



## COUNSELLING FAMILIES WITH REBELLIOUS TEENS

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### Parenting teens:

When children move into their teen years, the basic parental responsibilities do not change. Although parents should give their teens growing responsibility and freedom in accord with their age and maturity, the basic responsibility to *bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord* does not change (Eph 6:4).

MacArthur:

*As long as they are under their parents' care—as long as parents are accepting the responsibility to provide for them—children must obey .... This applies to children in their late teens no less than it applies to toddlers .... One of the worst things parents can do in the teenage years is give up and allow the child to rebel. (Successful Christian Parenting, 114)*

Point:

While the parental role in the later teen years gradually shifts from authority to influence, teenage children who live in the home still need to obey and honour their parents.

Tedd Tripp on reclaiming lost ground:

*If your authority over your teen is not established, you must take the time to seek God and work back through your life with your teen. Confess, rethink, and establish your authority and their responsibility based on God's word to both of you. There is no shortcut ... (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 227)*

### Counselling the parents:

Parents of rebellious teens must identify the idols of their hearts—things they (the parents) do that are provoking, exasperating, or disheartening their rebellious teen.

Eph 6:4. *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger ...*

Col 3:21. *Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.*

Point:

Parents, not just teens, put pressure on the parent-teen relationship because they want things.

Paul Tripp:

*The tumult of the teen years is not only about the attitudes and actions of teens, but the thoughts, desires, attitudes, and actions of parents as well. (Age of Opportunity, 17)*

*Always deal honestly with your own attitudes. Remember, your teenager is not the only sinner in the house. (249)*

Common idols of a parent's heart:

- 1) control
- 2) reputation
- 3) comfort
- 4) convenience
- 5) achievement
- 6) obedience
- 7) respect
- 8) productivity
- 9) things

### **Nine Pitfalls in Parenting Rebellious Teens:**

As a counsellor, you will often need to pull parents of rebellious teens out of the following nine pitfalls.

- 1) Lack of patience and understanding.

Paul Tripp:

*Do you remember what it was like to be a teenager? Do you remember your self-consciousness, your physical awareness, and your general confusion? Do you remember feeling great about yourself one day and wanting to die the next? Do you remember trying to be cool, only to make a complete fool of yourself? Do you remember doing immature and irresponsible things just at the time you were trying to win your parents' respect? Effective parents of teenagers are people who are able to remember what it was like to live in the scary world of the teen years. (Age of Opportunity, 73)*

Tedd Tripp:

*I have been embarrassed sometimes to be with the parents of teenagers and hear them reprimand their children over every little fault. You have no biblical obligation to censure your children for everything they do that is irritating to you. (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 233)*

Regarding sin:

*You're a sinner. Don't act surprised at your teenager's struggle with sin. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 238)*

The destructive effects of parental impatience and and arrogance:

*Few teenagers leave because of the rules. No, they leave because of the relationship. They leave because the relationship with their parents has gotten so bad, so angry, so confrontational, so adversarial that they cannot stand to live under the same roof with them. (Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 194)*

## 2) Anger.

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*Most parents of wayward kids struggle with anger, and we may want to tell our child, "How could you be so ungrateful?" Or, "How could you hurt us in this way?" (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 45)*

A suggested solution:

*Don't over-personalize your teenager's failure. Over-personalizing turns failure into a personal offense against you. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 236)*

Point:

Parents will need to confront the idols in their own heart, eradicating the *I deserve!* thinking that has led to their anger, and replacing it with what Ephesians 4:32 calls *tenderheartedness*—a compassionate concern for how the child's sin affects him or her, not a preoccupation with how it affects them, the parents (Matt 9:36; Luke 15:20).

Tedd Tripp:

*Teenagers are capable of colossal blunders. There is an enormous gap between the teen's desire to be autonomous and his understanding of*

*life. This is fertile soil for gigantic mistakes. It is easy for a parent to lose his focus.*

*...During times of failure ... your teens need positive interaction [not anger] ....*

*What I have in view is parental interaction that is full of hope and courage. This interaction is able to make a fiasco into an opportunity to learn and go forward. (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 231-2)*

### 3) False guilt.

*We must have done something wrong that made our child turn out this way.*

Ezekiel 18:5-13, 20

Three things that influence how kids turn out:

(Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*, 102-104)

1. Parents are responsible to train their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4).
2. Children are responsible for their own sinful choices (Prov 22:15; Ezk 18:20).
3. God is sovereign over all things, including a child's salvation (John 6:44).

*Remember, although our hope is that our children will respond to God through our instruction, we're only responsible for our obedience, not theirs. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 143)*

Note:

In the case of *real* guilt due to consistent failure to raise their child in a wise and godly way, parents need to ask the forgiveness of God and their child.

### 4) Constantly preaching at the child, telling him how bad he is.

Paul Tripp:

*We must not distance ourselves from the sins of our children as if they had a problem to which we can't relate. We don't respond with a "How could you?" or "Why would you?" We parent with a humble awareness of our own sin. (Age of Opportunity, 69)*

### 5) Minimising or excusing the child's sin.

*A wife may [need to] confess that she's been too lenient with her children. Perhaps she has failed to recognize their sinfulness or was too gullible or easily deceived. Perhaps she stood between her children and her husband as he was seeking to administer discipline. (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 59)*

Sometimes this includes holding stubbornly to the teen's childhood profession of faith long after it has been discredited by the child's rebellious and dissipate living.

James 2:14. *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*

#### 6) A mistaken idea of a child's rights.

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*As you begin to really investigate your children's fruit [their lifestyle, etc.], you'll need to make it clear to them that so long as they are minors living in your home, you have the obligation under the Lord to gather information about their lives. If you have reason to suspect wrong activity, you may find it necessary to search their rooms and backpacks, check up on their claims to be somewhere, monitor their phone conversations, email, Internet chats and Web sites, and if necessary, test them for drug and alcohol use.*

*If this is the case, your child, who's undoubtedly bought into the world's perspective of her right to privacy, will react with fury .... "You don't trust me!" to which you may reply, "I am giving you an opportunity to earn my trust." (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 91)*

#### 7) Fear of man

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*Another concern you may have is a fear of what others think of you as a parent and the shame that you feel when you consider your child's choices. How can I face the world when others discover that my son is a homosexual? Or, What will people say when they learn our daughter had an abortion? (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 44-45)*

*Many of us are motivated by guilt and fear rather than genuine love for our kids. (You Never Stop Being a Parent, 107)*

Prov 29:25. *The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.*

#### 8) Blaming the other parent.

*When a child's rebellion becomes evident, the situation can be further inflamed as a husband and wife blame each other for their child's sinful choices. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 54)*

The key role of forgiveness:

*We know that it will be very hard to forgive your spouse if you think that his sinful parenting has ruined your child .... [But] If your spouse has confessed failures to you, let us encourage you to offer full and bountiful forgiveness ... (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 59)*

It is critical that parents present a united front to a rebellious teen.

#### 9) Giving up too soon.

Rebuilding a loving relationship with a rebellious child is the first option, not despair or kicking the child out of the home.

Encouragement from John Calvin:

*It is certainly true that fathers of families and heads of houses ought to be careful to do their duty in governing those who are placed under their authority. But the main thing that parents should do is to take refuge in God. (quoted in Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*, 164)*

*... remember what you are fighting for: your child's very soul. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 166)*

A suggested prayer:

*Father .... Help me to love my child's soul more than I love peace, comfort, and rest. (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 142)*

### **Eleven Tips for Parents of Rebellious Teens**

#### 1) Pray.

Psalm 46:1. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Spurgeon: *Prayer is the slender nerve that moveth the muscles of omnipotence.*

## 2) Express love for the rebellious child.

Expressing love does not require approving or excusing the teen's rebellious behaviour. Some parents fear that acts of love will be seen by the child as a tacit approval of his or her rebellion. Don't worry, teens are intelligent enough to distinguish between the two.

Suggestions for loving problem teens:

(from Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 180-185)

1. Keep telling her you love her.

2. Express physical affection.

*A light hand on the shoulder ... might be the only time he is touched in what he would see as a gentle way. (180)*

3. Serve his favorite food.

4. Open your home to his friends and show them hospitality by feeding them.

5. Speak gently.

*Be very careful how you speak to your child, especially when he provokes you. Instead of lashing out at him and using destructive words, seek to use constructive, grace-filled words ... (184)*

6. Encourage any positive elements you can find in his life. [sports, music, hobbies, etc.]

*You must maintain a positive relationship with teens .... Be a constructive force in the life of your child. You want to be a source of encouragement and inspiration. (Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 231)*

7. Forgive as you've been forgiven.

*If your child is in trouble with the law or school authorities, you can freely forgive him while still holding him responsible to*

*bear the punishment for his folly. Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 183)*

8. Listen.

*One of the big mistakes we that we parents make is that we lecture our children without taking the time to try to understand them. (184)*

9. Learn to draw your child out.

*If you want him to open up to you, you'll need to make sure he feels safe and that he knows you'll love him no matter what he says. (185)*

10. Spend time together.

Summary:

Those are all ways that love can be expressed without approving or excusing the teen's rebellion.

3) Open the door to real communication.

Rick Horne:

Your first words to an angry teen will strongly push that interaction toward one of two outcomes: *your words being received, thus beginning a conversation, or a Get outta my face response, thus shutting it all down .... The way we approach our teen and start to talk, can make or break effective communication. (Get Outta My Face, 19)*

Paul Tripp:

*We should not resign ourselves to an increasingly distant relationship. This is the time to connect with our children as never before. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 19)*

**Seven principles for communicating with teens:**

1. Don't give up on giving wise, gentle correction:

Paul Tripp:

*Most teenagers sorely lack wisdom and desperately need loving biblical, and faithfully dispensed correction. (Age of Opportunity, 76)*

Tedd Tripp:

*It is often assumed that teenage children will find their parents irrelevant .... [In contrast,] Proverbs 1:8-9 holds out a vision of children seeing in their parents a source of wisdom and instruction. (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 216)*

Prov 27:5. *Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed.*

Prov 28:23. *He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.*

But:

Prov 15:2. *The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable ...*

For example:

*We need to be sure that we come to our children with honest questions, not accusations that come out of foregone conclusions. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 78)*

## 2. Pursue your teenager.

*Daily express your love. Don't ask questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Ask questions that require description, explanation, and self-disclosure. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 80)*

## 3. Ask open-ended, heart questions that force the teen to evaluate his thoughts words, and actions, and respond to you.

*Ask probing questions that are designed to break through the deceitfulness of sin and expose the heart. Part of the defensiveness so typical of teenagers comes from their utter lack of self-awareness, their utter spiritual blindness .... Don't settle for grunts, groans, no eye contact, and silences. Be positive, friendly, and encouraging, but be persistent. (Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 90, 139)*

Rick Horne:

*Angry teens often live in a kind of dream world built on deeply unrealistic thinking about the way life should work in order to conform to their assumptions and preferences. (Get Outta My Face, 95)*

4. Be patient in the face of provocation.

Paul Tripp:

*Teenagers will say wild things. They will give weak excuses and offer illogical arguments. They will make extreme statements. They will accuse you of not understanding. (Age of Opportunity, 138)*

5. Welcome and respect differences of opinion.

*... don't scold the teenager for his honesty. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 139)*

*In adult relationships it is possible to disagree with each other and remain friends. The same should be true in your relationships with your children. They don't have to agree with you on everything in order to respect you. (Tedd Tripp, Shepherding a Child's Heart, 234)*

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*We gain passport with our adult child by treating him or her with love and respect. If we can patiently learn to listen rather than always demanding to be heard ... our child will know that we respect his opinion and his right to differ with our views. (You Never Stop Being a Parent, 22)*

6. Don't try to address too many issues at one time.

Rick Horne:

*Keep in mind that not everything has to be said right now! (Get Outta My Face, 88)*

7. Listen to understand, not merely to refute:

*When a young person thinks his mom or dad ... understands his problem the way he understands his problem, the two will connect. (Horne, Get Outta My Face, 81)*

*Interrogation may help parents express frustration, but it won't help teens change. (Get Outta My Face, 83)*

4) Don't ignore the rest of the children.

Three dangers in regard to the other children:

1. The danger of bad influence:

*It is important to protect your other children from the sinful influences of your rebellious child. He may try to get his siblings on his side and may seek to influence them by boasting of his exploits or by exposing them to music, books, and videos that undermine your Christian beliefs and values .... If he's disrespectful, refuses to do chores, or participates in evil, your other children will notice and may be influenced to behave like him. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 63)*

2. The danger of neglect and double standards:

*"You have all the time in the world to deal with her, but you can't even attend my play or soccer game" .... "You punish me for one little slip-up and then let her get by with anything!" (65)*

3. The danger of self-righteousness:

*Sometimes kids who are "good" can be tempted to become self-righteous and look down upon their disobedient sibling. If that happens, we need to gently remind them of their need [and ours!] for God's grace and forgiveness. (66)*

5) Put the teen in decision-making roles at times when bad decisions won't be disastrous.

This shows respect, trains him to make decisions, and encourages him when the decisions go right.

6) Write out and review with the teen a list of expectations that you have for him.

*One of the primary conflicts between parents and their adult children occurs in the area of unclear expectations. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*, 85)*

Note:

It might also be good to have the teen make a list of the expectations that he or she has of the parents. This might lead to some interesting and helpful discussions.

*Angry teens are angry because they ... are not getting what they were expecting. (Get Outta My Face, 95)*

A sampling of areas to discuss under parental expectations:

- church attendance
- respect toward other family members
- school performance
- contribution to family chores
- curfew
- entertainment standards
- internet and phone usage
- dress code
- relationships with the opposite sex
- etc.

7) Define and enforce consequences for both active and passive defiance.

Two reasons for consequences:

1. God's reputation

*Gal 6:7. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

2. The ineffectiveness of words

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*We know that our words don't have the desired effect, and yet we don't know what else to do. We plead, cajole, and threaten, but when push comes to shove many of us just keep on providing food, shelter, transportation, and money. In response, our kids learn to tune out the nagging and easily disregard us. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, You Never Stop Being a Parent, 61)*

*Most parents with wayward adult kids have made many threats, but few have carried them out. They have backed away from ultimatums, allowing the pattern to continue ... (80)*

Four categories of consequences:

1. Restrictions

*Restrictions are best for acts of irresponsibility, such as bad grades or work left undone. You can keep your young person from telephone, video game, or*

*television use. You can restrict use of the car (which should always be an earned privilege, not a right) or from visits to their friend's houses ... Privileges [can] be earned back through a consistent change of behavior .... (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 169)*

## 2. Labour

*Extra chores can be an appropriate consequence for acts of disrespect .... (170)*

## 3. Financial Consequences

*Often parents compound problems with their kids by financing their rebellious lifestyle ... Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you have to fund cars, insurance, expensive clothing, electronic gear, or entertainment .... (170)*

## 4. Restitution.

*Any young person who has caused a loss to others should be taught the biblical principle of restitution. (170)*

## 8) Remove or reduce bad influences.

Prov 13:20. *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

1 Cor 15:33. *Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."*

Bad friends:

The influence of bad friends is illustrated in Proverbs 1:10-19—the lure of going out with the gang.

Paul Tripp:

*Identify the "voices" in your teenager's life. Who are the people your teenager listens to and respects? (Age of Opportunity, 239)*

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*You may need to restrict your child from certain friends who have proven to be a bad influence. He should not be allowed to spend time with peers who are sexually immoral, who abuse substances, or who sneer at authority or break the law ....*

*If your child has been misusing the Internet, he may need to be completely restricted from using it. (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 165)*

Observation:

This may include imposing a reasonable curfew and enforcing entertainment standards regarding tv, movies, monitoring internet usage, etc.

How to address the issue of friends:

*Teenagers tend to be prickly and protective when it comes to discussions of their friends. It is as if the operational rule is this: "To reject my friends is to reject me." As parents we need to be very careful about the way we have these conversations. Never resort to name-calling and character assassination. Your goal should be to get your teenager to step outside the emotion and commitment of the relationship to give it a long, honest biblical look. (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 84)*

Prov 15:2. *The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable ...*

From the positive angle:

Tedd Tripp:

*The most powerful way to keep your children from being attracted by the offers of camaraderie from the wicked is to make home an attractive place to be. (Shepherding a Child's Heart, 221)*

9) Enforce the right treatment of other family members.

10) Do not allow substance abuse in the home.

11) Refuse to finance the rebellious child's lifestyle.

Note:

Under South African law, parents are responsible to provide for their child's basic needs until the age of 18.

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*If your child is still a minor, you are required by law to provide food, clothing, and shelter for him. You aren't required to maintain his lifestyle, however. Because he is still a minor, you can impound his property, (television, telephones, stereo, etc.) and*

*restrict his access to money and cars .... You are not obligated to finance a rebellion against your own authority. (When Good Kids Make Bad Choices, 200, 201)*

The need for courage:

*We recommended that [the parents] make a list of everything they are giving their daughter which could be taken away as possible consequences for failure to meet basic expectations. Anything that you are providing can be removed or repossessed .... The question wasn't whether this couple had sufficient leverage but whether they would have the courage to deal with their daughter. (Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, You Never Stop Being a Parent, 79-80)*

### **Drastic Consequences: When should a rebellious child be put out of the home?**

It is possible that in spite of all the parents' positive efforts, the child's attitudes and behaviour will continue to get worse. What do the parents do then?

Two steps:

1. Bring the child to the church leaders for admonition.

As in Deuteronomy 21:18-21 where parents of a rebellious adult child brought him before the city elders.

2. Put the child out of the home.

When do parents take this extreme measure?

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick: When your teen ...

1. *... consistently and over a long season, has refused to follow your rules about household responsibilities, schoolwork, entertainment, activities, and choice of friends.*
2. *... has frequent and ongoing disrespect for you and for other authority figures.*
3. *... incessantly blames you and your authority for the problems in his life.*
4. *... is involved in immorality, substance abuse, gang activity, or other illegal activities and staunchly refuses to stop.*
5. *... has harmed or seriously threatened other members of the family.*

6. ... has been involved for some time with the occult or with beliefs that glorify evil, darkness, or death. (*When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 194-195)

Note:

If he is guilty of criminal behaviour, allow the police to do their job by turning him in (Rom 13:1-4).

Summary:

If necessary, due to flagrant and continual destructive rebellion and refusal to live within the reasonable rules of the family, having sought counsel, calmly put the child out of the house.

Principle:

Children who want to make adult decisions need to accept adult consequences.

*Gal 6:7. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

The place of painful consequences in Christian practice:

As with Matthew 18 and as illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, painful consequences are one of God's key tools in breaking the hardened heart of a rebellious young adult.

The two goals of putting a child out of the home:

1. That the child would repent and return.
2. To protect the rest of the family.

Note:

Putting a rebellious young adult out of the home does not necessarily require shunning. He or she can be invited to join family outings, come for meals, and so on.

Options:

- put him on the street with nothing (if the child is age 18 or above)
- drug rehabilitation facility
- halfway house
- live with relatives or another family

- place him in a special school designed to handle problem children

When the rebel wants to come home:

Be guardedly optimistic, but keep your eyes open for manipulation.

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

*Honesty should be a nonnegotiable condition of turning your home into a halfway house. If a pattern of dishonesty continues, the privilege of living at home must be forfeited. (You Never Stop Being a Parent, 112)*

The child must sign an agreement to live by a list of reasonable house rules, agreeing to accept appropriate consequences if he doesn't.

This agreement, the rules, and the consequences of their being broken should be written out and signed by both the parents and the child.

### **Motivating Rebellious Teens**

(adapted from Rick Horne, *Get Outta My Face*)

Two basic principles:

1. *Teens are fundamentally the same as we are.* (Rick Horne, *Get Outta My Face*, 76)
2. Teens *want* to have a good relationship with their parents.

### **Eight suggestions for motivating rebellious teens:**

- 1) Encourage the teen's parents to confess and ask forgiveness for their failures.

This will open the door to better communication with and a better attitude in the teen, leading to overall progress.

Jay Adams:

*It is truly amazing how much instant agreement you can get from a person who previously may have disagreed with you concerning nearly everything else under the sun, when you begin to say, "I have wronged you." (Christian Living in the Home, 35)*

- 2) Listen until the teen believes you see the problem from *his* perspective.

*When a young person thinks ... a counselor understands his problem the way he understands his problem, the two will connect. (Horne, 81)*

- 3) Admit that you can't make the teen change.

*He knows, "You can't make me do anything," and you can take a lot of wind out of his sails of resistance by acknowledging this as a limitation. (Horne, 107)*

- 4) Point out the cause-and-effect relationship between the teen's choices and the things he doesn't like in his relationships.

*Usually teens who are this hopeless have lost sight [of] (or have never truly grasped) the connection between their choices and specific outcomes. (Horne, 108)*

- 5) Point out that the teen's right choices make a big difference in his relationships.

*Teens are not used to being confronted with their own power to choose .... They are used to asserting their own "right" to make decisions or exercise independence, and they they are used to fighting anyone who challenges that right. When you assert what they can do—instead of telling them what they can't—you interrupt a deeply ingrained habit of defensiveness and pull the rug out from under many of their favorite ... arguments. (Horne, 109)*

- 6) Point out the teen's good choices in the past and their agreeable consequences.

*The goal is to identify a time when the teen behaved in a way that would seem atypical now, but which resulted in a wise want being met. (Horne, 121)*

Key question: *How did you do that?*

*"You feel that your parents are unreasonable with their standards, this school has rules that are nuts, and that you will be grounded for the next month. Yet you still get out of bed and come to school and even do English homework! How do you do that?"*

*The "How do you do that?" question .... may ... get the teen thinking that he really does have the ability to make wiser choices than he's made when other difficult situations arise. (Horne, 91)*

Point:

Success or wise choices in one area can be used to encourage wise choices in another area.

7) Ask questions to discover the teen's *wise wants*.

Every teen has wise wants:

*I just want good enough marks so that I'll be academically eligible for rugby.*

*I just want some peace at home rather than constant harassment from my parents.*

Identify and use those "wise wants" to motivate the rebellious teen. Show him the cause-and-effect relationship between his choices and either gaining or not gaining those wants.

*I know that I can't make you do your homework, but how does not doing your homework lead to your goal of being academically eligible for rugby?*

*How do your angry exchanges with your mother lead to peace in the home?*

8) Preach the gospel for heart change—the true solution to the teen's rebellion.

## Adult Children: The Problem of Extended Adolescence

Al Mohler:

*We now face the phenomenon of perpetual boyhood on the part of many males. Refusing to grow up, these young men function as boys well into their twenties—some even into their thirties and beyond. An extended male adolescence marks the lifestyles, expectations, and behavior of far too many young males ...*

[Extended adolescence] *is characterized by economic carelessness, self-centeredness, and laziness.* ([www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/21/from-boy-to-man-the-marks-of-manhood-part-one/](http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/21/from-boy-to-man-the-marks-of-manhood-part-one/), accessed 9 Oct, 2011)

Dealing firmly with "adult adolescents":

Newheiser and Fitzpatrick:

The problem of idolatry:

*We honor our children above the Lord .... We are supporting their sin because we love ourselves more than we love them and their souls. (You Never Stop Being a Parent, 80)*

*If they choose to live at home, they can't expect to have it both ways—they can't expect to have all the privileges of adulthood without any of the consequences for the choices they've made as adults. (111-112)*

Parents need to have the courage to force their child to take responsibility for his own life.

*We actually have a God-ordained responsibility to avoid supporting our kids' misbehavior and laziness. (72)*

Al Mohler:

*A failure to develop economic maturity means that young men often float from job to job, and take years to "find themselves" in terms of career and vocation .... A boy must be taught how to work, how to save, to invest, and to spend money with care. He must be taught to respect labor, and to feel the satisfaction that comes from a job well done, and a dollar honestly earned. Too many boys are coddled and entertained, demonstrating a laziness that will be highly detrimental to their future prospects as husband and father. ([www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/21/from-boy-to-man-the-marks-of-manhood-part-one/](http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/21/from-boy-to-man-the-marks-of-manhood-part-one/), accessed 9 Oct, 2011)*

All the principles developed in this syllabus regarding parental idols, the pitfalls of parenting rebellious teens, communication, love, and consequences also apply to adult children who continue to live at home.

Resources on parenting rebellious teens and young adults:

*Age of Opportunity*, Paul Tripp

*Come Back, Barbara*, C. John Miller and Barbara Miller Juliani

*Get Outta My Face*, Rick Horne

*When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick

*You Never Stop Being a Parent*, Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick