

PARENTING 11-14

Adolescence Ahead!

AN UNCHANGING GOD

○ God Is Faithful

- *“Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations...” (Deuteronomy 7:9)*
- *“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6)*

○ Scripture Is Sufficient

- *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*
- *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)*
- “Difficulties heaped upon difficulties can never rise to the level of the promise of God...Unbelief looks at the difficulty. Faith regards the promise.”¹

A RAPIDLY CHANGING CHILD

○ Change in the Tween Years

- Changing body
- Changing brain
- Changing world
- Changing convictions
- Changing relationships

○ Change is Scary

- “It is everywhere around us – on the television sitcom, in the magazine on the supermarket rack, on the shelves of the local bookstore...and yes, even in a number of Christian books on the family. Parents are afraid of their teenagers. Even as they are enjoying the early years of a child’s life, they are looking over their shoulders with dread, expecting the worst, knowing that in a few short years this precious little one will turn into a monster overnight.”²

¹ Charles Bridges, The Christian Ministry (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 175, 179

² Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997), 13

- “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.”¹
- “Things run along pretty smoothly until your kid reaches thirteen. That’s the time you need to stick ‘em in a barrel, hammer the lid down nice and snug, and feed ‘em through the knothole. And then, about the time he turns sixteen, plug up the knothole!” (Mark Twain)

○ **Change Is God’s Plan**

- This is an **essential** season of parenting
 - “We all know that God’s goal for our parenting is that we work ourselves out of a job. His plan is that we would be his instruments in producing children who are biblically mature, ready to face life in the fallen world, ready to be salt and light, ready to be contributors to his kingdom work, no longer needing the day-by-day guidance that we have given them for so many years.”²
 - *“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” (1 Corinthians 13:11)*
- This is a **revealing** season of parenting
 - One author has written “the most pivotal choices are made during the age span of about eleven to fifteen.”
 - What will these choices reveal?
 - Pre-adolescence and adolescence create a myriad of new **temptations** and redemptive **opportunities** for parents and children alike.
 - If your children are **converted**, adolescent temptations will provide you countless opportunities to shepherd them back to the Savior who offers grace for forgiveness and change.
 - If your children are **unconverted**, adolescent temptations will provide you countless opportunities to shepherd them to the Savior who offers the gift of salvation.
- This is a **humbling** season of parenting
 - “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. The teen years are hard for us because they tend to bring out the worst in us.”³
 - *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5)*

¹ Tedd Tripp, Shepherding A Child’s Heart (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), 231

² Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 208

³ Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 17

- This must be a **gospel-centered** season of parenting
 - “In all our nurturing as parents the gospel must be central. It is the only hope for forgiveness. It is the only hope for deep internal change. It is the only hope for power to live. The grace of the gospel is the center of everything for Christian parents.”¹
 - “Your heart’s desire in every phase of childrearing is to see your children internalize the gospel.”²

- This is a **rich** season of parenting
 - “It is time for us to reject the wholesale cynicism of our culture regarding adolescence. Rather than years of undirected and unproductive struggle, these are years of unprecedented opportunity. They are the **golden age of parenting**, when you begin to reap all the seeds you have sown in their lives, when you can help your teenager to internalize truth, preparing him or her for a productive, God-honoring life as an adult.”³

CHANGING BODY

- **Puberty**
 - Physical changes (see **Appendix A**)
 - Timetable can vary widely
 - Temptations
 - Comparison to others (favorable or unfavorable)
 - Self-focus
 - Anxiety
 - Redemptive Opportunity: Trust God
 - *“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” (Psalm 139:13-14)*
 - Emotional changes
 - “Tidal wave of hormones”
 - Temptations
 - Moodiness
 - Depression
 - Anger or aggression
 - Redemptive Opportunity: Cultivate Fruit of Self-Control
 - *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)*

¹ Tedd and Margy Tripp, *Instructing A Child’s Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2008), 180

² Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding A Child’s Heart*, 224

³ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 19

- "...sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)
- Sexual changes
 - New attractions and desires
 - Temptations
 - Flirtation
 - Pornography
 - Masturbation
 - Redemptive Opportunity: Communication With Dad and Mom
 - For Parent: Grace and skill at reaching your child's heart
 - "The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." (Proverbs 20:5)
 - For Child: Humility, transparency
 - "My son, give me your heart..." (Proverbs 23:26)
- **"The Talk"**
 - Be positive: Sex is a wonderful gift from God!
 - Discern the best time
 - Not too late
 - Not too early
 - Questions to help you discern the best time:
 - What contexts is your child in?
 - What questions is your child asking you?
 - Choose the content wisely
 - God's good purpose for sex
 - Anatomy (girls and boys)
 - General description of human reproduction
 - Explanation of changes associated with puberty
 - Guidelines for relating to the opposite sex
 - Commitment to honor God by using this gift according to his plan
 - Recommended Resources
 - Almost 12 (Original Version)
 - The Wonderful Way Babies Are Made
 - Set the context carefully
 - Continue the conversation
- **Self-image**
 - Changing body intensifies self-consciousness, feelings of insecurity
 - "The teen years are years of monumental insecurity."¹
 - Dangerous behaviors
 - Bullying
 - Eating disorders
 - Cutting

¹ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding A Child's Heart*, 210

- Secular solution: Self-Esteem
 - Unbiblical Diagnosis: The Empty Heart
 - Abraham Maslow: “It is these needs which are essentially deficits in the organism, empty holes, so to speak, which must be filled up for health’s sake...”
- Biblical solution: Love and Truth
 - Biblical Diagnosis: The Embattled Heart
 - *“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” (James 4:1)*
 - David Powlison: “[God] sees our hearts as an embattled kingdom ruled either by one kind of desire or by another kind.”¹

CHANGING BRAIN

- **Like A Steel Trap**
 - Asks hard questions
 - Abstract reasoning
 - Debates anything and everything
 - Loves to catch adults’ mistakes
- Temptations
 - Pride and independence
 - *Proverbs 16:5 – “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.”*
 - Disrespect
 - *Ephesians 6:2 – “Honor your father and mother...”*
- Redemptive Opportunity: Cultivate Patience (Parents) and Humility (Child)
 - *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing...” (Philippians 2:5-7)*
- Redemptive Opportunity: Love Your God With All Your Mind
 - *“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.” (Mark 12:30)*

CHANGING WORLD

- **Life Outside The Playpen**
 - In the next 5-8 years these children will be graduating from high school and taking their place in the adult world.

¹ David Powlison, “The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls” (Journal of Biblical Counseling, Spring 2005), 4

- This brief season of parental **authority** will have transitioned into a new season of parental **influence**
 - By God’s grace, and under your care, they are “to grow up in every way into him who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
 - As your child interacts with this expanding world, you will see more clearly the true nature of their emerging convictions
 - What do they treasure?
 - What do they fear?
 - What motivates their decisions?
 - Before their personal preferences harden into ironclad convictions, God invites us in this season of dynamic change to participate actively in conforming them to the image of Christ.
- **Expanding World**
 - Unsupervised opportunities
 - Home alone
 - Serving/socializing in church
 - Group activities
 - Parties, sleepovers
 - Sports teams
 - Clubs, camps
 - Jobs
 - Communication technology
 - Email, instant messaging, Facebook, etc.
 - Cell phones
 - **Enticing World**
 - *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)*
 - Music
 - TV/Movies
 - Internet (See **Appendix B: Are Your Kids Safe On The Web?**)
 - Video Games
 - Fashion
 - “When we respond to issues of taste in the same way that we respond to moral issues, we cheapen the whole cultural discussion and weaken the positive influence that we can have with our teenagers. We need to accept that in many ways they will be different from us. The issue is not whether they are participating in things that are enjoyable to us, but whether they are participating in things that are pleasing to God!”¹
 - **Handout:** “Modesty Heart Check”

¹ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 153

TEMPTATIONS	OPPORTUNITIES	FOR EVALUATION
<p>Self-sufficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “While this is a period of instability, anxiety and vulnerability, it is also paradoxically a period when children are seeking to establish an independent persona. The teen wants to be his own person. While his need for direction has never been greater, he will resist overt attempts to corral him.”¹ 	<p>Self-suspicion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:6-7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child willingly answer questions about his conversations, choices, actions, and motives? • Does your child ask permission before making or changing plans? • Does your child welcome your input on her preferences in music, fashion, etc.?
<p>Deception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly lying • Partial truths • Withholding information 	<p>Truthfulness, Faithfulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” (Proverbs 12:19) • “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.’” (Matthew 25:21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child have a pattern of deception (either direct lies or partial truths)? • Does your child ever volunteer information about his motives or actions that you would not have known otherwise? • Do you grant (or withhold) privileges on the basis of your child’s proven faithfulness?
<p>Love for the world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4) 	<p>Fear of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7) • “Do you want the world to lose its appeal? Then crowd out worldliness by filling your affections with the cross of Christ.”² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child like the world or <i>LOVE</i> the world? • Does your child ever resist sinful desires because he fears God’s displeasure (vs. fear of getting caught)? • Does your child possess the discernment and biblical conviction to have his own phone, email account, etc.?
<p>Sexual immorality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Flee from sexual immorality.” (1 Corinthians 6:18) • “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” (Job 31:1 NIV) 	<p>Self-control, purity, modesty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “But the fruit of the Spirit is...self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23) • “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How closely do you monitor your child’s use of the internet? • Is your child tempted by pornography? Other sexual sins? • Is your child flirtatious? • How does your child respond to sexually suggestive images on TV or in movies?
<p>Selfishness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3) 	<p>Servanthood, focus on others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (Matthew 23:11) • “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How consistently does your child serve in the home and church? • Does your child participate freely in family activities or withdraw into his room, music, hobbies, etc.? • Does your child show concern for how her choices affect others?

¹ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 211

² C.J. Mahaney, editor, *Worldliness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 34

- **Boundary Lines**
 - Big goals:
 - **Guard your child’s heart** during this vulnerable season of change
 - Gatekeepers (Nehemiah 13:19-22)
 - “In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement, that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, ‘How will this affect their souls?’”¹
 - *“And [Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.” (Luke 17:1-2)*
 - **Guide your child’s heart** toward personal convictions
 - “I am afraid that many of us are so busy making decisions for our children in order to keep them safe that we do not teach them to develop their own set of internalized biblical convictions. It is one thing for a teenager to do what is right under a watchful eye or under the threat of punishment. It is quite another thing to see the independent, unpressured, heartfelt exercise of personal conviction.”²
- **Because God’s Word is sufficient for all of life, I will base my parenting decisions on Scripture rather than on the opinions and practices of others.** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- **Because I understand the nature and power of indwelling sin, I will diligently monitor my child’s actions, graciously probe my child’s motives, and provide loving discipline as needed.** (Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 12:6)
- **Because I recognize my limited discernment and daily need for God’s mercy, I will humbly seek to understand my child’s perspective before rushing to judgments.** (Proverbs 18:13; Matthew 18:23-35)
- **Because children are by nature simple and inclined toward folly, I will be cautious about allowing new privileges that could expose my child to harm.** (Proverbs 22:3, 22:15)
- **Because I am committed to helping my child mature into a wise adult, I will view temptations as God-given learning opportunities and will proactively seek new opportunities for my child’s growth.** (Proverbs 22:6)

¹ J.C. Ryle, The Duties Of Parents

² Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 128

- **Because God calls Christians to unity in the Spirit, I will seek consensus with my spouse on all major parenting issues.** (Ephesians 4:3)

- **Because I trust the unchanging character and promises of God, I will view my child's current circumstances and future choices with faith and hope.** (Hebrews 11:1)

CHANGING CONVICTIONS

- **What Happened To That Conviction?**
 - Behaviors that looked like convictions in childhood sometimes evaporate in the teen years.

 - New freedoms can reveal a discrepancy between what your child says and does.

 - “Each of our children is afflicted with a fatal disease: sin. There is only one known remedy: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Faithful parents must approach parenting with a candid assessment of their child's spiritual condition.” (Kenneth Maresco)

- **Cause For Cheerfulness**
 - “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 of deficiencies and supplies of grace, without looking too eagerly for present fruit.”¹

 - *Philippians 1:9-11 – “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*

¹ Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, 178

CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS (PEERS)

- **Follow The Crowd**
 - “The peak of conformity comes at around age 13. At this age, there’s nothing more important to a child than being just like everyone else – normal.”¹

- **The Power of Peers**
 - *“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” (Proverbs 13:20)*

 - “Nothing perhaps affects man’s character more than the company he keeps. We catch the ways and tone of those we live and talk with, and unhappily get harm far more easily than good. Disease is infectious, but health is not. (repeat many times) Now, if a professing Christian deliberately chooses to be intimate with those who are not friends of God and who cling to the world, his soul is sure to take harm. It is hard enough to serve Christ under any circumstances in such a world as this. But it is doubly hard to do it if we are friends of the thoughtless and ungodly. Mistakes in friendships are the whole reason why some have entirely ceased to grow.”²

 - Temptation: Fear Of Man
 - *“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.” (Proverbs 29:25)*

 - Redemptive Opportunity: Fear of God, Courage
 - *“The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.” (Proverbs 8:13)*
 - *“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.” (Proverbs 1:10)*

- **Qualities of a True Friend**
 - Fears God and keeps his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
 - Honors his parents (Ephesians 6:3)
 - Submits to authorities (Hebrews 13:17)
 - Seeks to keep his friends from sinning (James 5:19-20)
 - *“And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.” (1 Samuel 23:16 NIV)*

- **Good Friends Don’t Just Happen**
 - Convictions to cultivate in your child

 - Convictions to cultivate as parents
 - God has given me authority to oversee my child’s friendships
 - *“Train up a child in the way he should go...” (Proverbs 22:6)*
 - *“Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.” (Proverbs 14:7)*

¹ Psychologist David Anderegg, quoted in Karen Levine, “The age of cliques,” Parents, December 1995, 102

² J.C. Ryle, The Duties of Parents

- I will use biblical criteria to evaluate my child's friendships
 - I will not let my child's complaints stop me from evaluating his/her friendships
 - "Teenagers tend to be prickly and protective when it comes to discussion of their friends. It is as if the operational rule is this: 'To reject my friends is to reject me.'"¹
 - I will not let fear of child keep me from upholding my parental responsibilities!
 - One ungodly friendship could sabotage the years I have spent in disciplining my child
 - "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33)
 - Practical tips
-
- **Search and Rescue**
 - Guidelines for intervening in an unfruitful friendship
 - Communicate directly with parents of other child
 - Care for your child during this transition

CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS (PARENTS)

- **A Parent's Love**
 - "Love should be the silver thread that runs through all your conduct. Kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to enter into childish troubles, a readiness to take part in childish joys – these are the cords by which a child may be led most easily, these are the clues you must follow if you would find the way to his heart."²
 - "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. Young people do not run from places where they are loved and know unconditional acceptance. They do not run away from homes where there are solid relationships."³
 - "The truth is, once my kids hit the teen years, my relationship – good or bad – is the greatest asset or liability I have." (Grant Layman)
 - Rules without relationship → Rebellion
 - Relationship without rules → Chaos

¹ Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity, 84

² J.C. Ryle, The Duties of Parents

³ Tedd Tripp, Shepherding a Child's Heart, 221

- **A Parent's Example**

- *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it...” (2 Timothy 3:14)*
- Your children are very perceptive to any trace of hypocrisy – they are studying you.
 - What are they observing?
 - What would they say you are most passionate about?
 - “Gospel-centered parenting begins with authentic example. Not a perfect example, not a flawless example, not a sinless example, but an authentic example. Modeling precedes teaching... Any contradiction between our proclamation and our practice ultimately undermines the authority and the effectiveness of our proclamation. All consistency between proclamation and practice confirms the authenticity of the gospel and promotes the attractiveness of the gospel.” (C.J. Mahaney)
- Humility
 - Confessing sin (James 5:16)
 - “The key to the family functioning as a redemptive community, where the Gospel is the glue that holds the family together, is parents who so trust Christ that they are ready and willing to confess their faults to their children...[P]arents who admit their sin will position themselves to model the Gospel for their children daily.”¹
 - *“The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” (1 Timothy 1:15)*
 - Hating hypocrisy (Matthew 7:1-5)
 - Seeking counsel (Proverbs 11:14)
 - “Remember, it is not your weakness that will get in the way of God’s working through you, but your delusions of strength.”²
- Encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
 - “Teenagers experience frequent failure. As Christian parents you must become adept at taking your child to the cross to find forgiveness and power to live.”³ Help them see evidences of God’s grace in their lives.
 - *“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus...” (1 Corinthians 1:4)*

¹ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 67

² Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 189

³ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 232

- Gratefulness and joy (Colossians 3:15-16; Philippians 4:4)
- Hunger for God (Psalm 42:1)
- Grasp of the gospel (Philippians 1:27)
 - “Gospel-centered parenting doesn’t begin with my proclamation of the gospel. It begins with a consideration of whether I have been transformed by the gospel...” (C.J. Mahaney)
 - “Parents who talk about sin but live self-righteously (‘In my day...’ ‘I get up and go to work every day, you don’t see me complaining!’) are functionally denying the Gospel. Parents who talk about the sacrificial love of Christ but live selfishly (‘Who took my newspaper?’ ‘Turn off that infernal racket, it is driving me crazy!’) are functionally denying the Gospel. Parents who talk about the grace of Christ, but are verbally condemning as they discipline their children (‘You’ll never make anything of yourself,’ ‘What are you trying to do, see how many stupid things you can do in one day?’) functionally deny the Gospel.”¹
- **A Parent’s Instruction**
 - “Instructing a child’s heart is essential to shepherding a child’s heart. The instruction that you provide not only informs the mind; it is directed to persuading the heart of the wisdom and truthfulness of God’s ways. We should impress truth on the hearts of our children, not to control or manage them, but to point them to the greatest joy and happiness that they can experience – delighting in God and the goodness of his ways.”²
 - The Bible is our most important tool for instruction
 - How often do you open the Word of God with your children?
 - “God’s Word – not our personal preferences or church culture – must be the standard for our instruction. His Word must be the arbiter between us and our children as they grow older. The more we elevate our personal rules and standards over God’s Word, the more we tempt and exasperate them.” (Kenneth Maresco)
 - Three biblical foundations to lay in the heart of a child³
 - Fear of the Lord
 - Adherence to parental instruction
 - Disassociation from the wicked

¹ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, 175

² Tedd and Margy Tripp, *Instructing a Child’s Heart*, 11

³ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 213

- The heart is the target of our instruction
 - “If my heart is the source of my sin problem, then lasting change must always travel through the pathway of my heart. It is not enough to alter my behavior or to change my circumstances. Christ transforms people by radically changing their hearts.”¹
- We must be persistent and patient in our instruction
 - “We must not expect all things at once. We must remember what they are, and teach them as they are able to bear. Their minds are like a lump of metal – not to be forged and made useful at once, but only by a succession of little blows. Their understandings are like narrow-necked vessels; we must pour in the wine of knowledge gradually, or much of it will be spilled and lost.”²
- **A Parent’s Hope**
 - “You have reason for hope as parents who desire to see your children have faith. The hope is the power of the Gospel. The Gospel is suited to the human condition. The Gospel is attractive. God has already shown great mercy to your children. He has given them a place of rich privilege. He has placed them in a home where they have heard His truth. They have seen the transforming power of grace in the lives of His people. Your prayer and expectation is that the Gospel will overcome their resistance as it has yours.”³
 - *“And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 17:7)*

¹ Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 62

² J.C. Ryle, The Duties Of Parents

³ Tedd Tripp, Shepherding a Child’s Heart, 225

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

(Available in the CLC bookstore unless otherwise noted)

- Almost 12 (Kenneth Taylor)
- The Wonderful Way Babies Are Made (Larry Christenson)
- I Kissed Dating Goodbye (Joshua Harris)
- Worldliness (CJ Mahaney, Editor)
- Eating Disorders: The Quest For Thinness (Edward T. Welch)
- Peer Pressure: Recognizing The Warning Signs and Giving New Direction (Paul Tripp)
- “Modesty Heart Check” (Carolyn Mahaney)
- “Listening To Music For God’s Glory” (Bob Kauflin)
A message given at the 10:31 youth meeting on 11/1/08. Audio available at www.covlife.org
- Recommended movie review sites (for parents, not kids):
 - www.pluggedinonline.com
 - www.kids-in-mind.com
 - www.crosswalk.com
 - www.screenit.com
- Ten Questions To Diagnose Your Spiritual Health (Donald Whitney)
- How Can I Be Sure I’m A Christian? (Donald Whitney)
- Instructing A Child’s Heart (Tedd and Margy Tripp)
- The Duties of Parents (J.C. Ryle)

PARENTING 11-14: Appendix A

Puberty: Its Biology and Psychology

(Taken from the book, *Your Adolescent*, by David B. Pruitt, M.D.)

If you are the parent of child in middle school, you have probably seen firsthand the highly variable timetable of sexual development.

Some seventh-grade girls have the bodies of mature women, while others are just beginning to wear training bras. As for the average twelve-year-old boy, he probably is several inches shorter than many of the girls in his class. At a glance, most of the boys could be mistaken for the girls' younger brothers.

Puberty – a series of biological changes that enable an individual to be capable of reproduction – begins when a part of the brain signals the pituitary gland to increase its production of hormones. In addition to the hormones that promote growth, the pituitary gland also releases hormones that increase the production of two main sex hormones. In a girl, the ovaries release large amounts of estrogen and progesterone; in boys, the testes and adrenal gland (located adjacent to the kidneys) manufacture testosterone. These hormones trigger the physical changes that we associate with puberty.

Many factors determine when a person starts puberty. Heredity has a role. If you, for example, started puberty later than average, your son or daughter is more likely to follow that pattern than the child of a person who started maturing earlier. Heredity is not the only factor. Studies of girls have shown that environmental factors such as nutrition, stress, exercise, and socioeconomic background also influence the age at which a girl starts her menstrual period. American girls today, for example, start menstruating eighteen months earlier than did their great-grandmothers at the turn of the century.

Boys too, enter puberty earlier than their great-grandfathers did. Most boys today have reached their full adult height by the time they turn eighteen; fifty years ago, the average male achieved his full height at the age of twenty-six. Although there are wide variations in the age and speed at which individuals go through puberty, the sequence of events is always consistent.

In girls, the first sign is usually the appearance of a small rise or breast bud around the nipple. As the breasts continue to grow, the girl develops sparse pubic and underarm hair. Her shape begins to change; in addition to growing taller, her hips become more rounded. The sebaceous glands in the skin often become overactive during puberty, which may result in acne on the faces or bodies of both boys and girls.

In addition to these visible signs, there are internal changes occurring as a girl's body prepares for menstruation. The ovaries are growing, and the cells destined to become ova are slowly beginning to develop. The uterus is also enlarging and the vaginal wall thickening. Prior to the onset of menstruation, many girls notice an increase in vaginal discharge. Menstruation occurs toward the end of puberty, on average about eighteen months after the peak of the growth spurt. In the early months of sexual maturity,

menstruation tends to be erratic, and many girls have periods without the release of an egg (ovulation) for a year or more. The average age in the United States for the onset of menstruation is between twelve and thirteen.

As a boy's testes begin to produce testosterone, the first noticeable sign of puberty is a difference in the way the genitals look. The testes become larger, and the skin of the scrotum thickens and becomes redder in color. Light-colored sprigs or pubic hair appear around the base of the penis. The penis itself becomes larger and will grow for the next two years. After the penis begins to grow, most boys begin to ejaculate semen. Although even the infant penis is capable of erection, the ability to ejaculate comes with puberty. Initially, the semen is scant of sperm, but the sperm count will increase as the boy matures. In addition to these genital changes, a boy will develop hair under his arms and on his face. Chest hair doesn't appear until the late teens or even well into young adulthood. During puberty, a boy's voice begins to change gradually as his larynx expands and the vocal cords lengthen. Before the high voice of the young boy evolves into the deep voice of a man, it goes through a period of cracks and squeaks that we have come to associate with adolescence.

The complete pubertal process for both boys and girls typically lasts between four and five years.

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Excerpt taken from Chapter 1: Early and Middle Adolescence*

PARENTING 11-14: Appendix B

Are Your Kids Safe On The Web?

A few years ago Covenant Life School found this letter online and shared it with school families. It contains explicit warnings about the dangers of blog sites, web cams, and other technologies.

I'm the IT Director at CCCS, and the issues I mention in this email have been on my heart for some months now. I am scared. I hope you are scared too after you visit the links in this e-mail.

- Do you have filtering or monitoring software on all the computers your kids use?
- Do your kids use the computer in their bedroom or another place where you can't easily monitor them?
- Are your kids allowed to use the Internet at a friend's house? Are they monitored there?
- Do you know if your kids have posted pictures of themselves online?
- Do your kids have a blog? Are they a part of a social networking site? Do you know what personally identifiable information they have posted?

If you don't read any further, then do this:

1. Get filtering software (if you have elementary aged kids) and logging software (if you have middle school and high school age kids). (See below)
2. Get filtering software (if you have elementary aged kids) and logging software (if you have middle school and high school age kids). (See below)
3. Do not let your kids access the Internet anywhere where there is not a filter or they are not monitored by a responsible adult.
4. If you have junior or high school aged kids, find out now if they have a blog or are a member of a social networking site (Xanga, MySpace, FaceBook) and see if what they have posted puts them in danger of being targeted/exploited by an Internet predator.
5. If your kids have cell phones, find out what kinds of pictures and messages they are sending and receiving.
6. Learn to use the computer, learn about the dangers of the Internet, communicate with your children, and communicate with other parents.

Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth

Out of a national sample of 1,501 youth ages 10 to 17 who use the Internet regularly:

- Approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the last year.
- One in thirty-three received an aggressive sexual solicitation — a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere; called them on the telephone; sent them regular mail, money, or gifts.
- One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex in the last year.
- One in seventeen was threatened or harassed.
- *Three quarters of youth who encountered a sexual solicitation or approach did not tell a parent. (emphasis added)*
- In households with home Internet access, *two thirds of parents said they did not have filtering or blocking software on their computer at the time they were interviewed.*

For these and other statistics, visit: <http://www.netismartz.org/safety/statistics.htm>

For valuable information about internet safety, visit:

<http://www.netismartz.org/resources/nsresources.htm>

Recommended vignettes/stories are: "Webville Outlaws," "Meet the WizzyWigs," and "Tracking Teresa" (very sobering). To see samples of Internet Safety Pledges, visit: <http://www.netsmartz.org/resources/pledge.htm> Take a look at the material and watch/do it with your children. Let them know you are serious about their safety online.

Blogs, Xanga and MySpace

A blog is a website for which an individual or a group generates text, photographs, video, audio files, and/or links, typically but not always on a daily or otherwise regular basis. The term is a shortened form of weblog. Xanga and now MySpace are two of the more popular blogging/social networking sites. **(Note: Since this letter was published, Facebook has exploded in popularity among youth.)** These sites allow students to create a profile, list their demographic information and interests, post what's on their mind, and allow others link to them as "friends" and to comment/react to their posts and pictures.

If you have children in middle school or high school, make them show you their MySpace or Xanga if they have one (if they balk... well, who is in charge? them or you?) Check and see who is linking to their site and check the pictures posted as well. (Many are posting pictures using their phones.) You might want to set up your own Xanga or MySpace and lurk (which I have done). Work out blogging and social networking website standards for your children which you can enforce and they can abide by. Not all kids are going to get into this new form of expression and communicating, but some will. If your kids are younger, stay informed and be planning how your family will handle new communication technologies.

Links:

- <http://www.xanga.com>
- <http://www.myspace.com>
- <http://www.livejournal.com>

Articles to Read

Please read the following articles. **WARNING: The NYT article is very graphic and is NOT for children or young teens.**

- **MSNBC: Kids, blogs and too much information:**
Children reveal more online than parents know: <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/7668788/>
- **NYT: Through His Webcam, a Boy Joins a Sordid Online World**
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/19/national/19kids.ready.html?hp&ex=1134968400&en=e17dd0c0b85cdde4&ei=5094&partner=homepage>

Instant Messaging

If your children are using Instant Messaging (AIM/MSN/Yahoo! Messenger/Google Talk), are you sure that everyone in your child's buddy/friends list is who they say they are? Instant messaging (and chat rooms) is one way Internet predators select and "groom" their victims. We've all seen reports on the news of teens running away with adults they meet online. Also be aware that even if they are not at a computer, they can IM via most mobile phones.

Filtering/Logging

Filtering software allows or denies access to web sites, either based on lists of approved/blocked sites, or based on the content of the individual page. Logging software records web sites visited, chat conversations, words typed on the screen, and may take pictures of the screen. I recommend filtering for families with younger children, and logging AND filtering software for families with older children.

Logging is more important than filtering for older students because instant messaging and e-mail are where the action is. If your teen is online for any length of time, but you are not logging their IM conversations and e-mail, you really don't know who they are talking to and who is talking to them.

Filtering software:

- <http://www.afafilter.com>
- <http://www.cybersitter.com>
- <http://www.netnanny.com>
- (Your ISP may have filtering options available as well)

Logging:

- <http://www.eblaster.com>
- <http://www.overspy.com/>

Note that logging software will probably be flagged as spyware or a virus-like program. This is to be expected. You will need to read the documentation with the software to figure out how to make it and your anti-virus/spyware software get along.

This software isn't free, but neither were child safety seats when your kids were younger. Knowing the dangers of the Internet, to me this software is as important as child safety seats. Even though you may not "know anything about computers," your children are still your responsibility and it is up to YOU to keep them safe, whether in the car or online.

Conclusion

Please take time to make sure your kids are being safe on the Internet, by installing filtering and logging software. Communicate with them about the risks and benefits of various online activities. If you feel like you don't know anything about computers, take a community education class or have a friend help you learn. Establish (AND ENFORCE) guidelines about Internet use at home and away from home (at friends houses, etc).

You are the parent. You are in control. Your children and their online safety is your responsibility.

**PARENTING 11-14 SEMINAR
“Adolescence Ahead!”
FEEDBACK SURVEY**

1. The amount of material covered in this seminar was... (circle one)

Too much Too little About right Other (Explain)

2. The time required for this seminar was... (circle one)

Too much Too little About right Other (Explain)

3. The pace of the teaching in this seminar was... (circle one)

Too fast Too slow About right Other (Explain)

4. The overall value of the teaching in this seminar was... (circle one)

Great Good Not bad Poor

5. The overall value of the Q & A panel in this seminar was... (circle one)

Great Good Not bad Poor

6. I wish the following topic(s) had been covered in this seminar:

7. I wish the following topic(s) had been covered more thoroughly in this seminar:

8. I think this seminar could be improved in the future by...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!