

RiverLakes Community Church

Life Transformation Class: Week 2

“EMPOWERING YOUR TEEN FOR A LIFE OF PASSION AND PURPOSE”

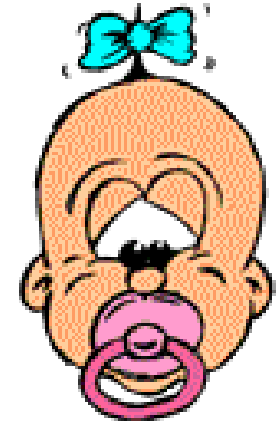
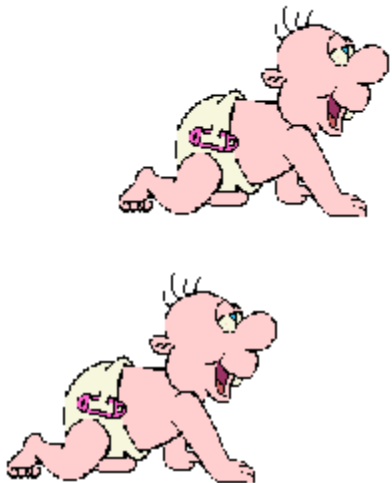
Instructors:

Ernie Zarra

Brent Van Elswyk



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THOSE
“WONDERFUL” DAYS WHEN OUR
TEENS WERE LITTLE CHILDREN?



Review of Week 1

- General introductory questions
- Psalm 139:1-24
- Compared a few personality types
- Examined our styles of parenting

Week 2

- We will examine the biblical stories of several “teenagers,” of the Bible.
 - We will analyze some of the traits they had in common.
- We will view the results of a national survey about teenagers.
- We will also learn what it means to “*Walk Alongside Our Teens.*”

Teenagers in the Bible

- **Joseph (age 17) (Genesis 37-50)**
 - Subjected to tremendous pressures.
 - Coming from a large family he had nearly all his brothers against him because of jealousy.
 - He may have attracted some of it by divulging some special dreams that God had given him concerning his future, but he was written off as some “dreamer,” and “holy Joe.”

Joseph (Continued)

- His brothers threw him into a pit with murderous intentions, but after second thoughts he was rescued, only to be subjected to further humiliation by being sold as a slave to some Ishmaelite travelers en-route for Egypt.
- He was employed in the Royal household where Potiphar's wife had sexual designs on him. He constantly refused her seductions with the noble protest, ***"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"***

Joseph (Continued)

- She did not give up and went on to engineer circumstances which made it look like rape by keeping part of his garment as he fled from the scene. It was reported to Potiphar, and on false evidence he was thrown into prison.
- So after the jealousy and the humiliation he became embroiled in false scandal.
- He may have lost his coat, but he kept his character! (Genesis 39:20)

Ishmael

- At age 13, Abraham's other son, Ishmael, endures a painful rite of passage (Genesis 17:25-27)

David

- David, another old Testament teenager, proved his loyalty when he was in the wilderness caring for the sheep.
- The sheep were attacked by a bear and a lion. No one would have blamed him if he had made a run for it, but instead he went after them and slew them.
- Later he volunteered to take on the giant Goliath single--handed, much to the amazement of the soldiers. (2 Samuel 21:18 ff)

Josiah

- Josiah became king of Judah at the age of eight, after the assassination of his father, King Amon, and reigned for thirty-one years.
- His father Amon and his grand-father Manasseh had both been evil kings.
- Josiah was brought up in an environment of wickedness and intrigue, but we read that “***he did what was right in the sight of the Lord.***”
(2 Kings 22:1-2)

Azariah (2 Kings 15)

- The people of Judah took Azariah (16-year-old son Amaziah), and made him king to succeed his father . . . (who had gone to) sleep with his ancestors.
 - The Books Kings and Chronicles indicate the general average age of king succession was about the age of 16-ish
 - Uzziah (16)
 - Jehoiachin (18)

Daniel and Jeremiah

- Daniel was a teenager when his country was over-run by the enemy and he was taken prisoner to Babylon. But even there, away from home influence, he stood firm for his principles, and eventually became a Minister of State.
- And then there are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego . . . Friends of Daniel.
- Another example is the great prophet Jeremiah, for whom it is believed, started out his prophesying mission while still a teenager.

Elisha's Encounter

- The Prophet *“Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, a group of boys from the town began mocking and making fun of him. “Go away, baldy!” they chanted. “Go away, baldy!”* “He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.” (2 Kings 2:23-24)

James and John

- In the New Testament, the two disciples James and John were no more than teenagers. Their father Zebedee was still practicing as a fisherman, and as probably no older than 40.
- James and John were known as the “Sons of Thunder,” suggesting that maybe they acted out their youthful exuberance. (Mark 3:17)

Salome

- On a different note, the daughter of Herodias, (the wife of King Herod) danced for him in return for the head of John the Baptist.
- Although not mentioned in the Bible, tradition has it that her name was Salome, and she would have been no older than a young teenager. (Matthew 14:1-12)

Mary

- Mary was likely a teenager when Gabriel spoke to her about her selection in carrying God's Son. (Luke 1:35-39)

Jesus

- Finally, of course, we hear that Jesus himself, when just 12, was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem where he was found by Mary and Joseph after they lost him. (Luke 2:39-52)
- He spoke to the priests and rabbis, who were astonished by his command of the Scriptures, at his age.
- ***“Jesus grew in wisdom and in strength, in favor with God and humankind”*** (Luke 2:52)

The Disciples of Jesus

- It is likely that some of the Disciples of Jesus were still teenagers when He called them
- Timothy, the young pastor who worked with the Apostle Paul, might have been a teen when he began his training.

Some Common Traits of Biblical Teens

- So the Bible gives us an impressive list of teenagers who faced unique challenges in their lives:
 - They knew what they believed
 - They were committed
 - They knew their general direction in life, by faith
 - They sometimes acted impulsively

Strengths

- Young people who stand for something are not likely to easily fall for anything.
 - 1. Joseph **beat sexual temptation**
 - 2. David showed **exemplary courage** in face of danger
 - 3. Josiah stood **firm on ethics**
 - 4. Daniel demonstrated that **integrity needs not to be compromised** just for a promotion.
 - 5. The Disciples/Apostles, and Timothy found the **ultimate adventure** in the Christian life, and many gave their lives for Christ later.

2011 Barna Group

Study of Christian Teenagers

<http://www.barna.org/topics/teens-nextgen>

- A new Barna Group study shows that most young people have clear ideas of what they would like to do, ***and their faith*** plays a role in their decisions.
– ***McKinley Cobb***, WORLD Magazine *July 1, 2011*

- “**Today’s teens** have huge aspirations in life and a great deal of self-confidence that is sometimes out of proportion with their abilities.”
- “Taught to believe they can **accomplish anything at anytime**, many young people figure if they see a problem or a need, they can just start a new company or nonprofit to address it. And armed with technology, some of them are actually doing that.”

– *David Kinnaman, Barna Researcher*

- **The most common goals among teens:**
 - Work in medicine or the health care field (23%)
 - Work in some type of scientific or applied science career (50%)
 - Students are attracted to creative vocations, including arts or music, graphic arts, culinary arts, and fashion or interior design (20%)

- 20% of students with an **active faith** (defined as reading the Bible, attending church and praying in a typical week) are:
 - more likely to be interested in arts and music, ministry, journalism and law.
 - Young Protestants are comparatively more interested in physically demanding careers such as construction, agriculture and the military.
 - Young Catholics express above-average interest in journalism and education.

- Teenagers with a **literalist view of Scripture** are among the least likely to want to pursue careers in “science” or “technology.”
- This pattern does not extend to other science-oriented careers, such as medicine or engineering, where literalist-minded teens express average interest.

- **Private school teens** are more interested than average in arts and music, ministry, government and political science, and graphic arts.
- **Public school teens** are relatively more interested in accounting and financial careers, social work, law and business.

- **Only 1% of teen females explicitly identify “domestic work” or “homemaking” as their future career choice.**

- “Today’s teen girls—even if they aspire to be married and have children at some point—want or feel they ought to have some career plans in place.”
- “The vast majority of today’s young women are thinking education first, then career, then perhaps family someday.”

- The Barna study also probed the views of **Protestant clergy**.
 - 38% of youth pastors and 36% of senior pastors say they frequently discuss college plans with their students.
 - Only 1% of youth workers say they had addressed issues related to science in the last year.
 - About 1% had taught about creativity or the arts to the students.

Kinnaman (Barna) Concludes:

- College and career decisions represent an important opportunity for faith leaders to influence students.
 - “Many young people do not seem to understand how a rich, historic understanding of the Christian faith and the gospel ought to inform their career aspirations,”
 - “And faith leaders are not as intentional as they could be with instruction and coaching on these types of decisions. *Understanding how teenagers hope to spend their professional lives can help faith communities and institutions better support these students as they discern God’s calling in their lives.*”

Developing Relationships With Teens

- **1. Unconditional Acceptance** – no friend can provide the depth of unconditional acceptance a parent can.
- **2. Value** – only you can affirm that they have innate value, no matter what they do or how they look.
- **3. Wisdom** – your teenager will learn to value your wisdom if it is shared in discussions, not in lecture form.
- **4. Experience** – you've been through many of the same things they are facing and can help them get through it.
- **5. Time** – you have more time with them, and time is the crucial ingredient in building relationships that matter.

Walking Alongside Our Teens

- Here are some good ways to discover how to walk alongside your son or daughter.
 - **1. Find out what he loves to do.** Then do it *with* him, rather than just cheering him on from the stands. Sometimes what he loves will be obvious, but sometimes it may surprise you both.
 - But plant the seed as to your insight into what your teen is good at doing. Take care not to use the occasion to live your life through your teen.

- **2. *Make the most of summer.***
 - Walking alongside should happen all year, but the best season for growing *with* your teen is summer.
 - Before school lets out, get a calendar and note how many days you have until fall classes begin. Find a block of time *each* day when you can put your priorities, work, hobbies, and worries aside and be there 100 percent for your teen.
 - Plan together what you can do — fishing, camping, shopping, grilling, tennis, whatever your teen would enjoy. Time builds relationships and teens learn passion through experiences with others who are passionate.

- **3. Take a wild adventure together.**

- *Whether it is hiking mountain, canoeing, do something outside YOUR comfort zone and into the excitement zone of your teen.*
- *This is not only good for parents and their teens, but a terrific way for grandparents to stay relevant and communicate their love for God and zest for life.*

- ***4. Ask what your teen has never done but would like to try.***
 - Go try it together.
 - something new. Go with an open mind and a sense of humor.
 - Look for classes in a foreign language, dance, art, computer software. Take piano or guitar lessons. Sign up for a sports clinic.
 - Don't be fearful of being real and demonstrating that choices can be empowering.

- ***5. Serve the needy together.***
 - Homeless shelters, the Salvation Army, soup kitchens, food banks, convalescent homes, tutoring, the list of volunteer opportunities never gets shorter.
 - Find common goals, common ground, and made memories that helped us through the most difficult years of the relationship.
 - Go on Mission Trips to foreign lands, or to another city in the US.

- ***6. Find out what your teen dreads doing.***
 - Ask whether she wants your
 - What kind of assistance does she want?
 - Remember to follow her rules—for example, letting her be the boss about where things go when you help clean her room.

- **7. *Walk alongside your teen spiritually.***

- Connect to your teen and to God by praying and reading and memorizing Scripture with your teen regularly.
- If your teens never see their parents as spiritual, chances are passion for their faith will be less than exciting.
- But don't force teens to be part of them; Much more is accomplished when these opportunities are welcomed.
- Let your teens know you are available for them spiritually
- This should be "chill time," a safe place in today's uncer-tain world. Should not be used for lecturing, criticism, or manipulation.
- Create an environment where the teen knows you are there and available, but not pushy.

- ***8. Bring your teen into your world.***
 - Ask yourself, where do I include my teen in what I do?
 - Ask your teenager for advice on what he or she would do to handle a planning situation, etc.
 - Find that opening where you are aware of what your teen is good at, and empower him or her to step into that zone. Model passion as a ,when they do.

- **9. Discover your teen's dreams.**

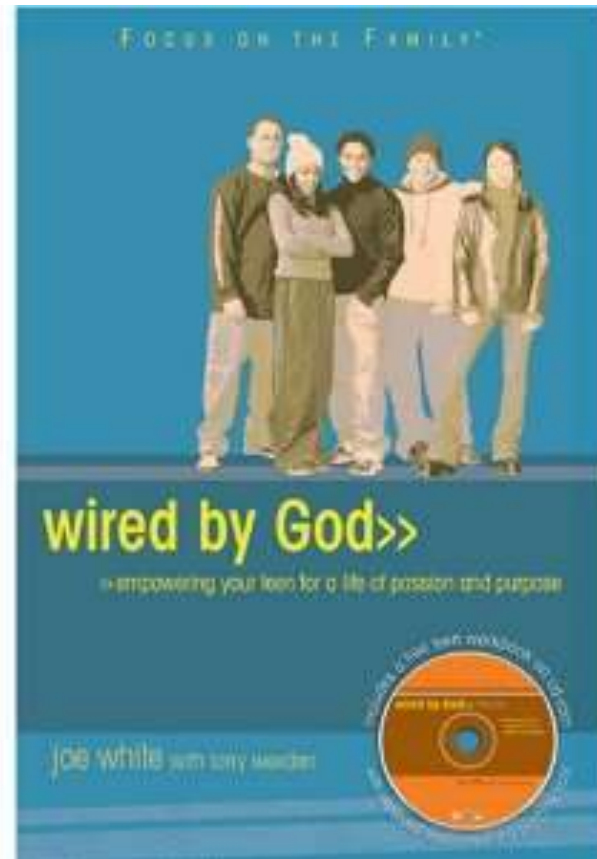
- “There's a dream inside every young person, as sure as there's a yolk inside every chicken's egg.”
- [Wired by God](#) is one tool that can help you do that. Guide your teen in setting his own goals; Then investigate ways for him to gain skill and experience.

- In *wired by God*, Joe White writes;

- *In our family, Courtney enjoyed gymnastics and volleyball; Brady was into guitar and basketball; Cooper liked weight training and football; Jamie pursued cheerleading. I was the lucky guy who got to catch passes, spot flips, and cheer like crazy. Listening to saxophone practice and retrieving tens of thousands of basket-ball shots helped build foundations for friendships with my kids that I enjoy as an "old guy" today.*

- **10. Remember that the relationship is everything.**
 - During those crazy teen years, make your relationship with my kids a top priority.
 - Culture tells them to have fun through sex, drugs and alcohol
 - Peers will tell them that par-ents are no longer relevant. I wanted to
 - Earn your teens respect and attention and thereby earn a hearing by being the person your kids love hanging out with the most.
- No matter how you decide to walk alongside your teen, remember that it's not a chore. It's not a competition, either. The goal is to learn about your teen, to have fun, to encourage, to do some servant-hearted foot-washing.
- Walking alongside your teen takes time. It may even start out as hard work. But before you know it, the process will be a joy — because you'll really enjoy this person you're coming to know.

- Joe White (2006). ***Sticking With Your Teen***,
Joe White (2004). ***Wired By God***.



Wired By God . . .

- For most teens, life can be like a roller coaster, and it's easy for them to lose sight of the future.
- ***Wired by God*** gives parents the tools to inspire their teens to get excited about the future and tackle new dreams with confidence, passion, and purpose!
- ***Wired by God*** is packed with hands-on self-assessments, tests, and exercises to help parents steer their teens into a discovery of their God-given, unique-in-all-the-world blend of talents, personality, and interests.
- Helping teens to dream is a fun, exciting, and natural part of coaching them through adolescence. Includes a free workbook on CD-ROM with expanded self-assessments and planning tools for teens to use on their own.

1 Timothy 4:12

- *“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”*