

“Project Connect”

(a monthly growth group
for Parents of Teens)

The Tampa Bay Church

11/2/08

Session Five: “How to Connect: Discipline with Love”

1. Q: How do we correct and guide our teens without them getting defensive and pulling away from us and turning to the world for acceptance?
2. Outline:
 - a. Three Important Equations
 - b. Four Types of Family Leadership
 - c. Three Practical Tips
 - d. Four Handouts
3. Three Important Equations
 - a. One: “Relationships – Rules = Irresponsibility”
 - i. We’ve been talking about the importance of “involvement and connection”.
 - ii. But friendship alone, without rules will result in irresponsible behavior.
 - iii. There must be accountability and consequences in a teen’s life.
 1. Proverbs 29:19 = “A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond.”
 2. Proverbs 29:21 = “If a man pampers his servant from youth, he will bring grief in the end.”
 - iv. That’s how God parents us – with discipline:
 1. Hebrews 12:8-9 = “If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!”
 - v. So, all young people must have:
 1. proper discipline when needed
 2. limits and boundaries
 3. supervision and guidance
 - a. Who do they spend time with?
 - b. Who are they around when they spend the night at a friend’s house? (Check out parents, other siblings, friends there)
 - i. Think about how much your friends influenced you growing up!

- vi. Point = You can't just be their friend; you must be their parent.
- b. Equations Two and Three:
 - i. "Rules - Relationship = Rebellion"
 - ii. "Rules + Relationship = Positive Response"
 - 1. Teens do not respond to rules, they respond to relationships.
 - iii. More than even rules, Lisa and I tried to impart our biblical convictions to our children in a relational way, so that it not only influenced their behavior, but shaped their life-long character.
- 4. Four Types of Family Leadership (according to Josh McDowell, "The Disconnected Generation"):
 - a. Autocratic (overbearing)
 - i. "My way or the highway."
 - 1. Problems:
 - a. No connection or respect for teen
 - b. Unnecessarily antagonistic
 - b. Permissive (too weak)
 - i. "Sure, whatever you want to do. I trust you."
 - 1. Problems:
 - a. Communicates the wrong messages:
 - i. You can do whatever you want; there's no consequences to your behavior.
 - c. Indifferent (uncaring; checked out)
 - i. "I don't care what you do."
 - 1. Neither connection nor discipline.
 - a. Problem: lack of love.
 - d. Relational Leadership (best one; most biblical; like God with us)
 - i. Discipline in the context of love
 - ii. Appropriate consequences for behavior
 - 1. Proverbs 3:11-12 = "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."
 - a. God reminds us of his love and delight in us.
 - i. (He stays connected to us, even when he's disciplining us.)
 - iii. Disciplining our teens is never easy.
 - 1. But when we're connected to them, it's more bearable (for us and for them).
- 5. Three Practical Tips
 - a. One: Ask questions before making judgments
 - i. James 1:19-20 = "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become

angry, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

- b. Two: Ask the right kind of questions:
 - i. Non-threatening questions are best.
 - ii. Ask "what", not "why".
 1. "Why" questions often put people on the defensive; makes them feel like they're on trial.
 2. "What" and "how" questions facilitate openness.
 - a. Examples:
 - i. "So, tell me what happened?"
 - ii. "How did it turn out when you did that?"
 - iii. "How are you feeling about that decision now?"
 - iv. "If you could do it over again, would you do anything differently?"
 - v. "What can you learn from all of this?"
 - c. Three: Remember "the kite analogy"
 - i. You give more or less string, depending on the strength of the wind.
 1. The more wind, the more string you give, the higher the kite flies.
 2. The less wind, the less string you give, the lower the kite flies.
 - ii. "strength of wind" = demonstrated responsibility
 - iii. "amount of string" = amount of freedom given
 - iv. "height of kite" = result of varying responsibility demonstrated and corresponding freedom given
 1. You give more or less freedom depending on the demonstrated responsibility.
 - a. The more demonstrated responsibility, the more freedom given.
 - b. The less demonstrated responsibility, the less freedom given.
 2. How high the kite can fly is dependant on the strength of the wind (their demonstrated responsibility)
 3. You constantly adjust the amount of string given (freedom given) based on the changing wind strength (demonstrated responsibility of your teen).
6. Four Handouts:
- a. "Discipline and Your Teen", by Dr. Walt Larimore
 - b. "Teens and Discipline", by Audrey Okaneko
 - c. "When Teens Test Their Boundaries", by Tom McMahon
 - d. "Disciplining Your Teen", from just4dads.org

