

ACCELERATE

Parenting Teenagers toward Adulthood

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ACCELERATE: Parenting Teenagers Toward Adulthood

SESSION ONE

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Readings: Preface and Chapter 1

The majority of those 18–25:

Do not have a clear _____ focus or the drive to move forward _____.

Do not feel motivated to achieve independence in their _____ or life situation.

Do not feel ready to accept the lifetime commitments _____ entails.

Do not feel ready to _____.

Do not like to delay _____ for a greater good.

Do not like to work hard for _____ at uninteresting tasks to achieve a _____.

For many believers this age, their faith is an underdeveloped, _____ faith.

Most set this _____ faith aside during adulthood.

Thus, most are not fulfilling their unique _____ on earth and not bringing glory to God.

TEENAGERS OF THE PAST

Reading: Chapter 2

What do you know about your great-grandparents when they were around 17?

Were their roles more like current ____ children, ____ teenagers, or ____ adults?

When the Bible tells stories about King Uzziah, King Josiah, King David, Daniel, Joseph, Samuel, Samson, and Esther, while they were 13 to 18, do they seem more like current ____ children, ____ teenagers, or ____ adults?

According the Matthew 17, ____ out of ____ apostles of Jesus may have been under 21.

How would you describe the respect Jesus must have had for this age group?

Adolescence, as we know it, ____ did or ____ did not exist in the ancient world.

In the Middle Ages adult apprenticeships began as young as _____.

Down through the centuries, children worked alongside and learned from parents and adults. Shortly after _____, they practiced and learned a trade. _____ and _____ usually followed soon afterward.

In early American history children and young teenagers performed _____ alongside their parents and then walked to school, sometimes several miles. They returned home for more _____ and then played.

Reasoning ability, intelligence, and memory functions peak in the _____ years.

When we assert that teenagers are to act like _____ rather than _____, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Human beings have the capacity increasingly to think and act in adult-like ways through the teenage years:

- If their _____ have received proper stimulation.
- If they have learned adult _____.
- If they have learned _____ and _____ through observation and formal instruction from parents and other adults.

WHAT REAL CHANGE REQUIRES

Reading: Chapter 3

Small changes in the home and church will not be adequate to create a generation of high school graduates who are far more mature, far more ready to take on adult roles, and far more ready to join King Jesus in bringing His kingdom on earth. Before considering new ways to accelerate growth, parents need to consider,

*“Am I ready to declare my independence from what is average—
in order to launch a generation that is mature and looks a lot like Jesus?”*

MEDIA

Parents who move from _____ to _____ hours of media consumption an evening may find time to prepare their children to be adults. (Nationally, parents spend an average of just over _____ hours an evening in social networking, online surfing, and TV viewing.)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

When a family is considering allowing a teenager to add another extracurricular activity, parents must consider whether that addition will help or hurt preparations for adulthood and for a vibrant faith.

Parents can ask:

1. At present, do we get four or five family dinners a week where we can relax, tell the stories of the day, and enjoy one another?
____ If yes, will a new activity place that at risk?
____ If no, should we be simplifying rather than making life more complicated?
2. Do we presently have time each week for about three half-hour conversations about faith and about preparation for adulthood?
____ If so, will a new activity place that at risk?
____ If no, should we reduce activity rather than add activity?

3. At present, do we have big blocks of time I can use to teach my teenager a strong work ethic and give her experiences in fields that may lead to a lifetime vocation?
- ___ If yes, could a new activity replace work that has lifetime value with something that will not matter that much in adulthood?
- ___ If no, what might we take off my teenager's schedule rather than add to it?

EXTENDED HOURS AT WORK

Some parents have the privilege of making decisions about extending hours at work. Working extra hours may permit giving teenagers certain economic advantages. But teenagers may profit even more from _____ with parents.

Teenagers need blocks of time with parents:

- To have warm, relational, _____ with mom and dad.
- To be _____ at home and thus transformed into the image of Christ.
- To experience _____ as a family.
- To have rich _____ about adult roles and adult life.

Are you willing to live differently?

As a parent, you stand at a crossroads. If you repeat the parenting approaches of the past, your children may well become 20-somethings similar to those today—living in a never, never land between the teenage years and adulthood.

Or you can seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and think new thoughts. You can link arms with church leaders and other significant adults and begin to parent in fresh new ways.

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SESSION TWO

PARENTING STYLES

Reading: Chapter 1

Those who parented current emerging adults had the best of intentions. They wanted nothing more than the well-being of their children. However, at times:

1. They listened to ill-informed “_____.”
2. They were influenced by trends in the _____.

Helicopter parents:

1. The ones who hover over their kids, making sure they get every imaginable _____ and are protected from every imaginable _____.
2. The ones who don't allow their kids the privilege of learning to _____ and _____.
3. The ones who prefer to prepare the _____ for the child instead of the child for the _____.

One of the apparent consequences of parents attempting to solve all of their children's problems and to assume responsibility for their child's well-being well into adulthood is that the child never develops a strong belief in his or her own ability to:

1. _____
3. _____

As their maturity grows, teenagers need increasing autonomy and the freedom to make choices. At the same time they need to be accountable for the _____ of those choices. They need to assume increasing responsibility for themselves.

Research: When parents raise the bar for their offspring, teenagers tend to _____ to those expectations.

To mature into wonderful adults, teenagers need: _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

... in an atmosphere of: _____, _____, _____, and _____.

rites of passage

Reading: Chapter 4

You can't expect a teenager to become _____ while confused about what that means.

Many cultures have clear-cut lines to separate childhood and adulthood. These lines are known as _____. The U.S. mostly has abandoned this concept.

Parents have the privilege of providing powerful _____—to move away from the ambiguous culture and to do something valuable for teenagers.

After participation in the rite of passage journey, a teenager likely will be able to say:

"I know I am now an adult because an adult embodies the values taught to me by my family and mentors. By making these values my own, I declare my ascension to adulthood."

What makes the rite of passage process work is the _____ of the process by the teenager. _____ will lead the teenager to believe adulthood is possible at an age earlier than what culture suggests.

Once this takes place, it's a parent's responsibility to reinforce that _____ by:

1. Seeing the teenager _____.
2. _____ key adults such as the pastor or student minister to do the same.
3. Encouraging leaders to ask a teenager to be _____ or assume _____ in the faith community.

Effective rites of passage contain three key phases:

1. The Founding
2. The Instruction
3. The Ceremony

THE FOUNDING

The founding phase and the instruction phase precede the rite of passage ceremony and often take place during _____.

The founding phase is a parent declaring to a child:

1. That the parent will intentionally nurture the child in a way that prepares him or her to be a _____.
2. That the parent will design a plan of parenting that has _____ as the final destination.

THE INSTRUCTION

The instruction phase is a parent teaching and preparing a child to be that adult. Parents must have a well-defined process of instruction that will help a child get to that goal.

FOUR KEYS

1. Set _____ —As you instruct your teenager in the values that make up adulthood, remember you cannot teach what you do not model.
2. Teach _____ — “As your parent, I expect you to act like an adult.”
3. Use _____ —Lectures rarely move anyone, but people remember and reflect on stories.
4. _____ what you teach.—This is what the celebration ceremony is for, to affirm and forge a lasting memory.

THE CEREMONY

FOUR CRITERIA

1. Ceremonies are _____ —People don't remember cheap. Parents want the ceremony to create lingering memories. (When funds simply are not available, an investment of time and creativity in planning can make up the difference.)
2. Ceremonies ascribe _____ to the teenager and _____ to the process as a whole.—The ceremony should be worthy of all the participants' time and effort.
3. Ceremonies employ _____.
4. Ceremonies empower with _____ —The rite of passage signifies the emerging adulthood of the teenager. At the same time the ceremony recognizes that this is not the destination, merely the start of a new journey for the participant.

WHEN

Most experts recommend having a ceremony between the ages of _____ to help accelerate the teenager to adulthood. At the same time many meaningful rites of passage ceremonies have happened at ages 17, 18, or even 19.

It helps if the ceremony happens at a time of _____—from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to college, or some other time of transition.

INVOLVE THE TEENAGER

For the ceremony to have greatest impact:

1. Involve the teenager in the _____.
2. Involve the teenager in deciding which _____ to include.
3. After teaching and coaching from the parent, the teenager should select what _____ and _____ are important to him or her—and thus should be featured in the ceremony.

SPIRITUAL ORPHANS

Parents should be open to the possibility that the Spirit might prompt them to seek out one or two teenagers in their faith community who do not have _____. By His leading, parents may choose to pull those teenagers into their family and include them in a rites of passage journey.

CONCLUSION

Rites of passage are powerful tools that can accelerate your teenager toward adulthood. Anything of value requires effort.

1. Be prepared to spend days and weeks _____ as you choose values that seem most important.
2. Lean on adult friends, mentors, and other parents for _____.
3. Find strength and vision from the _____ for your entire rite of passage journey.

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SESSION THREE

TEACHING TEENAGERS WHAT ADULTS KNOW

Reading: Chapter 5

Parents have the potential to move their teenagers toward adulthood as they invest around thirty minutes at a time to help them understand truths, both spiritual and practical. These conversations bring intentionality and purpose to the desire many parents possess—to give their children a foundation of life lessons to propel them into adulthood.

- If the family has thirty-minute, focused conversations three nights a week,
- If the family does this just forty of the fifty-two weeks of the year,
- If the family does this the six years a teenager is at home,

That would be _____ focused conversations by high school graduation.

What could the teenager learn, embrace, and come to value through that many well-planned conversations?

How would the teenager's preparation for adulthood compare with most teenagers today?

ONE EXAMPLE OF A FAMILY SCHEDULE

- _____ evening—Basic discipleship focused on who Christ is and who you are in Christ.
- _____ and _____ evenings—Basic life skills, everything from choosing a mate to changing the oil in the car.
- _____ evenings—Church activities.
- Other nights—Available for sports, clubs, hobbies, and other family activities.

Of course, nights other than Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday might work better in the rhythm of some families.

REMEMBER

1. Learning is most likely from thirty-minute _____, not _____.
2. Teenagers need time to _____ and to _____ they don't understand.
3. The goal is teenagers who _____ the truth, _____ the truth, _____ the truth, _____ the truth, and _____ the truth.
4. The ultimate goal is teenagers who have _____ for their faith walk.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Why are we looking at this, or why is this important?
2. How do you do this, or what do you need to learn?
3. What questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense?
4. How does this relate to who Christ is or who I am in Christ?

TO TEACH TEENAGERS WHAT ADULTS KNOW

1. When you quit, begin again.—Doug Bischoff: “The next time you find yourself not doing what you want to do, just start again. No need for guilt or embarrassment. Just start where you left off ”
2. Do something different.—Discipleship can become _____ and _____. Trying different methods can keep the lessons interesting. Everyone likes _____.
3. Plan well and work your plan.—One of the reasons many parents find maintaining a weekly teaching time difficult is lack of _____.
4. Limit use of the lecture.—Teenagers learn more and stay more motivated when they actively are engaged in discussion.
5. Ask open-ended questions.—They lead to more learning than yes-and-no questions.

SPIRITUAL ORPHANS

Spiritual orphans are those in families with parents who are not Christ followers and thus do not prepare children for an adulthood with Christ. As with rites of passage, parents can consider including a spiritual orphan while they are teaching their own children what future adults need to know.

TEENAGERS WHO CAN FEED THEMSELVES

At some point a teenager must take responsibility for his own spiritual walk. If your teenager decides to have a rich, vibrant, and fresh walk with God, then he must make investments in his own spiritual life.

Among other things, a son or daughter needs to know how to:

- Study the Bible.
- Pray.
- Share Christ with others.
- Discern the will of God.

To better prepare a teenager:

- Parents can consider giving an older teenager the opportunity to choose the discussion topics for a month.
- Parents can encourage a teenager to take a night to lead the family instead of mom or dad. Parents can show a teenager how they prepare and what parents do to make sure they have something to offer the rest of the family.
- Parents can have older teens meet with younger kids in the family to talk with them about what they are learning.

PREPARING TEENAGERS TO WORK AND EARN A LIVING

Reading: Chapter 6

The first step in preparing your teenager to earn a living is demonstrating the importance of work.

The Bible teaches that work has _____ value, which means “valuable by its essential nature.”

1. One way we know work has intrinsic value is because the Bible describes God as a worker.
2. The Bible also says God created people to be workers.
3. Work is a gift from God.

BE, GO, DO

Wise parents help teenagers discover what the Lord wants them to do. This process starts through prayer.

Parents can teach a teenager to seek the Lord's will by inviting the teenager to sincerely pray a simple prayer that expresses a humble and submissive heart:

*Lord, I'll be what You want me to be.
I'll go where You want me to go.
I'll do what You want me to do.*

The best way to lead a teenager to pray this prayer is for the parent to model it.

A STRONG WORK ETHIC

Research reveals that employers feel young people:

- Act _____.
- Are _____ and unrealistic.
- Are _____.
- Don't want to _____ to build a career.
- Want constant feedback and _____.
- Don't show _____ for others' experience.

A strong work ethic stems from a belief that someone is _____ for God or on His behalf.

A strong work ethic also means someone is _____.

Another component of a strong work ethic is _____. This means doing what is right even when acting alone.

Another important aspect of a strong work ethic is the ability to work hard even when the task _____.

Teenagers need training in work-like environments. Early work experiences can help children:

- Build _____.
- Learn to be _____ to work.
- Not give up and quit a job when work is _____.
- _____ what they start.

PRACTICING AND PREPARING FOR A FUTURE JOB

God has designed each person with _____ physical and mental abilities as well as different likes and dislikes.

Parents can help a young person _____ between the way God made him and jobs that require compatible skills, abilities, and personality.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

Saturday may be the ideal time to prepare for a _____.

What is the *most* loving thing to do?

1. Allow a teenager to sleep until noon and then plan on Saturday.
2. Spend some or most of Saturday learning to work hard and to explore vocations.

THREE OPTIONS

1. Community Service

- Church mission project
- Helping at a soup kitchen
- Stocking shelves at a food bank

2. Volunteering

More formal and on a regular basis

- Debriefing is valuable
- What did you learn today?
- What was hard about the job?
- What did you like about the job?
- Can you see yourself doing this type of job as a career?

3. Part-time Employment

Learn what type of work is a fit and what is not.

Learn a strong work ethic.

Careful parenting can make it less likely you will find your 25-year-old living and playing video games in your basement.

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SESSION FOUR

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Reading: Chapter 7

Your great-grandparents probably got married when they were about ____ or ____.

Today girls marry at ____ and guys at _____. This is a huge shift.

Very late marriage is one of the reasons why:

- _____ of emerging adults will have sexual intercourse before marriage.
- Over _____ have cohabited with someone before marriage.

The Results of Cohabitation

- Less _____ and happiness.
- Five times more _____.
- 50–80 percent higher _____ after marriage.
- Less _____ after marriage

The point of this session:

- Is not: “Let’s get teenagers to marry quickly so they won’t have sex.”
- Is: “Let’s mature teenagers and teach them biblical wisdom about marriage—so they will be prepared to marry whenever they find God’s person.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If parents do just that, is marriage during college practical?
2. Is it possible that a newly married couple could excel in college?
3. Why do you think church parents sometimes pressure collegians to delay marriage?

THE GOSPEL AND MARRIAGE

Any preparation for marriage must be rooted in the _____.

Your teenager grasping the _____ is at the heart of their finding love and living happily ever after.

The gospel is the answer to the _____ condition of the human heart.

Much of what emerging adults call love is really _____. We don’t love the person; we love being loved.

But the grace of the gospel rescues your teen from self-love and allows your teen to _____
love another.

Relationship expert, Paul Tripp explains God's kind of love this way:

Love is willing _____
for the _____ of another
that does not require reciprocation
or that the other person is _____.

Christian marriages are to display this kind of love.

The goal of marriage is oneness, transformation, and legacy.

In other words, it is to lead young adults to declare:

"The purpose of our marriage is to _____ and become like Jesus together,
to proclaim His gospel of love in our marriage relationship and to the _____,
and to _____ this purpose in a new generation."

SEXUALITY

Your marriage preparations will include talks about _____.

- Discuss _____ before and after marriage.
- Teenagers and young adults need moral _____.
- But they also need the _____ to keep those boundaries.
- That comes from their _____ and _____ of Christ.

COMMUNICATION

Your marriage preparations will include talks about _____.

Good communication builds _____, _____, _____.

One critical way to prepare your teenager for adult family relationships is by _____ positive communication among family members.

MODELING

Your _____ is your most powerful teaching tool:

- Related to making your spouse a priority—even above the children.
- Related to setting boundaries for yourself sexually.
- Related to the way you make decisions about finances.
- Related to the way you resolve conflict—and seek forgiveness.

CONCLUSION

If you:

- pray deeply toward your child's future marriage,
 - and you teach them about marriage, biblically and consistently,
 - and you model wonderful principles of marriage,
- your child will be prepared for a lifetime marriage far earlier than most young adults.

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SESSION FIVE

SPIRITUAL IMPACT AT HOME

Reading: Chapter 8

Thought Question: What do you want to see more than anything when your child is an adult?

According to Tim Kimmel,

“The standard measurements for success are _____, _____, _____, and _____ . . .

What Christian parents don’t seem to realize is that God places no special value on _____, _____, _____, and _____ in the Bible. . .

These four goals have no bearing on whether or not a child will . . . have any eternal impact.”

Your teenager is on earth to live in an intimate relationship with Christ, to adore the majesty of Christ, to invite Christ to live His powerful life through your teenager, in order to see Christ’s kingdom come on earth, to bring glory to God.

We want our kids to:

- Know what adults know.
- Have a focus for their vocation.
- Prepare for lifetime marriages.

But those pale in comparison to the goal above.

How is this most likely to happen?

MOVE TOWARD THESE PRIORITIES:

1. Guide your child to _____ with all his or her heart, soul, mind, strength.—Love flows from _____ for grace.
2. Unfold for your child the _____ of Christ.—Do you believe Christ will be more glorious than we can imagine on the day of His return? Do you think believers will be wonderfully overwhelmed when they see Him split open the heavens and descend to earth? Who Christ will be that day is precisely who He is today.
3. Give your child a desire to be _____—Children who are maturing as believers will come to look more and more like Jesus. They will carry more of His aroma on their lives now and into adulthood.
4. Lead your child to count all _____ for the greatness of Christ.—Picture teenagers who adore the King above relationships, possessions, comfort, and a long life—who absolutely would lay those things down at Christ’s command.

THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP OF PARENTS

1. The more spiritually _____ and _____ the parents are, the more this will overflow onto their children.
2. And the more _____ parents are about their own spiritual journey, the more their teenagers will tend to follow in similar directions.
3. Parents who keep _____ warm and strong usually see visible evidence their faith and values are passing to their children.
4. A heart connection is the “_____” that connects the hearts of the parent and teen. Through that _____ of warm relationships, spiritual impact flows from one generation to the next.

FAITH PRACTICES IN THE HOME

1. Parents teach their children to pray.
 - Prayer is often more meaningful at the _____ of the day.
 - Model prayer as a _____ with God all through the day.
 - Guide your teenager toward praying more and more prayers of _____ before asking for anything.
2. Parents lead their families in faith conversations (family worship).
 - These times include longer prayer, worship and praise, and reading and discussing Scripture.
3. Parents also plan times for the family to _____ in the name of Christ.
 - Some researchers believe that performing acts of service with the family is one of the most powerful discipling experiences any child or teenager can have.
 - Parents can plan family outings to address injustice, spiritual poverty, or needs that already have touched the heart of a teen. Even more important is the family’s role in taking the gospel to those who do not know Christ.
4. Parents teach a teenager how to _____ spiritually.

You teach:

- How to interpret any passage of Scripture
- How to share one’s faith
- How to grasp apologetics
- How to understand a Christian worldview
- How to know the will of God

Parent, you lead out because you someday want your adult child to lead your grandchild in worship—and for your grandchild to someday lead worship with your great-grandchild. God created your family to be a discipleship center that will build a legacy of faith for generations to come.

CONSIDER A GAP-YEAR MISSION TRIP

A gap year mission trip is one that lasts a few weeks or months and takes place within the first year or two after high school graduation.

Developmentally, emerging adults crave a grand adventure. They are ready to do hard things and go to the hard places. This is the perfect time for an assignment so challenging it requires all they are and all the Spirit supplies.

- Such a trip challenges and stretches young adults and thus accelerates growth toward adulthood.
- Such a trip sharpens a young adult’s life focus.
- Such a trip better prepares a young adult for college, for choosing a major, and preparing for a specific vocation.
- Such a trip is part of taking the gospel to the last persons on earth.

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND HOME

To support your church's youth ministry:

- Stay _____ about what is being taught at church so you can _____ those teachings at home.
- Speak _____ to your children about the youth minister and other church leaders.
- Give positive words of encouragement and support to _____.
- Correct _____ being circulated among parents or teenagers.
- Reach out to _____ parents.
- Offer your _____ for youth ministry.
- _____ family schedules to allow your children to be faithful to ministry events.
- Attend _____ so you can be knowledgeable.
- Invite teenagers who attend church _____ to participate with your family in family events.

If YOU are alive to Christ . . .

If YOU are transparent about your faith . . .

If YOU keep your heart connected to your teenager . . .

If YOU form a partnership with your church . . .

Then you are likely to see your teenagers become adults:

- Who love God with all their being.
- Who believe they exist for His eternal glory.
- Who invite the glorious King of kings to live His holy life through them daily, to see His kingdom come on earth.
- Who spend a lifetime embracing the full majesty of the Son and join Him in making disciples among all peoples.