

Lesson 7



Maintaining Family Life & Relationship with Teens by Kathy Perkins

*I have no greater joy than this,
to hear of my children walking in the truth.
~ 3 John 4*

Introduction

As parents our goal is to raise godly seed.

We are commanded to train up our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6) and bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

God said of Abraham, For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice . . . (Genesis 18:19).

We are chosen of God to teach and train our children. It is a lifelong profession.

Deuteronomy 4:9, *Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (Also see Deuteronomy 11:19-20.)*

Psalm 78:1-8, *Listen, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark saying of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments . . .*

David upon his death bed instructed Solomon, a grown man, in 1 Kings 2:2-4, *I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me . . . (Also see 1 Chron. 28:9-10).*

It is a work for our children and is to be passed to our grandchildren.

Joel 1:3, *Tell your sons about it, and let your sons tell their sons, and their sons the next generation.*

1) Examples of obedient children:

- Shem and Japheth, Genesis 9:23
- Isaac, Genesis 22:6-12—an obedience that could have been death
- Ruth, Ruth 1:15-17—obeyed mother-in-law’s advice, 3:5
- Joseph, Genesis 45:9-13
- Moses, Exodus 15:2—*My Father’s God, and I will extol Him*
Respect of in-laws, Exodus 18:7
And their advice, Exodus 18:19, 24

2) Examples of wicked children

- Eli’s sons, *1 Samuel 2:12*
- Nadab son of Jeroboam, *1 Kings 15:25-26*
- Ahaziah, *2 Chronicles 22:2-5—He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly.*

The result of neglect of spiritual instruction and not just physical.

1 Timothy 5:8, *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Instruction of our Mouth

Proverbs 31:26

Proverbs 16:21-24



When our children are young, we are pretty much teaching them by hours of constant instructions and diligently preparing them for life. We have taught them about God, about life, and our role in it. We have taught them the rules and enforced their obedience of them. As they mature, we are more of a counselor and guide. The teen years are the time they are to put into practice all the years of their training. It is the time they will have to internalize what they have been taught and not just be carried along by what you have said. Is it all just head knowledge and not heart belief? This is where we hope to see the fruit of our labor born out in their walking circumspectly in the Lord.

They will question life and values. They will be confronted about their beliefs. They will be encouraged to do their own thing by others. They will learn of differing beliefs and they will question what they have been taught. (It will also make you doubt your faith and teachings as they do.) It is a time for them to search out the truth themselves. They will seek to know what they believe and why. This is not a time to just step back and let them figure it out on their own because they are vulnerable. They are inexperienced and without a guiding hand will fall into disbelief. They will reject the faith.

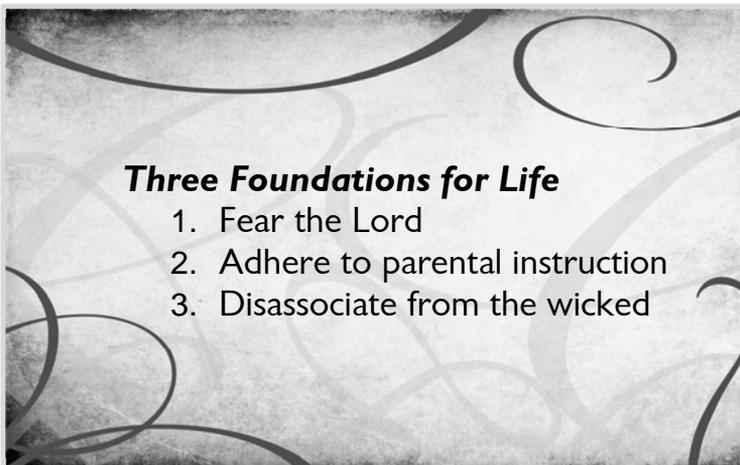
As mothers it generally falls to us to bear the main instruction and time because we are the ones who are at home, in the car, and available while our husbands labor to provide for our families.

We set the tone and attitude in the home. We need to make our homes a haven and refuge from the pressures of the world for our teens, our husbands, and our family. They need to know they are a top priority in our hearts and we need to show it in our actions.

Family relationships

1. Take time
 - a. sacrificially
 - b. consistently
 - c. committedly
2. Take communication
 - a. openly
 - b. honestly
 - c. bilaterally
3. Take respect
 - a. consciously
 - b. willfully
 - c. habitually
4. Take love for others
 - a. selflessly
 - b. unconditionally
5. Take action
 - a. proactively
 - b. continually
 - c. creatively

Tedd Tripp in his book, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, gives Three Foundations for Life from Proverbs 1:7-14.



As mothers of teens, we still need to point them to the cross. Even if they made a profession of faith in their younger years, we cannot assume they are grounded in faith. They are working out their beliefs and many doubts assail them. It is our job to point them to Christ, to help them find the answers to their questions in the Bible, and help them test the spirits whether they be of God (1 John 4:1). Ask them what they fear most – man or a Holy God. (Proverbs 1:7, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*) The fear of God must be motivated by a sense of awe and reverence. Peer pressure is a fear of man more than the fear of God and they need help seeing this. If we don't know the answers right away, we need to search them out together. (See who finds it first in the Scriptures.) Then with words of kindness in our mouth discuss it. Let them work through their thoughts out loud as you listen. Ask pointed questions that direct them in paths of righteousness. And if they still do not come to the right understanding, we may need to correct and instruct them again in the things they have been taught.

Proverbs 1:8-9 instructs us and our children to hear the instruction of our fathers and not to forsake our mother's teachings. Are we, even as adults, an example of seeking out our parents for wisdom and counsel? Do we maintain the values we were taught in righteousness? Even if we were from an unbelieving home do we honor and value our elderly parents? Have our children seen us make mistakes and how we repented and confessed them to the Lord and to them? Are we living honestly and not expecting more from them than we expect of ourselves?

Oh, what blessings the Lord promises if we obey our parents and not forsake their instructions—that things will be well with us and we will have long life! Proverbs 1:9 says parental instructions are *a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck*. We need to teach them that we are under authority of God and we dishonor God if we don't train them correctly. When they obey us, whom they see, they obey God, whom they haven't seen.

Teach them to recognize and disassociate from the wicked (Proverbs 1:10-14). Test what others are saying and what they promise you. (This includes unbelievers and those within our church.) Is it in alignment with what you have been taught by parents and the Lord? Are the words they say belying what they do? Do they promise unity and friendship and a better life? Are they truly happy and at peace or are they discontented and rebellious?

Proverbs 2:1-12, My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding . . . then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover knowledge of God . . . then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; Discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things.

Finally, we are to commit them to the Lord. We cannot protect them from failure or hurt, just as we could not prevent the falling down, the skinned knees, and all the bruises when they were little. The old saying “when they are little they step on your toes, but when they are old they step on your heart” is true. There will be many times you will have to let God direct and lead and test and purify them for His work and purposes. We are to be prayer warriors and encouragers and counselors.

Colossians 1:9-12, We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

If there was a time you realized you neglected these responsibilities or if you were not saved until later—I want you to know there is still great hope for your teens.

Joel 2:12-13,25, “Yet even now,” declares the LORD, Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil . . . Then will I make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, my great army which I sent among you.

God can reclaim our teenagers if we repent and seek Him with all our hearts. If we confess our needs and pray for His restoration, He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then seek out direction from God’s word. With consistency put into practice what the Lord teaches us to do as His children and as parents of our own children. He can restore to us our children and our homes.

Book recommendations:

George, Elizabeth. *A Woman After God’s Own Heart*

Plowman, Ginger. *Heaven at Home*

Tripp, Ted. *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*

Wilson, Mimi and Mary Beth Lagerborg. *Table Talk*

(Easy Activity and recipe ideas for bringing your family closer at mealtime).