



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Teens
Release: June 28, 2016

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO TEENS TODAY

You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Deuteronomy 11:19

A few years ago, I did a commentary by the same title of today's commentary: "What's Important to Teens Today." Did that commentary ever need updating! What is so very sad is that the original list of issues, which included feeling good about yourself, acceptance, identity and the media are still genuine concerns for young people today but what a teen faces today includes gravely serious problems.

Twenty-year old blogger Jenny O'Hara compiled a list of "Issues Teens Face Today" with a subtitle, "That Adults Aren't Even Fully Aware Of." Parents, take a deep breath. If you have a teen in the house, consider these:

1. **Cyber Bullying and Stalking:** The Internet has changed the age-old problem of bullying, making it an ever-present possibility in the life of your electronically connected offspring. No longer sticks and stones, cyber bullying has even led to tragic suicides.
2. **Sex:** "Kids (and I mean kids)" writes blogger O'Hara, are having sex younger and younger every year." Blatant sexuality is in your child's face in movies, TV shows and magazines.
3. **Drugs & Alcohol:** Kids left alone in a two-parent career home, the widespread acceptance of smoking pot, and cheap and available drugs have made this issue more serious than ever before.
4. **Grades:** The pressure from parents, teachers and peers to get a college degree from a ranked college, scholarships and established in a career produces anxiety that makes high school seem like life or death.
5. **Broken Homes:** An overseas dad or a broken home is far more common. Switching between homes, dealing with battling parents or stepparents all add to the stress and tension of being a teen today.
6. **Desensitization to Violence:** Violence is now a part of a teen's visual life. Whether in video games, movies or the news, life is filled with a constant flow of images that change the way he or she views life.

What to do about these serious issues your teen is coming up against? Talk. Talk with your kids all the time. As God instructed Moses way back in the book of Deuteronomy: teaching and talking while you sit and walk and lie down and rise up. Now, as anyone who has ever actually had a teen in the house knows, your teen may be most receptive to doing that talking around midnight, when your brain and body are thoroughly done for the day! Sit up in bed and talk.

But just talking alone won't change your teen's thinking (and most certainly your opinions won't!) The truth of God's Word is the agent of renewal of the human mind and that's why God gives us the words! "...impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul," (Deuteronomy 11:18).

Do you know God's Word well enough to talk through these tough issues with the truths of the Word? Is there enough Scripture in your mind, available to the Holy Spirit, to keep you trusting God and keep your calm when the conversation goes upside down? If the Word isn't going into your mind on a daily basis it certainly won't come out in the heat of the moment, especially if it's around midnight! Helping your teen navigate the world takes time and lots of it. As the saying goes, teens spell love, T-I-M-E. Are you there, physically and spiritually?

The passage I've been referring concludes with a promise: "...as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors (Deut. 11:18 NLT). Despite everything changes around us, we can stand on the promises of God's Word!

Resource reading: Proverbs 18