

Materialism and Stress

Today, more than in any other generation, teens are more stressful. Materialism has caused much of the stress we see today. Teens are under so much pressure to wear "in" clothes, have the latest video games, and have the best that money can buy. Parents are often caught up in this materialism as well.

Another factor that leads to stress in teens is the instant society in which we live. We have fast food, speed dial, I.M., pain killers that instantly melt on the tongue, and a host of other conveniences. And if we can't afford it, we just charge it.

Our instant way of life is teaching our teens to find instant answers to their problems. If our answers are not found immediately, then we feel something is wrong. We are not willing to wait on the Lord as He instructs us in Psalm 27:14. And what about Psalm 40:1? "I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry."

Teens need to know that God has a wonderful plan for their life. That plan can be found in His Word. Set a time aside each day to read God's Word and meditate on His Word. "Be still and know that I am God." What a great exercise to incorporate into our own live also!

Recognition of Stress in Your Teen's Life

Teens today face more stress than we realize. Think back to this past week and notice if your son or daughter experienced any of the following.

- Stomachache
- Headache or diarrhea
- Temper tantrums, regression, nightmares, too little or too much sleep
- Depression

If your child is experiencing any of these symptoms, they could be stressed out.

Here are five stress busters by Debra Bruce.

1. Recognize warning signs. Help your teen recognize signals for stress, such as a racing heart or stomach pains.
2. Reassure your teen that everyone has stress from time to time.
3. Teach your teen to relax, pray and ask God for help in stressful times.
4. Help your teen discern which stresses they have no control over. Teens can not control a divorce in the family but they can control whether they catch the bus.
5. Encourage support. God says, "Be still and know that I am God." Let your teen know they can talk with you, their pastor or youth pastor and most importantly, God.

If stress is a serious problem with your teen, seek professional help.

Power Sheet by Mark Witt
Teen Quest
293 Rich Road
Somerset, PA 15501
Phone: 814.444.9500 Fax: 814.444.8664
Email: quest@teenquest.org



A TEEN QUEST POWER SHEET

TEENS AND STRESS

Identifying Stress in a Teenager's Life

If you can find the source of stress in a teen's life, it will help you handle some of the stress of potential situations. When you know the problem causing stress and can identify it, then you are on your way to helping your teen overcome stress.

What are those stress conditions in teens?

1. Instant gratification - We are living in an instant society in which children are taught that all answers are quick and easy. Today's teen is under time pressure; they have deadlines to meet. We now push our little children into sports and expect them to perform as adults. We want it and we want it now - fast food, ATMs, vending machines.
2. Boredom—When kids do not have a purpose in life, they become bored. When teens can find Christ and be used of God, they begin to discover their purpose in life. Teens do not have to wait until they are adults to serve the Lord and live for Him. This is a myth we have created in our Christian circles.
3. Too many things to do - Too many things to do can lead to stress in teens. Teens can not handle too many activities and pressures our society puts on them.
4. Unrealistic Expectations - Parents sometimes put children into a mold not meant for them. You want them to go into a particular line of work or

continued

continued

get a certain job that is just not for them. Don't misunderstand. . . Parents need to challenge their children but pressuring teens to live up to unrealistic expectations will cause pressure.

On the other hand, parents tend to create negativism in their children when they put them into a mold. A parent will say, "Why can't you be like your older brother?" Parents will say in front of their children to a best friend. "My son is so bad, he is a lazy bum; he won't do anything around the house." When you say these things you simply reinforce a bad, lazy child.

Identify stress in your teen and get help.

The Adolescent Years are Stressful Years

The adolescent years are stressful for teens. Teens are changing from childhood to adulthood. Peers are so important and parents seem to be in the "back seat".

Parents, don't be alarmed if your teen seems to be experiencing stress. This is very normal; peer pressure, keeping up with grades, body changes and concern for his future all lead to stress.

When undue stress does occur, it has to be dealt with. Consistency is your greatest asset. . . especially during those turbulent teen years. You simply add to stress when you confuse your children. You may tell them to watch their mouth when they get sassy or critical toward you, but every night they hear you verbally abuse the neighbor, your boss, the preacher or a relative.

When parents are constantly fighting and screaming at each other or are never home or do one thing and say another, it creates stress.

What Causes Stress in Teens?

Any generation can experience stress. But stress in a teenager's life is on the rise.

Have you ever talked with a teen and received no response? You talk until you are blue in the face and seem to get nowhere. You see, teens are sometimes in their own world. They can be very self-centered and cruel without not really knowing it. Their self-worth is dependent on their peer group.

Remember, a teenager is moving from childhood to adulthood. Sometimes he has a hard time finding himself. His security is being threatened and at the same time struggling to be independent from Mom and Dad.

Even though he wants to do his own thing, deep down he wants Mom and Dad to put some restrictions on him. Children want limits at the same time they rebel when those limits are put on them.

God says in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." In other words, do not irritate or nag your teen.

Yes, some stress is normal for teens. A parent's duty is to be a good role model, patiently training them and constantly praying for them.

Do Parents Cause Their Teens Stress ?

ABC News did a special program a few years ago reporting that many parents are pushing their children too hard. Some parents sign their children up for every program and activity available such as skating, piano lessons, sports programs, swimming, karate, Boy Scout, ballet, etc. According to this report children want their parents to stop pushing them. They are burned out at an early age.

Lots of parents want their children involved in every social program just for status. I know families who never see each other.

Your son or daughter may be stressed because you have them doing too much. Remember, kids just need to be kids. They need time to think. I Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Encourage one another and build up one another." The job of parents is to train their children. God says for us to "Train up your child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

I suggest you do three things:

1. Evaluate all activities your children are involved.
2. Prioritize your children's activities. Subtract those activities not as important.
3. Take time weekly for family time. Use this time to communicate.

Be part of the solution. . .

Not the problem.