



Loving Your Teens

by Katie Leedy

*Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,
because love covers a multitude of sins.*

I Peter 4:8

God commands us to love our teenagers.

- *So that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, **to love their children.*** Titus 2:4
- *This is My commandment, **that you love one another,** just as I have loved you.* John 15:12

Challenges to loving our teenagers

- Ourselves—can only do this by the power of the Holy Spirit

“How is such a manner of life to be attained? I know of only one way, and that is by continually living near Jesus Christ. If we are to beautify Him, He must first beautify us. If we are to adorn the doctrine, the doctrine must adorn us. That is to say, it is only when we live near Him, are in constant touch of His hand, and communion with His spirit, it is only then that His beauty shall pass into our faces, and that beholding the glory of the Lord ‘we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory.’” Alexander McLaren

- Our Teens

Many changes are taking place in our teenager's lives. This causes insecurity, vulnerability, anxiety, instability. They are trying to take their place in the adult world, but they don't know just how they fit. They aren't children any longer—more is expected of them. This makes for a lot of challenges in loving them as we guide them through this tumultuous time of growing into adulthood!

“To love their husbands, their children –
With a tender, temperate, holy, wise affection.
O how hard a lesson.” John Wesley

What is love?

*... And I show you a still **more excellent** way. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the **greatest of these is love.***

I Corinthians 12:31, 13:13

1. Love is not . . .

- indulging our teenager's every wish
- making our teenager happy
- never being firm with our teens
- a warm, fuzzy feeling toward our teens

2. Words used for love in Scripture

- *agape*
 - Strong's Concordance: love, goodwill, benevolence, esteem; love which centers in moral preference
 - **selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love**
 - used in I Corinthians 13, I John 4 (God is love)

- *philos*
 - Strongs Concordance: beloved, dear, friendly, someone dearly loved (prized) in a personal intimate way, held dear in a close bond of personal affection.
 - Pastor Minnick: friendship love—warm, friendly affection between people; souls knit together (David & Jonathan), brotherly love
3. Word used in Titus 2:4 (“to love their children”)
- *philoteknous*
 - *philos* (see above)
 - *teknon*—a child, descendant
 - When you combine the 2 parts, this word conveys the meaning: **to be fond of one’s children with a warm, affectionate, tender, intimate, experiential, personal affection.**
4. God’s love shown to us
- *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* John 3:16
 - *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Romans 5:8
 - *We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* I John 4:16
 - *By this the love of God was manifested in us [in our case], that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* I John 4:9-10
5. Love is part of the Holy Spirit’s fruit in us.
- ***The fruit of the Spirit is love*** . . . Galatians 5:22

6. The Love Chapter—I Corinthians 13

- Love is **absolutely necessary** (v. 1-3)
We can have the greatest spiritual gifts, great knowledge, great faith, great giving—but if we do it without love, it is *no good!*
- Love is **action** (v. 4-7) (see I Corinthians 13 handout)
There are 14 actions in these verses—and these are love!

How can I love my teenager this way?

Let all that you do be done in love. I Corinthians 16: 14

1. Love gives Time and Attention

- Love is **kind**—part of kindness is extending yourself with your time, your interest, and your attention to another person—in this case, your teen!
- Love is **patient** (long suffering) with people (my teen!)—we must patiently give our time and attention to our teens—over and over! Frustration about being interrupted (again!) is the opposite of loving.
- Love is **self-denial**—I Corinthians 13 gives 5 self-denials that are required to love another person (my teen!) with patience and kindness:
 - Love doesn't have a strong *self* desire
 - Love doesn't call attention to oneself
 - Love isn't arrogant
 - Love isn't discourteous or rude or eccentric
 - Love isn't self-seeking

“Their first duty was to make home life beautiful by the love of husband and child—that great love which ever teaches forgetfulness of self.” Charles Ellicott

- Love is listening—active listening!

A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out. Proverbs 20:5

2. Love shows Affection

- Definition of “to love their children” in Titus 2:4--**to be fond of one’s children with a warm, affectionate, tender, intimate, experiential, personal affection**
- Physically
- Verbally
- Actions

Train up your child [**teen**] with all tenderness, affection, and patience. I do not mean that you are to spoil him, but I do mean that you should let him see that you love him. 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 [**teenage**] troubles, a readiness to take part in childish [**teenage**] 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. J. C. Ryle

3. Love Delights in Another Person

“The essence of love is a disposition (a deep-down pleasure) to take delight in someone or something.” Bryan Smith

- God delighted in His beloved Son.
*This is My **beloved** Son, in whom I am **well-pleased**.*
Matthew 3:17
- We can delight in our teens by **showing that we admire** them.
- We can delight in our teens by **liking** them.

4. Love Chastens and Corrects

- God disciplines those He loves—His children.
 - *My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.*
Hebrews 12:5b-6
 - *My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reprov's, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.* Proverbs 3:11-12
 - *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.*
Revelation 3:19
- We must discipline our teenagers to truly love them.
 - *He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.* Proverbs 13:24
 - *Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.* Proverbs 19:18

“Discipline is an expression of love.”

Tedd Tripp

Matthew Henry says on Titus 2:4, “And to love their children, not with a natural affection only, but a **spiritual, a love springing from a holy sanctified heart and regulated by the word; not a fond foolish love, indulging them in evil, neglecting due reproof and correction where necessary,** but a regular Christian love, showing itself in their pious education, forming their life and manners aright, taking care of their souls as well as of their bodies, of their spiritual welfare as well as of their temporal, of the former chiefly and in the first place.”

- We must use the Scriptures in our chastening and correcting.
 - *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*
II Timothy 3:16-17

“Your correction must be tied to the principles and absolutes of the Word of God.” Tedd Tripp

- We must **KNOW** the Word of God ourselves.
- We must **WORK** at using the Words of God to exhort our teens in times of disobedience.
- We must use wisdom in chastening and correcting our teens.

“Learn what to deal with and when. Some battles are not worth losing the war over. Some are. Make room for your teen’s differing style and manner. Wait for the right time to deal with things. Don’t just jump on your teen immediately when you observe a mistake. Don’t deal with everything that annoys you. Don’t ‘nitpick.’ Deal with broad themes.”
Jeff Rush

- We must do all of our chastening and correcting **with love.**

“It takes a heart to get a heart.”
Mark Minnick

It doesn't mean:

- we can't be firm
- there aren't consequences and outcomes to disobedient behavior

It does mean:

- we are **kind** in our tone and in our word choices
- we are **patient** in our dealing with our teen
- that we DO chasten and correct
- that we LISTEN to our teen and his/her responses, giving careful consideration to what they are saying, and trying to draw out of them what is really going on in their heart

“Once people know you’ve got their best at heart, it profits you **everything**.” Mark Minnick

“Nothing will compensate for the absence of this tenderness and love. A minister may speak the truth as it is in Jesus, clearly, forcibly, unanswerably; but if he does not speak it in love, few souls will be won. Just so you must set before your children [teenager] their duty, —command, threaten, punish, reason, —but if affection be wanting [lacking] in your treatment, your labour will be all in vain. Love is one grand secret of successful training.” J. C. Ryle

Resources:

Bridges, Jerry. *The Practice of Godliness*

George, Elizabeth. *A Mom After God's Own Heart*

Mahaney, Carolyn and Whitacre, Nicole. *Girl Talk*

Ryle, J. C. *The Upper Room* (Chapter 16—The Duties of Parents)

Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*

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