

# Raising Teens

## Goals to Look Forward to in 30 Days

- Your teen is happier and more secure
- You are really listening to your teen and he feels heard
- You are aware of the challenges he faces at this stage in life
- Your teen looks forward to family and one-on-one times
- Your teen recognizes changes in your character and behavior
- You are consistently asking for and getting help with your parenting

## Weekly Assignments

Week 1: Share with a friend the plan for the week with your teen. (This may include plans for individual times with you and your spouse, helping with homework, assigning chores, fun times.) Have your friend help you to follow through.

Week 2: What part of your sinful nature is detrimental to raising your teen? What would be the effect on him if this doesn't change? Discuss this with your spouse and/or a friend and decide what changes you are determined to make.

Week 3: Go over your teen's strengths and weaknesses with your spouse and/or friend. Come up with a plan on how to use their strengths, and how to overcome the weaknesses.

Week 4: Ask your teen to tell you of any differences between your behavior at home versus outside the home. (You will have to convince your teen that you really want honest answers and that you are not going to be judgmental or defensive about what he says.) Discuss his answers with your spouse and/or friend.

## *Bridging the Gap with Our Teens*

What causes the gap?

- Parents being hypocritical.
- Parents being harsh, shutting their teens down.
- Parents afraid to discipline gently but firmly.
- Parents being selfish. Dwelling on their own problems.
- Parents still in the mode of treating their teen as a child.
- Teens not feeling respected. They have a tremendous need to feel respected.
- Teens not feeling listened-to and understood.
- Poor communication or lack of communication.
- Parent non-involvement.
- Teens not feeling believed in.
- Teens feeling that their parents don't approve of them.
- Lack of emotional connection because the parent has neglected the relationship.
- Parents and teen having very different personalities.
- Parents and teen having different interests.

How does God bridge the gap with us?

John 10:11. Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. He is personal with them. They feel loved and taken care of by him.

I Cor 12:14-31. God knows the value of diversity and designed us to complete one another, rather than to despise our differences.

Philip 2:3-11. Jesus shows us an example of selfless love.

# Raising Teens

1. What are you hoping we will discuss in this class?

2. Realize that you are still the parent

- a. When your child becomes a teen, it doesn't mean the end of your influence
- b. You are still the most influential person in your teen's development
- c. There is hope (river/waterfall illustration)

3. Goals for your teen's development at this stage

- d. Advance spiritually (I Tim 5:8 You must take care of your family's needs)
- e. Adopt a godly value system
- f. Grow your family relationships
- g. Transition towards independence
  - i. Exciting days of discovery but also painful uncertainty
  - ii. Makes you want to protect them (re-run of your own adolescence)
  - iii. Parents get pushed from the front seat to the back seat
- h. Develop good peer relationships (both the parents and the kids)
- i. Develop a healthy view of themselves and opposite sex

4. Help your teen to grow spiritually

- j. Family devotionals (e.g., over breakfast) I Tim 4:7
- k. Your example and consistency (I Corinthians 11:1)
  - i. Set an example of someone who is not afraid to tell the truth and face consequences
  - ii. Apologize often ("Love means having to say you're sorry.")
  - iii. Model of being honest and real. They hear what we say on the telephone!
  - iv. Am I different at home than in other settings (church, for example)?
- l. Individual time I Thess 2:10-12
  - i. Use any and all times to gently, consistently teach and disciple the heart
  - ii. Look at the way Jesus taught. Gave illustrations (parables), not quick judgmental statements. He let their own hearts and consciences convict them.
  - iii. Being judgmental shuts down conversation. Let them talk.
- m. Be aware of their temptations
  - i. Do you know what they struggle with? (experimenting with masturbation, sex, or drugs, learning how to manipulate others, lying, deceit, being cliquish, giving into pressure to do something they don't want to do or know is wrong)
  - ii. Acceptance. Dealing with the hurts other kids dish out.
- n. Helping them to know their sinful nature
  - i. Must feel the struggle in order to be ready to come to God

5. Help your teen to have the security and nurturing of a loving family

- o. Be available and helpful
  - i. Although the relationship changes, your teen needs parental control and guidance more than ever at this age. Be home when they get home, if possible.
  - ii. A day in high school might be rough. Having a good home makes it bearable.
  - iii. Rather than just directing your teen to do things, help him by showing him how (Galatians 6:2)
  - iv. Help your teen to develop skills, sports, music, etc. (Don't neglect strengths; rather, exploit them !)
  - v. Support their extra-curricular activities (also opportunity to meet other parents)
  - vi. Be involved with their teachers

- p. Keeping communication open (II Corinthians 6:11-13)
  - i. Avoid harshness and criticalness. Help instead. (I Thessalonians 2:7-12)
  - ii. Don't always attempt to solve your teen's problem. They just need to talk sometimes.
  - iii. Be open about how you have struggles and difficulties and how you deal with them
- q. Your home is a haven and a positive place to be
  - i. Have fun with the family
  - ii. Encourage their friends to come to your house
  - iii. Their friends should envy the way you and your teen treat each other
- r. Showing grace in a loving, positive, respectful manner
  - i. *Always* treat them with respect. Ask them to model their behavior after yours. You can't have a different standard than theirs. (No yelling, put downs, harshness)
  - ii. They are beginning to think for themselves. Encourage this, rather than saying "because I say so." Show them the wisdom of the scriptures. Expose manipulation, pouting, and their disrespect or lack of love.
  - iii. Remember the grace that God shows us Col. 3:12-14
- s. Methods of discipline
  - i. No physical spankings at this age
  - ii. Show how much you love and respect them and what discipline is for
  - iii. Talk about how you are disciplined (now, not when you were their age)
  - iv. Be willing to negotiate
    - 1. You *must* keep your cool.
    - 2. This is not the same as allowing him to argue. Both he and you must proceed in a clearly respectful manner.
    - 3. Teach him how to discuss the issues in an adult manner
    - 4. Makes him feel he is respected and his viewpoint is understood and has received consideration
    - 5. Use these times to teach responsibility. Help him understand the principle that your goal is to move him towards independence, which requires him learning how to make decisions responsibly.
    - 6. Let him see how you deal with others in a forthright and fair manner, so that he will trust you, and he will have a model to follow
    - 7. Teach, through your behavior, that it is acceptable to disagree and to feel and express anger, but that screaming and rudeness will not be tolerated.
  - v. Loss of privileges.
    - 1. Never curtail church activities for punishment.
    - 2. Select who they can still receive telephone calls from (church leaders, etc.)
  - vi. Addition of responsibilities

## 6. Help your teen to have good peer relationships

- t. Helping them deal with hurts and challenges of peers
  - i. Being with peers is important to their development. They must learn how to deal with the challenges that come. This is the time when they will make decisions as to which direction they are going to go. They need a lot of strength and support to choose properly.
  - ii. Peer pressure. Teens can be ruthless in being unkind.
  - iii. Boys get bullied. Cursing, drugs, and being sexually experienced is pushed.
  - iv. Girls get excluded unless they give in to what everyone else is doing.
- u. Security of good family relationships helps them choose the right friends
  - i. Helps them to withstand pressure to go wrong direction

- v. They will choose friends who share their values
  - i. Example: If your family never curses, your teen will feel uncomfortable being with others who do curse
  - ii. Girls want peers who will understand their feelings
  - iii. Boys want peers who are strong and will stick up for them
- w. Promoting/facilitating positive relationships
  - i. Promote *supervised* sleepovers, especially with good examples at church
  - ii. The sacrifice to help the right relationships happen are a good investment
  - iii. Encourage their involvement with other good adult role models, including college students (the teen's next step). This may mean asking others to take an interest in your teen.
- x. What to do about bad influences
  - i. Find out who are your teen's closest friends and why. These relationships are meeting the teen's felt need for something.
  - ii. Focus more on promoting good relationships than putting down bad ones
  - iii. Ask how their friends make them feel. Are they loyal?

## 7. Help your teen to deal with physical changes and sexuality

- y. Talk about sexuality in God's plan as a precious gift (I Corinthians 6:18-20)
  - i. How would you feel about someone using your brand new Porsche in a demolition derby?
  - ii. Teach about improper use of sex to get attention. Educate on how the opposite sex interprets signals, such as excessive makeup, smoking, or rebellion
  - iii. Common emotional states of teens: rebellion, turmoil, confusion, alienation, indifference. Try to find out what is underneath the outward issue.
  - iv. Girls' self esteem is solid in elementary school, but plummets in MS. During high school years, girls are working to rebuild self-esteem..
- z. Fathers' roles with daughters (physical contact, one-on-one time)
  - i. If the dad gets so worried about being improper that he has no physical affection with his daughter, she thinks something is wrong with her
- aa. Piercings, hair style, shaving legs, bras
  - i. Decide what issues are important. Must pick the battles you are going to fight.
  - ii. What are the principles involved. Our own preferences or a moral issue? (Romans 14:1, Galatians 5:6)

## 8. Help your teen to become responsible and independent

- bb. Don't overprotect
  - i. Relationship with teen changes – it does not diminish in importance
- cc. Natural consequences
  - i. Letting them get the results of missed homework (zeros average in badly) before H.S. allows them to get convictions before grades matter quite so much
- dd. Privileges/freedom according to behaving responsibly
  - i. Teach that with responsibility comes privileges
  - ii. Teach that a track record of good decisions opens the way for more freedom
- ee. Summary: Galatians 6:9-10

## 9. Question and Answer Period