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Genuinely live this way before your teens and see what happens! ¹⁵

But our typical reaction is to question his motives and his actions, right? We investigate his activities. We tend to measure his morality by the standards we had when we were his age. ¹⁶

As a result . . .

II. The Teenager Expresses a Condemning Spirit

The teenager expresses a condemning spirit. ¹⁷

So, what does he condemn? ¹⁸

He condemns his parents. They have never understood him! ¹⁹ He condemns his society. He is against the establishment. ²⁰ He condemns himself! I don't know of a single teenager with the spirit of condemnation that has a positive opinion of himself! Suicide was the number one cause of death among depressed teenagers a few years ago! ²¹

The real cause is deep seated guilt! Notice a couple of scriptures here.

Romans, chapter 2, verse 3, **So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?** ²² And, again, Proverbs, chapter 22, verse 8, **He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his**

fury will be destroyed. God's judgment simply becomes an echo of his own! ²³

The problem is that the teenager's condemnation of his parents may be well deserved! Notice what God's word says! You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. ²⁴

Seriously ask yourselves these questions. Do you have a hatred for God within your family? Are your teens influenced in any way by anyone who hates God? ²⁵

What's a parent to do? 26

Check out your own attitudes about the Lord. Is He really calling the shots in your life or are you just playing Christian? 27

Is there anyone in your family, even remotely related, who needs the Lord and has an ungodly influence on your teens? Confront them about the power of an ungodly lifestyle on your teenager! 28

But what is our typical reaction? 29

We justify our actions and defend our actions. 30 We underestimate the power of our example and our attitudes exerted on our kids! 31 We are so grieved over their conduct that we become frustrated. 32

So, let me give you some practical rules you can use when relating to a teen. 33

1. Don't equate obeying rules with moral development.

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2. Be attentive to your teen's reasons for their moral judgments. 35

3. Make distinctions between rules for good manners/household order and issues of moral substance concerning justice/human relationships. 36

4. Allow children to participate in making household rules. 37

5. Try not to react more harshly to your teen's carelessness than you would if an adult committed the same act. 38

6. Respect your teen's right to an apology when you are wrong. 39

7. Discuss what your teenager considers to be fair or unfair in family relationships and procedures. 40

8. Let teens establish procedures for getting household chores done. 41

You can make mistakes raising children and they will usually turn out okay.

But you need the word of God in your heart and the power of the Holy Spirit for strength in your life to raise children to the glory of God!

Let God's word direct your parenting!

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