

Understanding My Parents

(This series of lessons was compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources and many teachers over a period of thirty years. The compiler is very grateful for their wisdom.)

Introduction:

- A. Would you give a steak to an infant? He is not equipped to eat and digest it.
 - 1. God gave them parents to help them with foods they can process and grow on.
 - 2. Would you give the responsibility of an adult to an adolescent? He is not equipped to engage and fulfill it.
 - 3. God gives you parents to help you till you develop enough to handle it.
 - 4. "As with all the other changes in adolescents, brain growth is a consequence of hormones, maturity and experience, which together cause uneven and rapid growth. The limbic system (emotional impulses, fear) matures before the prefrontal cortex (planning ahead, emotional regulation)... In brief, while adolescents are capable of rational thinking, they have not developed to the point that they 'think twice' before engaging their impulses." (Kathleen Stassen Berger, *The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence*, p. 375)
- B. You need parents in your childhood and adolescence as much as you did in your infancy and toddler years, just for different reasons.
 - 1. "When parental monitoring is part of a warm, supportive relationship, the child is likely to become a confident, well-educated adult, avoiding drug use and risky sex." (Ibid. p. 421)
 - 2. In social, physical, mental, emotional, and especially spiritual development; you are in a constant, and often confusing state of growth and change
 - 3. "A survey of U.S. teenagers' religious ideas found that most 13-17 year olds consider themselves religious and thought that practicing their particular faith would help them avoid hell. (Ibid. p. 396)
- C. God's answer to this is to give you parents to help guide you
 - 1. Ecc. 12:1; Psalm 71:17
 - 2. What should be learned from parents in youth that will give children an advantage when they become adults?

I. WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN

- A. Learn what it means to be principled
 - 1. Being principled means that you decide to do what is right just because it is right.
 - 2. It means not being influenced to do the wrong thing based on emotions
 - a. "Drink, smoke, do drugs, fornicate, lie, cheat, steal – as long as you don't get caught"
 - b. Many do these things because it makes them feels good.
 - c. Heb. 11:25 teaches us that Moses was a principled young man.
 - 3. It means not being influenced to do the wrong thing because of friends.
 - a. We all need and want friends and to be accepted by our friends.

- b. It is important that we influence our friends for good, but not allow them to influence us for evil.
 - c. 1Cor. 15:33
- 4. It means not being influenced to do the wrong thing because of environment.
 - a. There are all kinds of troubles in the world. Each one of you will experience your share of suffering, pain, and difficulties.
 - b. Losing faith or giving in to some temptation to do wrong won't solve any of these problems.
 - c. It is only resolute endurance, steadfastness, patience, and longsuffering that will see you through.
 - d. James 5:10-11

II. WHAT YOU LEARN FROM PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

- A. That they know where you've been
 - 1. It is thrilling to be young and alive; to have energy and want to go places and do things; to take in all of the experiences; see the sights.
 - 2. Your parents know this feeling; they were once your age; they know what you are thinking right now.
 - 3. There is not a desire that you have that they didn't have.
 - 4. There is a reason why your parents may tell you "no" or limit your activities and experiences. They not only know what it feels like, they also know what is behind it and where it can lead
 - 5. Learning from their experience is God's design for you - Col. 3:20
- B. That they know the consequences of poor choices.
 - 1. It's not easy to know the consequences of our choices if we've never made that choice.
 - 2. God gives us parents, in part, so that they can tell us what will happen as a result of our choices.
 - 3. Perhaps your parents made some poor choices. That does not disqualify them from advising you. If anything, they are far more aware of the pain of foolish choices than one who has not made them
 - 4. Prov. 3:1-4
- C. That they have wisdom that comes from experience and observation.
 - 1. Parents and grandparents have experienced and seen more of life and people than you have.
 - 2. Prov. 6:20-24
- D. That you should treasure the moments you have
 - 1. You can't go back and be young again. There are certain points in life where you step over a threshold that you won't cross again.
 - a. Getting your first job. Getting married. Having children.
 - b. The passing years move your life to a point to which you will never return.
 - c. Friends you now know will move away; brothers and sisters will grow up and move out.

- d. Relationships and influences that were once important will cease to have any relevance (junior high)
- e. You will never quite be able to recapture the experiences of your youth, and you shouldn't want to
- f. You are becoming an adult and must embrace those moments, otherwise you will waste the present wishing for the past and lose the future - James 4:14
- g. Don't wish your life away - Phil. 4:11; Matt. 6:34
- E. That you should make the most of your opportunities.
 - 1. Some opportunities are inconsequential; others, however, only come once in a lifetime.
 - 2. Turning down a good opportunity for whatever impulsive reason will result in regret for the rest of your life.
- F. God gave you parents to protect you from sorrow and prepare you for a good life

III. WHAT PARENTS WISH THEIR TEENS KNEW ABOUT THEM

- A. That they want to trust you
 - 1. If you want trust from your parents, you need to learn to make good decisions. Telling your parents you are staying after school to do extra assignments, and then going somewhere else is deceitful. If you want to be trusted, show that you can be. Learn to be honest and tell your parents your plans. Most parents want to give you freedom to make choices. But you must earn their trust.
 - 2. Pushing the limits causes stress and tension for everyone. Making a phone call and checking in goes a long way toward demonstrating your maturity, ability to be trusted, and your respect for them.
- B. That they want to say yes and make you happy
 - 1. So be proactive. If you want to go places and earn perks from your parents, don't wait to be nagged about chores. Learn to make your bed and keep your room clean. You'll be surprised how this influences your parents' attitude toward you.
 - 2. Parents want to say yes, and you can make that much easier for them if you consider your requests from their point of view. What do your parents want and expect from you?
 - 3. Remember that your parents are concerned about you and want you to be safe. Pick your friends wisely and introduce them to your parents. If you want your parents to give you permission to go places with your friends, make sure you cover all the bases. Have a plan.
- C. That they want you to respect them when they say no
 - 1. A rebuttal to parents' real and imagined concerns seems natural for most teenagers. Instead, defer to your parents with respect and dignity. Often your willingness to accept their decisions will allow them to reconsider after a discussion.
 - 2. Raising your voice, slamming the door and throwing a tantrum will only make matters worse. Even if you wear your parents down and get your way, you still lose. You lose respect and demonstrate immaturity—two factors that will likely undermine your chances to participate in future opportunities.

3. Parents do want to say yes to your wants and needs. But most of all they want you to make that decision easier for them by showing you're thinking about your choices. Be proactive. Keep a good attitude. Learn to take a no and communicate often with your parents about what is going on in your life.