**7 Tips for Parents with Teenagers**

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4 NIV

In general, the teenage years are complicated and troubling. Children experience several hormonal and psychosocial changes which happen quickly and unexpectedly, allowing no opportunity to make adjustments at home, thus leading to many family conflicts.

The problem stems from the fact that teenagers are entering a new phase of life in a way that is abrupt and unexpected. Suddenly, they see a world that attracts them and influences how they think and behave and, added to this, there is an awakening of their hormones which confuses them.

This all takes place in preparation for the adult stage but it confuses teenagers as much as their parents who often react by trying to control the situation through imposing their authority, instead of trying to understand what their son or daughter is experiencing. This provokes rebelliousness in the adolescent, only making the problem worse.

If you are going through this, here are some tips to help you:

Decide to face this stage consciously and intentionally. In other words, decide to face the situation firmly but with a willingness to resolve problems and empathetically understand your child. This will give you a calmer attitude to resolve issues without losing or hurting your kids.

Maintain open communication at all costs in order to hear and understand your teenager.

James 1:19 says: “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” You must listen intentionally, in spite of your demands, try to put yourself in their position. This will help to improve the way you respond.

Remember that you were once a teenager too, although you may not remember it very well. You also made huge mistakes, had a need for independence, went through an identity crisis and experienced the desire to explore new things. This was all part of your life and possibly was many years ago, but try to remember it and think about the fact that it is the same crisis your son or daughter is going through. This way, you will be able to better understand the situation without becoming so angry.

Respect fundamentally these three areas: a. Their needs, although you may not understand them; b. Their feelings and opinions; c. Their style of dress, always and when it is not immoral.

Have a key Bible text that relates to your children, repeat it everyday, write it where you can easily see it. The Word of God has the power to change.

Be patient. Know that, just like other phases, this one will pass. Both you and your child need to listen to the voice of God and believe that He will help you.

Speak clearly to your child about what you expect from him or her as it relates to their grades, drugs, their behaviour, etc. Know their friends and be aware of what they are doing.

Finally, keep your faith and ask God for wisdom so that He can help you to be a good parent during this phase.

May God help you in all you do today.

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