

# Mentoring with Grace and Wisdom – *Prov 1:7-9*

Children of the Conquest #12

**Introduction** - At 10, your boys and girls are all boys and girls and no men and women. At 20, your boys and girls will be all men and women and no boys and girls. And the transition will take place during the teen years. The metamorphosis is amazing and a privilege to watch. And you have been hand-picked by God to oversee, shepherd and guide the process – by grace through faith. “*Be anxious for nothing...*” (Phil 4:6-9).

**Issues of First Priority** (Luke 6:39-42) – Before discussing our relationship with our teenagers...

**Your Loyalty to the Lord** – You cannot export what you do not have. Are you “all in” with Jesus Christ? Oftentimes, by the time we have teenagers, we may have lost our “first love” and there first needs to be a true heart-revival in us. Oftentimes, that is exactly why the Lord gives us teenagers and teenage issues. It’s not for the teenager; it’s for us.

**Loyalty of Mom and Dad** – Teenagers battle with insecurity in new and weird ways. That battle is immensely lessened when Mom and Dad have a great relationship. You cannot overestimate the power a great marriage has for your teens. Investing in your marriage honestly and before the Lord is the first and best way to minister to your children.

**Wisdom You Bestow/Wisdom They Wear** – “*My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck*” (Prov 1:8-9, also 3:1-4, 3:21-22, 4:1-3, 4:10, 5:1, 6:20-22, 7:1-3, 13:1, 19:27). Note the patient repetition (and how it can be done in a way that is not nagging – Phil 3:1). Note the metaphor of wearing like a thing of beauty or a medal of honor. Note the responsibility parents have to possess such ornaments of grace and wisdom and then to bestow them.

**Teaching All the Time** – They are watching you. They see how you address your spouse. They watch how you talk about work, your boss, the other employees, the in-laws. They see how you act when tired, tempted, or under stress. They notice how and if you confess sin and if you gladly forgive and let love cover a multitude of them. They notice what you do with your leisure time, how you handle your own spiritual disciplines, the chores you do or neglect to do. They are watching all of this in light of the theology on God’s exhaustive sovereignty and love and they are evaluating your consistency. They are learning from you even when though you are not thinking of this as a teaching time. You are teaching in all these situations and yet you might not ever say a word to your kids during these times.

**Fathers and Mothers, not Preachers and Lecturers** – But we must talk, and we must converse a lot with our teenagers. We must be the kind of people that are the most loyal to them and the most easily approachable. Parents must be proactive to discuss all sorts of topics and do so not only when the kid is in trouble. Family devotion times may begin to radically change to open discussion times and rabbit trails are often the most important points. It gets messy. Be prepared spiritually and emotionally because you will not always be prepared intellectually (“I don’t know about that one, let’s look into it together”). Don’t act surprised by any subject brought up; they will learn a lot simply by how you respond with a thoughtful, mature manner.

**New Forms of Discipline** – At some point, spanking is out. But sin must still have consequences and you want to magnify those consequences for the sake of teaching. Do not subsidize sin, rebellion, or laziness, with free room and board (2 Thess 3:10). It may mean losing privileges (sleepovers, sports, keys to car, tonight’s dinner, etc.), but these things should not be ‘grounding’. Restitution should be paid, public confessions for public sins need to be made, and all with a thankful spirit. And don’t forget your thankful spirit in the midst of it all.

**Wisdom, Discipline, and Restrictions** – Toddlers can sin in all kinds of ways that are cute and not life-threatening. Teenagers can really hurt themselves and others. It is counterintuitive but toddlers need to live in a benevolent dictatorship and teens need to see more and more restrictions lifted. The temptation is to put more and more training wheels on instead of taking them off. As they approach the years before they leave the home, teenagers should be in a situation at home where they receive more and more advice and less and less commands. They need to practice making and living with their own decisions and standards with you around helping, debriefing, reminding, but not commanding. This is not done in one day or one year, but as a process over these years. Wisdom from parents will be required as you address friendships, media and entertainment standards, use of time and money, sports and other pursuits, hair, cosmetics, clothing, alcohol, and so much more. As they walk through this, they do not primarily need a “youth group.” What they need is Mom and Dad.

**Straight Talk** – Your sons need to know they can talk with their father about anything. Testosterone is a powerful hormone and I won't say here in mixed company all that a Dad really needs to talk straight about with his son. If you are embarrassed that I brought this up, just think (remember) how much more a boy is embarrassed in these times. He can learn from you or out on the street or Internet. Prove to him that he doesn't need to go there. And regarding Internet controls – they can be a real, practical help; safeguards are good, but they cannot replace an honest, loving, loyal relationship. They will stumble into these things by accident or through temptations. Do they know they can come to you and not get clobbered? Dads are the best accountability partner.

**For the Girls** – Mom should be just as willing to talk about anything with her daughters. And while she may never be tempted towards porn, she will be tempted with girl-porn (romance novels, chick flick). Mom and Dad both need to teach their girls that friendships with boys just don't work; boys are tempted to lust, and girls are tempted to be lusted after. She will and should care about her looks and must learn the biblical difference between attractive modesty and seductive advertising (1 Tim 2:9-11).

**Presenting Your Sons and Daughters** (Col 1:27-29) – *“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.”*

Remember what you have been given and what you have to give. You have *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* You have what they need for anything and everything they will encounter in life. God gave you particular children and not others. And He has for you what they need from you.

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