

# DEALING WITH REBELLIOUS TEENS: WHEN “GOOD KIDS” MAKE BAD CHOICES

Review: Why Do Kids Turn Out the Way They Do?

How Can Parents Prevent Their Kids from Getting Out of Control?

A. Discipline them while there is hope. *Prov 19:18; Eph 6:4*

1. Why is discipline necessary? *Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Prov 22:15*

2. How should discipline be carried out? The Process.

- You must be self-disciplined.
- Teach principles of behavior from the Bible.
- Don't merely target behavior. Deal with the heart of sin. *Prov 4:23; Mark 7:20-23*
- Demand immediate and respectful obedience.
- When the rules are broken take disciplinary action. *Prov 22:15; 29:15; 13:24*

- Lovingly forgive and restore the relationship. *1 John 1:9*

- Point them to their need of redemption in Christ.

3. Discipline is hard work (love)! *Heb 12:6-9*

- Don't lose heart. You are disciplining them on the Lord's behalf.

B. Train them in the Word. *Deut 6:4-9, 20-25; Prov 6:20-23*

1. You must instruct your children. *Deut 6:4-9, 20-25*

- The Word must first be on your heart! *Deut 6:4-6*

- Train them through formal teaching: Family Worship. *Deut 6:7; 2 Tim 3:15*

- Train your children through informal instruction. *Deut. 6:9, 20-25*

- Prepare them for adult life.

- Strive to build an intimate relationship with your children. *Prov 20:5*

2. Evangelize your children. *Deut 6:20-25*

- Incorporate the gospel into the way you train your children.

C. Don't provoke them to anger. *Col 3:21* (See *The Heart of Anger*, by Lou Priolo)

1. Overdiscipline. *1 John 5:3*

- Unrealistic demands and expectations. *1 Thess 2:11; 1 Cor 13:11*

- Overprotection: Not letting children grow up. *Luke 12:48; 1 Cor 13:11*

- Anger/harshness: verbal or physical abuse. *Jas 1:19-20; Matt 5:21-23*

- Humiliation and ridicule. *Matt 18:15a; Eph 4:29*

- Refusal to listen. *Prov 18:3, 17; Eph 4:25; Jas 1:19; Prov 20:5; Deut 6:20*

- False accusations, faultfinding and negativity. *Prov 19:11*

- Failure to encourage and reward good behavior. *Col 3:21; Rev 2-3; 1 Cor 1:1ff*

- Failure to express unconditional and deep love. *Ps 103:13-14*

## What Should Parents Do When Their Children Rebel?

### A. First deal with yourself.

1. Confess your own sinful failures. *Prov 13:24; 23:13-14; Col 3:21; Matt 7:5; 5:23-24*
2. Recognize the sin of your child for what it is. *Prov 22:15a*
3. Seek godly counsel. *Prov 11:14; 15:22; 20:18*
4. Be prepared to face the reality that your child may not be a believer. *1 John 2:3-4*
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 1:10ff; 13:20; Matt 5:29-30; 1 Cor 15:33*

3. Establish clear and reasonable expectations.

- Curfew. *Prov 2:13; 7:9; 1 Thess 5:7*

- Entertainment standards: TV, movies, music, computer (internet/games). *Prov 5:8; Rom 13:14; Eph 5:3*

- Manner of listening and speaking to parents. *Prov 19:26; 20:20; 30:17; Exod 20:12*

- Church involvement. *Prov 8:1ff; Heb 10:24-25*

- Treatment of siblings. *Prov 18:6; 12:16; Phil 2:3-4*

- Substance abuse. *Prov 23:29-35; 20:1; Eph 5:18*

- Work/school performance. (Not to remain idle.) *Prov 6:6-11*

- Contribution to family: chores, finances, etc. *Prov 10:5; Eph 4:28*
  
  - Participation in family activities (including family worship). *Prov 1:8; Deut 6:7*
  
  - Companions/use of phone. *Prov 13:20; 14:7; 22:24; 1 Cor 15:33*
  
  - Dress code. *Deut 22:5*
4. Define and enforce consequences. *Prov 23:13-14; 19:18; 26:3*
5. Appeal to your child on a heart level. *Prov 22:15; 2:2, 10; 3:1, 3; 4:23; 6:21; 11:20; 14:14; 19:3; 28:26; 1:7; Mark 7:21ff*
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.
- Both parents must be of one mind.
  
  - Don't make empty threats and don't allow yourself to be manipulated!

D. Mount a love offensive.

1. Make it clear that your love is unconditional. *Matt 5:44-45; 1 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!

How Can You Handle Incurrigible Kids? *Prov 19:18; 29:1; Deut 21:18ff; Exod 21:15; Lev 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 (incurrigible) kids were put to death. *Prov 19:18; Deut 21:18-21*

1. Drastic measures were required to ensure the purity of the covenant community.

2. Principles which remain.

- It is possible for a child to be incorrigible (out of control).
- Children (minors) are held responsible for their sinful choices.
- We are to be concerned about the corrupting influence of an incorrigible child upon the church (and the home).
- We must be prepared to take drastic measures.

3. 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. *1 Cor 5:1ff; Matt 18:15ff*
3. Bring them before the civil leaders: criminal penalties. *Matt 18:17*
  - The magistrate doesn't always do his job.



- Parents sometimes wrongfully circumvent the criminal consequences of their children's behavior.

4. Put them out of the house.

- After they are legal adults you can kick them out and, if necessary, get a restraining order.

- If they are still minors, you are still legally required to provide food, shelter, and housing.

- You may, however, send them to a disciplined and controlled environment where they will receive food and shelter.

- Do this in love, not anger. *Rom 12:18ff*

D. The goals of drastic measures.

1. Protection for those who remain: *Prov 1:10ff; 1 Cor 5:6*

2. The Lord may even use this hardship, like church discipline, to drive your child to his senses.

*Prov 3:11-12; 1 Cor 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. Learn the difference between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow over sin. *Luke 15:18, 21; 2 Cor 7:10-11*

3. He/she must be willing to follow the house rules (written contracts).

## 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*



## Books

Fitzpatrick, E., Newheiser, J., *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*.

Marcellino, Jerry, *Rediscovering the Lost Treasure of Family Worship*.

Priolo, Lou, *The Heart of Anger*.

Ray, Bruce, *Withhold not Correction*.

Tripp, Paul, *Age of Opportunity*.

Tripp, Ted, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*.



## Supplemental Resources

Priolo, Lou. “25 Ways Parents Provoke Their Children to Anger.”