

YOU NEVER STOP BEING A PARENT: PARENTING YOUR ADULT CHILDREN

Introduction

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). *Prov 4:3-4;*

1 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. *Prov 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; 5:40*

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. *Prov 1:7; 3:7-8; Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37*

2. Teach them to put others ahead of themselves. *Matt 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.

- The value of saving (postponed gratification). *Prov 6:8; 13:11*

- The importance of budgeting (planning). *Prov 21:5*

- The avoidance of debt. *Prov 22:7; 6:1-5; Deut 28:44*

- The prompt payment of financial obligations. *Prov 3:27-28; Deut 24:14ff; Ps 37:21*

- The blessedness of being generous. *Prov 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*

- Teach them biblical perspectives on manhood and womanhood. *Prov 31:10ff*

- Warn them against immorality. *Prov 2:16-19*

- Encourage them to get ready for marriage. *1 Cor 7:9*

- The desire for marriage motivates the pursuit of maturity and responsibility.

6. Teach them to choose their companions carefully. *Prov 1:10-19; 13:20; 22:24-25; 23:20; 1 Cor 15:33; Ps 1:1*

7. Teach them to resist temptation. *Prov 29:25; 2:12-15; 20:1; 31:4-5*

C. When is a child ready to leave home? *1 Cor 13:11*. (See Al Mohler: *From Boy to Man - The Marks of Manhood*.)

1. Spiritual maturity sufficient to lead a wife and children. *1 Pet 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. *Prov 28:19ff*

4. Physical maturity sufficient to work and protect a family. *Prov 6:6ff*

5. Sexual maturity sufficient to marry and fulfill God's purposes. *2 Tim 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. *1 Chr 12:32; 2 Cor 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. *Matt 5:13; Rom 13:1ff*
11. Verbal maturity sufficient to communicate and articulate as a man. *Prov 15:28, 7; 10:20-21; 16:24; 12:18; 20:5; Jas 1:19*
12. Character maturity sufficient to demonstrate courage under fire. *Prov 29:25*
13. Biblical maturity sufficient to lead at some level in the church. *1 Pet 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; 1 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? *1 Cor 9:5; 7:39; 13:11; John 2:3ff; Num 32:11*

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. *Prov 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. *Exod 20:12; Matt 15:5-6; 1 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. *Prov 21:5*

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. *2 Thess 3:10-13; 1 Tim 5:8*
3. They are financially irresponsible. *Prov 22:7*
 - They only work enough to pay for their desired level of discretionary spending.
 - They expect instant gratification.

- They get deeply into debt.

4. They place a high value on relationships and entertainment. *Prov 14:23*

5. Instead of marrying and having a family, they indulge in uncommitted relationships and fornication. *1 Cor 6:9-10; 7:9; 2 Tim 2:22*

D. Parents contribute to this problem.

1. They fail to prepare their children to be on their own. *Prov 1:8*

2. Some refuse to let go of their kids. *Gen 2:24*

3. They inadvertently enable sinful behavior. *Prov 15:19; 6:11; 10:4; 20:13; 16:26*

4. They are afraid to take strong steps to deal with their kids. *1 Sam 2:22-25; 21:50*

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. *1 Cor 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. *Prov 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. *2 Thess 3:6-12*
2. Don't allow them to be lazy while living under your roof. *Eph 4:28; Prov 10:1, 4-5*
3. Demand sexual purity. *Heb 13:4*
4. Do not tolerate substance abuse. *1 Thess 5:7; Prov 23:20, 30-31*
5. Make them pay a price for irresponsibility. *Prov 26:3; 38:02*
6. Be willing to kick them out.

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.

Prov 22:6; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; 1 Sam 2:12ff

2. Children are responsible for the choices they make. *Prov 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. *Luke 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. *Prov 29:25*

3. Cry out to God for help and wisdom. *Jas 1:5*

4. Seek godly counsel. *Prov 11:14*

5. Face the fact that your child may not be converted. *John 14:15; 1 John 2:3ff; Matt 7:20*

6. Learn to distinguish between worldly sorrow and true repentance. *2 Cor 7:10*

C. Don't enable a sinful lifestyle. *1 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; Prov 16:26; 19:15*
3. Many wayward children have an entitlement mentality. *2 Thess 3:10; Prov 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. *Prov 1:8ff*
2. If your child wants your money and not your counsel, you probably should give him neither. *Matt 7:6; Prov 1:7*
3. Offer help which addresses your child's root problems. *Prov 4:23; Mark 7:21ff*
4. Establish expectations as a condition for your assistance. *Prov 13:20; 20:1, 20; 6:6ff; 10:5; 1 Thess 5:7; 1 Cor 15:33*
5. Does this somehow violate their adult status? *Prov 26:3; 1 Cor 13:11*

6. If conditions are not met, you must stand your ground, even if this means kicking the child out.

E. What should you do about an incorrigible child? *Deut 21:18-21; Prov 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. *1 Cor 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. *1 Pet 2:14; Rom 13:1-7; Prov 19:15, 18*
5. God sometimes uses hardship to bring a child to repentance. *Luke 15:18, 21*

When Should You Give Financial Help to Your Grown Children?

A. Should parents pay for their children's college education?

B. Is it good to transfer wealth from one generation to another?

1. There is biblical basis for leaving an inheritance. *Prov 13:22; 19:14; Num 26:53; 32:18; 1 Kgs 21:3ff; 2 Cor 12:14*

2. A suddenly gained inheritance may be squandered. *Prov 20:21; Luke 12:15ff*
3. You may be able to offer crucial help to your grown children: an inheritance before you die.
4. You may be able to help bring the family together for special events.
5. You offer them a better spiritual inheritance. *Eph 1:11; Heb 9:15*

C. Money matters are very dangerous to family relationships. *Prov 22:7*

1. Just because you can afford to “help” them doesn’t mean you really would be doing them any good.
2. Sometimes it is appropriate to establish conditions for financial help.
3. Generally it is better not to attach strings.
4. Lending money among family members tends to generate stress and conflict.
5. Must you treat each child equally?

6. Your attempts at generosity may actually harm relationships.

What Is Your Role as Your Adult Children Approach Courtship and Marriage?

- A. Ideally you will have significant positive involvement in your child's courtship. *Gen 2:24;*

1 Cor 7:36-38; Exod 22:16-17; Deut 22:13-21

1. Ideally, both sets of parents will be actively involved in the courtship.
2. Children are wise to seek and heed parental wisdom. *Prov 31:30; 3:5-6; Jer 17:9*
3. Ideally, all will agree as to the choice of a spouse, the timing of the wedding, etc.
4. We don't always receive what is ideal in life.
5. Give your dreams to God.

- B. What authority do parents have in their children's choice of a spouse?

1. If you don't have your child's trust (heart) you will have relatively little influence on their choice of a spouse.
2. Parents do not have the right to impose marriage on their child. *1 Cor 7:39*

3. Parents must be careful not to provoke their children to anger. *Col 3:21*

4. Some young people marry just to escape tyrannical parental authority.

5. Under what circumstances may a child go against parental wishes when marrying?

C. What should you do if your children make romantic choices which you believe to be less than ideal?

1. What if:

- Your child marries a professing Christian against your will?

- Your child marries an unbeliever? *2 Cor 6:14; 1 Cor 9:5; 7:39, 16; 1 Kgs 11:4*

- Your child lives with someone out of wedlock? *Heb 13:4*

- Your child is a practicing homosexual?

2. Some would say that you should shun a disobedient adult child.

3. You are to pursue peace. Build the relationship, so far as possible. *Rom 12:18ff*

4. You are free to love people who have sinned against you. *Gen 45; Matt 5:43ff*

5. The limitation is that you cannot participate in sin. *Rom 14:23*

6. Be sure that you are limiting because of conscience; not anger, bitterness, or a desire to control. *Eph 4:26-27*

D. How can you be an in-law without becoming an outlaw?

1. How does your relationship with your child change?

2. What kind of relationship should you expect with your child's spouse?

3. Be careful to respect the integrity of this new family unit. *Gen 2:24*

4. Be ready to overlook offenses and slights which may occur. *1 Pet 4:8; Rom 12:18ff*

5. What should you do if your child's spouse tries to shut you out? *Matt 7:5*

6. Pursue peace.

- Avoid unbiblical responses of attacking or fleeing.

- Get the beam out of your own eye. *Matt 7:1ff*

- Gently restore. *Gal 6:1-2*

- The PAUSE principle (from *The Peacemaker**).
 - o Prepare for peacemaking

 - o Affirm relationships. *Phil 4:1-2*

 - o Understand interests. *Phil 2:3-4*

 - o Search for creative solutions. *Dan 1*

 - o Evaluate options objectively.

- E. How should you respond if your adult child is going through a divorce?
1. You need to evaluate the divorce based upon biblical grounds.

2. You need to stand up for what God's Word says is right, even if this means standing against your own child.

F. What if your adult child remains single?

1. Be careful not to push him/her too hard towards marriage.
2. Recognize he/she may have the gift of singleness. *1 Cor 7:1, 8, 32-33*
3. Help him/her to get ready for marriage.

What Is Your Role With Your Grandchildren?

- A. Grandchildren are a blessing to grandparents. *Deut 4:25; Ps 103:17; 128:6; Prov 17:6; Job 42:16*
- B. Grandparents are to be a blessing to their grandchildren.
 1. A spiritual heritage. *Deut 4:9; 6:2; Exod 10:2; 2 Tim 1:5*
 2. An earthly heritage. *Prov 13:22*
- C. Sometimes grandparents have to take over the parental role.
 1. Parental responsibility should be accompanied by parental authority.

What Are the Responsibilities of Grown Children to Their Parents?

A. Even after leaving home, you are still to honor your parents. *Exod 20:12*

1. Seek your parents' counsel.

2. Build your relationship with them. *Rom 12:18*

B. You are responsible to ensure that your parents' financial needs are met. *1 Tim 5:4; Matt 15:3-9; John 19:26-27*

C. You may wind up becoming their care-giver.

Conclusion

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Books

Fitzpatrick, E., Newheiser, J, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*.