

Family Driven Faith: How to Encounter Christ in the Home

Clay Bond

Introduction

- 1) In Psalm 127:3 we learn that our children are a blessing from the Lord. This implies that we should consider our role as parents to be a blessing. Nothing in our lives has the potential to bring greater joy or deeper grief than our children.
 - **Proverbs 10:1** *“A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.”*
 - **3 John 1:4** *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” NKJV*

Lesson

- 1) The starting place for creating a Christ centered home is to acknowledge God’s Word as the final authority for parenting. When it comes to parenting, we simply cannot do what comes naturally! We must be Christ centered parents if we wish to have Christ centered homes (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Isaiah 55:12; Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 3:5-6).
- 2) If we are going to have Christ centered homes we need to realize that, ultimately, our children belong to the Lord (Psalm 100:3). They do not belong to the state, the school, or society as a whole. This means that our children are a trust or a stewardship given to us by God. This realization should serve to heighten our sense of responsibility to raise them up in His ways. What are some of those responsibilities that God has delegated to parents?
 - a) Parents have the duty to _____ (Titus 2:4).
 - b) Parents have the duty to _____ for (2 Corinthians 12:14).
 - c) Parents have the duty to _____ (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).
 - d) Parents have the duty to _____ (Proverbs 22:6).
 - e) Parents have a duty to _____ (1 Timothy 3:4, 12).
 - f) Parents have a duty to _____ (Proverbs 13:24).
 - g) Parents have the duty to _____ (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21).
 - h) Parents have the duty to use the _____ to bless and build up and not to destroy (Proverbs 15:2, 4; Proverbs 18:21).
 - i) Parents have the duty to be an _____ (1 Timothy 4:12)

- 3) In order to have a Christ centered home we need to remember the law of harvest taught in Galatians 6:7
 - a) This passage teaches that we reap what we sow. As we parent, we are planting seeds and cultivating a crop. When that crop matures, it will reveal what we have sown and cultivated. Accordingly, parents who do not concern themselves with God's goals and ways should expect a harvest of problems with and in their children.
 - b) Parents who sow and cultivate loving, nurturing, discipline and training, together with a life that models the character of Christ and His teachings, tend to see a harvest of adult children who are a great blessing. (For Scriptural support of this principle see also Proverbs 15:20, 23:24, 29:17).
- 4) Another key to developing a Christ centered home is to cultivate good habits and avoid bad ones.
 - a) Every Christ centered household should be striving to develop the following habits:
 - i) Daily Bible Reading (Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17).
 - ii) Daily Prayer (Mark 1:35; Proverbs 15:8; Psalm 5:3; Philippians 4:6).
 - iii) Daily Devotions (Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 24:15).
 - iv) Regularity in attendance at worship services (Matthew 6:33; Acts 2:40,41)
 - b) Every Christ centered household should strive to avoid the following habits:
 - i) Anger (Ephesians 4:26, 31; Galatians 5:20).
 - ii) Drinking / Tobacco (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Proverbs 22:1).
 - iii) Swearing (Matthew 5:33-37).
 - iv) Cursing (Ephesians 4:27).
 - v) Gossip (Proverbs 18:8; Matthew 12:36-37).
 - vi) Faultfinding (Matthew 7:1-5).
 - vii) Anxiety (Philippians 4:6).

Conclusion

No home is perfect. Within every home there is room for improvement. Striving to build Christ centered homes will insure that our children grow and develop in an environment that abound with love and compassion. If we will allow God's Word to be the foundation and blue print, our homes will be havens of happiness.

Raising Children in Scripture

Carl McCann

Introduction

1. The purpose of this lesson is to encourage the efforts of parents, youth ministers, and all those who work with young people in the church.
2. Today's young people are facing an erosion of morals, conviction, and spirituality at a rate unprecedented in previous generations (my opinion).
3. It has always been the challenge of parents and all concerned about young people to do all we can to "train up" youngsters, who are pleasing the Father.
 - "Is the young man safe?"
 - "Am I my brother's keeper?"
 - "Let no man despise your youth..."
4. The text chosen is Dt. 6. This chapter contains invaluable principles which will help us to keep Christ – front and center (Heb. 12:1-2).

Discussion

1. Background of the book of Deuteronomy.
 - a. Deuteronomy literally means "one more time." It is the Law restated, a summary or recapping of the other books of the Pentateuch. In the book of Deuteronomy one can read of God's **promise, peace, provision and power**. As one writer has aptly stated: "Obedience (the key thought of Deuteronomy) is the *call* of the past, the *duty* of the present and the *guarantee* of the future." (Practical Bible Studies by Johnny Ramsey)
 - b. Robert R. Taylor, Jr. provides the following outline of Deuteronomy:
 - Moses' first address – 1:1-4:43
 - Moses' second address - 4:44-26:19
 - Moses' third address – chapters 27-30
 - Moses' farewell words – chapters 31-34
 - c. Pertinent Points Leading to Chapter 6
 - A Faithful Duo – 1:34-40
 - A Time To Turn – 2:1,3,8
 - Enough Is Enough – 3:23-29

- No Adding Or Subtraction – 4:2
 - Learning leads to Observance – 5:1
2. Lessons Needed For Today From Chapter 6
 - a. The Message Is God's – Dt. 6:1 (cf. Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 - b. The Message Is For Each Generation – Dt. 6:2 (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:14-15)
 - c. The Message Is One of Promise – Dt. 6:3 (cf. Heb. 3:12, 18-19, 4:1-2, 6, 11, 12:15)
 - d. The Message Is One of Conviction – Dt. 6:4 (cf. Eph. 4:4; Exo. 20:3; Acts 17)
 - e. The Message Is One of Commitment – Dt. 6:5 (cf. Matt. 22:36-37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:1-4)
 - f. The Message Is Precious – Dt. 6:6 – (cf. Jn. 8:32; 17:17; Acts 17:10-11; 2 Pet. 1: 1-4)
 - g. The Message Is Often Repeated – Dt. 6:7 (cf. Eph. 6:1-4)
 - h. The Message Is Our Guide – Dt. 6:8 (cf. Psalms 119:105)
 - i. The Message Is Identifiable – Dt. 6:9 (cf. Josh. 24:15)

Conclusion

1. Moses only taught what God commanded. Parents, youth workers, yea all Christians should do no less (Acts 20:32).
2. Genuine love for God is essential, but loving God does not happen automatically. As God's marvelous, gracious love for man is taught, we will learn to love God (1 John 4:19).
3. Our young people are precious. May we never lose sight of what they ought to know about God. May we never cease to encourage them to do what is right. May we never give them cause to doubt our devotion to God. Children will imitate what they observe, so let us never be a stumbling block to our children.

Developing a Christ Centered Youth Ministry

Mark Hammitt

The challenges of youth work among churches of Christ are many. In addition to those listed, can you add more?

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|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Small groups | 11. _____ |
| 2. Variety of family dynamics | 12. _____ |
| 3. Time | 13. _____ |
| 4. Social Media | 14. _____ |
| 5. Electronic Entertainment | 15. _____ |
| 6. School functions | 16. _____ |
| 7. Apathy | 17. _____ |
| 8. Peers | 18. - |
| _____ | |
| 9. Shallow faith | 19. _____ |
| 10. Poor organization | 20. - |
| _____ | |

With all the obstacles our young people face regarding their faith, the church must have a laser focus on Christ and helping our youth to establish a strong and personal faith. While many view the church as a place to go on Sundays to sit and worship, we must instill within our young people an understanding that Christianity is a daily commitment. After all, Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”* (emphasis mine, Luke 9:23, ESV) A daily faith ought to be the goal of every person who works with the young people of the Lord’s church. To have a truly “Christ Centered” youth ministry, we must look to examples found in the life of Jesus.

Study

The first consideration of “Christ Centered” youth ministry is STUDY. Although Jesus was “God with us” (Matthew 1:23) and had all authority (Matthew 28:18) to speak as deity, He placed great emphasis on Scripture. Time and time again, instead of speaking for Himself, He turned people to the word of God. This should serve as an example for us to follow (1 Corinthians 11:1).

For example, Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection (Luke 24:13-35). He encountered two disciples who did not recognize who Jesus was. After having a short conversation with them about “Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus began “with Moses and all the Prophets” and “interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

(Luke 24:27) This is one of numerous examples of Jesus pointing people to the Scriptures for the answers and guidance of life.

In “Christ Centered” youth work, the word of God should be at the forefront of all that is done.

Service

The second objective of “Christ Centered” youth ministry is SERVICE. We live in a world that is largely based on being served. Even most young people can count on parents, teachers, coaches and others doing things for them. Chores are a thing of the past in many homes in our communities and if a young person doesn’t feel like doing something, they are given their way in most circumstances. Just watch the television courtroom show, Judge Judy, and the evidence is overwhelming to prove this point.

Jesus’ teaching and example is a beacon of light and should be presented that way to the young people of the church. The greatest example of service has to be when Jesus washed the disciple’s feet (John 13:1-20). While servants would be the first ones to wash feet, surely one of the disciples would be called upon to perform this lowly task. Yet, the Son of God, actually washed the feet of these men who would proclaim the precious Gospel to the world in a very short time. How many times would these men think back to this day and be reminded that NOTHING should be beneath them in areas of service.

This is yet another great example to implement in all youth ministry that is focused on following Christ.

Social

The third objective to “Christ-Centered” youth ministry is the SOCIAL aspect. In some circles of the church, the social part of youth ministry is down played. This is most likely because we do not want to portray the church as a mere social club that is all about fun and games. This is a justified concern when we see the shift in religious circles towards entertainment in both worship and youth ministry. How can we seek a healthy balance in all areas of youth work, including social functions?

Are we to think that Jesus spent 100 percent of His time with the disciples in prayer, study and worship? The closest disciples were with Jesus for about three years and they spent time with him every day. We catch glimpses and can surmise that Jesus found Himself in social settings as he ate meals with the disciples, as he walked with them from town to town, as they lay down to sleep at night after a wearisome day of activities, and at times that are not recorded in the Gospel accounts. It was not just these disciples with whom he socialized because he was accused by the Pharisees of eating with “tax collectors and sinners.” (Matthew 9:9-12). On one occasion, Jesus went to a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-12) and although we can be assured that he did not engage in any sinful activity, we find no evidence that he did anything other than attend the wedding and celebrate with the attendees. On another occasion recorded in Luke 14:1-24, Jesus attended

Counseling Young People

John Moore

The purpose of this lecture is to provide participants with practical Bible principles for contemporary Christian ministry. This lecture is also designed to teach participants how to responsibly address and help youth who are struggling with sin and other obstacles that affect the faith and zeal of the human soul. By learning the principles and truths associated with Christian counseling and ministry, attendees will become more effective in helping others, transforming lives, reaching souls, and changing the climate and culture of the church.

I. The Premise for Christian Counseling

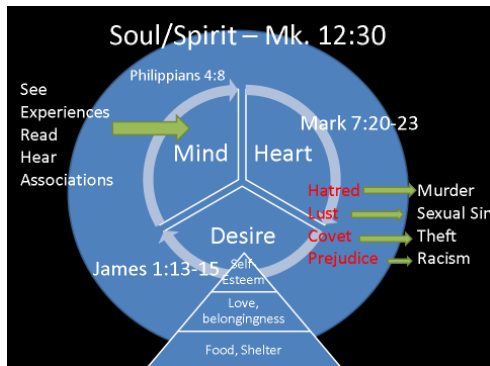
- A. The individual is important - Luke 15; Luke 19
- B. Caring for one another is a God given responsibility - Gal 6:2; Jas 5:16; 2Tim. 2:24-26
- C. Counseling is effective
 - 1. Jesus used different situations and times to teach the disciples both in large assemblies and in small private settings
 - 2. Do not be afraid of silence - give them time to think/build up courage, etc.
 - 3. This is how we build trust so that people can honestly and confidently open up and address their inner problems
- D. Counseling is a biblical concept - Proverbs 12:15; Prov. 11:14; Rev. 3:18; Prov. 19:20; Prov. 11:14
- E. Counseling Defined - General: A process beginning with a theory about the nature of human beings, and which involves the systematic use of constructs, strategies, and techniques designed to facilitate change and personal well-being in others. (See: 2 Timothy 2:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Galatians 6:2; James 5:16 etc.).

II. The Paradigm for Effective Counseling - Seeing Others as God Sees Them – A Biblical Psychology

- A. The components of human existence – Matthew 10:28
- B. The essence of the soul – Mark 10:28
- C. The concept of freedom (not determined) – Joshua 24:15; John 7:17
- D. The process of psychological development and behavior – Often our behavior is based on human desires (James 1:13-15), and its interaction with the things we have placed into our heart, mind, and soul (Mark 7:20-23; 12:29-30; Proverbs 23:7). The things in our heart, mind, and soul come from the things we see, read, hear, and experience. So it behooves those who are seeking change and improvement in their lives, to evaluate the inner self and what it is that you truly believe. The Bible emphasizes both the necessity of self-examination and the necessity of thinking upon things that are true (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Timothy 4:16; Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Matthew 5:8. An unexamined life

coupled with faulty thinking will lead to an unfulfilled life, and to dissatisfied relationships. Consider the following biblical model for human behavior.

- E. Emotions are normal (Heb. 5:7; Jn. 11:35)
- F. The physical can impact the mental (Ps. 30:5; Matt 4:4; Proverbs 25:16, 27-28; Exodus 20; Ps. 4:4; Eph. 5:14-18)
- G. Faulty thinking produces destructive behavior (Ephesians 4:17-19; Proverbs 23:7; 18:14; 16:22; 17:22; 3:7-8; 13:12; 15:15)
- H. Sinful behavior brings negative consequences to the body, mind, and soul (Psalm 38:3; Romans 2; Galatians 5:16-21; 6:7-8; Prov. 22:29-32)
- I. The path to happiness and liberation is to be found in Jesus (John 14:1-6; Colossians 2:2-3; Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:14-16; John 8:31-32; Luke 4:18; Isaiah 40:30-31; 2 Cor. 4:14-16)
- J. Scripture provides the answers and power for living (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 6:17; Philippians 2:12)
- K. Prayer strengthens (Luke 11:1-13; Ephesians 1:19; 3:2; 6:18)
- L. God's Spirit empowers (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 2:13; 4:13; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Romans 8:26; 1 John 4:4)
- M. Suffering refines us (2 Corinthians 4:14-16; 12:10; James 1:3-5; 1 Peter 1:7)



III. The Properties of Effective Counseling

A. The Three Levels of Ministry

1. Encouragement:
 - a. One Another passages - Rom. 12:10; Rom. 15:7,14; Gal. 5:13; 1 Thess. 4:18; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24; John 15:12
2. Instructional:
 - a. There is a difference between preaching and teaching
 - b. Counseling should always involve an element of instruction (2 Timothy 2:24-26); Titus 2
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:16
3. Interactive:
 - a. Real change often comes through a one on one setting. Discipling often occurs in this type of setting.
 - b. This is the very essence of Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:16; Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 10:27
 - c. Caring confrontation (2 Timothy 2:24-26); Johari Window

5 Ways to kick start your Youth ministry

Mark Hammitt

A periodic evaluation of all ministries in the church is a must. Whether it is a preacher who evaluates his preaching to improve communication with the congregation or the leadership of the church examining the effectiveness of a certain program, all constructive evaluation is a good thing. When youth ministry has hit a wall or a rough patch in the road, what are some ways to give it a kick start? Let us focus on “Christ Centered” ways to jump start any youth program.

CARE

Jesus showed a caring and compassionate heart throughout His ministry. He showed love and care not only to his fellow Jews, but also to those who were considered sinners by the Jews. Young people need to know they are loved by those who are working among them. Whether it is a full time youth worker or volunteers, it doesn't take young people long to recognize those who don't really want to be with them. It should be the goal of all youth workers to be seen as a caring Christian by every young person in the church.

An example of this in Jesus' life is when he saw Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), the dreaded tax collector. Jesus not only spoke with Zacchaeus, but went to his home as a guest! Every youth worker must genuinely care about the young people of the church.

COUNT TIME

To be close to someone, it takes time. There is no way around establishing a bond of Christian friendship among our youth, or congregations for that matter, without spending time together. We know the early church spent a great deal of time together in worship and in fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42-47).

It is estimated that Jesus spent up to three years with the disciples and they were definitely not the same men at the end of His ministry. Jesus didn't instruct them for a few hours a week and leave them to figure things out on their own. From all indications they spent a great deal of time with Jesus and he showed great patience as they grew in their knowledge and faith. He began with men who were willing to follow him when he said, *“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* (Matthew 4:19, ESV) They ended up as men who would die because of their commitment to the Savior. Time is the only way to establish and grow an effective ministry.

COMMUNICATE

The language barrier between those who are young and those who are older can be an obstacle to youth work. Today we have young people who largely communicate through texting, tweeting, acronyms, and emoji's!

Of course, Jesus was a master communicator and that should never surprise us because He is the Creator of all communication! Consider that He taught using simple methods of teaching such as illustrations, questions, Scripture and parables to teach great truths of God! At the end of what is often called the “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew 5-7, we read, *“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”* (Matthew 7:28-29, ESV) Jesus knew his audience and adapted the delivery of his message to better communicate. It is unacceptable when a youth worker obviously spends little time studying for a Bible class or takes little thought in how to better communicate with young people.

CHURCH FAMILY

Some have set up youth programs that separate the young people from the rest of the congregation. While this may be very popular, it is a dangerous practice for many reasons. The local congregation should be important in the life of every young person growing up in the Lord’s church.

Having times when the young people of the church get together alone to study, socialize and serve are encouraged. But, we must make a special effort to include them in the entire work of the church. Jesus met and traveled with those who were closest to Him, such as the apostles. Be reminded of the Lord’s prayer for His disciples and for all believers found in John 17. Near the end of His life on earth, Jesus was with those who were closest to Him as we read about the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:14-23) and even His betrayal in the Garden (Luke 22:47-53). Yet, Jesus never instructed them to keep to themselves and form a private club. They were instructed to go throughout the world and preach to the world! They were foundational to the establishment of the Lord’s church (Ephesians 4:11). From the beginning of the church, it was a body of Christians of ALL ages who spent time together following the apostles’ teaching and in fellowship (Acts 2:42). In jump starting a youth ministry, it must be stressed that those who are young are a part of the local church and not a separate group. Effort should be made to regularly include the whole church family in their study, service and social gathers.

COMMITMENT

Looking for commitment in our world today can lead to frustration. Common practice is that when we get tired of something, we move on to something else. There is nothing wrong with this sentiment when it comes to a house, car, clothing, or a hobby. On the other hand, our youth are negatively affected when leadership does not appear to be constant and stable.

Jesus made it very clear to His followers that He was committed to their development and growth. How many times would a normal man have given up on the disciples as they doubted, grumbled, showed immaturity, lacked faith, and failed to understand the teaching of Jesus? Yet, Jesus loved these men and knew how important they were to the spread of the Gospel in the coming years. The number of times Jesus must have been disappointed in the disciples could not overtake His commitment and love for them. As Jesus washed each of these men’s feet (John 13), he knew the times each of them would lack faith in the coming days. This included Judas, who would betray Him, yet He washed the feet of the betrayer also! We cannot foresee the future of our individual young people in the church, but we must commit ourselves to giving them every advantage and benefit to help them remain faithful

Getting Their Attention: How to Engage Young People

Shawn Montandon

1. Start early

If you want to engage young people (teens), I suggest you start early (when they are toddlers). Hold babies. Talk to toddlers. Every Sunday morning, go by all the classrooms and talk to the kids. Talk to them on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. Kneel down and get on their level and talk to them. The kids you engage will eventually begin to engage you. You can't start too early engaging kids for the cause of Christ (2 Tim. 3:15).

2. Spend time getting to know them

Read Matt. 19:13,14. To engage teens you need to get to know them. Talk to them about their lives. Know their interests. Find out what makes them tick! Find out what makes them who they are becoming! Help them find their gifts and how they can use them in the Church. Spend time with them at Church activities. Have you ever noticed, that at most Church activities, the adults hang out while the kids play in the auditorium and the teens hang out by themselves? Make a point to engage them for 10-15 minutes? What if you deliberately sat down with the MS & HS kids and just talked to them about their day? Go on mission trips, host youth devotionals, attend camps, sit in on Bible Class (ask the teacher first). Don't you know Paul spent some time getting to know Timothy (Acts 16:1-3)!

3. Think outside of the box

Use object lessons to illustrate Biblical truths. Think of creative ways for them to process God's truth. There are so many objects that can be used to make truth stick in their minds. I've used mousetraps, peppermints, balloons, rope, water, and flowers. Sure Jesus "lectured," but He used wonderful word pictures (parables) to create imagery and illustrations in the minds of His listeners. Jesus created a great visual when he spit on the ground and used mud to heal the blind man (John 9:6,7). Vacation Bible School isn't the only time to teach creatively! Don't make Bible Class boring! Make learning God's word fun and interesting!

4. Teach them the truth

Paul makes a huge claim, and says, "the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). First and foremost, teens need to hear an uncompromising truth about Jesus. They need to know that He is the ONLY way (John 14:6). Teens need to hear grace is received through an obedient faith (Eph. 2:8,9; Heb. 5:9). Teens need to hear that when they turn (repent)

from sin (Luke 13:3,5) and turn to Jesus (Heb. 12:1,2) by being baptized into His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3,4), they are forgiven of their sins and put in Jesus Christ! From then on, when they sin as they live in Christ, His blood continually forgives them (1 John 1:7; 2:1,2). Teens need to hear the truth about marriage (Matt. 19:1-12), gender (Gen. 1:27), and sex (Heb. 13:4). If we don't engage our teens with those truths, the world will certainly engage them with its spin on those topics. Teens need to hear the truth of Jesus!

5. Teach them what they need to hear

Paul told Peter a painful truth he needed to hear (Gal. 2:11-14). Teens need to hear some painful truths and I believe they will respect you for it. Parents need to hear this too! Teens need to hear from adults that life isn't about sports, dance competitions, formals, and jobs. Life isn't about being popular, making good grades, and it's certainly not about them! The teen years are the optimum years to cultivate a relationship with God (Eccl. 12:1; Acts 16:1,2). Teens need to hear that life is about God first and others second (Matt. 22:37-39). Teens need to know their life is about Jesus (Col. 3:4). Parents tend to build their lives around their children, which produces teens that think life is about them. Teens need to hear that life is about serving and not being served (Mark 10:45).

6. Practice what you preach

Read Mark 7:6,7. Teens can see hypocrisy a mile away. Teens will see straight through your inconsistencies. If you want to engage teens, you must practice what you preach. Teens need to see authentic faith. Not only will you engage them, but you will earn their respect and that's a big deal! If a teen calls you on an inconsistency, then by all means, show humility and make it right!

7. Be a spiritual mentor

Chuck Morris said at the 2003 Freed-Hardeman University Youth Ministry Workshop, *"Studies show that young people who develop relationships with at least 5 adults who play a significant role in their spiritual growth are more likely to remain faithful than those who do not develop those relationships."* Teens need to see a Church family who doesn't see them as the "Church of tomorrow," but as working parts of the body now! Paul mentored Timothy and took him on his journeys. Timothy became Paul's son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2,18). The Church needs more Paul and Timothy relationships.

8. Love them

I once had a teen tell me, *"My parents are probably sending me to all the summer activities because they don't want me around."* I looked at child and said, *"Well I want to take you everywhere I go this summer!"* Not everything you do with them needs to be a "spiritual" activity, but show them that everything you do is about loving God and loving others (Matt. 22:37-39). Jesus said, *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). I think the greatest way for teens to feel and to know that God loves them is to feel and to know that you love them.
