

Biblical Parenting – 15 Rebellious Teens

When children move into their teen years, the basic parental responsibilities do not change.
Point: While the parental role in the later teen years gradually shifts from authority to influence, teenage children who live in the home still need to obey and honour their parents.

Parents of rebellious teens must identify the idols of their hearts—things they (the parents) do that are provoking, exasperating, or disheartening their rebellious teen.

Eph 6:4. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger ...

Col 3:21. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

Common idols of a parent's heart:

- 1) control
- 2) reputation
- 3) comfort
- 4) convenience
- 5) achievement
- 6) obedience
- 7) respect
- 8) productivity
- 9) things

Nine Pitfalls in Parenting Rebellious Teens:

1) Lack of patience and understanding.

2) Anger.

Point: Parents will need to confront the idols in their own heart, eradicating the I deserve! thinking that has led to their anger, and replacing it with what Ephesians 4:32 calls tenderheartedness—a compassionate concern for how the child's sin affects him or her, not a preoccupation with how it affects them, the parents (Matt 9:36; Luke 15:20).

3) False guilt.

We must have done something wrong that made our child turn out this way.

Ezekiel 18:5-13, 20

Note: In the case of real guilt due to consistent failure to raise their child in a wise and godly way, parents need to ask the forgiveness of God and their child.

4) Constantly preaching at the child, telling him how bad he is.

5) Minimising or excusing the child's sin.

6) A mistaken idea of a child's rights.

7) Fear of man

8) Blaming the other parent.

9) Giving up too soon.

Rebuilding a loving relationship with a rebellious child is the first option, not despair or kicking the child out of the home.

2) Express love for the rebellious child.

Expressing love does not require approving or excusing the teen's rebellious behaviour. Some parents fear that acts of love will be seen by the child as a tacit approval of his or her rebellion. Don't worry, teens are intelligent enough to distinguish between the two.

Suggestions for loving problem teens:

(from Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 180-185)

1. Keep telling her you love her.
2. Express physical affection. A light hand on the shoulder ... might be the only time he is touched in what he would see as a gentle way. (180)
3. Serve his favorite food.
4. Open your home to his friends and show them hospitality by feeding them.
5. Speak gently.

Be very careful how you speak to your child, especially when he provokes you. Instead of lashing out at him and using destructive words, seek to use constructive, grace-filled words ... (184)

6. Encourage any positive elements you can find in his life. [sports, music, hobbies, etc.]

You must maintain a positive relationship with teens Be a constructive force in the life of your child. You want to be a source of encouragement and inspiration. (Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 231)

7. Forgive as you've been forgiven.

If your child is in trouble with the law or school authorities, you can freely forgive him while still holding him responsible to bear the punishment for his folly. Newheiser and Fitzpatrick, *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, 183)

8. Listen.

One of the big mistakes we that we parents make is that we lecture our children without taking the time to try to understand them. (184)

9. Learn to draw your child out.

If you want him to open up to you, you'll need to make sure he feels safe and that he knows you'll love him no matter what he says. (185)

10. Spend time together.

Summary:

Those are all ways that love can be expressed without approving or excusing the teen's rebellion.