

**Living Way Church**  
**Age of Opportunity – Parenting Teens**  
**Lesson One – Parenting With God In The Picture**

**I. Introduction: The Problem With Parenting**

- A. The problem with parenting is sin – both ours and our teen’s
- B. The problem with parents
  - 1. *“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5)*
  - 2. “It is my experience that when parents begin to recognize, own, confess, and turn from their own wrong heart attitudes and the wrong actions that flow from them, the result is a marked difference in their relationship to their teen and in the way they view the struggle of the teen years. When we look with concerned eyes toward the teen years, we need to look not only at our children, but also at ourselves. Parents who are humbly willing to change, position themselves to be God’s instruments of change”<sup>1</sup>
  - 3. Our teens do not create our sins; they reveal the sins that were already there
  - 4. Effective parenting begins with us identifying and correcting the sins that keep us from effectiveness
  - 5. Some common sins of parents:
    - a. Anger (harsh, unkind, critical)
    - b. Uncharitable judgment
    - c. Unforgiveness and bitterness
    - d. Laziness (the “idols” of ease and comfort)
    - e. Selfishness
    - f. Materialism
    - g. Pride
      - (1) Wanting to be recognized and appreciated as a good parent by others
      - (2) Wanting to be respected and appreciated by your teen
      - (3) Unwillingness to admit wrong in your actions or attitudes
    - h. Self-righteousness
    - i. Self-pity

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<sup>1</sup>Paul David Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, page 18

- j. Fear of man
    - k. Disobedience
      - (1) Failure to instruct and discipline your child
      - (2) Spoiling your child
    - l. Fear and unbelief
- C. The problem with teens
  - 1. The problem with teens is twofold – they are sinners and they are immature
  - 2. They are sinners
    - a. All children are born with an ingrained lust to defy and disobey God and His delegated authorities – the sin nature
    - b. Even regenerate children have to deal with the problem of remaining, or indwelling, sin
  - 3. Some common sins of children and teens
    - a. Rebellion
    - b. Pride
      - (1) Self-willed
      - (2) Self-absorbed
      - (3) Demanding
      - (4) Sullen (showing irritation by a gloomy silence or reserve; moody)
    - c. Disrespectful
    - d. Stubbornness (an expression of pride)
    - e. Selfishness
    - f. Anger
    - g. Envy
    - h. Laziness/idleness
    - i. Dishonesty (lies and deception)
    - j. Complaining
  - 4. Teens can also be immature and foolish and need to be instructed so they can gain wisdom
  - 5. It is important that we distinguish sinfulness and childishness
  - 6. Persistent foolishness is viewed as an “evil” thing by the Lord (Mark 7:22-23)
- D. Parenting teens is one of our greatest opportunities for growth in sanctification and faith
- E. “These are years of penetrating questions, the years of wonderful discussions never before possible. These are the years of failure and struggle that put the teen’s true heart on the table. These are years of daily

ministry and of great opportunity.”<sup>2</sup>

- F. Two relevant Scriptures
  - 1. Deuteronomy 6:1-9
    - a. These are God’s instructions to ensure that Israel remains faithful in future generations
    - b. As members of God’s covenant people, we can derive principles for parenting our teens
  - 2. Ephesians 6:4 – *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”*

## II. Parent With God In The Picture (Deut 6:2, 4-9; Eph 6:4)

- A. Keeping “God in the picture” cultivates a fear of God
  - 1. Our parenting is simply one part of God’s greater plan to redeem people for His glory
  - 2. We do not parent to look good in the eyes of others or to produce good, moral citizens
  - 3. We will give an account to God for the souls of our children – we are responsible to God to faithfully steward the lives of our children that have been entrusted to us
- B. Keeping “God in the picture” inspires faith
  - 1. Apart from God, parenting becomes mere techniques and rules
  - 2. God has called us to the task of raising our children, and He will supply the grace we need
  - 3. Discouragement and weariness come quickly when we doubt God is at work
  - 4. “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 for deficiencies and supplies of grace, without looking too eagerly for present fruit.”<sup>3</sup>
- C. Keeping “God in the picture” produces peace
  - 1. Being an “instrument in the Redeemer’s hands” is not the same as being the Holy Spirit – there is a Holy Spirit, and we are not Him
  - 2. Our job is not to keep our children from sinning, but to teach them how to deal with their sin in light of what Jesus Christ has done
  - 3. We cannot affect true change in their hearts; God does that

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<sup>2</sup>ibid. page 19

<sup>3</sup>Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, page 178

4. Our children are ultimately accountable to God, not us
  - a. Therefore, we do not have to be personally offended by their sin
  - b. We can show compassion rather than anger
- D. Keeping “God in the picture” motivates prayer
  1. Our inability to produce true heart change in our children should lead us frequently to the throne of grace (Heb 4:15-16)
  2. We pray that our children would come to a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and bear fruit for His glory (Col 1:9-14)

### **III. Questions for Reflection and Application**

- A. Which is more prevalent in my parenting: the fear of man or the fear of God?
- B. Where do I lack faith for my role as a parent?
- C. What steps can I take to make sure that God is “in the picture” in my parenting?