

Teenage Challenges=Incredible Opportunities

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Big Picture

- The purpose of parenting is to disciple our children to wholeheartedly love God, for the glory of God (Matt. 22:36-40). Career and lifestyle must support-not undermine- this mission.
- This will likely be the most difficult thing parents do because we are at war (Eph. 6:10-18). Expect this is be more difficult than all other pursuits and plan accordingly.
- Have a clear picture of what successful discipleship looks like (e.g. 1 Thess. 1:2-10). If you don't have a clear vision of the target, you're not likely to hit it.
- Effective discipleship requires engaging the heart and cultivating wholehearted love for God (Luke 6:43-45). Behaviour modification and obligatory religion are barren. Missing the heart is missing the mission.
- The home is the most ideal place to disciple hearts. When kids leave home, the best opportunities leave with them. The sooner we take action the better. No work we do will ever be as important as this.

Foundation for Discipling The Heart

1. Biblical-Gospel Foundation

If we are not meditating on scripture most days, we can't expect success in discipling our kids (Ps. 1). Without a biblically informed _____, we'll think culturally despite our "Christian" claims. Caution: focussing on knowing the Bible without loving God is a fruitless trap (Jn. 15:1-11). Foundation: any true, lasting progress is always rooted in wholehearted love for God. The gospel must be lived daily, modeled by the parents, and grasped by the kids. No gospel = no power, no salvation, no transformation, no story (Rom. 8). *Idea: Schedule an hour with your youth. Ask them, "In your own words, describe the gospel message." Review their answer biblically using scripture as your guide.*

2. Prayer

Set regular times to pray intentionally into each of your children's lives regarding _____ situations and sin struggles. Ask God for wisdom and discernment to disciple them well (Jas. 1:5). Listen for God's response in scripture. Hearts will not be transformed without God's intervention (1 Thess. 1:2, 3:10).

3. Show Them

A parent must be an active disciple of Jesus, otherwise they cannot make true disciples. Hypocrisy and impure motives are easily spotted by kids and create _____ to faith. Be appropriately transparent about your; love for God, intensions, struggles, sin etc.. Modeling humility and dependence on God creates a _____ for the children to follow. *Idea: Ask your spouse and older kids, "What do you see my top priorities to be? What do you see me working hardest to accomplish in life? Etc." Just listen, then go away and seriously consider what they say. Is Jesus really my first love?*

Acting Out = Incredible Opportunities; use this path into the H.E.A.R.T.

Examples of Acting Out: Argumentative, Angry Outbursts, Bullying, Defensive, Belittling, Cheating, Demanding, Disrespectful, Disobedient, Doing the Minimum, Excessive Gaming, Lacking Ambition, Language, Lying, Overly Concerned about Appearance, Porn Use, Put Downs, Stealing, Sibling Rivalry, Working Slowly, and more. With wisdom, the following process can be effective for every example of Acting Out listed above. If you feel stuck get wise help! (Not google!)

H-Halt

As much as possible, stop whatever is going on and create some calm space to have a reasonable conversation with your youth. Acting out is a great opportunity but it requires time. The beauty of a youth who is Acting Out, is that they

"...turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." - Malachi 4:6

provide a window into their heart that typically remains masked by _____. Conversely, the “easy” child who always complies on the outside, but is rebellious at heart, is far more challenging to disciple because they are typically better at masking true motives. Thank God for the times they Act Out! (I’m not kidding 😊)

Discipling the heart is time consuming (Deut. 6:4-9) but if we are over _____, we’ll never get there. Don’t sacrifice the best on the altar of business. Note: *I’m speaking about this topic Saturday at 2:15 (unless schedule changes), title: “Being Family vs. Doing Family”*

Example: Joey is avoiding his school work again! Dad asks, “What’s going on?” Joey gets defensive then angry.

E-Evaluate

Listen, don’t lecture nor excuse them. Everything we do flows from the heart (Luke 6:43-45). They are literally Acting Out of their _____. These moments are critical times to actively listen and even take notes (if appropriate). Their words provide important clues as to what lurks in the heart. Ask good, appropriate questions to identify the motives. (e.g., What did you do? What do you mean by ...? Why did you do that? How did you come to that conclusion? How were you feeling? What do you desire/want? etc.)

Ex.: Dad calmly takes his son for a walk and sincerely asks, “Help me understand how you are feeling about school.” This leads to further questions and lots of listening.

*Scenario A: Dad discovers Joey is motivated by **fear**. He has tried his best in the past, but seems unable to attain the standard. Joey feels like a failure when he does school, avoidance is his reasonable solution.*

*Scenario B: Joey knows the house rules well and understands the good expectations of his parents. He simply refuses to obey them because he **rebelliously** wants to do things his way. (could be an number of motivations)*

A-Affirm

Thank them for being transparent with you. Appropriately affirm truths about their situation including: your love for them; God’s _____ for them (Jn. 3:16); God’s intention for their lives; Satan’s intention to deceive and destroy them (Jn. 10:7-10); how to build our lives on a Jesus (Matt. 7:24) etc. Also affirm _____ you see in their character or faith.

R-Repent

Use the situation to practice a gospel response to sin. Repentance = turning from sin & death toward faith and life (Rom. 6:23). Help them _____ their sin, sincerely repent, and resolve to obey God. When they do, affirm their complete forgiveness and encourage their growth as a disciple of Jesus. If you as a parent have sinfully contributed (knowingly or unknowingly) to their wrong actions, then repent in front of them and demonstrate your need for the gospel as well. Give them an *appropriate* consequence to help them remember that sin always has consequences. Not giving consequences in the home, usually results in much larger consequences after they leave home.

Ex A: Consequence of fear motivated disobedience: Possibly redoing school work during free time or loss of a privilege.

Ex B: Consequence for rebellion motivated disobedience: Needs a greater consequence than for that of fear.

T-Truth

Just like the in Garden of Eden, behind every sin is deception from the enemy (Gen. 3:4). These _____ must be identified, uprooted, and proactively replaced with the truth of God’s Word. Getting them to journal about the situation and the biblical truth is a powerful way to help them clarify and process the truth. Review their discipleship journal with them.

Ex. Scenario A: The lie is basing his value on test scores or what others think of him. Thus memorize Prov. 29:25

Scenario B: The lie is believing Joey knows better than God/parents what’s best. Thus memorize 1 Pe.5:5

FINAL WORD: Men Engage

Like onion layers, often there are multiple motivations to any given action. Use these H.E.A.R.T. steps as frequently as necessary; sometimes a few times in a conversation. Moms and dads play equally important roles, however, God specifically gave fathers the primary responsibility of discipling their kids (Gen. 18:19, Deut. 4:9-10, Ps. 78:1-4, Eph. 6:4, 1 Th. 2:13) with their wife alongside. This is why Satan targets dads-child relationships. How kids view dad is how they’ll tend to _____ God. Fathers need all the help we can get. Discipling the heart is hard work, but any willing man can learn to effectively disciple the hearts of his children. The Malachi Man video series (www.MalachiMan.com) is fun and engages fathers and sons on a heart level regarding vital topics. God does not expect any man to be perfect, but He does call us to wholeheartedly try. NOTE: Video series is **HALF PRICE** this AHEA weekend at our booth.

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