

Foundations for Parenting

Parenting through the Teen Years Week One: The Parent's Role

I. Passing the Baton to the Next Generation

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. ~ Psalm 78:5-7

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ~ 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Our commitment to intentionally and wholeheartedly invest in the next generation to provide a living chain of truth that will extend through the centuries.

II. The Process Begins with Us!

“The goal of parenting is to work ourselves out of a job. The goal of parenting is to raise our children who were once totally dependent on us to be independent, mature people who, with reliance on God and proper connectedness to the Christian community, are able to stand on their own two feet.”

--Paul Tripp

A. Trust God!

1. Your children are His...a heavenly assignment!

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.
~ Psalm 127:3 ESV

Rather “It is everywhere around us – on the television sitcom, in the magazine on the supermarket rack, on the shelves of the local bookstore...and yes, even in a number of Christian books on the family. Parents are afraid of their teenagers. Even as they are enjoying the early years of a child's life, they are looking over their shoulders with dread, expecting the worst, knowing that in a few short years this precious little one will turn into a monster overnight. adult.

--Paul Tripp

2. God is at work in their lives as well as yours.

Rather than years of undirected and unproductive struggle, these are years of unprecedented opportunity. They are the golden years of parenting, when you begin to reap all the seeds you have sown in their lives, when you can help your teenager to internalize truth, preparing him or her for a productive, God-honoring life as an adult.

--Paul Tripp

B. Deal with Past Mistakes

1. Where necessary, ask for and receive God's forgiveness.
2. Don't allow any lack of involvement in the past to discourage a healthy involvement in the future.
3. Parenting is designed to humble us and help us to see how much we ourselves need the gospel.

"The tumult of the teen years is not only about the attitudes and actions of teens, but the thoughts, desires, attitudes, and actions of parents as well. The teen years are hard for us because they tend to bring out the worst in us."

--Paul Tripp

C. Proceed with Faith

1. Do not withdraw. Your teens need your care, relationship & input more than ever.
2. Interaction can increase as they get older. Our relationship can deepen!

D. Build a Great Relationship

1. Express your desire and God's desire for you to be best of friends. Let them feel your care and concern.
2. Give them your time and affection.
3. Be willing to be inconvenienced.

E. Communicate!

1. Draw them out and give them your full attention.
2. Plan regular and special times together.

F. Walk Alongside Them

1. God has provided the family as the primary arena for preparation & training.

“God says, ‘Teach your children; the family is your classroom.’ There is no more consistent, pregnant, dynamic forum for instruction about life than the family, because that is exactly what God designed the family to be, a learning community!”
--Paul Tripp

2. Build a relationship with them and walk together during their teen years.
 - a. Don't fear losing their love more than losing their respect.
 - b. Press into heart issues and relate them to the character of God.
3. Point them to God!
 - a. Help them to have a life-giving devotional life.
4. Teach them to think biblically
 - a. Explain why and who the source of authority is.
 - b. Focus on biblical principles
 - c. Assist them in developing godly convictions regarding practices.

III. Legalism, License & Liberty

Our temptation in this season is to parent out of fear, using our authority to enforce rules and control behavior. In shepherding the hearts of our children, it is critical that we move from fear to faith, from legalism to grace, and from heavy authority to growing influence. We want to come alongside our children, helping them in applying the Gospel to their hearts and their lives.

A. Legalism is seeking to achieve forgiveness from God and acceptance by God through obedience to God. ~ C.J. Mahaney

1. Characterized by self-righteousness, sinful judgment, and a fear of being infected by the sin of others. "Bad company corrupts good character."
2. Often based on our own standard of righteousness, not God's.
3. Results in ostracizing, lack of reaching out, staying away from Christians who are struggling.
4. Can't relate to people who don't act like me, aren't from my background. Home school, Covenant Life school.
5. Form groups based on appearance, speech, struggles, recreation. Knee jerk reaction to those things.
6. The impulse of the legalist is to leave rather than love, separate rather than serve, condemn rather than care.

B. License is misinterpreting grace and mercy as an opportunity to sin.

1. "Living as though freedom in Christ means there are no measurable standards of spirituality." ~ Donald Whitney
2. License is seeking to take advantage of grace.
3. Gladly joins in with non-Christians, but others can see no appreciable difference in their behavior or values.
4. Rarely considers a biblical rationale or support for their behavior.

C. Christian liberty is freedom of practice in matters that the Scripture does not clearly define as right or wrong. Liberty is to be exercised for the glory of God and the good of others.

1. Liberty does not mean we can do whatever we want.
2. Christian liberty is a fruit of the gospel and must be exercised in light of the gospel.

"You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." ~Gal. 5:13
3. Christian liberty recognizes the difference between preferences, convictions, and biblical commands.

D. Areas to cultivate a conviction include:

1. Alcohol
2. Non-addictive tobacco use (cigars, pipes)
3. Music
4. Appearance
5. Dancing
6. Fads
7. Technology
8. Media and entertainment

E. Five questions to ask to help young adults build a biblical conviction:

1. Does God's Word speak directly to this activity?
2. What counsel have you sought and received?
3. What are your specific temptations? (i.e., is this wise for you?)
4. Is this legal?
5. Does this activity contribute to you loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving others as yourself? (Mt. 22:37-39)

"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." ~ Phil. 1:9-11 ESV

F. Don't confuse external conformity but internal maturity.

1. The goal is not that your children would agree with you in every decision, but that their lives would be a practical picture of submission to God.
2. If your young adult is a Christian, help them "think like a Christian," that is, someone who has been bought for a price, and is no longer their own. (1 Cor. 6:20).

- G. True Christian liberty means seeking to honor God** and exploring gospel opportunities, not doing whatever we please.
- H. Legalism and license are typically the result of making decisions from an individualistic perspective.** Christian liberty, however, is always exercised in light of the community (Rom. 14:1, 15:1, 15:7)
1. The focus is how what I do might affect those around me and how I can contribute to the strengthening and unity of the church.
 2. If our children believe they can do anything they want because they're "free in Christ," they haven't yet grasped the profound corporate aspect of Christian freedom.
- I. Frequently young adults engage in "grey" areas not out of Christian liberty, but self-confidence, lack of discernment, or a reaction to their upbringing.**
- J. Young adults may need help to see why a particular activity is sin. On the other hand, parents may too quickly assume they know their child's motive or degree of involvement in an activity.**

Recommended Resources:

Age of Opportunity by Paul Tripp

Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World by CJ Mahaney

Do Hard Things by Alex & Brett Harris

Shepherding Your Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp