

## American Family

### Teen Idol

#### Introduction

Last week we began the series, American Family. We talked about the reality that Biblically, the majority of the social problems today come from a father deficit.

#### The problem of “adolescence”

The first document to use the word teenager was:

1. First *English New Testament* in 1526.
2. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in 1623
3. Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac* in 1739.
4. Theodore Roosevelt’s *Strenuous Life* speech in 1899
5. **A Readers Digest issue in 1941**

The whole teen culture came out of baby boom prosperity in the 1950’s. People began to market to them – clothes, music, etc.

“Generation gap” was created.

The teenage years began to be more about enjoying this subculture – dating, music, recreation than moving into adulthood.

ADOLESCENCE literally means “to grow up” (Latin)

#### History- a different story

- Up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, girls began to be ready to marry by 13 or 14; boys entered vocations or university by 15.
- George Washington, Born 1732, middle class family, as a boy memorized 101 rules of a gentlemen, he applied himself in geometry, trigonometry, and surveying mastering it by the time he was 16. At 17 he became the Official surveyor for the Culpeper County in Virginia.
- David Farragut – Born 1801, began serving at sea at 10, captain of ship at 12, later became Navy’s fist admiral.
- Clara Barton – born in 1821 she was 11 when her brother fell from the roof of a barn and she nursed him to health he was a Dr. so she cared for everyone in the sick room as a nurse and took over his practice for two years. Then at 14, served as a nurse during a small pox epidemic, at 17 she became the founder of the **American Red Cross**.
- John Quincy Adams – Our sixth President, son of our 2<sup>nd</sup> President, was Ambassador to France at the age of 14
- Benjamin Rush – Signer of the Declaration, most famous doctor of the time, graduated from medical school at 14 yrs. old.
- William Livingston – at 14 yrs. of age was a missionary among the Mohawk Indians the most dangerous Indians at the time.

#### The problems this has created

We are now in the third generation of this teenage culture that’s been created.

- Diminished expectations
  - Google “teens and expectations” (Do the Hard Things, 2008):
    - teens and drugs
    - teens and alcohol

- teens and smoking
- teens and illiteracy
- teens and marijuana
- teens and cell phones
- teens and sex
- Even Google has low expectations.
  
- Arrested development
  - American teen years have begun to be extended childhood. Complete industries, and products have been created all producing just for the teen to CONSUME
  - Music, movies, fashion, fast food, countless on line services revolve around the consumer habits of the teens.
  - Thus teens are becoming trained to become **consumers** rather than **producers**.
    - One official government definition of adolescence extends the age to 30!
    - This consumer, entertainment driven mentality is at the root of our moral decline. (parent who argued over prom at ETCS)
  
- Entitlement mentality
  - OCCUPY WALL STREET are doing, demanding the government give them jobs, health care and of course take it from the haves and give it to them.

## Biblical solutions

### A. Change your thinking

- Rom. 12:2 – *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.*
- The Bible doesn't even *recognize* this adolescent age.
- ! Cor. 13:11 - *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*
- Bar Mitzvah – (Bible) 12 was an adult – age of accountability
- This doesn't necessarily mean our youth don't enjoy their years, but the goal is to prepare for adulthood, not just enjoy their teen years.
- I Cor. 14:20 - *Brothers and sisters, do not think like children. In evil things be like babies, but in your thinking you should be like adults. (NCV)*
  - Our modern culture gets this backward.

### B. Realize who the real 'expert' is (The role of parents)

- Most recent surveys tells us the number role model of youth are their parents! They've seen the shallowness of their culture.
- Quit lowering the expectations!!
  - Emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, morally
- Don't be afraid to exert both your influence and your authority
- Force the interactive environments – it's the greatest antidote to foolish peer pressure. Refuse to allow the "generation gap"!

### C. (Recognize that) Maturity comes from responsibility.

- Lam. 3:27 - *It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth.*
- All of us need to examine this issue, especially if you're stuck in adolescence (consumer).

#### D. Your family and God's family (the church)

- Disturbing statistics
  - According to a survey by American Research Group, 95 percent of 20- to 29-year-old evangelicals attended church regularly during their elementary and middle school years. Only 55 percent went to church during high school. And by college, only 11 percent were still attending church.
  - Youth Transition Network (YTN), a coalition of some of the nation's largest denominations:
    - An Assemblies of God study showed a loss of 66% of their students within one year of high school graduation.
    - A Southern Baptist transition project estimates an 82% loss of youth within one year of high school graduation.
- Clearly, the majority of American young adults today have failed to connect with God or His people while growing up.
- Also, the Church has terribly neglected the college age generation, thinking they were ready to engage in adult life without an active spiritual covering and ministry to their generation.
- If you're a parent of a teenager, you must engage them with both the church and adults, especially yourself.
  - The role of a youth group – many churches have bought into the consumer culture for young people – pizza and a ten minute devotional!
  - That is not our vision. We're going to disciple them, which include calling them early to responsible roles. Our college ministry is beginning to transfer some of their successful strategies to our youth ministry.
- If you're an adult, you can empower the next generation in a variety of ways – leadership, mentoring, support and involvement in a healthy church.