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Foreword

One of the most effective methods to help young people maintain their faith-commitment and to grow in spiritual maturity is by providing them with service-learning opportunities. As Diana Garland explains, “Service-learning combines methods of experiential education with the needs of the neighborhood or larger community. It involves families in learning about needs, studying what the Bible has to say about those needs and the church’s response, gaining knowledge and skills needed for service, engaging in service, and reflecting on these experiences.”¹ Service-learning takes place when the family learns together through reflection and study as an expression of Christian love and commitment.²

The late General Conference Ministerial Secretary Jim Cress wrote that visitors to a church do not automatically or immediately become mature, committed, or engaged members of the same, but rather to get there, they must go through a process of assimilation.³ Winseman describes the *engaged* members as people who “are loyal and have strong psychological and emotional connections to their church or parish. They are more spiritually committed, they are more likely to invite friends, family members, and coworkers to congregational events, and they give more, both financially and in commitment of time.”⁴

The Church and Home Partnership

Unfortunately, as Holmen states, many parents

would prefer that church or school *professionals* be the ones in charge of instilling their children’s faith instead of assuming that God-given responsibility themselves.⁵ Freudenburg adds that the parents are also up against a culture that has taken over the responsibility that they deliberately or by default have given to others.⁶ It is true, as Renfro asserts, that while most parents admit they have the responsibility for their children’s spiritual development, the majority neglect to engage in any activity that might guide their children toward that goal.⁷ In assuming responsibility for the spiritual growth of children and becoming a parent substitute by hiring professionals to work with the children, some churches have actually, though unintentionally, discouraged parents from taking up their disciple-making role.⁸ Other churches, Holmen adds, have usurped the place of the family as disciple-makers⁹ by creating programs that stand in their way of accomplishing that task,¹⁰ or, as Freudenburg says, by “subtly valuing its organizational priorities over family rhythms and priorities.”¹¹

DeVries also writes of the dramatic importance of parents in the faith formation of their children explaining that when parents talk about faith and involve them in service activities it doubles and sometimes triples their children’s chances of living out their faith as adults.¹² Freudenburg cites studies conducted by his denomination that

show four family practices that are particularly important in helping young people grow in faith (both in childhood and adolescence): (1) talking about faith with their mother; (2) talking about faith with their father; (3) having family devotions or prayer; and (4) doing family projects to help other people. Unfortunately, fewer than one-third of the youth reported any of these activities as happening often in the past or currently in their homes.¹³ Barna's research affirms that in a typical week fewer than ten percent of parents who attend church regularly with their kids read the Bible together, pray together or have family worship together.¹⁴ The Valuegenesis¹⁵ studies conducted among Adventist young people also confirm the important role parents play in transmitting their faith to their children not only by talking about but by joining them in helping-projects in their community or missionary endeavors.¹⁶

In this year's Planbook we are emphasizing the importance of service as part of the discipling process in our families. As you work with families in your congregations, encourage them to perform ministry acts of service together as a family, with their children. Doing so will increase the possibilities they will remain committed to God and engaged in the life and ministry of the church.

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Notes

¹Diana Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 388.

²*Ibid.*, 389.

³Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care*, 30.

⁴Winseman, *Growing an Engaged Church*, 67.

⁵Holmen, *Building Faith at Home*, 37, 47. See also Timothy Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 83-84.

⁶Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*, 77.

⁷Renfro, Shields, and Strother, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 23. See also, Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*, 7, and Timothy Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide*, 25.

⁸Joiner, *Think Orange*, 89.

⁹Holmen, *Building Faith at Home*, 22.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 23; Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*, 21, 45, 83; Renfro, Shields, and Strother, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, 108.

¹¹Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*, 83.

¹²DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, 63.

¹³Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*, 17.

¹⁴Barna, *Grow Your Church From the Outside In*, 78.

¹⁵"Valuegenesis" is a research study into the faith and values of young people attending Seventh-day Adventist high schools in North America in the three areas of family, school, and church. The first survey was conducted in 1990, a second major survey was conducted in 2000, and a third is taking place in 2010. Related studies also termed "Valuegenesis" have been conducted in other countries.

¹⁶V. Bailey Gillespie, Michael J. Donahue, Barry Gane, and Ed Boyatt, *Valuegenesis - Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations* (Riverside, CA: Hancock Center Publication, 2004), 255-273.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SECTION

How to Use This Planbook

The Family Ministries Planbook is an annual resource organized by the General Conference Family Ministries department with input from the world field to supply local churches around the world with resources for the special family emphases weeks and Sabbaths.

Christian Family Week: February 10-17

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Christian Family Week occurs in February embracing two Sabbaths: Christian Marriage Day that emphasizes Christian marriage and Christian Home Day that emphasizes parenting. Christian Home and Marriage Week begins on the second Sabbath and ends on the third Sabbath in February.

Christian Marriage Sabbath: Sabbath, February 10 (Emphasizes Marriage)

Use the Marriage Sermon for worship service and the Marriage Seminar during a Friday evening, Sabbath afternoon or Saturday night program.

Christian Parenting Sabbath: Sabbath, February 17 (Emphasizes Parenting)

Use the Parenting Sermon for worship service and the Parenting Seminar during a Friday evening, Sabbath afternoon or Saturday night program.

Family Togetherness Week: February 16-22

Family Togetherness Week is scheduled the third week in February. Family Togetherness Week and Family Togetherness Day highlight celebrating the church as a family.

NAD Day of Hope and Compassion: Sabbath, April 21-22

The North American Division has set aside this day to encourage congregations to look for ways to show hope and compassion to the people in their communities. The NAD's desire is to connect every department's program with the NAD's mission statement which states: To reach the North American Division territory and the world with the unique, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of Hope and Wholeness. You may wish to use the sermon idea, "Hope for your family" included in this Planbook.

Adventist Single Adult Ministries Day: Sabbath, May 19

Approximately 42% of the population in the US is single, and there are more singles than marrieds in Canada. We are including resources you can use on this day.

Men's Ministries Day of Prayer: Sabbath, September 1

We have also included a sermon and other resources (in English and Spanish) you can use on this day.

Family Togetherness Week: Sabbath, September 16-22

Within this planbook you will find sermons, seminars, children's stories as well as leadership resources, reprint articles and book reviews to help facilitate these special days and other programs you may want to implement during the year. In

Appendix A you will find useful information that will assist you in implementing family ministries in your local church.

This resource also includes a disk with Microsoft PowerPoint® presentations of the seminars. Seminar facilitators are encouraged to personalize the Microsoft PowerPoint® presentations with their own personal stories and pictures that reflect the diversity of their various communities.

SEMINARS

Parenting Teens: Challenges and Opportunities

CLAUDIO AND PAMELA CONSUEGRA

Scriptural Principle

“AND I LOOKED, AND AROSE AND SAID TO THE NOBLES, TO THE LEADERS, AND TO THE REST OF THE PEOPLE, “DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEM. REMEMBER THE LORD, GREAT AND AWESOME, AND FIGHT FOR YOUR BRETHREN, YOUR SONS, YOUR DAUGHTERS, YOUR WIVES, AND YOUR HOUSES.” NEHEMIAH 4:14 (NKJV)

ICEBREAKER- GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Remember
 - Remember when you were a teenager. Describe your teenage years.
2. Review
 - As you consider our spiritual principle for this chapter, what message do you glean from the verse?
 - How can we “fight” for our sons and our daughters?
3. Reflect
 - Take a moment and reflect on the greatest challenge you faced as a teenager.

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- Do you think teenagers today face even greater challenges than you did? Explain.

Overview

Teenagers face real problems on a daily basis during one of the most awkward growth stages of their lives, that is, between thirteen and eighteen years-old. During this time, teens are exposed to some overwhelming external and internal struggles. Teens go through, and are expected to cope with hormonal changes, puberty, social forces, and work and school pressures. Often teens feel overwhelmed when faced with unprecedented stresses concerning high school and college, and career decisions.

As we look at parenting teens in today’s world, we look at the good as well as at the not so good. In doing so, we will consider the greatest challenges and temptations that Satan throws at our young people, but we will also reflect on the wonderful opportunity that awaits as we take a front row seat and witness our babe in arms morph into the responsible young adult that God intends for them to be.

The purpose of this chapter is to serve as an introduction to the rest of this manual as we review the big picture of life as a teenager in today’s world. We will look at the top challenges in broad strokes and then break each one down

in the successive chapters. It is our desire that the conversation in this first chapter will prime the pump to get you thinking in realistic and honest ways about parenting teens today and will also whet your appetite to dig deeper into each of these topics as we work our way through this resource. Remember, the practical applications to dealing with each of these challenges will come later in each of the successive chapters.

Having a Moral Compass

Your child has now reached the age when faith needs to be personalized. As parents, we no longer make every decision for our child. It is imperative that they understand the connection between the choices they make and eternity. Having an internal moral compass will help them navigate those decisions.

As Christian researchers George Barna states, “Every choice we make is ultimately a spiritual decision. No matter what the issue or challenge is that we face, our decision comes down to what we believe is right or wrong. Our perspective on such matters comes from our spiritual beliefs (Barna, 2016, pp. 30, 31). Perhaps one of the most important roles we play as parents is to help our child develop this moral compass.

So, how does the typical young person make a decision? George Barna (2016), found that “young people are more likely to base their decisions on their feelings or upon what other people expect of them rather than depend upon the Bible as their standard for moral choices” (p. 38). This finding should be a red flag to us as parents. At a time in their life when peers play such a large influence, what is a parent to do? We will discuss this issue in greater depth and look at some practical suggestions in the chapter dedicated to this topic.

GROUP DISCUSSION

How do we teach our child to make choices based on scriptural principles rather than on their feelings or on what their peer group expects?

Disconnecting in Order to Connect

Face to face communication has suffered greatly as the use of technology increases. Our young people would rather text than talk. Getting them to turn off all technology and have a conversation seems like a punishment to them. If you take a survey you will probably discover that the actual amount of time you spend talking with your teen pales in comparison to their screen time.

Cyber addiction is prevalent among our teens. The Internet offers undeniable benefits in developing a teen's ability to grow with modern technology, technical ideas, knowledge and other skills. However, using the internet, particularly the social networking websites, unsafely puts the teenagers at very high risk for many dangers. As they spend more and more time on social networking, gaming, chats and websites, including adult sites, they can end up developing a cyber addiction. This addiction can be just as harmful as addiction to drugs or drinking alcohol. Teenagers who spend unhealthy amounts of time on the Internet or online suffer from a condition recognized as Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD). Those who have IAD conditions may experience distress, withdrawal symptoms including obsessive thoughts, tremors, and other mental and physical problems. Cyber addiction impairs the quality of their lives. Parents should talk to their teen and agree on a list of rules that clearly say when to use the internet, which sites they should visit and what safety measures they should follow. It is NOT an invasion of privacy to help insure the safety of your teenage child!

Is it possible that your teen is connected to their screen because they are not connecting with you, as a parent? That is a difficult question to ponder but perhaps it is one that we must ask ourselves.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which do you think comes first---connecting with your teen or getting them to disconnect from their screens? Why?

2. Have you considered how much screen time you spend and how your own example may be teaching your children to do the same? What can you do to change that?
3. How do you think extensive screen time affects a teen's spiritual growth and development?

Mental Health

We dedicated an entire chapter to this topic because we need to dispel the stigma that surrounds it. It is time to put the mental health issues that plague our teenagers out in the open and deal with them in healthy and proactive ways.

Self-esteem and body image is an issue that many of our teens struggle with today. Teenagers undergo and have to cope with numerous body changes. Some teenagers feel too fat, too skinny, too tall, or too short. Their hair is too curly or too straight and the list goes on and on. The problem with this feeling is that it affects their self-image. As a teenage boy or girl's body changes, so does their self-awareness. This is compounded as they compare themselves with the people they see on TV, in movies, and in the magazines. Teenagers who experience negative comments about their appearances, the way they talk, etc. develop poor self-esteem and body image. What image does your teen see played out in front of them every day? Take an immediate audit of what they are being exposed to on the media.

Cyberbullying is one of the latest trends and one of the most harmful to our teen's mental health, safety, and even life. Cyberbullies can be cruel as they spew out their hate-filled messages online. Bullying is a very offensive behavior and crime. These cyberbullies repeatedly throw out their barbs, affecting the psychology of the teen they have targeted. At the same time, it is important to recognize that such behavior is even detrimental to the bully as research reveals that they are prone to exhibit even greater violent behavior later in life. In other words, such behavior is life altering for both the bully and the bullied in terms of mental health. Is your teen

prepared to respond to the cyberbullies? And, perhaps the harder question to ponder would be - has your child ever been the cyberbully?

Depression symptoms in teenagers may be exhibited in various ways. Changes in sleep patterns, eating habits, declined interest in normal and healthy activities, dropping grades in school and college, and preferred isolation are all signs of depression. When teenagers exhibit any of these symptoms parents should intervene immediately. If teenagers begin talking about their depression, then they should be allowed to express their feelings, and parents should validate their feelings by listening to them without interrupting the conversation. In addition, professional help should be sought.

Suicide is a growing health concern. It is the third-leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24, surpassed only by homicide and accidents, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (APA, 2016). Are you aware of some of the warning signs to look for? And, do you know where to seek help should you notice any of the signs? What are the myths that surround suicide and what are the actual facts?

The chapter dedicated to the topic of mental health will explore more fully all of these important issues and will offer some warning signs we need to be aware of as well as some practical ways to Intervene when you see them in your child. Remember, when it comes to acknowledging and addressing mental health issues, you may be saving the life of your child.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think there is a stigma around mental health issues?
2. Are there things we can do as individuals or as a church to help break down the perceptions around this issue?

From Dependence to Independence

As your teen grows, he or she will begin to move in a direction that makes them more independent. They will begin to rely less on you. For some parents that is difficult and for most teens it is quite tough, but it is a necessary part of becoming an adult. The question then becomes how can we as parents help our teens move in this direction? How can we guide them to become responsible and mature young adults?

Perhaps one question we need to consider is this whole notion of freedom; how much is too much? The only way that our children can mature and exhibit responsible decision making is if we allow them the freedoms to do so. But, how do we know they are ready to move from dependence on their parents to independence? How can we be assured they are ready to take flight and spread their wings?

Cutting the umbilical cord was actually done at birth and yet, we still want to keep it attached. However, the reality is that parenting is all about helping our child become a responsible, mature, independent adult. Why, then, is it so hard?

Think back to the process of teaching your small child to ride a bicycle. It started with them riding with training wheels on. Then, when they came off, you held on to the back of their seat and gently pushed them until you were confident they could do it on their own. Then, you let go, and prayed they would not fall down. Your new rider may have been pretty wobbly. In fact, they most likely fell several times in the beginning. But, they learned from those falls and picked up their bike and tried again and again until they had it mastered. It is the same principle for teens that are moving from dependence to independence.

Guiding your teen to become independent means that you must allow them to make their own mistakes and even fall at times. They will learn from those falls as you continue to lovingly guide, encourage, hold them up, and support them. The time is coming, however, when you may just have to let go of the bike.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is letting go of our children so hard?
2. How do we know when to let them go?

Brain Development and the Risky Business of Substance Abuse

Risk-taking can be thought of not only as experiences with potentially negative consequences, but also those leading to healthy outcomes. Risk-taking can be viewed as exploring and experiencing the world around them, which is a normal and healthy part of growing up. The challenge is that our teens often take risks that have a very high probability of negative consequences.

The adolescent brain seems wired to test the limits and take risks. While this stage of development is important in that it allows young people to explore their world and individuate as people, it also often comes with great risk to life, health, and even to their eternity. Teens overestimate their ability to identify and avoid a potentially dangerous situation. Even when they weigh the pros and cons, they might think “I won’t get caught” or “Nothing bad will happen to me. It only happens to other people.” They, often, are not realistic with the true dangers that are present.

New brain research is now shedding light on some of the reasons our young people engage in risky behaviors. Although adolescence is often characterized by increased independence and a desire for knowledge and exploration, it also is a time when brain changes can result in high-risk behaviors. The danger, as recent imaging studies in humans show, is that brain development and connectivity are not complete until the mid-twenties (Society for Neuroscience, 2007). So, at the very time in life when our children are exhibiting independent decision making, their brain development has not yet caught up with the decisions they are making.

Substance abuse in the United States is a major problem affecting millions of teenagers. In

fact, it is one of the top items included in any list of risky behaviors. Substance abuse includes the misuse of substances such as alcohol, previously labeled illegal drugs, including those that are now legalized, prescription drugs, and over the counter medication.

The number of states placing a question on their ballots to legalize certain drugs grows every year, and many have already passed legislation accordingly. In reality, our young people do not need to go searching for drugs. Instead, the drugs are easier to obtain and even come to them. In fact, drugs are as close to our children as the medicine cabinets in our own homes. A new phenomenon is the prevalent misuse of prescription drugs and over the counter drugs among teens. This abuse among teens now tops the list of risky behaviors regarding substance abuse. With something so readily available, how are we to help our teens resist this trendy risky behavior?

(Note: This chapter deals with substance abuse. Some of the other risky behaviors our teens engage in will be looked at in dedicated chapters in this book.)

Sexuality Issues

Many parents are uncomfortable with the idea of teen sexuality, and prefer to remain in ignorance or denial. In fact, in many cases, it was not even the parents that talked with their child about puberty, menstruation, God's gift of sex, etc. It is critically important for parents to address adolescent sexuality realistically, to recognize the temptations, and know the statistics.

As parents, we'd like to think that pre-marital sex would never be practiced by our child. Other teenagers engage in this risky behavior but not our child. However, statistics reveal that by their 19th birthday, 7 out of 10 teens have engaged in sexual intercourse (Abma, 2010). This one statistic should cause alarm. More alarming is the fact that many young people do not consider other acts of sex (oral sex, physical petting) as sex and are practicing them feeling quite comfortable that "at least they're not having sex." We need to take heed and admit that it could

indeed happen to our child and we need to take intentional steps to minimize the chances of our teen making that choice.

Dating is most likely on your teen's mind even if you are not ready for it. They are beginning to be interested and attracted to the opposite sex. Attraction to the opposite sex is a normal part of the maturing process. But when teens are dating exclusively (going steady, going out, or "going with someone"), they are more likely to have sex earlier. We will explore some of the pitfalls of early teenage dating in the chapter dedicated to this topic.

GROUP DISCUSSION

At what age do you think is appropriate to begin exclusive dating? Explain your answer. (Note: We will discuss this at length in the chapter on this but explore your current beliefs)

Date rape, acquaintance rape, and sexual abuse are not something that we usually discuss with our teens but it is happening and studies reveal it to be an issue that is grossly underreported. There is a fear of being blamed for the incident and if you add to that the fact that an estimated 80% to 92% of all teen rape victims know their attackers, it is understandable why there may be a reluctance to speak up (TeenHelp, 2016). How can we, as parents, create an environment in our homes where our teens talk to us about sexual issues and feel free to report anything that's going on in their lives that they feel uncomfortable with, including sexual issues?

When was the last time that you discussed topics such as teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases with your child? Did you know that the Center for Disease Control (2016) reports that, among students in high school, 41% are sexually active? Of course, we like to think that our child is not counted in that percentage, but unless we are willing to have open and honest conversations with our teen, the chances are that we could be fooling ourselves.

In the biblical book, The Song of Solomon, the groom describes his bride as “a garden locked up, a spring shut up, a sealed fountain” (Songs 4:12). What was he referring to? In symbolic language he’s stating that she is a virgin. She has not participated in pre-marital sex and has reserved herself for the day when she will be married. At the same time, his bride counsels her friends three times to “not awaken love (referring to early dating and sex) until the right time (that is, within the context of marriage) (Songs 2:7, 3:5, 8:4). Great advice to share with our teenage boys and girls.

GROUP DISCUSSION

What are some practical ways that we can help our young men and women remain chaste until their wedding day while the message they hear everywhere is “everybody’s doing it”??

Financial Pitfalls

Credit cards offers arrive in the mail even before your teen graduates from high school. These companies court your child and are happy to offer them a credit card in their name. It is shocking to see the aggressive and senseless marketing of credit cards to teenagers who don’t even have a job or steady income. And yet, the allure works. Teens easily fall in to the trap in order to have a ceaseless flow of “cash” to satisfy their desires.

Let’s be honest. One of the greatest inventions was the ATM. It affords us the opportunity to go and withdraw cash and not to have to be dependent on the bank hours. However, what happens when accurate records are not kept? And, the few dollars here and there that our teens withdraw rapidly add up before they even realize it.

Teaching your teens the principles of sound financial management will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Soon, that eighteen-year-old will be away in college and you will not be there to offer guidance and counsel. Financial

faithfulness in the small things they may have now will give way to financial responsibility for the big things later on.

Beyond High School

Teens typically focus on the here and now. They are not prone to look beyond high school and catch a glimpse into college, career, and establishing their own family. It is not too early to begin the conversations on these topics with your teen.

The teen years are important for solidifying a strong work ethic in your child. A strong work ethic may be encouraged by faithfulness to school work, household chores, volunteering, and seeking their first job.

The choice of a college and a career is a thought that all too often evades our teen’s mind. And, yet, as parents we need to keep it in the forefront. Helping them to identify the gifts that God has given them along with their passions will serve them well into the future.

Are the teen years too early to begin having conversations about a future life partner? The sooner we begin these conversations the better. There are things they need to consider before they think about a spouse. What are some of those things? Perhaps they should include having a shared spiritual background, their desire for children in the future, their education and possible careers, each person’s family background, and many others.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Is it possible that we do not talk with our teen about life beyond high school because we are the ones not ready to face this reality? Explain your answer.

A Prodigal Teen

It can be heartbreaking when, despite our best efforts as parents, our children chose a path that is in opposition to the values and standards

we have held in our home and that we have taught them. Perhaps your teenage daughter has become pregnant, your son is sitting in jail for drunk driving, or your teen may be a runaway and you have no idea where they are at this point in time.

No doubt, the blame game sets in and you blame yourself and make lists of all the ways you failed as a parent. The truth is that this does not solve the situation and the blame and guilt only help to dig the pit of despair and helplessness even deeper.

In that chapter we will look at some positive ways we can proactively deal with situations where we have a prodigal teen.

GROUP DISCUSSION

“I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” Psalm 34:4 (NKJV)

What are your greatest fears/concerns as it relates to parenting your teen?

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Opportunities

When you consider the list above it is easy to become discouraged. If we focus on the mountain of challenges it seems insurmountable. However, the good news is that parenting teens brings many wonderful opportunities too.

Perhaps one of the greatest thrills of parenting is finding out that they have stood up to peer pressure and said “no” to engaging in risky behaviors. Yes, it is a joy to watch them make responsible decisions as they grow and mature. God has given us a front row seat to witness the miracle of His creation coming into the fullness of all that He has planned for them.

He has chosen YOU to parent your child. No one can take your place. No one can do what He has called you to do. The good news is that you do not have to do it alone. He has promised to walk with you through this parenting journey. Your Heavenly Father is your parenting partner. That should give you courage!

One of the often overlooked blessings is that parenting helps us to grow and deepen our personal relationship with Jesus. Our own faith blossoms as we place our challenges at the foot of the cross and seek His wisdom to handle the parenting issues that each day brings. What an incredible opportunity as we look to our Heavenly parent to journey with us!

Wrap Up

Problems that teenagers face today are multifarious but interrelated in many cases. One problem often invites another which leads to more problems. It is one of the times in parenting when, more than ever, we need to lean upon Jesus to give us direction. Christian parenting is vital as our children are making decisions that will guide the rest of their life. These decisions need to be made in light of a God who loves them unconditionally, died for them, and is preparing an eternal home with them in mind.

The season of the teenage years will pass all too quickly. Soon, they will be out the door and off to college and a life on their own. Embrace this season. Enjoy every moment as your child stands on the edge of adulthood.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the following statement and discuss it with your group.

“Fathers and mothers, however pressing your business, do not fail to gather your family around God’s altar. Ask for the guardianship of holy angels in your home. Remember that your dear ones are exposed to temptations” (White, Child Guidance, p. 520).

Try This at Home

1. Once again, this week we encourage you to add a Bible verse to your “Parenting Bible Promise Project.” Find a promise in the Bible that speaks to you and you may specifically relate it to the topic of this chapter. Write the verse out on an index card and put it in a prominent place in your home throughout this week. Repeat it every time you walk by it, memorize it, and claim it as your own. And, remember to share it the next time you meet with your group members. Don’t throw it away at the week’s end. Save it to add to the other promises in your parenting promise box as these are valuable reminders in the days ahead that you are co-parenting with God.
2. Write a letter to your teen child. Do not preach to them or make a list of concerns or worries. Rather, the purpose is to let them know how much you love them and how privileged you are to be given the opportunity to parent them. Plan a special date with them, read it aloud to them, and give it to them.

8

A Prayer You May Say

Dear Father, please give me wisdom to help my child navigate these teen years. Provide the resources when needed, give me words when I need to speak up, and give me a listening ear when I need to remain quiet. Thank You, Lord, for the awesome privilege of partnering with you along this parenting journey. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

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