



# *Growing up Godly Teens*

## 1 Corinthians 13:11

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THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life  
Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, July 24, 2016, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, IL  
[livinghopechurch.net](http://livinghopechurch.net)

“Parenting – not politics, not the classroom, not the laboratory, not even the pulpit – is the place of greatest influence. We must understand that it is through the godly family that God’s grace, a vision of God, a burden for the world, and a Christian character are most powerfully communicated.” ~ **Kent Hughes**

### **Announcements**

1. Evening service at 5pm.
2. New members class begins Sunday September 4. Pastor Matt will be teaching.
3. Nursery help
4. Next week we’ll have Ruth Dougherty with us during the morning service. She is relocating to Greece.

**I**f you don’t have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **1 Corinthians 13:11**. The title of our message this morning is “Growing up Godly Teens.” This is part of our series “Thriving in the Christian Life.”

**Proposition:** Christian teens should take on the responsibilities of early adulthood.

### **Text**

**1 Cor 13:11**, “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.”

We must ask our kids to be like Jesus. **Luke 2:52**, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

## What is the Problem with the Teen Years?

What exactly is the problem with “teen years”? Paul Tripp in his book “Age of Opportunity” says that some people look at it as a season for parents to survive. Listen to him describe it: “It is everywhere around us...in the magazine rack, on the shelves of the local bookstore, on television and radio talk shows, and yes, even in a number of Christian books on the family. Parents are afraid *of their teenagers*. Even as they are enjoying the early years of a child’s life, they are looking over their shoulders with dread, expecting the worst, knowing that in a few short years this precious little one will turn into a monster overnight.... They are told to expect the worst and to be thankful if they come out of the valley sane, and with their teenager alive and their family intact.”<sup>1</sup>

We hear so often about the inevitability of teenage rebellion that we, even as Christians find ourselves believing it excusing our children’s behavior. We’ve always been told that it’s perfectly normal for a young person entering the teen years to become moody and difficult, and their parents won’t understand them. I remember hearing this at school growing up. I’ve heard it often on TV. You can read articles about it and studies that come out from time to time. In fact, there is a huge teenage subculture that our society has accepted and parents believe that there is nothing they can do about it. So we buy it to it. Society tell us this *will* happen and that it is completely normal. Of course the Bible does not teach that at all. The Bible has a name for irresponsible and rebellious behavior no matter what the age. It is sin against the Lord.

I knew my wife during high school, and I remember people being amazed that her and her brother never had a time of rebellion in their life. The teenage years came, and they did as all of our children should do. What was the secret? As they approach the age of 12 or 13, our children should say as Paul did, “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

## Outline

If our teens are going to take responsibility, parents must...

- Understand the spiritual **war** for your kids’ hearts.
- Reject the world’s **worldview** for your kids.
- Accept God’s **challenge** to call your kids to become adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Age of Opportunity* (P&R Publishing: Philipsburg, NJ, 2001), 13 [emphasis mine]..

## I. Understand the spiritual **war** for your kids' hearts.

### Our Culture is at War to Gain our Kids Hearts

There is no reason why a 13 to 18-year-old cannot behave as a responsible adult. Our culture has moved the place of adulthood back.

### Paw Paw, Michigan

When I was a kid I can remember traveling every summer from the south side of Chicago to my uncle's house in Paw Paw, Michigan near Kalamazoo. We counted every mile marker. We looked for the signs that said: "Kalamazoo: *60 miles*", then 30 miles. The closer we got the more excited we became. We couldn't wait to get to our destination. Then came that signpost that said, Welcome to Paw Paw, Michigan. We had arrived!

### The Line of Demarcation

There's another destination that kids can't wait to get to: adulthood. There's a line of demarcation for adulthood. Paul knew that destination. It was precise—there was a line of demarcation. He said, "when I became a man, I put away childish things."

Paul refers to a time in his life when he put away the excuses of childhood and began to take responsibility for himself.

He implies that there was a time in his life when there was a *break, a line of demarcation* with childhood. When Paul was a child, he could be excused for childish irresponsibility. After all, you don't expect a seven year old to think like an adult. But there came a time when Paul put childish excuses away. That time was about the age of 12 or 13 in his Jewish culture.

### An Adult in the Jewish World

Biblically and in Paul's Jewish world, becoming an adult meant:

- being *accountable* for your actions,
- and being *responsible* and *careful* before God and man in the way that you live.

### Legitimate Mile Markers

In our culture, some legitimate mile markers and signposts for growing up have become important:

- **Your first job** is a huge way that young people express their entrance into adulthood.
- **A driver's license** has become very much a rite of passage.

## **Our Culture's Disastrous Mile markers of Adulthood**

Sadly, the most notable mile markers are **disastrous**. The line of demarcation into "Adulthood" in our culture has become synonymous not with responsibility, but with *irresponsibility*.

We have *adult* movies, *adult* book stores and *adult* content all referring to such irresponsible things that no child or adult should take part in!

Sadly, our culture has different values. Becoming an adult in our culture means:

- you can *buy cigarettes*
- you can *drink alcohol*
- you can *get into R rated movies*.

## **Our Culture Used to Be Different**

Our culture at one time expected children to put away childish things and become young men and women. Now instead we prepare them for disaster in adulthood.

Just to give you an idea of how things used to be, look I want to introduce you to three men.

1. **David Farragut**: He was the U.S. Navy's first admiral. At age 10 he became a midshipman on the Essex warship. Though he would be a little boy by our culture's standards, at age 12, Farragut was considered a man in that day, and at that age he was given command of his first navy ship, a crew to command, and carried back to the US, prisoners of war, after a successful battle. Though Farragut was given responsibility at an early age, he rose to the occasion.
2. **Jonathan Edwards**: He was 13 years old when he entered Yale College. He was all of 17 years old when he completed his undergrad degree. He had his master's degree at the age of 19.
3. **George Washington**: Though he was never thought to be very bright by his peers, yet as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader he mastered geometry, trigonometry, and surveying and completed his education at 14 years of age, being considered a young adult and got gainful employment in surveying. By age 16, he was named official surveyor for Culpepper County, Virginia. For the next three years, Washington earned the equivalent of what would be \$100,000 a year

in today's dollars. By the age of 21, he was so good at his trade that he was able to acquire 2,300 acres of prime Virginian land.<sup>2</sup>

Raising godly, responsible young people is more than possible. The culture of our country in earlier years proves it.

### **The Teen Age Rebel Unknown in Other Cultures**

Around the world you see the need for younger people to take on adult size responsibilities. The phenomenon of the “teenage rebel” (i.e. moodiness and rebellion against parents) is unknown in many cultures. They treat their teens as young adults and do not allow them to have idle time. They are given adult responsibilities, and don't have time to be idle.

So, clearly, there is a pattern of responsibility in our past culture, and if we had time, we could show that many other cultures that have less idle time do not have this problem of irresponsibility in the teenage years.

### **Low Expectations**

Truly, the only thing holding young people back in America today is the ongoing recess called adolescence and our society's low **expectations**. Society expects our teenagers to be entertained and pampered. It is expected that they will not relate with parents. If we expect immaturity and irresponsibility, from ourselves as parents, and from our children, then that is exactly what we will get.

I don't believe any parent here should settle for that! So, this morning, I want to debunk some of the main myth propounded about the teenage (or adolescent) years, and then we are going to replace bad thinking with Biblical thinking.

## **II. Reject the World's Worldview for your kids.**

### **1. The world would have us believe “teenage rebellion” is a biological problem.**

This view is commonly held even by Christians. I once heard a famous Christian radio personality jokingly say that the solution for the teenage years is to put the teen in a barrel and let them out after they come into adulthood. He went on to say write in an article read recently that “for several years, some kids are not entirely rational! ... a hormonally depressed teenager may not interpret his world accurately either. His social judgment is impaired.” It is this basic attitude that is the problem.

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<sup>2</sup> Bios gained from <http://www.therebelution.com/blog/2005/08/myth-of-adolescence-part-1/> and <http://edwards.yale.edu/about-edwards/biography/>. Accessed 19 September 2007.

## **A Cop-Out for Failing to Act Responsibly**

The biological view is most definitely promoted by our society. We must realize it is a cop out to excuse us from requiring our kids to act responsibly.

All around us in our society we are led to believe that our teenagers are (as Paul Tripp puts it) “nothing more than collections of raging rebel hormones encased in developing skin.” The idea promoted by our culture is that there is a biological problem that excuses young people for several years of their life from acting rationally and responsibly.

We’re told there’s supposedly an age between childhood and adulthood where self-absorption, immaturity, and various forms of rebellion should be tolerated and indeed excused because of biological changes. This is a presupposition that our culture takes for granted, and I would say great numbers of professing Christians have used the same excuse when trying to explain teenage immaturity and even rebellion. It’s biological.

### **2. If “teenage rebellion” is biological how can we reprimand it?**

Christians need to take a step back and consider what this implies. If adolescence is biologically determined, affecting our teenager’s attitudes and temperaments, then how can we reprimand it? If my child’s rebellion is outside of his control, then how can I correct him or her? If the child cannot be any other way through this stage of his development, then it is pointless punishing him or her as if change were possible. In fact, it would be unfair and unreasonable to do so. On the other hand, if adolescence is a relatively modern feature of our culture, then a different posture needs to be taken towards it.

### **3. The idea of the “teenage rebel” mentality begins in modern times.**

“Rather than calling into question teenagers’ irresponsible and selfish behavior, they [the experts] tell us that teens are supposed to go through an out-of-control time-out between childhood and adulthood.” Who are these experts and where did their bad thinking come from?

According to historian David Bakan, “The idea of [the teenage years] ... is the product of modern times...” that began really at the turn of the twentieth century. So today, the term “adolescence” refers to the teen years, during which teenagers are treated as children even though they are really “adults” in the original sense of the word.

How did it happen? Bakan gives three reasons from history as to how the teenage years went from beginning adulthood to reverting to an extended childhood.

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## HOW ADOLESCENCE WAS EXTENDED IN MODERN AMERICA

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### **1. Public School was mandated by the government.**

First, Public School became mandatory. Public education laws were passed that removed how a child should be educated away from parents. Education was mandated by law, and parents could be punished for keeping their children out of public school. At first the laws were seldom enforced since parents as an infringement of our God-given responsibility to educate our children.

Gradually, these laws were passed in the United States that required all children to go to school.

### **2. Public School was extended four years by the government.**

Second, instead of going to college at 14 or 15 (which was considered young adulthood in times past), these laws extended primary education for four additional years. So in today's world, young people like Farragut or George Washington or Jonathan Edwards are forbidden by law from entering college at a younger age, and instead have a four-year stint in school covering what used to be covered in the first year or two of college.

In 1880, American high schools were launched as preparatory academies for colleges. Normally at the age of 14 one would begin to work alongside your family as an apprentice. The other option was to go to college or to a preparatory school, what we call a high school today.

One person I read observed that “young people by these laws were now allowed, encouraged, and even forced to remain quasi-children for much longer than necessary....” With these changes, young adults (“adolescents”) and not just children were forced to attend a continuing primary school instead of going to college or getting a job and family.

So, Public Education Laws began to reform our understanding of teenagers, and remove them from taking on responsibilities.

### **3. Child Labor Laws**

Third, child labor laws were enacted that made it illegal to employ persons below certain ages.

Though this was good on many levels and protected some segments of society, young adults from responsible homes were now not allowed to work. As a result, they became financially dependent on Mom and Dad for an additional four years. It didn't used to be this way. For thousands of years, young people worked with their parents or beside an apprentice until they could become independent.

“Today, young adults are by law not permitted to assume the normal responsibilities of adulthood. In the past our society would have encouraged them to enter a trade, go to college, or finding gainful employment. Consequently, marriage and family has had to be delayed as well.

So our society invented ‘the teenager’, who has all the yearnings and capabilities and intelligence of an adult, but none of the freedoms or responsibilities.”

#### **4. Juvenile Justice System.**

We might mention a fourth and final reason adolescence was extended by four years in America. A juvenile justice system was created to segregate younger lawbreakers from older ones. This produced a different system of record keeping, punishment, and probation for “juveniles.” Just as teenagers were no longer expected to be responsible to support themselves, so they were no longer held responsible for their criminal acts, despite the fact that for thousands of years the legal system treated teenagers as adults. In nineteenth century America a fifteen-year-old lawbreaker could be punished the same way as a thirty-five-year-old offender would be. Today, however, our laws have turned adults into irresponsible children. As a result, young people can literally “get away with murder.”

By the 1920s the marriage age, along with inauguration into the work force, was steadily moving upward. For the first time in history, young people were not allowed to make adult decisions at the age that physically they became adults.

People who were young adults were told they were still children. As a result, permissiveness and immaturity began to be encouraged.

### **III. Accept the God’s challenge to call your kids to adulthood.**

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#### **UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM**

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##### **1. The problem of a teenager is clearly addressed: sin.**

You have to ask yourself, if teenagers are such a difficult phenomenon in our culture, why doesn’t the Bible address the problems of this age group? The answer to that question is that the Bible clearly addresses the problem. But it’s not a problem that is specific to a certain age group. It affects us all. It’s called sin. Sin is the transgression of God’s law. This means we need to teach our young adults responsibility.



## **2. The problem has little to do with hormones.**

So we have to ask a question... Why do kids sometimes turn bad when they become teenagers? For the same reason meat goes bad if its left out to be influenced by its environment. Leave the meat out unprotected, and worms crawl in. Leave it to be exposed to the heat of the midday sun and it will turn rancid.

It has very little to do with hormones. Hormones can make a young person have a bad day, but so can many things that the young person cannot control. Hard things happen all the time to young people. They have to move to a new unfamiliar community. They get made fun of at school. They have a class that they're not extremely interested. None of these things cause a person to turn sour. No, it is the heart that turns anyone, young or old sour.

## **3. The problem begins at birth.**

It is human depravity. The problem is promoted at the time of physical entrance into adulthood. Instead of taking on adult responsibilities at physical maturation, young adults are told that they are still children. Then they are rebuked when they are 18 for not growing, after having been told they were children for four or five years of physical adulthood.

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### **UNDERSTANDING THE SOLUTION**

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The Bible speaks of three stages of life. Two are found in our text: childhood, manhood or adulthood, and finally the Bible speaks in many places of old age. We'll get into these divisions at another time, but here in our text we see the first two divisions already. Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

## **1. Insist on personal responsibility beginning at physical maturation of your child.**

The old saying goes 'an idle mind is the devil's playground.' Children of the ages between 13 and 19 are extremely intelligent. If you add intelligence with irresponsibility and a wicked heart, and then you give them little to no responsibilities, then don't be surprised at their rebellion!

## **2. Take the radical irresponsibility of our culture seriously.**

We ought to be alarmed at what public schools want to do with our children. Christians should be outraged at what is going on in our society.

a. Our public schools are breeding grounds for irresponsible behavior. This is taught in sex education classes. Our public schools and our culture are having classes and promoting the ideas of how to responsibly do the most irresponsible thing in the universe.

b. Then there is Abortion “rights”. Young adults are told that they are children, yet they have the desires of adults. They are encouraged to be immoral under law in public schools. And then today, under the laws of the United States of America, “minors” can obtain an abortion without parental consent.

Rather than calling into question teenagers’ irresponsible and selfish behavior, society tells us that teens are supposed to go through an out-of-control time-out between childhood and adulthood. The laws of our country support it by subsidizing immorality, and then they support the murder of children to make the problem go away. Because of this more than one third of American women under the age of 45 have had an abortion. I could say a lot more on that, but do you see what disobedience to the Word of God leads to?

### **3. Wake up to the challenge that raising your teens for Christ is the parent’s responsibility.**

Christian moms and dads need to realize the real problem is that we are sending our young people into the world mentally, socially, and morally unprepared for the challenges of adulthood. If the most significant relationships in our children’s lives are simply their peers, then do not be surprised if they fall away.

### **4. Reject the myth that healthy development among youth requires a strong break with their parents.**

A recent study showed that young people desire a strong bond with their parents. Specifically, the study concluded that (1) equating the youth years with inevitable rebellion is inaccurate; (2) the predictable disintegration of parent - teen relationships is false; and (3) teens are more likely to support parental values than to be in conflict with them.

### **5. Finally treat the problem biblically, Psalm 119:9-10.**

The problem is not their age. It’s not their hormones. It is their heart. Psalm 119:9-10, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto

according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.”

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## UNDERSTANDING THE RITE OF PASSAGE

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### 1. First, realize the world has already created its own “rite of passage.”

Instead of taking on adult responsibility, young people have created their own **rite of passage** into their perceived adulthood based on our cultures values. Common rites of passage into adulthood for young teens would be sadly all too common in our culture:

- smoking a **cigarette**
- or having a **beer**
- and in today’s promiscuous culture, many times it includes **fornication** and throwing away the precious gift that God has reserved for the person you marry.
- Sometimes it includes **drugs**, or any **illicit behavior**

We don’t express it this way, but our society basically says you are an adult if you smoke, get drunk, and are promiscuous. You have to wait to 18 to do all that, but you can be any age to legally make the decision to take a baby’s life. What confusion!

Can all this confusion be prevented? Absolutely. I believe it can. It is parents’ irresponsibility in guiding children into adulthood that has created the mess we call “adolescence”.

Instead of leaving our children to wonder when it is they are to take on adult responsibilities, I believe we as parents should guide the way for our children into young adulthood.

### 2. Give your child a “rite of passage” into adulthood.

***The Rite of Passage in Paul’s day.*** In Paul’s day, the parents would have a “rite of passage” –a formal celebration that indicated that the child was entering into adulthood. This has now become known in Jewish culture as the bar mitzvah. The ceremony itself is not the important thing, but it is the understanding of everyone in the family and the community that this boy or girl has now taken the first step into adulthood.

***The Rite of Passage in Other Cultures.*** This rite of passage exists today in many other cultures around the world. This week I came across the Nigerian rite of passage.

In Nigerian society, a boy lives at home until he reaches the proper age, usually about eleven. Then one evening the village elders and the boy's father appear outside the hut. The men call out for the boy to come out of the hut. The boy of his own accord steps out and is led deep into the forest. For two weeks he is taught the skills of construction and hunting and his family's history. After the two weeks are up, the boy returns to the village. He is regarded as a young man, and is given his own hut to live in. That evening, he receives from his father a gun, a piece of farmland, and a farming instrument which will help him to establish himself as a man. From that day on, he's on his own.

### **A modern example of a Christian rite of passage.**

I think it is important for Christians to somehow mark this rite of passage into adulthood for our sons and daughters. You could do several things:

- **Hold a special service at your home, or at a special place.** Invite family and adults that are important in your child's life [grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, pastors, teachers].
- **Go through your family history.** Have the father or some of the godly adults give the family's history—of the physical and spiritual heritage, and how important your son or daughter is in that keeping that heritage. During this time you want older, godly adults to talk about the responsibilities of adulthood. It's also a great time to talk about how to develop godly disciplines like prayer and Bible reading.
- **Have the father give a word of expectation.** (When I was growing up, my father was 800 miles away, so he wasn't available. If that is the case, you can have a godly adult such as a pastor or someone respected in the church take this on). This "word of expectation" should be a welcoming into the beginning of adulthood. A Scripture could be quoted, and you would explain that the child is no longer a child. They are expected to begin to take on adult responsibilities around the home and if possible in the church.
- **Finally, close with a dedication and prayer.** Have the young person come forward and have two or three godly people, including the father if possible, pray and dedicate the young adult to the Lord.

Obviously, the points I just gave you are a suggestion—the ceremony is not necessary, but it could be something your child will never forget.

Paul had come from a Jewish home and speaks in 1 Corinthians 13:11 about the transition from childhood to adulthood. He says: **1 Cor 13:11**, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."

### 3. Treat your teens as young adults: let them know you expect them to be responsible. See Luke 2:52.

When Paul began to be able to reason and express himself, he was a man. It was a definite point in life that certainly took place at his physical maturity, but was also had to be guided by his parents and his home life.

***The Example of Jesus.*** The same occurred in the life of Jesus. **Luke 2:52**, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” We remember in Luke 2:41-52, at the age of twelve, Jesus went up to the Temple and began acting like a man. Remember they lost track of Him and could not find Him. Look at **Luke 2:46-47**, “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

Jesus began to grow into manhood.

***The Example of Paul.*** The same occurred with Paul, we can concur through 1 Cor. 13:11. When he became a man he put away the things of childhood.

Around the age of 12 or 13, Paul began to think and reason abstractly and his parents moved him into adulthood. He began to interact with his own thoughts. At the age of physical maturation, Paul began to take responsibility to think for himself, and to operate upon his own internal convictions.

***Application.*** Let me give some application here. By the time a young person is developed physically and begins to think abstractly, they should be learning to provide for and take care of themselves.

By age 12 or 13, young ladies should be cooking, sewing, and helping mother run the home. By this age, young men should be able to do some of the manual things around the house—fixing things, yard work, etc. Around the age of thirteen, children should now learn to take responsibility for their own lives and transition to adulthood. A person is only as mature as what they are willing to take responsibility for. I’ve met 15 year olds that were more ready for life than some 35 year olds. So let me say it again: A person’s maturity can be defined according to what a person is willing to take responsibility for.

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#### TAKE ACTION

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### 1. Lead by example.

Expect them to act like adults. Show them what a walk with God looks like. They should see answered prayer in your life. They should be walking with God and be able to talk meaningfully about what God is teaching them in the Word.

## **2. Be sure they are converted and baptized.**

While no parent is able to convert their child's soul, we are the means of grace that God uses to point our children to Christ. If your child is not converted by the age of 11, you should be having daily and weekly conversations of the love of Christ, the assurance Christ can give, what faith is, etc. This is primarily the responsibility of the parents, not anyone else's. Yes the church will help, but it is difficult to help if the parents are not already evangelizing their children.

## **3. Give them responsibilities in the home.**

*Teach them how to maintain a home and a yard.* One day they are going to have to do it. Before adolescence was invented, children were expected to work without getting an allowance.

*Teach them financial responsibility.* For thousands of years young people worked and learned from their parents. Today, teens can clean windows, trim trees, mow lawns, and scrub floors for money. My youth pastor started his own lawn business that put him through Christian school and college.

*Help them with learning how to drive.* When teens begin to drive, they should work and help pay their own insurance costs, and eventually pay for the car. Some parents charge their teens ten cents a mile for the use of the car. Help them to understand that the money doesn't grow on trees. It is earned by hard work. If they have the ability to drive, then they have the intelligence to work. In fact, you don't even need much intelligence for some jobs!

*Encourage them to get a job.* This is something where a young person has to demonstrate responsibility beforehand. Work teaches several important values: it teaches them to meet deadlines, to work with a glad and thankful heart, and to replace something if they break it. They need to learn to manage money. What you teach them they will take into their marriage and multiply times infinity! Sometimes your teens will blow the bankroll and beg for money. That's when you need to be a Depression era banker! There will certainly be more money for them...*when they get paid!*

## **4. Give them a place to serve in the church.**

Encourage them to have a real role in the church. Every one of our teens should have a serious role in the church if you are saved and baptized. At age 12 in Judaism

young people began to participate in adult worship, even by reading the Torah. Some ideas would be:

- Serve on the worship team if they are musical
- Straighten the Bibles in the seats after each service
- Help serve in the nursing home, the pantry ministry, VBS
- Put stamps on the tracts, and make sure the tract racks are full
- Write notes to those who are absent for church and let them know you are praying for them
- Help set up, serve, and clean up for fellowships and church activities
- They can do yard work for shut-ins.

These are just suggestions! They should also have a major role in family devotions at home. At times they can share something from the Word of God with the family at the appropriate time.

### **5. Spend time with young adult children.**

Expect them to act responsibly. Give them many opportunities. We like to get the kids their licenses and encourage them to get a job. We remind them often that soon they will be on their own.

### **6. Prepare them for singleness. Prepare them for courtship and marriage.**

No one is guaranteed marriage or even a good marriage. We need to help them remember they need to take care of themselves. Especially young women need to realize that you may not get married, and that's ok.

I love the example of the young women in our church who are like Lydia. She was a seller of purple in Philippi.

Our young women should be taught to be willing to give up a good paying job for a family to do the work God intends married women to do. To be a "worker in the home." I am so proud of some of the professional moms who have lucrative careers, but who have drastically cut it back when the children came. Praise God!

### **7. Help them consider college and career choices.**

Don't tell them to go after their dreams. That's silliness. Tell them to be practical. They need to be able to provide for themselves. If they are able to provide where they can consider some of their dreams, then so be it. But most should prepare for college. Be wise in that. You don't have to pay 50K a year to go to college.

Take them on college trips. Help them explore Christian colleges.

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**LOOK TO BIBLICAL EXAMPLES**

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Some of the greatest heroes of the Bible were young adults! Think of some of the Biblical examples of teenage responsibility.

1. **Josiah:** Josiah's father was a wicked king—assassinated when Josiah was **8 years old**, and he ascended to the throne at that age. At age 15, the Bible says he “began to seek after the God of David” (**2 Chronicles 34:3**). Josiah cleaned house, and the Bible says “he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images”. A 15 year old brought the last great national revival to Israel!!
2. **Joseph:** Talk about responsibility! Joseph was all of seventeen when he was sold as a slave, ending up in Potiphar’s house with his adulterous wife. Joseph’s actions at 17 showed his commitment that ultimately saved a nation, and we are talking about him today. Imagine spending age 17 and 18 and into your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday in jail. Joseph never compromised.
3. Then there’s **David:** He was a ruddy faced young man when he took down the giant Goliath. At a young age he had responsibility for the family flock of sheep and had to kill a lion and a bear to protect them.
4. How about **Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?** Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, on the way to establishing a vast empire took hostage 70 teenagers from the most important families of Jerusalem. He wanted to make them into Babylonians on the inside even if they looked like Hebrews on the outside. The plan was that those seventy would lead the rest of the people away from God to the Babylonian world-view. Most of the young people denied their faith, however, four of the seventy stood firm for God, and it almost cost each of them their lives. You remember their names right? Their Hebrew names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, but you know Daniel’s three friends as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The king could change their names, but he could not change their commitment to the Lord. These young adults are my heroes!
5. **The Apostle John:** He would have been likely around 12 or 13 when Jesus’ ministry began.
6. **Timothy** was a young man when he became the pastor of the church at Ephesus. Even as a young adult, Paul could say to the **Philippians** in chapter **2:19-20** that Timothy was trustworthy. He says, “I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.”

## Conclusion

We must reach a point where we are giving our children real responsibilities and calling them to an account. They have the cognitive ability like no other time



in life. The teenage years should be the best and most glorious of life. It should be the time of commitment and intense spiritual growth.

Remember, it's never too late. Perhaps you have a wondering child. Hezekiah was father to Manasseh. Manasseh was one of the wickedest kings in the history of Israel. I believe because of his godly father and mother's prayers, God brought repentance to Manasseh many years later. Don't ever give up hope!