

## Foundations for Parenting

### Parenting 11-13, Part 2 Shepherding Methods

#### INTRODUCTION

Parenting an 11-13 year old means shepherding a child's heart through a season of much change.

- Changing body
- Changing brain
- Changing world
- Changing convictions
- Changing relationships

#### I. CHANGING BODY

##### A. Puberty

##### Physical changes - *Timetable can vary widely*

- Temptations
  - Comparison to others (favorable or unfavorable)
  - Self-focus
  - Anxiety
- Redemptive Opportunity: Trust God
  - "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:13-14)

##### Emotional changes - *"Tidal wave of hormones"*

- Temptations
  - Moodiness
  - Depression
  - Anger or aggression
- Redemptive Opportunity: Cultivate Fruit of Self-Control

- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self- control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “...sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:7)

### **Sexual changes - *New attractions and desires***

- Temptations
  - Flirtation
  - Pornography
  - Masturbation
- Redemptive Opportunity: Communication With Dad and Mom
  - For Parent: Grace and skill at reaching your child’s heart
  - “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” (Proverbs 20:5)
  - For Child: Humility, transparency
  - “My son, give me your heart...” (Proverbs 23:26)

### **B. “The Talk”**

#### **Be positive: Sex is a wonderful gift from God!**

#### **Discern the best time**

- Not too late
- Not too early
- Questions to help you discern the best time:
  - What contexts is your child in?
  - What questions is your child asking you?

#### **Choose the content wisely**

- God’s good purpose for sex
- Anatomy (girls and boys)
- General description of human reproduction
- Explanation of changes associated with puberty
- Guidelines for relating to the opposite sex
- Commitment to honor God by using this gift according to his plan
- Recommended Resources
  - Almost 12 (Original Version)
  - The Wonderful Way Babies Are Made

#### **Set the context carefully**

#### **Continue the conversation**

### C. Self-image

#### **Changing body intensifies self-consciousness, feelings of insecurity**

- “The teen years are years of monumental insecurity.” - Tedd Tripp

#### **Dangerous behaviors**

- Bullying
- Eating disorders
- Cutting

#### **Secular solution: Self-Esteem**

- Unbiblical Diagnosis: The Empty Heart
- Abraham Maslow: “It is these needs which are essentially deficits in the organism, empty holes, so to speak, which must be filled up for health’s sake...”

#### **Biblical solution: Love and Truth**

- Biblical Diagnosis: The Embattled Heart
- “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” (James 4:1)
- “[God] sees our hearts as an embattled kingdom ruled either by one kind of desire or by another kind.” - David Powlison

## II. CHANGING BRAIN

### A. Like A Steel Trap

- Asks hard questions
- Abstract reasoning
- Debates anything and everything
- Loves to catch adults’ mistakes

### B. Temptations

- Pride and independence
  - Proverbs 16:5 – “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”
- Disrespect
  - Ephesians 6:2 – “Honor your father and mother...”

### C. Redemptive Opportunities

#### **Redemptive Opportunity: Cultivate Patience (Parents) and Humility (Child)**

- “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing...” (Philippians 2:5-7)

### **Redemptive Opportunity: Love Your God With All Your Mind**

- “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

## **III. CHANGING WORLD**

### **A. Life Outside The Playpen**

- In the next 5-8 years these children will be graduating from high school and taking their place in the adult world.
- This brief season of parental authority will have transitioned into a new season of parental influence
- By God’s grace, and under your care, they are “to grow up in every way into him who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
- As your child interacts with this expanding world, you will see more clearly the true nature of their emerging convictions
  - What do they treasure?
  - What do they fear?
  - What motivates their decisions?
- Before their personal preferences harden into ironclad convictions, God invites us in this season of dynamic change to participate actively in conforming them to the image of Christ.

### **B. Expanding World**

- Unsupervised opportunities
  - Home alone
  - Serving/socializing in church
  - Group activities
  - Parties, sleepovers
  - Sports teams
  - Clubs, camps
  - Jobs
- Communication technology
  - Email, instant messaging, Facebook, etc.
  - Cell phones

### **C. Enticing World**

- “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)

- Music
- TV/Movies
- Internet
- Video Games
- Fashion
  - “When we respond to issues of taste in the same way that we respond to moral issues, we cheapen the whole cultural discussion and weaken the positive influence that we can have with our teenagers. We need to accept that in many ways they will be different from us. The issue is not whether they are participating in things that are enjoyable to us, but whether they are participating in things that are pleasing to God!” - Paul Tripp

#### **D. Boundary Lines**

- Guard your child’s heart during this vulnerable season of change
  - “In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement, that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, ‘How will this affect their souls?’” - J.C. Ryle
- Guide your child’s heart toward personal convictions
  - “I am afraid that many of us are so busy making decisions for our children in order to keep them safe that we do not teach them to develop their own set of internalized biblical convictions. It is one thing for a teenager to do what is right under a watchful eye or under the threat of punishment. It is quite another thing to see the independent, unpressured, heartfelt exercise of personal conviction.” - Paul Tripp
- “God’s Word – not our personal preferences or church culture – must be the standard for our instruction. His Word must be the arbiter between us and our children as they grow older. The more we elevate our personal rules and standards over God’s Word, the more we tempt and exasperate them.” - Kenneth Maresco

### **IV. CHANGING CONVICTIONS**

#### **A. What Happened To That Conviction?**

- Behaviors that looked like convictions in childhood sometimes evaporate in the teen years.
- New freedoms can reveal a discrepancy between what your child says and does.
- “Each of our children is afflicted with a fatal disease: sin. There is only one known remedy: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Faithful parents must approach parenting with a candid assessment of their child’s spiritual condition.” - Kenneth Maresco

## **B. Cause For Cheerfulness**

- “It is faith that enlivens our work with perpetual cheerfulness. It commits every part of it to God, in the hope, that even mistakes shall be overruled for his glory; and thus relieves us from an oppressive anxiety, often attendant upon a deep sense of our responsibility. The shortest way to peace will be found in casting ourselves upon God for daily pardon of deficiencies and supplies of grace, without looking too eagerly for present fruit.” - Charles Bridges
- “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” - Philippians 1:9-11

## **V. CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS**

### **A. Follow The Crowd**

- “The peak of conformity comes at around age 13. At this age, there’s nothing more important to a child than being just like everyone else – normal.” - David Anderegg

### **B. The Power of Peers**

- “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” - Proverbs 13:20
- “Nothing perhaps affects man’s character more than the company he keeps. We catch the ways and tone of those we live and talk with, and unhappily get harm far more easily than good. Disease is infectious, but health is not. Now, if a professing Christian deliberately chooses to be intimate with those who are not friends of God and who cling to the world, his soul is sure to take harm. It is hard enough to serve Christ under any circumstances in such a world as this. But it is doubly hard to do it if we are friends of the thoughtless and ungodly. Mistakes in friendships are the whole reason why some have entirely ceased to grow.” - J.C. Ryle
- Temptation: Fear Of Man
  - “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.” - Proverbs 29:25
- Redemptive Opportunity: Fear of God, Courage
  - “The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.” - Proverbs 8:13
  - “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.” - Proverbs 1:10

### **C. Qualities of a True Friend**

- Fears God and keeps his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
- Honors his parents (Ephesians 6:3)
- Submits to authorities (Hebrews 13:17)
- Seeks to keep his friends from sinning (James 5:19-20)
- “And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.” (1 Samuel 23:16 NIV)

### **D. Good Friends Don’t Just Happen**

- Convictions to cultivate in your child
- Convictions to cultivate as parents
  - God has given me authority to oversee my child’s friendships
  - “Train up a child in the way he should go...” - Proverbs 22:6
  - “Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.” - Proverbs 14:7
- I will use biblical criteria to evaluate my child’s friendships
- I will not let my child’s complaints stop me from evaluating his/her friendships
  - “Teenagers tend to be prickly and protective when it comes to discussion of their friends. It is as if the operational rule is this: “To reject my friends is to reject me.” - Paul Tripp
  - I will not let fear of child keep me from upholding my parental responsibilities!
  - One ungodly friendship could sabotage the years I have spent in disciplining my child
  - “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’” - 1 Corinthians 15:33

### **E. Search and Rescue**

- Guidelines for intervening in an unfruitful friendship
  - Communicate directly with parents of other child
  - Care for your child during this transition

### **F. Parental Love**

- “The most powerful way to keep your children from being attracted by the offers of camaraderie from the wicked is to make home an attractive place to be. Young people do not run from places where they are loved and know unconditional acceptance. They do not run away from homes where there are solid relationships.” - Tedd Tripp

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Be patient**

- “We must not expect all things at once. We must remember what they are, and teach them as they are able to bear. Their minds are like a lump of metal – not to be forged and made useful at once, but only by a succession of little blows. Their understandings are like narrow-necked vessels; we must pour in the wine of knowledge gradually, or much of it will be spilled and lost.” - J.C. Ryle

### **Get to their hearts and get to the cross**

- “If my heart is the source of my sin problem, then lasting change must always travel through the pathway of my heart. It is not enough to alter my behavior or to change my circumstances. Christ transforms people by radically changing their hearts.” - Paul Tripp

*\* This material was adapted from a parenting course written by Greg Somerville, a pastor at Covenant Life Church of Gaithersburg, Maryland ([www.covlife.org](http://www.covlife.org)).*