

WILL YOUR TEEN GRADUATE IN GODLINESS?

LUKE 2:52

As Jesus lived at home He grew. Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. And when He left home He graduated from all He was to learn in that setting. Is that what will happen in our homes?

The Oxford American Dictionary defines the word graduate as "the successful completion of a recognized course". And graduation as the "ceremony for a successful completion of a recognized course or a mark of measurement".

Of course we graduate because there is a set of requirements that have been laid down by others for the courses needed to finish what we call High School. This is just another step that started in Preschool, then Elementary School, Grade School, Middle School, then High School, and leading toward Vocational School, Junior College, University, Graduate School, and finally Post-Graduate School. Right?

Here is the current Oklahoma Requirements for High School Graduation By the State Board of Education Regulations, for students who will graduate from high school in the 2000-2001 school year.

2 Science

2 Social Studies (Includes American History and Oklahoma History)

2 The Arts (Includes Visual Art and General Music)

8 Electives

21 Total

Most of us hope, plan, and expect our children to graduate when they get to 12th grade. But have we been careful to check and fulfill all the requirements God has for them to graduate SPIRITUALLY into the next level in your lives?

Here are some of the unchanging Requirements by your Heavenly Father for High School Graduation,
By the Heavenly Board of Education Regulations,

Recorded forever in His Word,
For students who will graduate from the school of being raised by a godly MOM AND DAD in your home!

SUBMISSIVENESS: Psalm 32:8-9 *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.* 9 *Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.* What should we be learning while at home?

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to obey their instructions and do what I know they expect of me, even when it is not mentioned¹. This helped me to not force you into repeated reminders, which I sometimes call nagging.

GRATITUDE: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus for you!* Philippians 2:14 *Do all things without complaining and disputing,*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to not grumble or complain when I participate in my share of the duties because I will remind myself of what a great thing it is to have a family a home, clothes, food, running water, electric lights, and central heating in a world where millions of teenagers have none of these.

SERVANTHEARTEDNESS: 1 Peter 2:21-24 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to stop when I think your demands are unfair, and choose to move forward to do them first, and after showing an obedient attitude, I will ask if we can talk. Then I will explain my side and try to understand yours.

PEACEMAKING: Isaiah 32:17 *The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to not stonewall you and give you the silent treatment, which I dislike when my friends do it to me. Instead, if I am discouraged and want to be left alone, I will say; "I'm sorry; I don't feel like talking now: Can we talk later? I'm not mad. I just need to be alone.

¹ These applications adapted from a list of resolutions from John Piper, A Godward Life, p. 273-275.

HUMILITY: James 5:16 *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to respond when I do something wrong and let you down. My response should be to apologize sincerely with words that you can hear. Something like, "Mom, I'm sorry I didn't pick up the pile of clothes."

LOVING: Romans 12:9ff (Message) Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality. Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody. Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody.

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to call you by affectionate family titles like "Mom," or "Dad." I won't let other kids pressure me into calling you nothing or calling you something disrespectful as though true affection were embarrassing or childish.

THANKFULNESS: Romans 1:21b "...neither were they thankful..."; 2 Timothy 3:2b "...unthankful, unholy..."; 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to say thank you daily, again and again, for the ordinary things you do for me. I will not take them for granted as though you were my slave.

TRANSPARENCY: 1 John 1:7-8 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to express my feelings. Both the positive ones (like happiness, pity; excitement, and sympathy) and the negative ones (like anger, fear, loneliness, and discouragement). This is because I have learned that unshared feelings lead to estrangement, coldness, and even more loneliness and discouragement.

HAPPINESS: Proverbs 17:22 *A cheerful heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit makes one sick.* Ephesians 4:32 *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While living with my parents at home I need to learn to laugh with the family and not at the family I

will especially laugh when my little brother or sister tells a simple joke with expectant excitement.

SALTINESS: Colossians 4:6 *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to give two compliments for every criticism. And every criticism was aimed to help someone improve, not just belittle or cut them down.

GROWINGNESS: Deuteronomy 4:29 *But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.* Isaiah 64:7 *And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.,* Isaiah 26:3 *You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to enter into family devotions and treat Bible reading and prayer with respect and do my part to help others in the family enjoy God's Word : When I don't feel spiritually strong, I will pray about this as a personal need rather than pouring my spiritual problems on others as a glass of cold water. I will remember that confessed weakness knits hearts together

KINDNESS: Romans 12:17-19 *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.* Ephesians 4:32

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to not return evil for evil or try to justify my meanness because somebody treated me meanly first.

SPIRITUAL ROOTEDNESS: Jeremiah 15:16 *Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.* Jeremiah 17:5-8 *Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the Lord. 6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. 8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to read my Bible and pray every day; even if it is only a verse and a brief call for help. I learned that teens cannot live by bread alone but only by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.

TRUSTWORTHINESS: Psalm 15: 4 *In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;* Matthew 5: 37 *But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'* For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to come home at the time we agreed on. If something happens to stop me, I learned I should call and explain and ask your guidance.

GRACIOUSNESS: Matthew 25: 44-45 *"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to greet our guests with courtesy and respect and try to make them glad they came.

TRUTHFULNESS: Ephesians 4: 25 *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned to always tell the truth so that you can trust me and give me more and more freedom as I get older.

FOREVERNESS: 1 Thessalonians 2: 19 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

- **What is my goal for my teen in light of God's Word ?** While I lived at home I learned that I should pray for you as long as I live, that we will be united in faith and love, not only now in this world, but for all of eternity in the kingdom of God.