



# Preparing Teens for Life

by Dottie Smitley

*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;  
Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with GREAT patience and instruction.*

II Timothy 4:2

## Introduction

Like an arrow, a child needs direction and guidance. Like an arrow, a child needs both a spiritual archer (DAD) and a virtuous bow (MOM); and like an arrow, a child must be aimed and released. But there must be a target. The target is godliness, glorifying God in all they do, fearing God and keeping His commandments until death.

“Our goal as parents should be to bring our children to an understanding that they were made by Him, that they belong to Him and that they are called to live for His glory.”

Paul Tripp

The Wilds Christian Camp has this mission statement: **“Using the unique benefits of Christian camping, we serve people by presenting the TRUTH of God, with the LOVE of God, so that lives can be changed to the GLORY of God.”** We can take that same mission statement for our families: **“In our home, uniquely designed by God, we will strive to serve people, by presenting the TRUTH of God, with the LOVE of God, so that lives can be changed to the GLORY of God.”**

So what are some PRACTICAL things that we can do that will help us direct our arrows toward that ultimate target of glorifying God?

## Directing Our Arrows in Life Skills

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

### A. Teaching Character

Proverbs 22:1 *a good name is to be more desired than great wealth. . . Why? Not for self, but for God’s glory!*

“Character building must be a deliberate effort and not left to chance.” Dr. Walter Fremont

1. Work ethic and accountability – I Corinthians 10:31
  - Jobs at home
  
  - Jobs outside the home
  
2. Manners and appropriateness
  - GRATEFULNESS  
Thank you notes
  - PUNCTUALITY  
Do not keep others waiting

- **CELLPHONE ETIQUETTE**  
 Not: at the table, in a restaurant, in the middle of a conversation with others;  
 ALWAYS: silence it at church, weddings, fine arts events (places like the Peace Center and BJU); and  
 NO texting during these events—they distract those around you and it is rude to performers.
  - Behavior at events: **INCONSPICUOUS**  
 Examples: ballgames, Fine Arts Events
  - Appropriate dress: **INCONSPICUOUS**
    - Consider the activity
    - Consider style
3. Respect for others
- Respecting others' things
  - Respecting others' homes

**B. Teaching Personal Discipline II Timothy 2:22**

1. Spirit-controlled thought life – Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 12:34, 35; II Corinthians 11:3

“What a person thinks is vitally important. Thoughts control decisions, decisions control behavior, behavior controls feelings. Corrupt behavior and guilt feelings always follow uncontrolled fantasizing.”

Dr. Walter Fremont

2. Spirit-controlled emotions
- Anger – Proverbs 16:32; 25:22; 29:11, 22
  - Fear – II Timothy 1:7; Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6
3. Spirit-controlled conversations

- Gossip – Proverbs 6:16, 19; 11:13; 16:27, 28; 20:19
  - Unkind words – Ephesians 4:32; James 3:1-13
  - Impure words – Philippians 4:8
4. Spirit-controlled desires and appetites –  
I Corinthians 9:24-27; Proverbs 19:15
- Free time
  - Physical appetites

“There are significant temptations of the heart that greet teenagers, calling them to believe that they cannot live without some aspect of the creation. These voices call them to believe that identity, meaning, and purpose can be found in the creature rather than the Creator.”

Paul Tripp

Will our children be ready to deny themselves of “things” if God calls them to a difficult mission field?

5. Spirit-controlled time (Time Management) –  
Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:5; 12:24; 19:15; Eph. 5:16,17
- Day-timers
  - Calendars
  - Daily check-off lists

**How are we being examples of being spirit-controlled in these areas? Unless we practice this in our own lives, the verses we share with our children may have little effect.**

### C. Teaching Obedience, Honor, and Respect of Authority

1. Obedience to parents – Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; Proverbs 1:8; 3:1-3; 6:20-23; 7:1-3

**Expect and accept nothing less than obedience that is done immediately, sweetly, and completely!**

2. Honor parents – Ephesians 6:2, 3; I Timothy 6:1-6 (having a servant’s attitude in the home)
3. Obedience to other authorities – Romans 13; I Peter 2:13-15
4. Honor other authorities – I Timothy 6:1-6 (having a servant’s attitude outside the home)

**We need to be examples of obedience and honor. How well are we submitting to our authorities? To our husbands? Do we respond sweetly even when difficult? This will teach our girls how to submit to a future husband. How do we uphold our pastors/school teachers before our children?**

### Directing Our Arrows in Wise Choices

“How do you know when your children are ready to make their own choices? When they make RIGHT ones!!”

Pastor Mark Minnick

I Corinthians 10:23 **All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.** We need to teach our teens the “good, better, BEST” principle—**Choose the BEST!**

## A. Discernment in choosing friends

*He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20*

“The most powerful influence can be wrong friends.”  
Pastor Mark Minnick

I Timothy 4:1

1. Characteristics of good friends – I Corinthians 13;  
Philippians 4:8; Psalm 1; Proverbs 1:5; 17:9, 17; 27:6, 9, 17

Proverbs 1:5

**A Wise Person**: has a teachable Spirit before the Word of God, before godly Counsel, and before rebuke

2. Characteristics of bad friends – Proverbs 16:29; 20:19, 20; 22:24, 25; 23:6, 7; 24:1, 2, 21, 22; 29:3

Proverbs 1:22

**The Simple**: lacks discernment and moral commitment

**The Scoffer**: proud, having an arrogant, mocking attitude toward spiritual things

**The Fool**: rebels against God’s truth

## B. Discernment in choosing books, \*music, entertainment

Give BIBLICAL principles for why you as a family do not read, listen to, or participate in certain activities (and repeat, repeat, repeat: “repetition aids learning”!)

Job 31:1a *I have made a covenant with my eyes*

Psalm 101:3a *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes* KJV

Romans 12:2a *And do not be conformed to this world*

\*see “Sources”

**C. Discernment in choosing a vocation** Romans 12:1-8;  
Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 4:9-11

1. Study your child (Know Your Child, by Joe Temple)
2. Prepare your child

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. said, **“God always has a prepared place for a prepared man.”** —and Pastor Minnick added, that you should **“make it your high ambition.”** As parents we should make preparing our teen OUR high ambition.

- Provide experiences
- Provide professional instruction  
(music, art, speech, woodworking ,cooking,  
advance Math and science classes)

## Directing Our Arrows in Spiritual Goals

**A. Encourage your teen to:**

1. Participate in PACE
2. Attend camp
3. Develop a plan for summer devotional time (The Wilds, six week Bible studies by Rand Hummel)
4. Begin a prayer journal
5. Initiate a Bible study and/or prayer time with a younger teen or sibling(The Wilds is a good source for ideas)
6. Read one chapter from Proverbs every day
7. Read *Expositions of Psalm 119*, by Charles Bridges (one verse a day commentary, probably best for older teens)
8. Read I Corinthians 13 every day

**B. Teach the principle of tithing**

## Conclusion

Like arrows, our children have great potential for good or evil. There is nothing more devastating than the regrets of careless, shortsighted parents; AND there will be no greater JOY that to see our children hit the target of glorifying God with their lives. And like all arrows, our children are a one-shot deal and we have only one shot at parenting! Every day we need to rededicate ourselves to the Lord, daily seeking the face of God for wisdom—being ready, when it is convenient and when it is not convenient, to reprove, rebuke, exhort and to encourage our teens by using God’s Word with GREAT patience and instruction. We cannot do this in our own strength, but we CAN do it through Christ who strengthens us!

GET READY – AIM – FIRE!

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