

# 10. Raising your children in God's way-Part 3

December 6, 2009

My daughter Michelle was a good teenager when she was growing up. She was respectful to her mom and dad in most cases with the exception of two incidents. I am sure that there were a few more that I do not know about.

One time, I told her, "No" for what she wanted to do. In response to that, she slammed her room door shut. She was grounded for a week. In other time, she mouthed at us that she could choose any friend she wanted because she wanted to be a buddy with a boy who was not a Christian. I told her that she would be on my Friday prayer list for that rebellious attitude from that moment.

Many people in my Friday prayer list are those who have backslidden and I pray to the Lord that whatever it takes for Him to get their attention and bring them back to Himself. One of them got sick bad with a respiratory illness and the other got bone cancer. Next morning, she came to me and apologized for her response and asked me not to put her on the Friday prayer list.

It is not uncommon for a teenager to feel invincible, yet they are extremely vulnerable. They think that they know everything while their parents know nothing, yet in reality, they practically don't know anything when it comes to social skills, or just common knowledge for survival.

As the ones who have been there and done that, we need to come along their side to help and guide them to the Lord more than simply being drill sergeants who bark at their faces with orders. Our children are not our recruits whom we can have for lunch rather they are gifts from the Lord to love and raise in His way.

## A. THE UNSEEN EXTERNAL ENEMIES THEY ARE FACING

*Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Our teenagers are facing the unseen enemies that come in glamorous packages – movies, music, advertisements, peer pressure and homosexuality – and they do not have a clue that they are in danger spiritually, emotionally and physically.

What is the common bond that links young people together? It is the worldwide pop culture, which knows no geographical boundaries. MTV, the most watched television cable network in the world, is the primary vehicle driving this conformity. Its wretched 24 hour programming is seen now in more than 377 million households every day, mostly by impressionable teens or young adults.

The corporate conglomerate makes billions of dollars marketing pop culture – and rebellion – to a generation. Its executives are not only keenly aware of the influence they are having around the world – that is precisely what they are striving for.

One of their corporate ads pictures the back of a teenager's head with MTV shaved in his hair. The copy reads, "MTV is not a channel. It's a cultural force. People don't watch it, they love it. MTV has affected the way an entire generation thinks, talks, dresses and buys." The amazing thing about this ad is that MTV not only

admits they are trying to manipulate the young and immature; they spend big bucks bragging about it.

Now, this MTV generated teen pop culture imposes on parent-child relationships a vast and enormously influential network of ideas, enticements, sexuality, profanity, ungodliness and, mostly, an articulation of anger that compounds the difficulties of growing up.

A good place to begin is by monitoring your child's access to the mass media. According to a recent survey, children ages 2 through 18 spend on average five hours and 29 minutes every day watching television, listening to music or playing computer and video games. Many times, parents use these media as digital baby sitters while they do what they do.

That total increases for children over 8, who spend nearly 40 hours a week engaged in some sort of media-related activity. The survey also found that 53 percent of children have a television in their bedroom, which includes 32 percent of 2 to 7-year-olds and 65 percent of 8 to 18-year-olds. Seventy percent of all children have a radio, CD or MP3 players in their room, and 16 percent have a computer.

Almost everything children are seeing and listening to is essentially going into their minds in some sort of uncensored or unfiltered way. Just guess who is behind all these harmful influences? Satan, you know it.

Here are a few of my suggestions to fight against these enemies:

**1) Get those devices, whether they are television sets, computers, DVDs or video games, out of their bedrooms.**

Locate them in the family room, where they can be monitored and where the amount of time spent on them is regulated.

**2) Put parental blocks on your cable TV channels and internet.**

If it is not fit for your children to watch, it probably is not fit for you to watch either.

**3) Sit down with your children and read or listen to their song lyrics together.**

If those lyrics don't reflect your Christian values, tell them why and ban those songs from your home and from your children. Take them out from your children's computer, MP3 devices. Remove the CDs out of your home.

**4) I highly suggest that your home to be off-limit from any demonic influences – such as vampires, dungeons and dragons video games, Ouija board games and tarot card.**

I know that vampire phenomenon is very much in nowadays. If your children are watching, playing and have these kinds in their rooms, they are opening doors to demonic forces.

Their excuses might be, "It is not real. It is just a make-believe movie." First, ask them if they would watch it if Jesus is next to them. Second, let them know that if they keep on watching those so-called make-believe movies, soon they will start to believe in them. That is precisely what the devil wants.

## **B. HOMOSEXUAL INFLUENCES AGAINST OUR TEENS**

The “homosexual rights” ideology continues to seek legalization of homosexual behavior – not just tolerance, but as a privileged and protected class. It results in changing social infrastructure and values that deeply impact Americans in their day-to-day relationships with family members, neighbors and co-workers.

The flood of their contaminated influences has been seeping into just about every single social layer, especially into the educational systems in America. Many liberal educators and teachers promote their homosexual agendas to our teens to make them think that homosexual lifestyle is normal and God created them in that way.

And now they are advancing into the Christian realm. Pro-gay revisionist theology takes their homosexual movement one step further by attempting to redefine homosexual behavior as God-ordained and morally permissible.

These liberal theologians, whom I don’t consider true Christians, claim that Scriptures that supposedly condemn homosexual behavior have actually been mistranslated and taken out of context and do not apply to our present society. Let’s look at what the Word of God say:

*Romans 1:27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

*1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites*

I think that they are loud and clear. I don’t know which part they don’t understand.

If you have or know someone close to you who are into this horrible bondage of homosexuality, or thinking about getting into it, or you just want to know more about it and show others how to get out of it, I made some handouts that are provided by Focus on the Family on the information table. In those handouts, you will find the resources you can get from them to help you out.

## **C. DEALING WITH TEENS**

I don’t have some magic formula to tell you about how to deal with teens. If I had and it worked every time, I would take over Dr. Phil’s program in the afternoon TV. But I do believe that the Lord give us some insights of these adolescents who are not quite sure about themselves either.

Last week I told you about two of the most important parenting tools – Time and Touch. The following five suggestions are based on “Time and Touch”.

### **1) Nurturing love**

To steadily develop in all areas of their lives, growing teens need healthy and continuing relationships with parents who genuinely care about them and who regularly fill up their emotional tanks.

There are four primary ways to express unconditional love to your teens:

- **Make full eye contact**

Use your full eye contact to give love, not just to show annoyance or to punish.

- **Use physical contact**

Many children do not receive adequate physical touching from their parents. In addition to the important hugs and kisses, try touching your child on her shoulder or the back of her arm, tousling his hair, scratching her back, or gently poking him in the ribs. Your teenager sons might act embarrassed in front his friends when you do that to him, but in his heart, he loves it and his friends wish that their parents did the same.

- **Give your focused attention**

Giving your teens your full, undivided attention can make them feel like the most important people in the world. You might wonder if constant focused attention will “spoil” your children. It won’t! You spoil children by failing to train them, not by loving him or her too much.

- **Give verbal affirmation of your love for them**

Don’t expect that your children know that you love them because you feed them, give them a place to stay and do their laundries. Let them know several times a day that you love them verbally and pray for them everyday.

## 2) Protection from harmful influence

- **Teach your children how to think and know the dangers.**

Share your own thought processes with your teens through the Bible. Explain why you feel and think as you do.

- **Share your deep feelings about many different subjects with your young people.**

If they don’t know about those deeply held feelings you seldom talk about, your teens will be programmed to reject the feelings they do hear from you later.

- **Help your teens deal with problems before they happen.**

This gives them an advantage in coping with life. We must learn to let our teens know of potential dangers without frightening them or producing anxiety. Look for the teachable times, such as when your teen is inquisitive and asking about an issue.

Some issues you will want to discuss with your child include dating and sexuality, exposure to sexual themes in the media, language and attitudes he will encounter in school, and violence in our society.

- **Try to have meals together**

Not separately, not in front of the TV. Try to make conversation over your meals together, not lecture. Listen to them, show your interest about their lives at school, sports and their friends. As much as your children have to learn from you, you have to learn about them to teach them.

## 3) Give teenagers the gifts they hunger for most other than salvation through Jesus Christ – respect and dignity.

The 13th and 14th years probably are the most difficult 24 months in life. A pre-adolescent child of 10 or 12 suddenly awakens to a brand-new world around him, as though his eyes were opening for the first time. I call this period “A half human period”.

Middle school students are typically brutal to each other, attacking and slashing a weak victim in much the same way a pack of wolves kills and devours an injured

deer. They also fear that if they don't participate, attention will turn to them. They also have a sense that it's all in fun – but to the victims, it's not funny.

The combination of kindness, unconditional love and firm, consistent discipline as parents give them respect and dignity they desire so much.

#### **4) Pry open the door of communication**

But how can you talk to someone who won't talk – someone whose language consists of eight phrases: "I dunno", "I don't care", "Leave me alone", "I need money", "Can I have the car?" "My friends think you're unfair", "I didn't do it," and that famous word "Whatever."

Prying open the door of communication with an angry adolescent can require more tact and skill than any other parenting assignment. Often, mothers and fathers act like adolescents, shouting and screaming and engaging in endless battles that leave them exhausted but without strategic advantage. There has to be a better way of communicating than shouting at one another.

Talk to them about your concerns for his or her situation from godly viewpoint without siblings and away from home – a breakfast with that teen alone.

Encouragement and suggestions go a lot further than constant corrections and punishments. If you don't let up, your children will tune you out next time when you are all over them again. Find good things they've done even if it is a small and minor thing and it does not measure up to your standard. They will take note of it and do better next time.

Again, parenting requires Time and Touch.