

Disconnected Parents and Disconnected Teens

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And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. [Mal 4:6 \(KJV\)](#)

And He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. [Luke 1:17 \(KJV\)](#)

The beliefs, values, and ethics of parents positively influence the majority of teenagers. Similarly, the majority of teenagers want to spend positive time with their parents. But a smaller group of youth is a clear exception. They want neither the opinions nor the presence of their parents.

Many of these youth push parents away in order to protect themselves from more hurt. They have been abandoned emotionally by parents pre-occupied with career, income, self-fulfillment, failing marriages, new romances, adult recreation, community involvement, or even church busyness. In the past decade, mothers have joined fathers in being physically absent from the home or emotionally spent and distant.

Counselors call these teenagers disconnected, wounded, or kids with their emotional tanks running on empty. Unless something changes quickly, they will reject the faith, go off the deep end in terms of lifestyle, and spend their lives distant from their aging parents.

The parents in our church who are emotionally abandoning their teenagers likely will not set foot on church property any other time than Sunday morning. We must work hard to get a message to them. Work with the other ministers on a plan to bring together parents of teenagers for a special Bible study hour.

As we plan to challenge the parents to be more emotionally involved and connected to their teenagers, consider these points:

- 1. If your teenager is genuinely pushing away your convictions and values and does not want you around, he may be reacting to emotional neglect.**
- 2. Your drive to provide your teen with economic advantages can cause you to be physically absent and emotionally drained and distant.**
- 3. Stressful marriages, dating, or adult friendships can leave you left with little to give to your teen.**
- 4. A stressful career can leave you with your emotional batteries drained with nothing left for your teenager.**
- 5. An emotionally abandoned teenager will reject your faith, make poor lifestyle choices, and drift further from you as an adult.**
- 6. To keep from losing your teenager, you need to consider making life-altering changes that give you more time at home with more emotional reserves for your teen.**
- 7. With Scripture as your guide and God as your strength, you can commit to doing whatever it takes to provide your teen with the unconditional love, sense of significance, and emotional security he needs to prosper.**