

Age of Opportunity

Lesson 7 & 8

BIG IDEA: We must learn to fight against

DEFEAT, **DISCOURAGEMENT**, and **FEAR** in the war for the heart of our teens.

RHETORICAL QUESTION: How equipped are you for the war for the heart of your teen?

- Rate yourself ... how much does each of the following characterize you while shepherding your teen?

① - Rarely ② - Occasionally ③ - Regularly

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I struggle with discouragement | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I throw up my hands and quit | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I resort to comfort food or some addiction | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I remind myself of God's rich resources in Christ | 1 | 2 | 3 |

- As much as the teen years can be years of personal **UPHEAVAL** for your teen, parents too can constantly battle **DISCOURAGEMENT** and **DEFEAT**.

What's the most discouraging thing you've experienced while shepherding your teenager?

- Three Bible passages for the discouraged parent:
 - Ephesians 3:20 – “We can parent with courage and **HOPE**!”
 - John 17:20-23 – “We have God's glory to **BRIDGE** the gap!”
 - 2 Peter 1:3-9 – “We can be **EFFECTIVE** and productive parents!”
- Let's set some **CLEAR** biblical goals “that function as God-given **GUARD RAILS** to keep us on the road he [God] wants us to travel.”

Regulation of Behavior

- One of the most common unbiblical goals the parent of a teenager has is the **REGULATION** of their child's **BEHAVIOR**.
- “It is a **SHORT-TERM** victory at best to control the behavior of a teen whose heart is not **SUBMISSIVE** to God.” (Tripp, pg. 110)

- Match the statement with the motivation:
 ❶ - Guilt ❷ - Fear ❸ - Manipulation
 1 "What's the Lord saying right now about the way you're acting?"
 2 "You just wait until your father/mother gets home!"
 3 "If you _____, we'll get that Xbox for you."

What are some other statements parents have made to regulate their teen's behavior using guilt, fear, and manipulation?

- "Pastoring (shepherding) our teens" and "regulating our teens" have very different ways of accomplishing their objective ... see if you can match the method with the model:

❶ - Pastoral Model ❷ - Regulation Model

- 2 Cross-examinations
- 2 Making sure that you win the argument
- 2 "WHO is wrong" is more important than "WHAT is wrong"
- 1 Refusing to let the teen set the agenda for the relationship
- 1 Discussions
- 1 Heart-disclosing questions
- "The rules-and-regulations approach that focuses on keeping the teenager **OUT OF TROUBLE** will ultimately **FAIL** because it does not deal with the heart." (Tripp, pg. 111)
- Colossians 2:20-23 & 3:12-14

GOAL #1 – FOCUS ON THE SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

- In the fuzzy land of "Teendom", the **PHYSICAL** world invariably trumps the **SPIRITUAL** world.

What does the Bible teach about spiritual warfare?

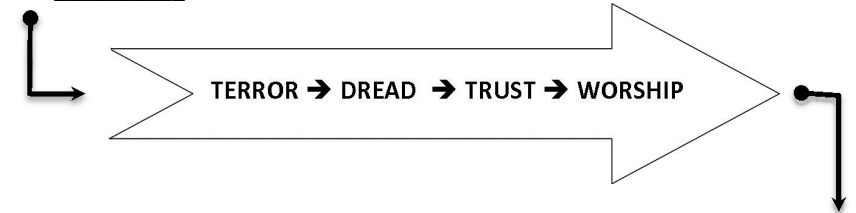
- Before we become conceited, **PARENTS** of teenagers will often model a lifestyle and philosophy of life that gives preeminence to the **PHYSICAL** world as well.

What are some ways a parent might do that?

- Spiritual warfare "is not an **ASPECT** of the Christian life, it **IS** the Christian life." (Tripp, pg. 118)

- Soooo ... what does a teenage spiritual warrior look like? (See Eph. 6:10-18)
- 1. They will possess a heartfelt, **INTERNAL** fear of God.
 - What is the "fear of the Lord"?
 - At one end of the spectrum, the fear of the Lord does indeed mean a **TERROR** of God. (Gen. 3:7-8)
 - At the other, the fear of the Lord means **REVERENT** submission that leads to **OBEDIENCE**.

We **HIDE** from God ...



... We seek to draw **NEAR** and **SUBMIT** to God.

- What do these passages teach us about the fear of the Lord:

Deut. 4:10

Deut. 17:18-19

Deut. 31:13

Psalm 33:8-9

Psalm 34:9-11

- They will **SUBMIT** to authority. (Prov. 1:8)
 - Teens who comprehend the nature of spiritual warfare will **ADMIT** their need for God-ordained **AUTHORITY**.
 - Some thoughts on teenage rebellion
 - Teenage **REBELLION** against parental authority is never OK and its never inevitable!
 - We should continue to train our children to obey **IMMEDIATELY** with a godly **ATTITUDE**.
 - Carrying through on the promise of **DISCIPLINE** is just as important for teens as it was for toddlers!
 - "Debts paid" (discipline) should not be allowed to **TARNISH** the **FUTURE** relationship you have with your teen - **FORGIVE** from the heart.
 - A **WISE** parent is able to discern the difference between **DISOBEDIENCE** and **REBELLION**.

3. They will **SEPARATE** from the wicked. (Prov. 1:10-16)
4. They will apply biblical **PRINCIPLES** to life.
- If your child has grown up in the church, they will tend to view the Bible as a collection of **MORAL** stories.
 - Wise parents help their teens **THINK** biblically and press them to **INTERPRET** all the facts of life from a **BIBLICAL** perspective.
 - *“(A teenager) needs to be more than a person who has acquired biblical **KNOWLEDGE**; he needs to be a person who is able to approach life with biblical **WISDOM**.”* (Tripp, pg. 21)
- How can a parent facilitate this objective?*
5. They will **EXAMINE** their own heart regularly.
- Most teens are not biblically **SELF-AWARE** - they obviously tend to get much of their information from **PEERS**, **MEDIA**, and **CULTURE**.
 - Biblical self-awareness is essential to ...
 - a) **FLEEING** youthful lusts
 - b) Christian **LIBERTY** issues
 - c) **SANCTIFICATION**
 - Biblical self-awareness means that *“the teenager will live with an **ACCURATE**, practical knowledge of personal themes of **WEAKNESS**, **TEMPTATION**, and **SIN**.”* (Tripp, pg. 123)
 - One of the best **DISCUSSIONS** a parent can have with their teen is helping them **ANTICIPATE** where temptation will hit them and teaching them how to **AVOID** it.

CONCLUSION