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WHY ARE WE LOSING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

It is not uncommon for young people to lose interest in spiritual matters, start “pulling away” and become distant to fellow Christians and even family. They may start missing some of the worship services, then later quit altogether. They may date and then marry a non-Christian. They may even reach the point that they are involved in alcohol or drugs. Ultimately they are lost to the world. The Proverb writer said, *“Train up a child in the way she should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it”* (Prov. 22:6). Some children don’t live right because their parents did not teach them. This is a general statement to which there are exceptions. Thus, it is possible to train children in the way they should go and they still depart from it. If this is not true, then children are not free moral agents. From this, we must conclude that there could be any number of reasons why young people go astray. Let’s consider

some reasons why we are losing our young. **The Bad Influence Of Their Friends** 1. The

warnings. • *“My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. If they say, ‘Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse’-- My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path”* (Prov. 1:10-15).

• *“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray”* (Prov. 12:26).

• *“Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul”* (Prov. 22:24-25). • *“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’”* (1 Cor. 15:33). These warnings tell us of

the power of friendship. They tell us that we may or may not see (at first) the influence others are having on us. Furthermore, we learn where such influence will take us. 2. How this happens. When our young people associate with worldly people, they will not suddenly change. Instead, there is a gradual drifting (cf. Heb. 2:1). As time goes on, they become desensitized to sin (Ps. 1:1-3). Pressure mounts when they are outnumbered by ungodly people (Ex. 23:2; Rom. 12:2). It then becomes easy to be just like those around them (Prov. 23:20-21). **The Poor Example Of Their Parents.** 1. Young people learn from what they see. The general principle of the power of example (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 4:12) would certainly apply to what children see in their parents. Children often become what they see in their parents. *"Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!'"* (Ezek. 16:44). The Proverb writer said, *"The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him"* (Prov. 20:7). Don't forget that *actions* speak louder than *words*. 2. Young people often see parents who:

- D Don't go to Bible class.
- D Don't go on Sunday nights.
- D Don't attend on Wednesday evenings.
- D Miss a lot of services when they don't feel good.
- D Miss a lot for work.
- D Emphasize material things

over the spiritual. D Stress the importance of school work over spiritual matters. D Toy with sin. It should not be surprising when the children turn out to be just like they were trained! **The Weak Image Of The Church.** From the time children are old enough to pay attention to what goes on in worship (for example, ten years old), they form an image of the church and Christianity. What image do children form by the time they are twenty years old? This ten-year period is rather short in the history of a local church but leaves a lasting impression on young people. 1. A strong, impressive image of the church is powerful. Think of the powerful influence on our young people when they see a local congregation learning the Bible and understanding it. Think of the impact of seeing that truth in action in those around them. Think of the good done when young people see conviction and strength. What do they learn when they see that sin will not be tolerated? Think of the image they have by seeing people who love and respect each other. 2. Too many young people see a weak image of the church. In too many places, the young people hear preaching that is weak and watered down. The message says little of nothing. In other places, the preaching (though it is true to the book) may be hard to follow. Sometimes Bible class teachers are unprepared or may not have

a “clue” what the lesson is about. Add to that the fact that they often see hypocrisy in some of the members. They may hear grumbling from the members about each other. What kind of image would all of this give to a young person? **The Lax Standards At Home.** 1. Training young people requires high standards. God expects parents to train a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6). Paul wrote that fathers are to see that their children are brought up “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4). To do so requires *high* standards. 2. Common lax standards. In some homes, there is little corrective discipline in the younger years (Prov. 22:15; 19:18). Some parents are careless in watching what their children wear, the music they listen to, the movies or television programs they watch, who they are with and where they go. Many parents do not make sure their children have their Bible lessons prepared. Little effort is made to communicate, to bond or to teach (Prov. 29:15). And then we wonder what has happened to our children. **Little Time Is Spent Together As A Family** 1. There are many responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled without spending some time together. It takes time to be an example. It takes time to teach our children. It takes time to help them through problems. It takes time to understand our children. It takes time to communicate. It

takes time to build a relationship that last. 2. We must redeem the time (Eph. 5:15-16). That means we need to make wise use of the little time we have. We do not want to look back later and regret that we did not spend more time together as a family. 3. Often, families are too busy to really be a family. When we are too busy to eat together, to talk about each other’s day, to go somewhere as a family, or help a teenager through some problems, we should not be surprised when we lose our young people. These are just a few of the reasons we lose our young people. Hopefully, listing these few will help parents to assess what may be happening to their children before it is too late! – Donnie Rader

BIBLE TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. **Jesus said He spoke in parables "because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they ____."**

- a) Speak
- b) Understand
- c) Whistle
- d) Breakdance

2. **Seed sown beside the road is snatched away by the ____ one.**

- a) Crazy
- b) Fidgety
- c) Shy
- d) Evil

3. **Wheat and tares will be allowed to grow together until the ____.**

- a) Harvest
- b) Birthday
- c) Evening
- d) Sunset

4. **When the mustard seed is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a ____.**

- a) Turtleneck
- b) Harmonica
- c) Swatch
- d) Tree

5. **The ____ of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.**

- a) Kingdom
- b) Jello
- c) Noodles
- d) Pudding

6. **Jesus did not speak to the crowds without a ____.**

- a) Powerpoint
- b) Lazerpointer
- c) Pulpit
- d) Parable

7. **"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things ____ since the foundation of the world."**

- a) Silly
- b) Fantastic
- c) Hidden
- d) Frightening

8. **The man who found the treasure hidden in the field sold all he had and bought the field from ____ over it.**

- a) Fear
- b) Joy
- c) Suspicion
- d) Confusion

9. **The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine ____.**

- a) Turtles
- b) Fannypacks
- c) Pearls
- d) Frogs

10. **At the end of the age, ____ will take out the wicked from among the righteous.**

- a) God
- b) Jesus
- c) Holy Spirit
- d) Angels

- 1) B, Reference: Mt. 13:13
- 2) D, Reference: Mt. 13:19
- 3) A, Reference: Mt. 13:30
- 4) D, Reference: Mt. 13:31-32
- 5) A, Reference: Mt. 13:33
- 6) D, Reference: Mt. 13:34
- 7) C, Ps. 78:2; Mt. 13:35
- 8) B, Mt. 13:44
- 9) C, Mt. 13:45
- 10) D, Mt. 13:49