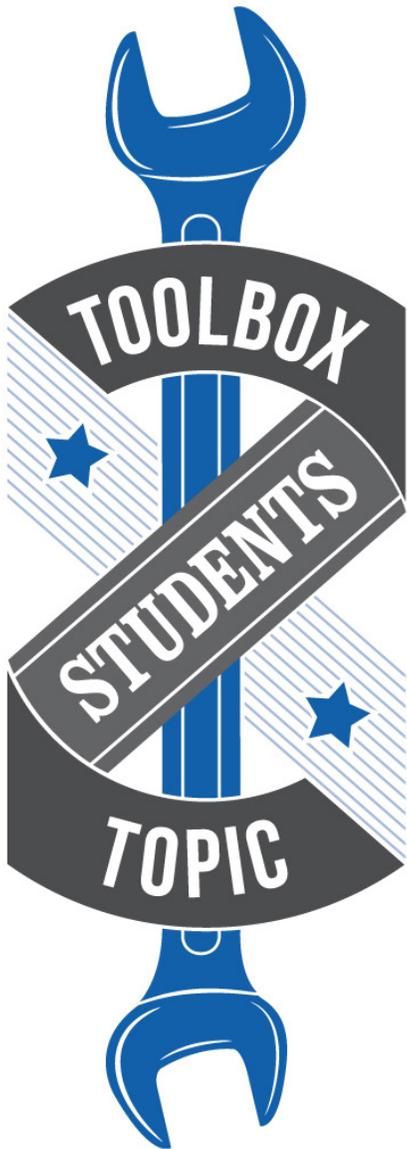


Thoughts for Parents of Teens



As our children mature into teenagers, our relationship begins to change. For many, the teen/parent relationship doesn't look like we hoped and imagined. Sometimes teens push back against the values they were raised with. And we long for them to put their trust in us like they did when they were younger. Somewhere along the way their desire to be held turns to their desire to let go.

As we face this switch in parenting, we must remember that our teens still need us. We might kiss fewer boo-boos and tend to more broken hearts and disappointments, but the fact remains they need us, just in different ways. We need to be available for our teens, setting a foundation for our family in God's Word. We must pray consistently as we attempt to model our beliefs and uphold the principles found in Scripture.

Parenting teens is a new and sometimes difficult season. We must keep in mind that their natural progression toward independence prepares them for adulthood. Teaching them life skills provides them with the satisfaction and skills to one day live independently. It is such a blessing to provide them a taste of adult responsibility and accountability in the safety of your home. Be reasonable in your expectations, encourage them often, and cover them with grace.

As parents, we learn very quickly the benefits of choosing our battles. This continues to be a wise idea as we parent teens. Seasons will come when disagreements seem constant and every conversation is laced with hidden landmines, but we must control our temper and choose to not be easily provoked. This is not always easy, but we must model the behavior we expect from our children and practice the fruit of self-control.

Despite the difficulty and heartbreak parenting teens might bring, there is good news. First of all, the Lord goes before us (Deuteronomy 31:8). He is with us every step of the way (Deuteronomy 31:6). Secondly, time brings renewed relationships. Continue to provide a steady presence with unconditional love, and you will build a strong foundation for the future. Finally, let's not forget to enjoy our children and each season and stage. Parenting is both frustrating and fascinating. As conversations become deeper and life gets harder, cheer your teens on even more. Celebrate the glimpses of righteous character, and treasure the time you have with them.

God is good, and He watches over and guides parents in a special, powerful way (Isaiah 40:11). Continue to pray, and gather a few good friends who can hold you up when the battle is too much (Exodus 17:12).