

## **Don't get "hooked" by your Teenager.**

Teenagers can test your sanity. They're neither adult nor child, and can become either without notice. Flooding hormones and exploding neurons spark biochemical reactions in their heads and bodies. Words like, 'What in the world were you thinking?' form involuntarily on your lips. In response come sullen teenage shrugs, followed by the incomprehensible "don't know." And they don't! What can you do? 'Lock them up?' Sorry, that's illegal. But here are two things that will help.

1) Back off and slow down. 'Be clear minded and self-controlled.' One of the biggest mistakes parents make is overreacting, which triggers an escalating battle of wills you're unlikely to win. Decibel levels rise, wisdom fails, your teen concludes you're the crazy one, and suddenly there's no adult present and nobody's 'minding the store.' You've become part of the problem, leaving your child angry and insecure, without a rational role model. Pray, breathe deeply and count to ten! For your child's sake, it's time for the clear minded and self-controlled parent to prevail.

2) Remember, anger begets anger. An angry person starts fights; a hot-tempered person commits all kinds of sin' (Proverbs 29:22 NLT). No one can infuriate you like a teenager trying to grow up. A look, a word, an attitude, and you're 'hooked; 'you're in a shouting match with your own child. How crazy is that? Emotionally charged exchanges hard wire your teenager's brain for automatic, long-term anger reactions.

What's the answer? Use the carrot and stick approach of Scripture: 'Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture [love and encouragement] and admonition [character building discipline] of the Lord' (Ephesians 6:4).

Taken from *The Word for Today* Summer 2009, UCB, Westport Road, Stoke on Trent, ST6 4JF.  
Free issues of this daily devotion are available for the UK and Republic of Ireland