

Dealing with Rebellious Teens: When Good Kids Make Bad Choices

I. Introduction and review.

II. How can parents prevent their kids from getting out of control?

- A. Discipline them while there is hope. (See Shepherding a Child's Heart, by Ted Tripp and Withhold not Correction, by Bruce Ray) Eph. 6:4 Gen. 8:21 Ps. 51:5
Prov. 22:15 29:15 13:24 23:13-14 13:24 19:18 Heb. 12:6-9
- B. Train them in the Word. Dt. 6:4-9,20-25 Pr. 6:20-23 II Ti. 3:15
- C. Don't provoke them to anger. Col. 3:21 (See The Heart of Anger, by Lou Priolo)
1. Overdiscipline I John 5:3 I Th. 2:11 I Co. 13:11 Luke 12:48 Js. 1:19-20
Mt. 5:21-23 Pr. 18:3,17 Eph. 4:25,29 Js. 1:19 Pr. 20:5 Deut 6:20 Ps. 103:13-14
 2. Underdiscipline. Prov. 19:18 29:15 I Sam. 3:13
 3. Using worldly methodologies instead of the Bible! II Ti. 3:1-2
 4. Other ways to frustrate and embitter your children: inconsistency, favoritism, comparison, hypocrisy, broken promises, lack of marital harmony, neglect, selfishness. Ge. 25:28 Mt. 5:23-24,37 Ps. 15:4 Col. 3:9 Eph. 5:22-33 II Sa. 14:28
- D. Can a man be a Church leader if he is having trouble with his children? I Tim. 3:4
1. Must an Elder's children be believers? Titus 1:6 1:9 3:8 II Tim. 2:2 I Tim. 1:12
 2. While a man can be expected to discipline his children, he cannot be held responsible for their election and regeneration.
 3. Is a man responsible for the actions of his adult children who are out of the home?

III. What should parents do when their children rebel? 19:18

- A. First deal with yourself.
1. Confess your own sinful failures. Pr. 13:24 23:13-14 Col. 3:21 Mt. 7:1f 5:23-24
 2. Recognize the sin of your child for what it is. Pr. 22:15a
 3. Seek godly counsel. Pr. 11:14 15:22 20:18
 4. Be prepared to face the reality that your child may not be a believer.
 5. Pray and fast. Only God can change a rebellious heart of a child (or a parent).
Matt. 17:21 Mark 9:29
- B. Take care of the rest of your family.
1. Be sure you and your spouse are united.
 2. Watch out for your other children.
- C. Mount a discipline offensive.
1. Be prepared to do some investigation.
 2. Remove bad influences from his life. Prov. 1:10f 13:20 Mt. 5:29-30 I Co. 15:33
 3. Establish clear and reasonable expectations.
 - a. Curfew. Pr. 2:13 7:9 I Thess. 5:7
 - b. Entertainment standards: TV, movies, music, computer (internet/games). Pr. 5:8
Rom. 13:14 Eph. 5:3
 - c. Manner of listening and speaking to parents. Pr. 19:26 20:20 30:17 Ex. 20:12
 - d. Church involvement. Pr. 8:1f Heb. 10:24-25
 - e. Treatment of siblings. Pr. 18:6 12:16 Phil. 2:3-4
 - f. Substance abuse. Pr. 23:29-35 20:1 Eph. 5:18
 - g. Work/school performance. (Not to remain idle). Pr. 6:6-11
 - h. Contribution to family: chores, finances, etc. Pr. 10:5 Eph. 4:28

- i. Participation in family activities (including family worship). Pr. 1:8 Dt. 6:7
 - j. Companions/use of phone. Pr. 13:20 14:7 22:24 I Co. 15:33
 - k. Dress code. Deut. 22:5
4. Define and enforce consequences. Pr. 23:13-14 19:18
 5. Appeal to your child on a heart level. Pr. 22:15 2:2,10 3:1,3 4:23 6:21 11:20 14:14 19:3 28:26 1:7 Mark 7:21f
 6. It may be wise to have your child examined by a physician to see if there are physiological elements which are complicating the situation.
 7. Don't undermine your own efforts.

D. Mount a love offensive.

1. Make it clear that your love is unconditional. Mt. 5:44-45 I John 4:19
2. Find ways you can show love to your kids without compromising your standards.
3. Be ready to forgive.
4. Never give up!

IV. How you can handle incorrigible kids? Pr. 19:18 29:1 Dt. 21:18f Ex. 21:15 Le. 20:9

A. Beware of two extremes.

1. Giving up too soon because of personal hurt feelings, anger and bitterness.
2. Tolerating and enabling sin.

B. Under the Old Covenant, out of control (incorrigible) kids were put to death Pr. 19:18 Dt. 21:18-21

1. It is possible for a child to be incorrigible (out of control).
2. Children (minors) are held responsible for their sinful choices.
3. We are to be concerned about the corrupting influence of an incorrigible child upon the church (and the home).
4. We must be prepared to take drastic measures.
5. God finally reaches a point at which He deals with Israel this way. Jer. 3:8 7:28

C. New Covenant applications.

1. Apostates and rebels are no longer executed by the covenant community.
2. Bring them before the church leaders: excommunication. I Cor. 5:1f Mt. 18:15f
3. Bring them before the civil leaders: criminal penalties. Mt. 18:17
4. Put them out of the house.

D. The goals of drastic measures. Rom. 12:18ff

1. Protection for those who remain: Pr. 1:10f I Co. 5:6
2. The Lord may even use this hardship, like church discipline, to drive your child to his senses. Pr. 3:11-12 I Co. 5:5

E. When can they come home?

1. Beware of being manipulated and becoming *enablers* of their sinful lifestyle.
2. The child must be repentant. Luke 15:18,21 II Co. 7:10-11
Learn the difference between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow over sin.
3. He/she must be willing to follow the house rules. (Written contracts)

V. Concluding Applications.

- A. Both parents and children are responsible. Prov. 23:13-16
- B. There is hope for failed parents and rebellious kids. Luke 15:17-20

Discussion Questions

1. What factors determine how kids turn out?
2. What should parents do to prevent their children from rebelling?
3. What should you do when you sense your child is rebelling?
4. What investigation may be necessary in order to understand the scope of your problem?
5. How can you know if your child is a Christian?
6. What can you do to protect the rest of your family from the effects of a rebellious child?
7. Who are some allies you can enlist to help you with your wayward child?
8. How do you discipline a wayward child?
9. How can you show love to a rebellious child?
10. When is a child considered incorrigible?
11. What can you do with an incorrigible child?
12. When can you let a wayward child back into the home?