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SESSION 2 | THE PRIVILEGE AND PERILS OF PARENTING TEENS

I. Introduction

- a. Parenting teens is one of our greatest opportunities for growth in sanctification and faith.

- b. Two common misconceptions
 - 1. “When we hit the teen years, we can sit back and enjoy the fruit.”

 - 2. “During the teen years, the best we can do is survive.”

These are the years of penetrating questions, the years of wonderful discussions never before possible. These are the years of failure and struggle that put the teen’s true heart on the table. These are the years of daily ministry and of great opportunity. (Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 19)

II. Two Relevant Scriptures

- a. Deut. 6:6-9

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as

a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:6–9, ESV)

b. Eph. 6:4

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, ESV)

III. Parent with God in the picture. (Dt. 6:2, 4-9; Eph. 6:4)

a. Keeping “God in the picture” cultivates a fear of God.

b. Keeping “God in the picture” inspires faith.

It is faith that enlivens our work with perpetual cheerfulness. It commits every part of it to God, in the hope, that even mistakes shall be overruled for his glory; and thus relieves us from an oppressive anxiety, often attendant upon a deep sense of our responsibility. The shortest way to peace will be found in casting ourselves upon God for daily pardon or deficiencies and supplies of grace, without looking too eagerly for present fruit. (Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, 178)

c. Keeping “God in the picture” produces peace.

d. Keeping “God in the picture” motivates prayer.

"Father or mother, can you impart spiritual life to your child? The answer is that you cannot. You can teach them. You can train them. You can preach to them the same gospel that saved you. But you cannot give new life. Do not place yourself in the role reserved for the Spirit of God Almighty. Only he can awaken the dead. Why carry the burden of a task that you cannot accomplish? Call upon the Lord and acknowledge your desperate need. Intercede on behalf of your children to the One who is full of mercy and steadfast love. Let the conversion of your children be cause for humble,

patient dependence on the Lord, not anxious toil and striving." —J. Eugene, Selected Theological Writings, page 251

e. Three questions:

1. Which is more prevalent in my parenting — the fear of man or the fear of God?

2. Where do I lack faith for my role as a parent?

3. What steps can I take to make sure that God is in the picture of my parenting?

IV. Focus on the heart – yours and your teen’s. (Dt. 6:5-7; Col. 3:21)

- a. The primary question in Deut. 6 is, “What do you love?”

- b. The primary heart to focus on is mine.

- c. Most teens have similar temptations: pride, self-centeredness, lovers of pleasure, fear of man, comparison.

- d. Focusing on the heart is crucial to navigating many of the “gray” areas (music, friends, clothes, Internet use, phone use, events, etc.)

- e. Focusing on the heart helps define maturity and earning trust.
Maturity is mistrusting my heart enough to pursue self-disclosure, teachableness, and counsel on my own.

f. Awareness of the heart should cause us to excel in encouragement, rooted in the gospel.

g. Three questions:

1. Whose heart tends to occupy more of my thoughts – mine or my teen's?

2. What do my teens think "maturity" looks like?

3. Are my teens more aware of my encouragement or correction?

V. Engage your teen compassionately, creatively, and consistently. (Dt. 6:7-9, Eph. 6:4; Prov. 20:5)

a. Engage compassionately

Take time to enter the world of your teenager. Know what he faces every day, know how he is emotionally and spiritually gripped by those experiences, know where he is being tempted and where he is succumbing. Understand what the worlds of home, school, work, and leisure look like to him. (Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 197)

b. Engage consistently (Dt. 6:7)

c. Engage creatively

d. Three questions:

1. Does my teen feel I seek to engage them consistently?
2. If not, what are the hindrances?
3. What could I change to create more opportunities to engage with my teen?

VI. Make trusting in Christ appealing. (Dt. 6:2-3)

- a. Model a functional love for the Savior and the gospel.
- b. Model a functional love for God's Word.
- c. Model a functional love for fellowship.
- d. Model a functional trust in God's sovereignty.
- e. Make sure your teens understand the difference between being moral and being saved.

Parents should care more for the loyalty of their children to Christ than anything besides, more for this than for their health, their intellectual vigour and brilliance, their material prosperity, their social position, their exemption from great sorrows and great

misfortunes. (Francis Foulkes, quoting Dale in Ephesians, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 166).

f. Questions:

1. Do my teens see and appreciate how I have benefited from knowing Christ as the Savior?

2. In what ways could I make trusting in Christ more attractive?

VII. What if My Teen is in Rebellion?

- a. Doesn't negate the principles we've already covered.

- b. Increase the amount of time you give to prayer.

- c. Take time to evaluate your heart and your parenting practices.

- d. Seek the counsel and observations of others.

- e. Respond in ways that demonstrate a trust in God

VIII. Conclusion

Suggested Reading List

Parenting:

Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family – Paul Tripp

Age of Opportunity – Paul Tripp

Instructing a Child's Heart – Tedd and Margy Tripp

Everyday Talk – John Younts

Hints for Parents – Gardiner Spring (Tedd Tripp, ed.)

Duties of Parents – J.C. Ryle

Get Outta My Face! – Rick Horne

General:

War of Words – Paul Tripp

Instruments in the Redeemers Hands – Paul Tripp

Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health – Don Whitney

How Can I Be Sure I'm a Christian? – Don Whitney

Living the Cross Centered Life - C.J. Mahaney

Humility – C.J. Mahaney

The Enemy Within – Kris Lundgaard

For Girls:

Girl Talk – Carolyn Mahaney, Nicole Whitacre, Kristen Chesemore, Janelle Bradshaw

Feminine Appeal – Carolyn Mahaney

For Guys:

Holiness – J.C. Ryle

Thoughts for Young Men – J.C. Ryle