

IN THE BALANCE

Six Great Balances a Teen Must Receive at Home

Charles Blond, a French acrobat, lived from 1824-1897. In 1859 he crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope. Several times he crossed, once with a blind fold, once with a wheelbarrow, once on stilts, and another time with a man on his back. Even a man as great as that never achieved perfect balance! Balance is a desired goal that you never fully attain, but you utterly fail when you stop trying! Balance is maintained through the journey of correcting to which side you are off balance.

1. Restraint with Reason

Most parents will find it hard to believe that their teenagers want restraint. They fight it, they buck it; but inside they know they need it. But they want it with reason. Teens won't accept a restraint without a reason. Rather than wait until they ask, teach them, and take them along on the journey with you.

2. Rules with Relationships

Rules without relationships breed rebellion. That can also be stated in reverse... relationships without rules breed rebellion, as well. Teens in today's society are desperately seeking relationships. They hunger for someone to be interested in them, to notice them, to participate in their lives and understand their needs, concerns, fears, and feelings! Parent, I encourage you to make time in your schedule to build a relationship with your teen. Have fun with him, make memories. Homes are filled with relationship killers (TV, computer, video games, diverse interests, busy schedules, fast paced lives, exhaustion, anxiety). How do you get a relationship back? Plan it and MAKE IT HAPPEN.

3. Direction with Devotion

If you have an older teen, this is so important. They all have dreams, plans, desires and aspirations! Two extremes... the Direction Extreme - do what I say... or the Devotion Extreme - whatever you choose... we are behind you!

Teens need both! They need your devotion... unconditional love and the knowledge that you believe in and support them. But they also desperately need your direction! They are almost adults with very little knowledge or wisdom with which to make the adult decisions they face. God gave them YOU as a gift to direct and guide them. The youth ministry's responsibility is to push them to talk to you. Future choices should be guided by your leadership...college, career, dating, and marriage.

4. Discipline without Diversion or Digression

Teens today are crying out for loving, consistent discipline, for parents who will truly discipline rather than debate. They are hungry for parents who will not step into the ring

with them and put on the verbal boxing gloves. Teens need discipline from authority, not from a "peer." When you step into a debate and allow your focus to be diverted to verbal digression, you become a peer.

- Refuse to step down from your position as authority.
- Deal with discipline clearly and predictably.
- Set the boundaries and enforce them.
- When infractions occur, respond biblically.
- Be willing to apologize when wrong.
- Know when to call TIME OUT.
- Deal consistently, lovingly and decisively.
- Stay in control of yourself and the situation.

5. Instruction with Influence

Does your instruction or the instruction you provide through other means, match up with the influence you have on their lives from day to day? Do you live what you say and teach? If not, you will certainly lose your teen. Teens are straight shooters in their own minds. They figure people out quickly and correctly. If you want your instruction to be heard for a lifetime, you must first live it out and then teach it!

Conclusion: The earlier you start, the better off you are!
