

You Never Stop Being a Parent: Parenting Your Adult Children (Part 1)

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I. Introduction.

II. What can you do to prepare your children for adulthood?

- A. The goal of parenting is to make your children ready to live wisely (on their own).
Pr. 4:3-4 I Cor. 13:11
1. Childhood is meant to be a temporary state. Gen. 2:24
 2. It is the job of parents, not schools or churches to train children. Pr. 1:8-9
 3. You want them to learn to make wise choices on their own.
 4. Parents, be ready to lose control!
 5. Learn to relate to your children as adults. Col. 3:21 Phil. 2:3-4 Prov. 20:5
- B. What can you do to make your children ready to live on their own?
1. Teach them to fear God and to live for His glory. Pr. 1:7 3:7-8 Dt. 6:5 Mt. 22:37
 2. Teach them to put others ahead of themselves. Mt. 22:39 Phil. 2:3-4
 3. Prepare them to pursue a vocation so they can work hard to care for a family.
Prov. 6:5-11 24:30-34 26:12-16 12:11 13:11 22:29 10:4-5 28:19 14:23
 4. Teach them financial wisdom.
 - a. The value of saving (postponed gratification). Pr. 6:8 13:11
 - b. The importance of budgeting (planning). Pr. 21:5
 - c. The avoidance of debt. Pr. 22:7 6:1-5 Deut. 28:44
 - d. The prompt payment of financial obligations. Pr. 3:27-28 Dt. 24:14f Ps. 37:21
 - e. The blessedness of being generous. Pr. 3:9-10 11:25 19:17 22:9
 5. Teach them God's design for marriage (and sex). Prov. 5:1-23 6:20-35 7:1-27
 - a. Teach them biblical perspectives on manhood and womanhood. Pr. 31:10ff
 - b. Warn them against immorality. Prov. 2:16-19
 - c. Encourage them to get ready for marriage. I Cor. 7:9
 - d. The desire for marriage motivates the pursuit of maturity and responsibility.
 6. Teach them to choose their companions carefully. Pr. 1:10-19 13:20 22:24-25
23:20 I Cor. 15:33 Ps. 1:1
 7. Teach them to resist temptation. Pr. 29:25 2:12-15 20:1 31:4-5
- C. When is a child ready to leave home? I Cor. 13:11 See Al Mohler: *From Boy to Man - The Marks of Manhood.*
1. Spiritual maturity sufficient to lead a wife and children. I Pe. 3:7
 2. Personal maturity sufficient to be a responsible husband and father. Eph. 5:22ff
 3. Economic maturity sufficient to hold an adult job and handle money. Pr. 28:19f
 4. Physical maturity sufficient to work and protect a family. Prov. 6:6ff
 5. Sexual maturity sufficient to marry and fulfill God's purposes. II Ti. 2:22
 6. Moral maturity sufficient to lead as an example of righteousness.
 7. Ethical maturity sufficient to make responsible decisions.
 8. Worldview maturity sufficient to understand what is really important.
I Chr. 12:32 II Co. 10:5
 9. Relational maturity sufficient to understand and respect others. Phil. 2:3-4
 10. Social maturity sufficient to make a contribution to society. Mt. 5:13 Ro. 13:1ff
 11. Verbal maturity sufficient to communicate and articulate as a man.
Pr. 15:28,7 10:20-21 16:24 12:18 20:5 Js. 1:19
 12. Character maturity sufficient to demonstrate courage under fire. Pr. 29:25
 13. Biblical maturity sufficient to lead at some level in the church. I Pe. 4:10-11

D. Some children leave too soon.

E. What authority does a parent have over an adult child?

- 1. Parents must recognize that their relationship with their adult child is very different from what it was when the child was small. Eph. 6:1ff I Cor. 13:11**
- 2. One of the biggest mistakes made by Christian parents is to treat their young adult offspring as if they were still small children. Col. 3:21**
- 3. When your child is married, he/she is in a new family unit and no longer under your authority. Gen. 2:24**
- 4. Are single adults also free from parental authority? I Co. 9:5 7:39 13:11 Jo. 2:3ff Num. 32:11**

III. What do you do when your adult children come back home (or never leave)?

A. The phenomenon of the “twixter” (or boomerang kids/adultolescents).

B. What are valid reasons for an adult child to stay home?

- 1. A son may stay at home while he is completing his education, establishing his business, or saving for marriage. Pro. 10:4b**
- 2. A daughter may choose to stay under the protection of her parents prior to marriage. Gen. 2:24**
- 3. Some young adults are not physically or mentally able to take care of themselves.**
- 4. Children may stay at home in order to take care of aged or disabled parents or other family members. Ex. 20:12 Mt. 15:5-6 I Tim. 5:4**
- 5. Sometimes children move home because of extraordinary circumstances.**
- 6. Young adults should only be living at home if there is a clear goal.**

C. Some young people sinfully postpone the responsibilities of adulthood: vocation, marriage, and children.

- 1. They fail to establish a career by which they can provide for themselves. Prov. 6:5-11 12:11 28:19**
- 2. They expect others to take care of their financial needs. II Th. 3:10-13 I Tim. 5:8**
- 3. They are financially irresponsible. Pr. 22:7**
 - a. They only work enough to pay for their desired level of discretionary spending.**
 - b. They expect instant gratification.**
 - c. They get deeply into debt.**
- 4. They place a high value on relationships and entertainment. Pr. 14:23**
- 5. Instead marrying and having a family, they indulge in uncommitted relationships and fornication. I Cor. 6:9-10 7:9 II Ti. 2:22**

D. Parents contribute to this problem.

- 1. They fail to prepare their children to be on their own. Proverbs 1:8**
- 2. Some refuse to let go of their kids. Gen. 2:24**
- 3. They inadvertently enable sinful behavior. Pr. 15:19 6:11 10:4 20:13 16:26**
- 4. They are afraid to take strong steps to deal with their kids. I Sam.2:22-25**
- 5. Some birds would benefit from being pushed out of the nest.**

- E. What are the challenges of having an adult child living with his parents?**
1. The child wants to be treated as an adult, yet he is still dependent upon his parents.
 2. Parents often have a hard time looking upon their child as an adult.
 3. Being under your roof subjects them to your rules.
 4. The rules should be reasonable and you should recognize their adulthood.
- F. What can parents do to help their twixters grow up?**
1. Encourage maturity. I Co. 4:20
 2. Be willing to make tough choices for the good of your children.
 3. If they continue to act like children, they must be treated like children.
 4. Make your expectations clear, along with the consequences.
 5. You may need to seek their forgiveness for having spoiled them.
 6. Their return to your home may be one last hope for you to train them. Pr. 19:18
 7. Do what you can to show you love them without compromising your standards.
- G. What should be expected of an adult child living at home?**
1. Expect them to take financial responsibility. II Thess. 3:6-12
 2. Don't allow them to be lazy while living under your roof. Eph. 4:28 Pr. 10:1,4-5
 3. Demand sexual purity. Heb. 13:4
 4. Do not tolerate substance abuse. I Th. 5:7 Pr. 23:20,30-31
 5. Make them pay a price for irresponsibility. Pr. 26:3
 6. Be willing to kick them out.

IV. What do you do when your adult children get into trouble (substance abuse, debt, crime)?

- A. Whose fault is it when adult kids go bad?**
1. Parents are responsible to raise their children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. Pr. 22:6 23:13-14 29:15,17 I Sam. 2:12ff
 2. Children are responsible for the choices they make. Pr. 20:11,20 30:11,17 Ezek. 18:5-13 Isa. 1:2 Jer. 2:30 Eph. 6:2
 3. You are dependent upon God's sovereign grace for the souls of your children. Lu. 12:51-53 Gen. 4:1-9 Ps. 51:5 Eph. 2:1ff John 6:44
- B. Adult children often look to their parents to bail them out.**
1. They can be very charming, persuasive, and manipulative.
 2. Parents are often motivated by fear and guilt. Pr. 29:25
 3. Cry out to God for help and wisdom. Js. 1:5
 4. Seek godly counsel. Pr. 11:14
 5. Face the fact that your child may not be converted. Jo. 14:15 I Jo. 2:3ff Mt. 7:20
 6. Learn to distinguish between worldly sorrow and true repentance. II Co. 7:10
- C. Don't enable a sinful lifestyle. I Sam. 2:12-17,22-25 3:13 4:11**
1. If you feel guilty about how you raised your child, confess your sin to God, your child, and your spouse; but don't compound your guilt by financing more sin.
 2. You may be circumventing the very consequences God has designed to bring sinners to repentance. Luke 15:13ff Pr. 16:26 19:15
 3. Many wayward children have an entitlement mentality. II Thess. 3:10 Pr. 10:4
 4. Don't buy into the world's lies which excuse sinful behavior: the disease model.

D. Help should be offered wisely and lovingly.

- 1. Express love to your child and offer godly counsel. Pr. 1:8ff**
- 2. If your child wants your money and not your counsel, you probably should give him neither. Mt. 7:6 Pr. 1:7**
- 3. Offer help which addresses your child's root problems. Pr. 4:23 Mark 7:21ff**
- 4. Establish expectations as a condition for your assistance. Pr. 13:20 20:1,20 6:6ff 10:5 I Th. 5:7 I Co. 15:33**
- 5. Does this somehow violate their adult status? Pr. 26:3 I Co. 13:11**
- 6. If conditions are not met, you must stand your ground, even if this means kicking the child out.**
- 7. What help can you offer a non-Christian child?**

E. What should you do about an incorrigible child? Deut. 21:18-21 Pr. 19:18 29:1

- 1. Recognize that there is such a thing as an incorrigible child.**
- 2. You should be concerned about the effect he/she will have upon others. I Co. 15:33**
- 3. You must be prepared to take drastic measures.**
- 4. You must allow them to experience the full consequences of their sinful actions. I Pe. 2:14 Rom. 13:1-7 Pr. 19:15,18**
- 5. God sometimes uses hardship to bring a child to repentance. Luke 15:18,21**

V. Summary of part 1.