

For Parents of Teenagers

Dub McClish

Several years ago, I wrote some lines on this subject prefaced by a confession of feeling inadequate since I had no children who were teenagers at that time. I also noted that I would likely feel even more inadequate when I had some teenagers. That prophecy was certainly one of the truest I shall ever make. In spite of this, I want to suggest a few commonsense observations that might help us as parents to help our young people.

1. **Be fair and honest.** When you are wrong, apologize; your teenager deserves no less and will respect you for it.
2. **Be sincere and consistent.** Young people can size up a hypocrite from a country mile. Keep your words true and pure; it's not nearly so distasteful when you have to eat them later. Make your life agree with your words.
3. **Be firm when you need to be.** Your teens need and even want the security of some limitations. Don't let them grow up having their way about everything. They will push you as far as possible, but they expect you to say "no" sometimes.
4. **Don't expect more from them than you are willing to deliver.** Why expect them to love the Lord, His Word, and His Church supremely if you treat these like a worn-out shoe? If you never pray or read God's Word in their presence, you should not expect such activities to come natural to them. How can you afford to criticize your child's disinterest in spiritual values if you put secondary things first?
5. **Don't attempt to transfer your own responsibility toward your teenager to the Church.** It can't be done. The home, not the church, is the God-ordained institution for rearing children to be strong servants of God. Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for this awesome responsibility (Eph. 6:4). True, the Church, through its worship, educational and fellowship activities can greatly assist the efforts of parents, but for parents who are members of the church, church and family activities ought to blend into one whole.
6. **Love them, even when they are unlovable.** After all, this is the kind of love our Heavenly Father has for us (Rom. 5:8). And isn't this the kind of love we want our children to have toward us? Certainly, we dare not condone misbehavior and sin in them, but neither can we afford to quit loving them.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the July 18, 1971, edition of *The Christian Reminder*, weekly bulletin of the Johnson Street Church of Christ, San Angelo, Texas, of which I was editor.

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