

Teenage Trials and Triumph

Notes from Ted Tripp

The Truth about Teens

Teens (as well as adults and children) are made to worship the living and true God. We are hard-wired for worship. Read Psalm 145:3-21. Now that you have read it, re-read it slowly and underline everything about God. We are called to commend the works of God to the next generation by asking, "Have you seen how glorious and marvelous God really is?"

The Trouble Teens Endure (God-substitutes)

- Pride and performance manifests itself inasmuch as teens want to run faster, jump higher, and out perform others on SAT's. Many love the accolades that come from excellent performance.
- Pleasure and sensuality is the rush of doing new things; going new places; and finding adrenalin pumping excitement.
- Teens are packrats who love their "things." They polish their stuff and display it. They are oriented toward a life that consists of the abundance of personal possessions.
- Teens want acceptance and approval of and by others. Their quest comes from the opinions of others.

Models for Teens to Follow

- Psalm 17:13-15. Obviously, the guy in this Psalm is in trouble. Teens live in drama from sunrise to sunset. They need an example to follow like the Psalmist sets before us here.
- Teens need an answer to the question: "Why is life worth living?" Many people in good churches talk about the need for salvation (which is indeed a great need) but all too often, the talk stops right there. Follow-up conversation many times has to do with "lists" of good things we need to do and bad things we need to avoid. While such conversations have their merit, Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." (Matthew 13:44) The treasure absolutely dazzled him. LIFE NEEDS TO BE INTERPRETED IN REFERENCE TO GOD.
- No one sins from duty. The only reason we sin is from or for pleasure. Part of our task is to help our teens understand that pleasures associated with sin are fleeting. One does not make wise choices without a proper understanding of who God is. One can't understand what life is about without understanding who God is. In Psalm 36:5-9 God is described in a beautiful way. Is He that beautiful to you? If not, don't expect Him to be the object of your teenager's affection.