

Lesson 8



The Troubled Teen by Virginia Arnold

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
~ Ephesians 6:10-12

Introduction

God is able to take the most difficult struggles in our teen's life and reverse them for His glory. What we are facing with our troubled teen is not a closed door but God's open door of opportunity that will allow us to minister to our teen.

Understand and help your children understand what the Scripture teaches regarding the Spiritual Warfare

The reality of the spiritual conflict – Ignoring it will leave you defenseless

*For our struggle is . . . against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, **take up the full armor of God**, that you may be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having done everything **stand firm**. (Ephesians 6:12-13)*

The source of the spiritual conflict

*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your **adversary, the devil**, prowls around like a roaring lion, **seeking someone to devour**. But resist him, firm in your faith . . . (1 Peter 5:8-9)*

*The devil . . . was **a murderer** from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is **no truth in him**. Whenever he speaks a lie, **he speaks from his own nature**; for **he is a liar, and the father of lies**. (John 8:44)*

The fierceness of the conflict – without and within

For our struggle is . . . against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

Description of the conflict:

Unsaved Teen: Ephesians 2:1-3

Saved teen: Romans 7:21-25b; 1 John 2:14-16

The longevity of the conflict – for a lifetime

*. . . for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God **day and night**. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, **and they did not love their life even when faced with death**. (Revelation 12:10-11)*

The God-given means for equipping parents and teens for the conflict

(taken from Ephesians 6:10-18) strength in the Lord, allegiance to truth and righteousness, a readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, persevering faith, alertness, comprehension and application of the Word of God, spirit-filled prayers and petitions.

(James 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:1-4)

Summary

Parents and teens have this one main thing in common – SIN. Parents and teens must stay on the same side in the battle – against Satan and his devices. Don't fight with your teen or distance yourself from him. It is only through Christ that we as parents have experienced any freedom from the things with which they now struggle. We – and our teens – are both still at war with sin and we both will be – for life. But we know where our teens can find deliverance and hope.

Parents must maintain their responsibility to their teen.

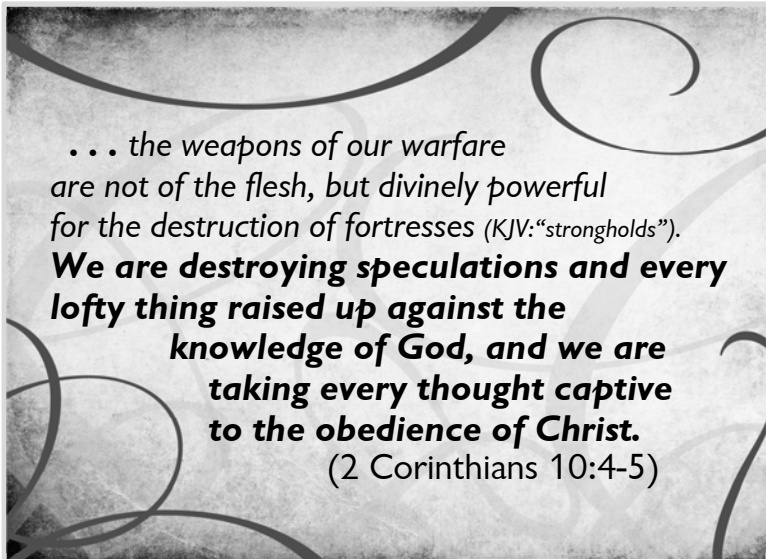
1. Interpret the warfare by giving them a Biblical worldview.
2. Warn them Scripturally regarding Satan's schemes and devices.
3. Fortify them with Scripture so that for a lifetime they can personally battle sin.
4. Intercede in prayer for them believing that God can change their hearts.
5. Glory in the cross that overcomes sin and Satan. Do so with joy and thanksgiving.

Parents must acknowledge the means for battling Satan's deception – the Scriptures.

Acknowledge that your family positions are established by God. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

1. **Children** are commanded to obey and honor their parents.
2. **Parents** are commanded to bring up (nurture) their children in the discipline (chastening) and instruction (admonition) of the Lord.
3. As parents strengthen your commitment to God's plan for the home. In contrast to a divided, child-centered, home there must be only ONE will in the Christian home; Christ is the head, mothers are submitted to fathers, children are submitted to parents, and all are submitted to God.

Acknowledge the objectives and strategies of your battle.



Parents are deceived when they fail to realize the importance of their role in the home.

1. Eli

*For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and **he restrained them not.** (1 Samuel 2:12; 3:12-13, KJV)*

2. Israelite parents

And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel . . . and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt (Judges 2:7-12)

Parents are deceived when they maintain a “survival mentality” instead of a “ministering mentality” while parenting their children.

Parents may attempt to deal with their teens using manipulation, a **raised voice**, threatening, outwitting, and debating **rather than applying Scripture to their teen's deception.**

Parents are deceived when they view their parenting with an “entitlement mentality”.

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me . . . (Mark 8:34-36)

Why am I doing what I am doing? Who am I serving? Do I see my teen as “trouble” or as a ministry opportunity? Do God’s desires for my teen rule the opportunities to minister that HE has given to me?

Parents are deceived when they desire only their personal success and the control over their children.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. (John 12:24)

Teens may lack an awareness of the state of their own heart.

1. **Teens** may display autonomous spirits, rationalization for sin, negative attitudes toward authority, and blame shifting.
2. **Parents** need to diligently teach their teens what the Scriptures say about their hearts.
 - a. **Your heart is deceitful** above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9); *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8; see also Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Isaiah 53:6; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 6:21)*
 - b. **Guard your heart.** (Proverbs 4:23; 23:7)



Teens may lack an awareness of eternity.

1. **Teens** may consider themselves invincible, desire instant gratification rather than delayed gratification, or reduce life to the happening-of-the-moment in their desire for fun or possessions. They may resent the restrictions placed over them as well as parental instructions.
2. **Parents** need to diligently teach their teens what the Scriptures say about the eternal God, His character, His judgments, His commands, and His eternal purpose that mankind glorify Him forever.
 - a. *But seek FIRST His kingdom and HIS righteousness and ALL these things will be added to you.* (Matthew 6:32-33; Deuteronomy 4:29; Jeremiah 29:13; Proverbs 21:17)
 - b. *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap . . .* (Galatians 6:7-8; Proverbs 3:5-6; 15:32; James 1:22)

Teens may tend to choose wrong companions.

1. **Teens** may consider themselves able to handle the detrimental influence of wrong friends despite the fact that the Scripture says “*He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*” (Proverbs 13:20)
2. **Parents: Instruct your teens with Scripture regarding right friendships.**
 - a. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, or sitteth in the seat of the scornful.* (Psalm 1:1, KJV)
 - b. *My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path, for their feet run to evil.* (Proverbs 1:10, 15-16)
 - c. *I am a companion of all those who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts.* (Psalm 119:63) (Proverbs 2:20; 4:14; 15:31-32; 19:4, 6; 25:28; 27:1, 6, 9; Psalm 73:1-25; 101:6, 7)

Teens may be susceptible to sexual temptation.

1. **Teens** may think that their new awareness and excitement over the opposite sex is not only pleasurable but the entry way into adulthood and freedom from restraint.
2. **Parents** teach your children, as the father in Proverbs did, about his God-given sexuality and God's promise of blessing and fulfillment when people live within God's ordained commands. Help him scripturally to understand the sorrow that comes to those who disobey God's commands in this area.
(Proverbs 2:12-22; 5:3-5; 6:24; 7:1-27; Luke 15:30; I Corinthians 6:16 -18, 7:2; Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4)

Parents must display support for their teen through verbal and physical expressions of love.

Consider your teen as a wonderful God-given opportunity for ministry. Pursue your teen. Daily express your love for him and communicate your desire to see him live in obedience to God. Lovingly, promptly, and consistently reprove him when he makes unwise or ungodly choices. Urge Him to always seek wisdom and correction from the Scriptures.

**When your teen's heart
is submitted to Christ's control
then you can be assured
that Christ will do in his heart
what you can never do.**