



Biblical Parenting 6: Parenting Teenagers

Richard D. Phillips

Second Presbyterian Church
Greenville, SC

Feb. 18, 2009

Parenting Teens

- Teenage Challenges

- Vulnerability

- Rebellion

- What looks like rebellion is often a misguided attempt to be oneself
- Teen rebellion usually has deeper roots: reflects the child's hostility to parental relationship
- Rebellious teens find one another: "A teen falls in with rebellious company because he is a rebel. He does not become a rebel because of the company he keeps... I am persuaded that rebellious kids may embolden each other, but rarely does a teen who is in heart submissive become rebellious because of the company he keeps" (Tripp, 187).

- Foundations for Life

- Fear of the Lord

- Adherence to Parental Instruction

- Disassociation from the Wicked

"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.



Foundations for Life (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 the Prophets:
 - “Make it a point to read through the Old Testament’s Major and Minor Prophets with your children during their teen years. Your children are part of a contemporary evangelical culture that suffers from a low view of God. Reading the prophets confronts you with a holy God who is awesome and prepared to hold His people to account.”
- Address fear of God vs. fear of man issues



Foundations for Life (Prov. 1:7-19)

• 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:
 - “Children will be enriched and greatly benefited by adherence to the values and instruction of their parents. Rather than young people casting off, as irrelevant, their parents' outlook, Solomon directs them to embrace it.”
- Places a high premium on parental responsibility
- Importance of Honesty:
 - “He is convinced that we are trusted guides and have his best interests at heart.”
- When: Daily Living
 - “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deu 6:6-7).
- When: Family Worship

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



Foundations for Life

- Disassociation 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).



Internalizing the Gospel

- “The process of your children embracing the things of God as their own living faith” (Tripp, 198).
 - Requires the work of the Holy Spirit
 - The goal is not to raise self-righteous, self-reliant children, but for our children to know God in His saving grace.
 - There is no reason for us to presume rebellion, if we have been shepherding their hearts all along.
- How do we shepherd teens to internalize the gospel?
 - Gospel dynamics: repentance, forgiveness, new obedience.
 - Do not force them to see their sin without showing them the cross.
 - Teens are more conscious of their failures and weakness: respond with the gospel
 - Teens become aware that not everyone believes what we believe: constructively engage with truth.
 - Seek to influence attitude as much as to govern behavior.
 - Give a little rope, then keep them from hanging themselves!
 - Do as much as possible to maintain positive interaction (and avoid berating them with destructive speech).
 - “The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction” (Prov. 16:21).
 - “It is no wonder so many teens do not receive instruction from their parents. They are suffering under the cruelty of their parents’ harsh words. Instruction is lost to a wounded spirit and deepening alienation” (Tripp, 207).



Transitioning to an Adult Relationship

- Increasingly, the parent-child relationship takes on the characteristics of friendship (so how do you pursue an adult relationship?)
 - Wait for the right time
 - Bear with their faults & develop sensitivity for individual traits
 - Don't nit-pick (look for broad themes)
 - Allow room for differences and disagreements
 - Build expectations on God's Word
 - Entrust your children to the Lord (do not try to own them)