

Raising Teenagers: Principles, Pitfalls and Pleasures

Our grown children are heartily following Jesus now, but each had significant teen challenges. Using stories, time in the Word and prayerful reflection, God teaches us. There is joy in seeing our children walk in truth.

I. Introductory Thoughts

II. Pray

- a. Prayer principles "Jesus **often** withdrew to lonely places to pray." Luke 5:16
 - i. Persistently (pray and not give up, persistent widow)
 - ii. Passages (scripturally)
 - iii. Partner (spouse and prayer networks)
 - iv. Publically (with them, for them over them)
 - v. Personal (prayer builds relationships)
 - vi. Perceptively (listening prayer) "My sheep hear my voice and they follow Me." John. 10:4,16,27
 - vii. Privately (eventually they need to be hearing from God on their own)
- b. Passages and stories
 - i. Eli and his sons and Samuel (Samuel 1-3)
 - ii. Ephesians 6:10-20
- c. Pitfalls
 - i. Missing the joy and privilege of prayer
 - ii. Busyness (prayer is hard, "wrestling")
 - iii. Anger or resentment with our wife (I Peter 3:7)
- d. Pleasures
 - i. Falling more in love with Jesus
 - ii. Hearing His voice
 - iii. seeing our kids' lives transformed as God answers our prayers (journaling)
- e. "Listening prayer" exercise

III. Model

- a. Modeling Principles
 - i. He chose 12 that they might "be with Him" (community)
 - ii. God and children spell love TIME.
 - iii. Much more is caught than taught.
 - iv. Jesus's first command was to follow Him. Last command to Peter was to follow Him. To follow means to imitate, follow an example.
 - v. Jesus gave us an example of "following" His Father. I do only what I see Him doing. I only say what I hear Him saying. Jesus modeled for the 12 and the 72 and then sent them out to imitate Him. (community)
 - vi. Paul: "Follow me as I follow Christ." "You not only imitated me but the Lord."
 - vii. The **ONLY** way we can follow and imitate Jesus is because we are born again. We can only give to our kids what we have received and experienced.
 - viii. Community and networks.
 - ix. Accountability vs. control.
 - x. Modeling: abiding, walking in authority, grace, thankfulness

- xi. Eventually they need to be following and imitating Him without a lot of input from us
- b. Pitfalls
 - i. "lone ranger" approach
 - ii. Not abiding (hearing the Word only)
 - iii. "Busyness"
 - iv. Making our kids an idol. "Loving" them more than God
- c. Pleasures
 - i. Doing life in fellowship with Jesus & walking together with Jesus with our kids
 - ii. Having fun together
 - iii. Watching God transform them (a son or daughter becomes a brother or a sister).
- d. Passage to look at: The Holy Spirit. "But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't the Counselor won't come. If I do go away...I will send Him to you." John 16:7
 - i. Jesus modeled, as our example, being filled with, in step with, hearing from and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. "And no doubt you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Acts 10:37-38 (See: Luke 3:21, 4:1, 4:14, 4:18,5:17,11:20,10:21, John 14;12)
 - ii. Discovery Bible Study (DBS) exercise

IV. Teaching

- a. Teaching principles
 - i. More is caught than taught
 - ii. Jesus taught "as they were going" largely by example, good questions and stories.
 - iii. People (children) can't come to Jesus unless the Father who sent Jesus draws them to Him (John 6:44) and yet, "Everyone who hears and learns from the Father comes to me." (John 6:45) ..."
 - iv. The Holy Spirit serves as a Teacher, Counselor, a Revealer as well as a Comforter.
 - v. We also need the teaching and counsel of our Paul's and community.
 - vi. At the end of the day our choice is between us and God.
 - vii. Teachable moments. Can't be planned. Might be late at night. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)
 - viii. Goal is transformation not just information. Transformation only occurs through discovery and God's revelation. Beholding God. People usually reject religious rules not a relationship with Jesus.
 - ix. Teaching through discipline (Hebrews 12:1-12)
- b. Pitfalls
 - i. Relying on Sunday school
 - ii. Not involving others in your network
 - iii. Neglecting relationship, discovery, discipline
 - iv. Failing to learn to listen for, hear and heed God's still small voice
- c. Pleasures
 - i. Experiencing discovering God together
 - ii. Watching their "aha" moments
 - iii. Seeing God transform them
- d. Meditation exercise... The Story of the Lost Son as a Teachable Moment (Luke 15:11-32)

V. Wrap up

- a. Our children are gifts to us from God
- b. We were created for deep fulfilling enjoyable relationships with God and one another
- c. We desire that our kids have an intimate walk with God and God desires this even more
- d. God is absolutely committed to gathering all His lost sheep
- e. We want to cultivate relationship and avoid religious legalism
- f. Our kids will rebel and we cannot "fix" our kids
- g. However, through our vital relationships with God as new creatures and with our community we can influence our kids through prayer, modeling and teaching so they can discover and embrace the love of God for themselves
- h. There is no greater joy than seeing our teens walk in Truth