

## Ministering To Teenagers

Michael R. Daily, April 2013

Other youth bible studies by Michael R. Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Reference #1: Gary Klein, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*, The MIT Press, 1998.

Reference #2: Chip & Dan Heath, *Made To Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, Random House, 2008.

Reference #3: Chip & Dan Heath, *Decisive: How To Make Better Choices In Life and Work*, Crown Business, 2013.

The mission of transiting the teen years into the adult world is one that is complex and requires teenagers to make numerous decisions along the way. Unlike the decisions of childhood, decisions made during the teen years can lead to catastrophic failure if done poorly. In addition, the person making these decisions (the teenager) has a complete lack of experience in the areas in which they will be making these life altering decisions! On top of that satan has set up a world system that constantly streams incorrect information and faulty advice to them, literally on a daily basis.

Authors such as James Dobson have compared the teen years with that of preparing to launch a rocket and, in many ways, the analogy is a good one.

**Analogy:** *inference that if two or more things agree with one another in some respects they will probably agree in others*

When we sent men to the moon the mission was complex and required the astronauts and engineers to make numerous decisions along the way, any one of which could lead to catastrophic failure if done poorly. In addition, no one had any experience making these decisions because no one had ever sent a man into orbit much less to the moon and back! And yet our travels to the moon were successful. Why?

Part of the reason was how they trained for such a mission. In addition to the bookwork they did, they also did something else that was critical to success. They made extensive use of simulation (reference #1).

**Simulation:** *examination of a problem often not subject to direct experimentation by means of a simulating device*

They built simulators for every piece of mission equipment and task, and the astronauts and engineers spent countless hours flying every aspect of the mission over and over and over. Not only that, but every possible combination of variation, problem, or system failure was induced in the simulators and the astronauts and engineers had to make real-time decisions on what they should do and not do. The idea was to not only give them the head knowledge of what to do but to also give them the experience of how hard or easy it would be, how it would feel emotionally, and to make it personal for them in every way. So, how did they do? The first time these people encountered a new situation in the simulator, they often made the wrong decision! Then the situation was reviewed to see what could be learned and it was tried again. The process was repeated over and over until the best response was not only discovered but also became intuitive. By the time the first rocket left the launch pad on its way to the moon, the crew and engineering team had flown many thousands of missions in the simulators greatly increasing the probability that they would make good decisions during the actual mission.

Should a similar approach be used to help prepare teenagers for their mission?

### Proverbs 29:19

**A slave will not be instructed by words alone; For though he understands, there will be no response.**

Words alone are not the best way to get people to respond properly to instruction. We need to provide either some "hands on" training or the next best thing, simulation.

"Hands on" training is disciplinemaking based on the "with him" principle.

### Mark 3:14

**And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,**

So, the best way to help someone learn how to do things, including making good decisions, is to do these things with them. For teenagers, this type of training mostly falls to the parents although in some cases it can also be done by a youth minister.

But what if you are working with a larger group where “hands on” training is not possible?

### **Psalm 78:1-8**

**Listen, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, <sup>3</sup> Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. <sup>5</sup> For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, <sup>6</sup> That the generation to come might know, *even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children,* <sup>7</sup> That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments, <sup>8</sup> And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.**

In these cases the next best approach is to use simulation. The least expensive and easiest form of simulation are well selected analogies and well designed stories or parables. (reference #2).

Why is this important? We know from **Proverbs 29:19** that talking to them in abstract conceptual terms doesn't have much impact. This leaves three alternatives. “With him” training, simulation, or direct experimentation. In the absence of “with him” training or simulation, teens will drift toward direct experimentation which exposes their lives to serious damage that can take years, decades, or even a complete lifetime to recover from. If we had attempted the Apollo Moon mission with no simulation and only direct experimentation, the probability of success would have been zero!

The “simulating device” that we will use, primarily, will be the use of intentionally designed stories that engage the teens’ imaginations.

Jesus set the example by teaching using parables. Parables are short stories that teach a moral or spiritual lesson. However, Jesus’ parables had two purposes: To reveal spiritual truth to some people while simultaneously hiding spiritual truth from others.

### **Matthew 13:10-13**

**And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup> For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**

Our job is going to be a little easier. We only need to focus on using stories to reveal truth to the teens.

### **A Well Designed Story (reference #2):**

- 1) Is simple and easy to understand. It doesn't raise more questions than it answers.
- 2) Has things in it that are unexpected, surprising, or counterintuitive
- 3) Is presented in very concrete terms, it is not abstract
- 4) Is credible and believable (i.e. it's a true story or it is closely based on a true story)
- 5) Communicates the emotions and feelings of the situation, not just the facts.

But not all stories and analogies are simulations. In order to be effective as a simulation, the teenager must be able to see themselves immersed into the experience of the story as if it was about them.

## **Making the Story Simple but Credible**

We want the simulation to be realistic and credible. Nothing is more realistic and credible than a true story. The problem with telling all the details of a true story is that many of the details are not relevant to the lesson or simulation, and often cause distraction, confusion, or raise questions in the minds of the teens that you are not trying to address right now. Ideally, we would like to tell a true story but strip out all of the unnecessary details that confuse rather than clarify. If we take out the unneeded details but keep all the critical elements, relevant cues, and the emotions in the story, it becomes more effective and memorable. So, what we really want is to tell a story that is not precisely a true story but rather something that is, “based on a true story”. It has the credibility and emotion of a true story, but the irrelevant details of a specific occurrence have been removed.

Jesus was a master at doing this. The Sower is a combination of both Story and Analogy. Notice how Jesus told the story of The Sower.

### **Matthew 13:3-9**

**And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup> and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup> And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”**

What is the name of the sower? What had the sower been doing earlier in the day? Was his son with him? Jesus doesn't mention these details because they distract from the lesson being transmitted and are irrelevant. Jesus' parables were not complete fiction and they were not a full accounting of an actual event. His parables were “based on true stories” and ours will be too.

## **Surprising or Counterintuitive Story Elements for Teens**

When making decisions teenagers have a tendency to frame the decision too narrowly (ref #3, pages 32-37). For example, they will often say, “I need to decide if I am going to do X or Y”. What they mean by this is there are only two options and these options are not allowed to have any overlap. In reality, most decisions have many more than two options and in some cases the OR can be replaced with an AND, at least partially. They might also frame the decision by saying, “I need to decide if I am going to do X or not”. This is even worse. Now they have limited themselves to considering only one option which means they have already made the decision whether they realize it or not! So, in our simulations we want to show them that there are many more things to take into consideration besides a yes/no, either/or decision. This is why we can't create stories for teens from an adult's perspective. Adults tend to automatically frame decisions more broadly than teens do. In other words, what is obvious to you is not at all obvious to them. So, to overcome this we will need to think back to what it was really like when we were teens – how we viewed things, how we thought about things, and how we felt about things – and use those memories to help us create our stories or simulations.

## **The Concrete and Emotional Story Elements for Teens**

### **Mark 12:28-31**

**One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

God wants people to love Him with all their HEART, SOUL, MIND, and STRENGTH. Therefore, the best way we can help them do this is to try to engage these four things as much as possible in our teaching. We don't want to just transmit data (mind), we also want to engage their emotions, their spirit, and their physical senses, to the extent possible. In other words, create an experience for them. If you can immerse your audience in an experience they will enjoy it more and remember it better. The movie industry does this well.

For example, when the movie industry tells you a story they don't just transmit facts – “the boy met the girl, they fell in love, got married, end of story”. They don't present it in abstract terms – “most boys and girls

eventually marry someone of the opposite sex” (yawn). You would not pay money to see that kind of movie, would you?

Instead, they open the story with the camera high above the peach tree in the spring time, as the camera slowly pans down and around the tree we glide toward the young woman gazing into the setting sun, golden sunlight streaming across her face, the gentle breeze flowing through her long, satin hair, a tear welling up in one eye. Its as if you are right there having the experience yourself – it engages your emotions and senses as well as your mind. What they are doing is immersing you in an experience. People like that.

Jesus used stories (parables) to immerse his audience in an experience.

### **Matthew 7:24-27**

**"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25" And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26" Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27" The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."**

A house built on the sand. You can feel the rain and the wind pounding the house, you can see the house helplessly sliding down the sand into the ocean. Its an experience. Its like a movie clip in people's minds.

*Key Point: Our simulations will be based on true stories with the irrelevant factual details removed and a little more emotional detail and description added in and will contain counterintuitive elements when appropriate.*

### **What Should We Simulate?**

Teens are in a hurry to get to the future. So, let's focus our simulations on their future. They already have many teachers who talk to them about the present, but not many help them get ready for the future. In addition, the future is an area of life where they have not already had success or failure so it is naturally interesting and full of potential from their perspective.

I work with teens from ages 13 to 18. If I am teaching the 13 and 14 year olds, we will cover lessons relevant to 15 to 18 year olds. If I am teaching 15 to 18 year olds I will cover lessons relevant to college students or young adults out on their own. In other words, I will be taking the 14 year olds through simulations of things they will encounter when they are 16 or 17 years old and I will be taking the 18 year olds through simulations of things they will encounter at college, out on the job, or related to marriage.

If I can engage them in a physical simulation instead of just a story-based mental simulation I will do that. For example, The Bridge Challenge is a physical simulation of presenting the Gospel to a group of people. Not all but many of the emotions (anxiety), environmental challenges (interruptions), and logistical issues (markers that don't work) show up during the simulation. Once they have mastered these with me it is much easier for them to present the Gospel to a real audience (The Extreme Bridge Challenge), some of whom they lead to Christ. In every lesson I teach, my objective is to show them what the Bible says about an issue and then engage them in some type of relevant mental or physical simulation to the extent possible.

### **An Interesting Side Effect**

Over the past 6 years or so I have annually gathered written questions about life, God, and the Bible from all of the 13 and 14 year old students. I thought it would be a good way to find out what they are thinking and struggling with. I also assumed that it would take some effort to answer their questions the first year but after that most of the questions in later years would be repeats not requiring additional work from me. To my surprise the percentage of repeat questions each year remains at around 10%. In other words, 90% of the questions I get each year are new and have never been asked in previous years! Considering that each class results in about 30 questions I have so far had to answer 180 questions with only 20 to 30 being repeats. I was curious to find out why. After all, my miscalculation has resulted in a significant unexpected workload for me! As I talked to the other adults and parents about it, this is what has emerged. It appears that many of the stories, lessons, and questions we have covered in mid-school (13 & 14 year olds) are being shared around dinner tables and with friends by the 13/14 year olds, and their younger siblings and friends are picking up the

lessons. By the time these younger people get to mid-school, they aren't struggling with those issues and are ready to move on to other things. That's great. Their older brothers and sisters are helping them follow Christ!

### **A Few More Thoughts Before We Try Some Simulations**

1) During your time around the teens its important that you be enthusiastic and encouraging.

#### **I Peter 5:1-4**

**Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

Adults, by their actions, constantly and unintentionally communicate how unimportant teens are to them. Every year we have at least two or three instances of adults forgetting to show up to teach a Bible lesson to the teens on the night they were scheduled. This would never happen if those teachers had made the commitment to a group of adults. One night a local celebrity was supposed to show up to teach and didn't. One of the other men leaders, who faithfully attends every week, filled in to teach the lesson and started by saying, "I'm sorry but tonight you will have to settle for the B team". I had to interrupt him and say, "No, the guy who doesn't show up is the B team. You are the A team".

Instead, show up, be happy, be enthusiastic, and talk to them in an encouraging way. They have felt harassed and beat up all week by the world system so they don't need more of that. They should be able to relax a little and not have to worry about getting their feelings hurt unnecessarily by an adult.

2) Make the scriptures the foundation for your teaching.

**Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

**I Corinthians 2:4-6 - and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;**

If you do everything else in this lesson but do not use and demonstrate the power and wisdom of God's Word then you will have failed and ultimately, lives will not change. Being enthusiastic is necessary, being memorable is necessary, but the goal is to continuously demonstrate that God's Word is the only foundation to build our lives on. It is the only thing that has the answers to life's questions. If we do everything else but fail to do this then we have demonstrated, whether we meant to or not, that maybe God's Word does not have the answers and maybe the World system does.

When teens get into the adult world (ex: college) the entire academic power of the world system will attack them with the goal of destroying their faith. Studies show that the majority of kids raised in Christian churches will "lose their faith" and only 30% of these will ever come back. I believe the reason that kids "lose their faith" in college is that churches failed to constantly demonstrate the things mentioned above. When kids get to college and the world presents them with their reasons why the Bible can't be trusted in areas of science, philosophy, child raising, sexual behavior, etc. - they are not prepared. After a few years of college Satan comes along with the following thoughts for them to think about:

*"There are lots of hard questions and difficult issues that we study in college and the answers we learn are not what my parents live by in their religion. I remember my time in church back home. That was a happy time, lots of fun and good memories. But that was childhood and childhood is a time to be silly and happy and perhaps a little ignorant – that's the way it should be. I love the adult leaders who were there with us – they were good, happy, fun, sincere people and they obviously cared about us. But perhaps they were a little too happy and a little too ignorant – they never answered the hard questions I am now dealing with in college and*

*in life. I guess its because the bible doesn't have answers to these issues. Maybe to believe the bible you have to just not ask certain questions. But I am an adult now and the time for blissful ignorance is over. I appreciate the good times we had in church but I have to face reality. I am an intelligent person and I have to deal with the real world now .... and the world seems to know what it is talking about."*

In our teaching we have to be interesting but that is not the goal. We need to have fun but that is not the goal. We have to be memorable, but that is not the goal. The goal is to constantly demonstrate the power of God's Word and its wisdom from every angle and for every issue. If we don't do that one thing above everything else then we failed.

**Psalm 119:98-100 - Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts.**

3) Use a preemptive approach to address challenges

Imagine that you are a member of your audience at their station in life, listening to you, and try to imagine what questions, arguments, and challenges will be going through their mind. State those and then answer them. These things include honest questions, arguments they have heard from the world system that no one has ever countered, and challenges from demonic attempts at deception that have not been effectively addressed.

So, as you teach your lesson occasionally you may stop and say in a slightly melodramatic fashion, "Oh, but Mr. Daily, what about....." Then you state the challenge - then you lead them to the answer to the challenge. We are essentially running a simulation of someone in the audience challenging me without anyone actually having to take the personal risk of making the challenge.

Don't wait for someone in the audience to jump up and say, "You're wrong, Mr. Daily, and here's why". Occasionally this may happen but most of the time people will not say it, but they will be thinking it.

Spend some time identifying ahead of time what these difficult questions or common challenges are going to be and spend most of your preparation time studying the Bible to figure out the answers.

You can use Bible search web sites such as (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>) to help you in your study.

For extremely difficult issues you may also want to get some wisdom from others. Perhaps you can find a pastor or "wise man" to get advice from – if not perhaps you can buy their book. A search on the Focus on the Family web site book section is a good resource.

This is a very powerful teaching method. The opposite is also true. The worst thing you can do is avoid the hard questions or pretend they don't exist. If you don't address them people figure you don't have an answer and therefore the challenge must be correct.

One of the most valuable things you can do is pick the most difficult and challenging issues and work diligently during your preparation to answer them. This is harder work but the result is you will make a significant contribution to strengthening people's faith in God and confidence in the Bible.

Jesus used a similar approach in that He often answered questions that had not been asked.

### **Matthew 9:1-8**

**Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." And he got up and went home. But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.**

## **Matthew 5:21-45**

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 23"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26"Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. 27"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; 28but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell. 31"It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; 32but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. 33"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' 34"But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36"Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37"But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil. 38"You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' 39"But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40"If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41"Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42"Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. 43"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Tonight we will try out two types of simulation in class. One will be a series of simulations related to sexual purity. The second will be a simulation related to the inerrancy of the Bible.

## **Nine Sexual Purity Simulation Examples**

For more on this topic please see the study, "Purity Before Marriage" at: <http://qciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

The question often comes up, "Mr. Daily, I know we are not supposed to have pre-marital sex, but what about touching and kissing, what are the rules for that"? No matter what you say they will object to it. They will say that that is just your opinion or your interpretation of the Bible. Or they might agree that the Bible says not to do it but they don't understand why. Although it is not necessary to always know why in order to obey God, it can be helpful if examples are available. What follows is a series of simulations related to sexual purity.

Simulation #1: Sometime, over the next few years you are going to see a teenage man lightly kissing a young woman on the lips and gently hugging her. Now I want you to know something - they really love each other. (teenagers often change their answer if they think the couple really loves each other). What do you think about this? How many say that what they are doing is harmful, how many say what they are doing is harmless, and how many say what they are doing is helpful? How many don't know? (Write down the vote counts on the board). Have them explain why they gave the answer they gave.

Simulation #2: I have another question for you. You are walking along and you see another teenage man and woman hugging and kissing. But this couple is not just kissing, they are really kissing – I'm talking heavy, passionate kisses – and they really love each other. I'd like to know what you think about this. How many say that what they are doing is harmful, how many say what they are doing is harmless, and how many say what they are doing is helpful? How many don't know? (Write down the vote counts on the board). Have them explain why they gave the answer they gave.

Simulation #3: I'm not done yet. I have another question for you. You are walking along and you see another teenage man and woman hugging and kissing – and they're kissing heavy, passionate kisses AND.....the hands are going everywhere. Up and down, front and back, the hands are going everywhere – and they really love each other. I'd like to know what you think about this? How many say that what they are doing is harmful, how many say what they are doing is harmless, and how many say what they are doing is helpful? How many don't know? (Write down the vote counts on the board). Have them explain why they gave the answer they gave.

(You will likely get a spread of answers – not a unanimous consensus on one. If they ask you if the couple really loves each other make a strong statement that you know for sure that the couple loves each other)

Now most of your answers relied on your own wisdom by thinking through what seemed right or wrong to you. Some of you voted based on how you felt as you pictured seeing these couples. But there are some problems with that approach.

### **Proverbs 16:25 – “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death”**

As you can see from the varied responses we got to our scenarios, our brains are not big enough to figure out the right answer. If they had been, you all would have unanimously agreed on the same answer and would have clear reasons for why - that didn't happen – did it?

### **Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick, who can understand it?”**

**Deceive:** to absolutely convince someone that something good is bad or that something bad is good.

Simulation #4: If you are watching a movie and in the movie there is a teenager in a love situation and they are confused and unsure what to do, what usually happens? – an older character in the movie will tell them to what? “Follow your heart, young one. – what does your heart tell you?” The world's wisdom says to follow your heart. God says, “If you follow your heart, you're toast”.

Our feelings and our brains cannot be relied on to come up with the right answer. The only chance you have is the wisdom of a perfect God.

What does God's Word say about kissing and touching?

**I Corinthians 6:18-20 – “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”**

Some people say they can do whatever they want because its their body. Is that true? If you are a Christian it is not your body – God owns it and has the right to tell us what to do with it.

**Romans 13:13-14 – “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”**

**Carousing:** attending loud drinking parties

**Sensuality:** inappropriately indulging the physical senses

**Lust:** a strong, overwhelming desire



**Flee:** to run away from danger as fast as you can

Simulation #5: God does not want you getting drunk but he also does not want you attending loud drinking parties. It does not matter if you are only going to drink a coke, it does not matter if you are only there to witness – God says you are not to attend loud drinking parties. Likewise, God not only wants you to avoid sexual promiscuity but he also wants you to avoid sensuality (some versions use the words wantonness or debauchery or lasciviousness but they mean the same thing as sensuality). What is the reason? Because sensuality – touching and kissing – makes provision – it opens the door – to strong, overwhelming desires. And those desires are like a tractor beam that slowly pulls you in more and more.

Physical touching begins a God designed process of binding two people together for a lifetime – a process intended for marriage. When you touch and kiss there is an addictive quality to it that is hard to resist – a little bit like a drug addiction. And even though there is also a large emotional content to this addiction – you need to understand, it is not love. It has nothing to do with love. Now in marriage having a husband and wife kind of addicted to each other is not a bad idea! This is a very powerful force. Outside of marriage this force is still very powerful but you need to understand – outside of marriage it is a destructive force.

Touching and kissing (sensuality) creates two scenarios.

1) the addictive quality is such that it will slowly draw you like a tractor beam into deeper and more serious sin and it muddles your thinking in such a way that you can't make wise decisions and you may end up marrying someone who is not right for you and then you have to live with that for the rest of your life.

2) You may realize one day that this person is not right for you in the long run and decide to break it off. This is a good decision but it will cause a lot of emotional pain for you because the bonding process has started – it has not finished but it has started and when you break off the relationship it is like ripping apart two things that were being glued together. As a result of this good decision you may have a broken heart, you may feel terribly guilty. You may feel unlovable and wonder that, perhaps, even God may not love you anymore. And these feelings could lead you to make some bad decisions in other areas of life.

Simulation #6: In addition, there are other problems that will occur. For example, a man my age who kissed and touched a lot of young women in their youth might say something like, "I love my wife, I really do, but I still remember this one girl, gosh, it must have been 20 years ago, but I remember her like it was yesterday. And, well, I hate to say it, but she was a lot better kisser than my wife is!"

You need to understand that even across the years the effects of these behaviors in their youth have stolen some of the joy from their marriages for decades. You can't see that now but its true – satan would love for you to trade a few days of touching and kissing to damage your future marriage.

Simulation #7: "Oh, but Mr. Daily, Mr. Daily - what about the couple who have never been sensual with anyone else but they are sensual with each other and they end up getting married and they really are right for each other – in other words God always had planned for them to marry each other". No problems, right? Raise your hand if you think this couple will have no problems because of their sensuality before marriage. Well, guess what - even if you end up marrying the person you have been touching there is a negative effect on your marriage due to a loss of trust. The thinking here is, "If I could not trust you to control yourself and obey God before we were married, how do I know I can trust you in other areas of life now that we are married?" So, even in this scenario touching and kissing before marriage will cause some damage to your future marriage. God does not always tell us exactly what damage will be caused by a specific sin, he just says don't do it because you will regret it later.

Now let me talk with the boys (this tells the boys that the next simulation is mostly for them)

Simulation #8: I was in a youth group once and I was friends with one of the girls in the group. We had similar views on just about all issues and we enjoyed talking to each other. One day, I don't remember exactly how it happened, we ended up alone together in a park away from the group. It was a beautiful day in late summer and it was late in the day. It was quiet – all you could hear was the gentle rustling of the leaves of the trees as a soft breeze gently blew. As the sun sank in the sky the sunlight glinted off her hair just so. Then she looked at me and said, "If you'd like to kiss me that would be OK with me!"

Let's freeze the frame for a moment.

When you get in that situation what will you do? What will you say?

Of course satan will come along and say, “Aw- look at her, you don’t want to hurt her feelings, if you hurt her feelings she might cry, you don’t want that do you? Its just a little kiss, besides, you might like it.”

One option might be to not say anything – just take off running down the street. This may not be the best option but it actually is not a bad choice (God wants us to flee). But she will probably call you on the phone later to find out what happened and so you will still have to talk to her.

Another option might be to say – “Get behind me satan, for thus says the Lord, Flee immorality!” But if you actually say that she probably will cry. (this simulation option is here to provide a little comic relief and have some fun).

You could say, “To be honest I would like to but I’m not sure I could control myself”. And then you need to excuse yourself and get out of there (that’s what I did).

**II Timothy 2:22 – “Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”**

The question is not, “Will this happen to me?” The question is, “When this happens to me, what am I going to do?”

#### Let me tell you another story

Simulation #9: In October of my freshman year in college I was talking to my roommate, Joe. Joe was also a freshman and his dream was to get a PhD in Computer Science and become a college professor. Joe told me about a young woman he had been dating over the summer. Joe said he really liked her because she was nice to him and she was a good kisser. They didn’t have much to do during the summer so they went on dates almost every day and there was always some kissing on the dates. Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss. One day, toward the end of the summer, they were kissing and, suddenly, the girl pulled away and looked at him and said, “If you want to touch me – anywhere – that’s OK with me!” Joe sat there with his mouth open not doing or saying anything.

Let’s freeze the frame for a moment.

So far Joe has made two mistakes. What was Joe’s first mistake? He should not have been kissing on her. If they had not been doing all that kissing this question would never have come up.

What was Joe’s second mistake? God never intended for Joe to get in this situation but here he is, so now what does God want him to do? (Flee – get out and take off running, literally). But Joe did not take off running, he just sat there with his mouth open.

So, what happened next? After a few moments this girl took Joe’s hand and put it on her chest!

That happened in October – let’s fast forward to April. Joe and I came back from Spring Break and we were in our dorm room talking, like roommates do. While we were talking Joe said, You’ll need to find a new roommate next semester (me - any particular reason why?) I’m married (you’re getting married?) No, I AM married (you’re living in the dorm with me but you’re married to a girl?) Yes, we got married over Christmas break (so, you got married to a girl over Christmas, you never told me, your best friend and roommate, and then, after you were married you came and lived with me in the dorm for January, February, March, and April, and during this whole time you were secretly married and you never told me!) Right (I don’t understand Joe, why didn’t you wait and get married this next summer – I could have come to the wedding, it would have been fun, and then you two could move into married student housing together, I just don’t understand). Well, in two months our baby will be born and I felt that we should be married before the baby is born (Joe, this is crazy, you’re living with me in the dorm while being secretly married to a girl and in two months you’re going to be a father – Joe, we’re 18 years old – a year ago we were in high school!).

A year and a half later I went to visit Joe in married student housing. I had called ahead of time so they knew I was coming over. I knocked on the door and Joe answered. He didn't let me in the apartment but came out on the front porch and we talked. I could hear the baby crying and his wife inside. (How's it going?) Its going OK. Well, my wife isn't very happy – she's not going to college and she doesn't have any friends up here and there's really nothing much for her to do except take care of the baby – so she wants me to finish up as fast as I can and get a job and buy a house and all that. So, I am taking full class loads during the summer and extra classes during the year – I'm working as hard as I can to try to finish up my Bachelor's degree early so we can get out of here. (But I thought you were going to get a PhD and be a college professor?) Well, that's not going to happen. No, I'll finish up my bachelor's and go pound code for some company – It will be OK. About this time his wife called for him and Joe said he had to go. He walked back into the apartment and I never saw him again.

**Ecclesiastes 7:26 – “And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.”**

This verse accurately describes what happened to Joe.

“Oh but Mr. Daily, Mr. Daily, its just a little kissing!” When this kissing thing comes up in your life I want you to remember what happened to Joe.

**Biblical Inerrancy Simulation** (how do we know the words of the Bible have not been changed over time?)

For more on this topic please see the study, “Can I Really Trust The Bible?” at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

**Matthew 5:17-18**

**“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**

How many of you believe the Bible is perfect and without error? What would you say if I told you I have copies of all the known ancient manuscripts of the Bible and guess what? Every one of them has errors in it! I know exactly where the errors are and I can show them to you. Now what do you say? Do you still think the Bible is perfect and has no errors? What are we going to say in this situation?

Copies of the Bible made throughout most of history were done manually. In other words a person had to copy the Bible by hand printing. Perhaps along the way someone decided to change what the Bible said to serve their own purposes. Even if they didn't, we know that humans routinely generate errors at the rate of about 1%. If this was a person's error rate while hand copying the Bible, we would expect each copy to have around 8,000 mistakes. If someone else copied that copy of the Bible they would add more mistakes and so on. Knowing this could happen, how do we know the words of the Bible haven't changed over time?

There are two ways. First, we short circuit the problem of recopying copies by going back to the earliest copies we can find. Whenever a translation of the Bible is made, the scholars go back to the earliest manuscripts that we have and translate them directly from these early copies. Second, if we have enough early copies of the same books of the Bible we can compare them to each other. The probability that most of the copies of a book of the Bible would have the same exact error and that error would not be recognizable using the rules of language is essentially zero. We will work through an example (simulation) in a few minutes to demonstrate that.

Some of the New Testament books we have copies of date to the second century and we have complete New Testaments that date from the fourth century.

Historians use the following criteria when determining the authenticity of a manuscript:

1. Are any original documents in our hands, or only copies?
2. If only copies exist, how old are they when compared with the date of the original document?
3. How many copies exist?

For documents as old as the Bible originals rarely exist. So, the strongest evidence that an ancient manuscript is accurate is related to how soon after the original was written was the copy we have made, how many copies still exist, and how do these copies compare to each other?

For the majority of ancient writings (Pliny, Plato, Caesar) we have less than 10 copies with the earliest copy being made 1,000 years after the original was written. The strongest evidence for a non-Biblical ancient document is for Homer's Iliad (643 copies with the earliest copy being made 500 years after the original was written).

Now compare that to the New Testament. We currently have 24,970 copies with the earliest copies being made less than 100 years (less than 50 years for some of the books) after the original was written! Think about that. The writers of many of these books were alive for many of these years and could publicly correct anything that was copied incorrectly. In addition we have almost 25,000 copies that we can compare against each other. If any human error was made in making the copies it would be easy to detect these errors and correct them.

This is what we mean when we say the Bible is perfect and without error. We mean that the original text is completely accurate, true, and perfect in every way. Inerrancy does not refer to copies or translations but only to the original manuscripts. Copies and translations are inerrant only to the extent that they reproduce the original documents.

There are many different types of copying errors, such as eye skips and even deliberate changes, that humans are known to make. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of manuscripts (24,970) makes it easy to determine the original words. This is one way that God designed the Bible to be resistant to intentional changes. It would be impossible for a person or group of people to change a significant percentage of the 24,970 copies such that the original words of the Bible were lost forever.

### Breaking News!

A great archeological find was just unearthed yesterday in Israel and has been rushed to our classroom tonight. Five manuscript fragments of a New Testament passage have been found! As expert Bible scholars (the class) you have been given the task of determining what the original, inerrant document must have said.

In addition, as experts in paleography ("ancient writings") you are keenly aware that hand copying of documents has an error rate of about 1% and that common error types include:

- 1) **Dittography:** the accidental, erroneous act of repeating a letter, word, phrase or combination of letters
- 2) **Haplography:** the accidental, erroneous act of omitting syllables, words, or lines
- 3) **Fission/Fusion Errors:** Spaces between words are missing or in the wrong place
- 4) **Homophony:** Wrong word used because it sounds similar to the word that should have been used.
- 5) **Metathesis:** Reversing the order of two letters or words.
- 6) **Homoioteleuton:** Omission caused by two phrases that end similarly
- 7) **Homoioarchton:** Omission caused by two phrases that begin similarly
- 8) **Mistaken Letters:** Wrong letter used because it looks similar to the letter that should have been used.

Your task is to break up into groups of 5 researchers. Each person in each group will be given a photographic copy of one of the manuscript fragments. As a group you must compare the manuscripts and determine what the exact wording of the original document was. The highest standards of scholarship are expected (no guessing).

When we are done we will all travel to the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Paleography in London (in our imaginations). During the Plenary Session of the conference, one research group will write their solution on the board and the other groups will "peer review" it, pointing out any errors in their results or weaknesses in their methods.

(below are teacher's versions. Red identifies the location of an error. Versions for handout are on next page).

### John 17:15-19 (Original Inerrant Manuscript)

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth;  
Your word is truth.<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the  
world.<sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified  
in truth.

### Manuscript Fragment #1 – Codex New Mexicus

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as I **am of** the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your  
word is truth.<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.<sup>19</sup>  
For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also **maybe** sanctified in truth.

### Manuscript Fragment #2 – Codex Albuquerque

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the **vile** one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth;  
**Our** word is truth.<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the  
world.<sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified  
in truth.

### Manuscript Fragment #3 – Codex Green Chilecus

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as **They are** not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the  
truth; Your word is truth.<sup>18</sup> **You** sent Me into the world, **as** I also have sent them into  
the world.<sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be  
sanctified in truth.

### Manuscript Fragment #4 – Codex Red Chilecus

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the **truth**.<sup>18</sup>  
As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.<sup>19</sup> For **there** sakes I  
sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

### Manuscript Fragment #5 – Codex Sopapillacus

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.<sup>16</sup>  
They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth;  
Your word is truth.<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent **Me** into the world.  
<sup>19</sup> For **there** sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in  
truth.

(Print this sheet, make copies, one copy per group of 5 students. Cut each "codex" out, one for each group member, you can cut the edges roughly to make it look old if you wish)

**Manuscript Fragment #1 – Codex New Mexicus**

*I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also maybe sanctified in truth.*

**Manuscript Fragment #2 – Codex Albuquerqueus**

*I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the vile one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Our word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

**Manuscript Fragment #3 – Codex Green Chilecus**

*I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as They are not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> You sent Me into the world, as I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

**Manuscript Fragment #4 – Codex Red Chilecus)**

*I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For there sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

**Manuscript Fragment #5 – Codex Sopapillacus)**

*I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent Me into the world. <sup>19</sup> For there sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

**QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD**

***JEREMIAH 15:16***

**THEME: *Ministering To Teenagers***

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 29:19, Mark 3:14***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalms 78:1-8***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 13:10-13, Matthew 13:3-9***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD**

***JEREMIAH 15:16***

**THEME: *Ministering To Teenagers***

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 12:28-31, Matthew 7:24-27***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Peter 5:1-4***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 4:12, I Corinthians 2:4-6, Psalm 119:98-100***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**



**QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD**

***JEREMIAH 15:16***

**THEME: *Ministering To Teenagers***

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 9:1-8***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:21-45***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 16:25, Jeremiah 17:9***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD**

***JEREMIAH 15:16***

**THEME: *Ministering To Teenagers***

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 6:18-20, II Timothy 2:22***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:13-14, Ecclesiastes 7:26***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

**PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:17-18***

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**