

ENCOURAGEMENTS

Some of this you're not going to be able to do with your teen. Don't let it become a load on your back! Some of you will be able to do much more. Don't let feelings of pride creep in! There are so many variables in raising children--and many of them are outside your control. You can not control your husband, your extended family, your genes, your academic or psychological limitations to this point, your teen's peers with all their influence, our culture, the lack of revival, your church's direction, your pastor, your health!! On and on... and these all impact what you are able to accomplish with teens. You are seeking to build a spiritual house for yourself first. Then to give your teens some tools he/she can use for building their own house.

IT IS NOT ABOUT MEASURING UP

Aren't you amazed at the stories of John Wesley's wife's accomplishments with her big family--spending time with each child is an accomplishment in itself!! Or how Sarah Edwards managed her household so Jonathan could be free to study and write. Or how Abigail Adams ran the New England farm alone while John helped write the Constitution and served as an Ambassador in Paris. But, all this was before the American revolution! "They didn't have to deal with cell phones, email, erotic web pages, or even cars," you retort.

Or what about Mary Lee's loss of her whole way of life in the midst of raising teen girls while seeing her sons and Robert E. arrayed in swords and rifles and battle fatigue? She clung to Jesus as her refuge and strength and sang,

Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou, from hence, my all shall be;
Perish every fond ambition, All I've sought or hoped or known;
Yet how rich is my conditon; God and heav'n are still my own!
(Mozart and Lyte, "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken").

One daughter died, one apparently went the way of the world, one remained faithful to Christ and her mother.(John Perry, *Mrs.Robert E. Lee*, (Multinomah, Sisters, Oregon, 2001), p.302. "Don't tell me any more; I can't

possibly measure up!!" you cry.

It is not about "measuring up." It is not even about feeling burdened or guilty. Coaching your teen is all about balance. *Maintaining yours*. It is achieving that balance between your responsibilities and God's work in your life and your teen's. Your goal is to send him/her off into life equipped with the tools looking to Jesus Christ as his only hope. You can't even make him thirsty for the living God, but you can attempt to put Bible skills in his hand, that's all. So when you start to turn life examples into "rules of life," breathe deeply, stretch, and meditate on how you have been favored with the Holy Spirit to guide you in these times. That is the balance process. You do not have to be Abigail Adams, or Martha Washington, or Mary Lee. Rely on Jesus's words,

'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:38-39).

To get back in balance, look to your own heart. Refresh your memory of the Ten Commandments in both outward acts and inward attitudes. Perhaps you need to look at the Shorter Catechism or Thomas Watson's *Ten Commandments* or Allistar Begg on the web. Wholeheartedly turn from the sins you see there and embrace your Savior's own righteousness, knowing His perfect obedience has made you acceptable to God. Remember the ministry of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ and to enlighten the mind--even your teen's. Then, rely on His grace anew for this overwhelming task of leading your teens to God.

**"HOPE IN GOD, FOR I SHALL YET PRAISE HIM FOR THE HELP OF HIS
COUNTENANCE. O MY GOD, MY SOUL IS CAST DOWN WITHIN ME;
THEREFORE I WILL REMEMBER YOU"...(Psalm 42:5b-6a).**

Oh! I forgot one thing. Use *Proverbs* all the time. Teens love them because they are short and real.

DO WHAT YOU CAN....

Oh! One more thing. Don't forget to teach them hymns especially some from the revival periods of the 16-1700's.....and...

" We need to pray for the youth who are before us; and not suffer procrastination, that thief of time, that child of the devil, to deceive and destroy the rising hopes of our families, our churches, our country. But, O you parents, a particular obligation devolves upon you. Awaken all your tenderness and anxiety, and give them a spiritual direction. Fear God and teach your offspring likewise. Recommend instruction by example, and crown all with prayer--prayer for them and with them." William Jay, "The Young Admonished" (edited, on www)