



Biblical Parenting 5: Parenting Teenagers

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Parenting Teens

- How to understand teenage years
 - Age of Opportunity or Season of Survival?
 - Challenges, Temptations, & Dangers
 - “Flee the evil desires of youth” (2 Tim. 2:22).
 - What are these?
 - “The Golden Age of Parenting” (Tripp):
 - Penetrating questions & wonderful discussions
 - Failures and struggles that lay open the heart
 - A time of changing, but growing relationships

“We should not resign ourselves to an increasingly distant relationship. This is the time to connect with our children as never before” (Paul Tripp, 19).

Parenting Teenagers

- **Primary Characteristics**

- *Insecurity*: “Who am I? Do I look okay? Will I be a success or failure? Do people like me?...”
- *Rebellion*: Desire to think and act for self, try new things, test boundaries, fit in...
- *Anxiety*: “Teenagers feel vulnerable about everything: appearance, friends, life, competency”
- *Testing*

- **Primary Parenting Goals:**

- Personal fear of the Lord
- Establish Understanding and Support
- Internalization of Faith and Values

- **Primary Training Procedure: Interactive Discipleship**

- Involvement
- Worship
- Ministry / Evangelism
- Entrusting with Responsibility

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head a chain to adorn your neck.” *Proverbs 1:8-9*

* Adapted from Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, chapters 18-19.



The Problem of Parental Idols

- Parenting teens exposes the parents' idols
 - “If we are ever to be effective for Christ in the lives of our teenagers, it is important to be honest about our own idols – the places where we have tended to exchange worship and service of the Creator for worship and service of created things” (P. Tripp).
- The Idol of *Comfort*
 - The desire to be served and pleased.
 - The sense of “I’ve paid my dues, now I deserve this...”
 - But raising teenagers is a war – just as the Bible says about all of life.
- The Idol of *Respect*
 - Every issue becomes about respect; seeing disrespect where there is none.
 - Viewing teenagers’ sins and failures as a personal affront.
- The Idol of *Appreciation*
 - The appreciation of our children is *not* our goal.
 - Replacing service to God with appreciation from children / family members.
- The Idol of *Success*
 - The desire to be thought a success in parenting.
 - The desire for *our* glory, rather than *God’s* glory in our children.
- The Idol of *Control*
 - Playing God, rather than trusting God.
 - Forgetting that the goal of parenting is to transfer control to our children.

* Adapted from Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, chapter 2



Interaction with Teenagers

- *A Positive Relationship*
 - “You must maintain a positive relationship with teens. Your interaction should have the objective of ministry. Be a constructive force in the life of your child... be a source of encouragement and inspiration” Tripp, 204.
 - Candidly share own experiences, trials, failures, triumphs
 - “You cannot afford to berate your teens with destructive speech... “The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction” (Prov. 16:21).
- *An Adult Relationship*
 - Child still under authority, but parents are sensitive to child’s ascent into adulthood.
 - Have patience and give more time in correction. More dialogue; less monologue.
 - Deal with broad themes: being responsible, showing courtesy, exhibiting maturity, etc.
 - Allow room for disagreement, especially in personal taste. Don’t waste your influence on trivia.



The Fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7-19)

- **Fearing the Lord**

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7).

- Sense of awe and reverence for God
- The question is not *if*, but *what* God teenagers will worship
- Awareness of accountability to the Lord
- *Tripp Tip*: Read Minor Prophets with teenagers
- Address fear of God vs. fear of man issues

- **Adherence to Parental Instruction**

“Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck” (Prov 1:8-9)

- Teenagers should be called to heed parents' judgment
- Places a high premium on parental responsibility
- Family Worship

Fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7-19)

- Dissociation from the Wicked

“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent (Prov. 1:10).”

- The problem of influence: *“The one who lives in company with wicked people will learn wicked ways”* (Tripp, 194; see Ps. 1:1-2).
- The lure of *comraderie*:

“If they say, “Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason... we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse“ (Prov. 1:11-14).
- Counter this temptation by *making the home a positive place to be*. *“Young people do not run away from homes where there are solid relationships... in which the family is doing exciting things”* (Tripp, 195).

* Adapted from Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, ch. 18.