

**What is Adolescence?**

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and mental human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood. This transition involves biological, social, and psychological changes, though the biological or physiological ones are the easiest to measure objectively. Historically, puberty has been heavily associated with teenagers and the onset of adolescent development. In recent years, however, the start of puberty has seen an increase in preadolescence and extension beyond the teenage years, making adolescence less simple to discern. (from Wikipedia)

It is simply a time of *intense change* for a child.

*The Goal for this Lesson: To begin to understand the parents' God given role and responsibility in guiding your child through this critical time of adolescence.*

**What is our God given role and responsibility?**

To glorify God by leading our children to Christ. We are called to nurture them in the knowledge of Christ's grace and love and teaching them to live in obedience to Him. (In essence we are to disciple our children)

<sup>ESV</sup> **Deuteronomy 6:4-7** <sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

**What are some Obstacles?**

We have our own obstacles to overcome before we can start blaming our kids. We have to look deep into our own hearts first before we can begin to try and shape the hearts of our kids.

**Idols**

Comfort: "I want what I want and you're getting in the way of my pleasure..."

Respect: "I'm the parent and I'm entitled to your respect..."

Appreciation: "After all I've done for you, you should appreciate me..."

Success: "I need you to be what I want so that I can derive some self-worth..."

Control: "Not letting go of my parental control, despite you're growing independence..."

**Ignorance**

"I don't know what to do with my teenager. They are out of control, off the wall, disinterested in me and they speak a foreign language, what does ...tfn, lol, bff mean anyway?"

**Intimidation**

I'm afraid of my teenager. I have heard the horror stories and I am not sure our family will be able to survive these years. What if they don't like me? What if they go "gothic"?

**Indolence**

This means that most parents are lazy. They are too lazy to put in the time, effort and energy into disciplining their teenagers.

**How do I overcome these Obstacles?**

**Believe...** in the gospel of grace in your own life. Confess your own brokenness and need for Christ to redeem your heart. These obstacles are heart issues and the only thing that will fix your heart is the gospel of grace.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 20:24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**Bathe...** yourself in the Word of God. You have got to allow God’s Word to overwhelm you and be your constant companion that guides you and gives you the wisdom and strength to love your kids.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalms 119:97** Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

**Battle...** your obstacles with Prayer.

<sup>NIV</sup> **James 5:16** ...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

**Begin...** to spend quality time with your teenager. Don’t wait till the end of this course. Don’t wait for the *right* opportunity, *create* opportunities.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Ephesians 5:15** Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

**Biblical Parenting Matrix**

Age	Content	Goal	Proverbs
Very Young Children (K-4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Teaching the elementary "facts" of the Bible; stories, names, details, themes, places, major events, etc.  Help them understand the 4 Core themes of Scripture: God, Sin, Jesus Christ, Faith	We want our children to know the Bible, to understand their sinfulness and acknowledge their need for Christ.	Knowledge (Proverbs 19:270)  "Knowledge" is connected with hearing or refusing to hear, specific words of instruction.
Adolescence/Pre-teen (5 <sup>th</sup> grade-8 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Teach them to assimilate the facts and begin making sense of God's Word and how Christ bridges the gap between holiness and sin	Having accepted Christ, we want our children to learn how to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, and to adopt a comprehensive Biblical world and life view	Understanding (Psalm 111:10)  "Understanding" has an ethical component. That is, " <i>this</i> " and not " <i>that</i> ."
Teenage/Young Adult (9 <sup>th</sup> grade-12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Teach them to lovingly articulate their faith to others, and have the confidence to defend the faith and engage their culture with a Christian mind rather than a secular mind	Fully confident in their faith, we want our children to have a heart for disciple making (within their own families and in the world at large). We want them to be prepared and eager to lovingly engage their culture and bring the truth of Scripture to bear on anything they set their hand to.	Wisdom (Prov. 15:2)  "Wisdom" has to do with putting knowledge to use in the right way.



**What is a Family?**

The family is God's primary learning community. The parents are God's primary teachers

*The Goal for this Lesson:* *To begin to understand how to teach our family the Redemptive focus of all of life.*

**Two important things to know about your teenager:**

1. *They are covenantal beings.* They were created to live in relationship with God for His glory. (Tripp, p.43-44)

<sup>ESV</sup> **Titus 2:11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

2. *Children behave out of the heart.* The parent is not in the business of behavior modification but heart modification because the heart controls the behavior.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Luke 6:43** "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

**Three Fundamental Biblical Themes in Teaching your Family the Redemptive Focus****1. The Family is a Theological Community**

We have to root our children's identity in the existence and glory of God. (Tripp, p.59)  
*Where do your children go to get their identity?*

<sup>ESV</sup> **Isaiah 43:6** I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, <sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

We need to teach our kids to look at life through God's lens, from his perspective. But how?

- Talk to your kids and utilize teachable moments
- Immerse your family in the Scriptures to see His perspective.

**2. The Family is a Sociological Community**

What is the second and greatest commandment? We were created to live in community with others and the family is the most basic of all communities. If your child can learn to get along with their brother or sister and their parents then this will be the training ground for college roommates, classmates, spouses and co-workers.

Why is it hard to get along with other people?

<sup>ESV</sup> **James 4:1** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

Why is it hard to extend grace to others?

- we have not received it yourself
- we have created a “works oriented system” for others

### 3. The Family is a Redemptive Community

“The key to the family functioning as a redemptive community, where the gospel is the glue that holds the family together, is parents who so trust in Christ that they are ready and willing to confess their faults to their children.” (Tripp, p.67)

- We have to model the gospel to our children every day.
- Everyone’s sin is exposed and we either rationalize it, blame it or repent of it.
- The only thing getting in the way of not doing this is pride, and we all know what God thinks of pride.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 5:5** “...Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- “We have to teach our children that there is a Redeemer who has come, who forgives, delivers, reconciles and restores.”
- We are teaching our children that there is hope in a fallen world. We point them to the Redeemer who will be their only hope now, in the future and forever.

*Age of Opportunity*, by Paul David Tripp

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## Lesson 4: Influencing Culture Redemptively                      Parenting Adolescents

Note: adapted from Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, ch.9

### **What is Culture?**

Culture – “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.” (Webster) It becomes a filter that influences how we perceive reality.

- ✓ Myth of neutrality - God made things good. But since sin entered the world it is now fallen/broken. Things can be used for good or evil. However, there is no neutrality—we do not live in a vacuum. Everything we experience is in some context and is therefore not neutral. It may be more or less dangerous or more or less helpful, but not neutral.
- ✓ The influence of Culture → like air. Just as we constantly breathe in air so we are breathing in the culture around us.

### **How do we respond to Culture?**

Two Errors: Isolate or Assimilate

- ✓ Isolation – underlying philosophy (evil is in the thing, so avoid the thing and avoid evil). Great study with kids is to watch the movie, *THE VILLAGE* and discuss. Col 2:20-23. Then notice 3:1. This can lead to...righteousness = keeping the list of rules.
- ✓ Assimilation – probably more evangelical Christians err in this way. Col 2:8; Matt 12:30. Here there is no real commitment to submit to God’s commands and therefore no distinction from culture.

A Third Way: Influencing Culture Redemptively.

God wants us to be agents of transformation to redeem culture. Salt and light.

### Matthew 5:13-16

*13"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.  
14"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

### **What steps can we take to train ourselves and our children how to influence culture?**

1. Prepare – need to instill more than bible stories and commands; children need to be taught to think with a biblical worldview. The bible becomes the lens through which they see reality instead of culture being that lens.

#### Questions to ask when reading the bible with kids...

- ✓ What does this teach us about God—his character and plan?
- ✓ What do we learn about ourselves—our nature, struggles, purpose?
- ✓ What does it teach us about right and wrong, good and bad, true and false?
- ✓ What instruction does it give us about relationships, authority, love, trust?
- ✓ What does it teach us in terms of how to think? To feel? To act?
- ✓ What have we learned that will guide decisions we make and how we live?
- ✓ How does it help us critique and identify problems in our culture?
- ✓ How does it help us understand our culture and love people?

## Lesson 4: Influencing Culture Redemptively Parenting Adolescents

Note: adapted from Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, ch.9

2. Test – as children become more grounded in biblical wisdom we can critique, evaluate, and analyze culture from a biblical worldview. Common mistake → keep “bad things” away from kids instead of teaching them to test, analyze and evaluate them.  
Use the same questions (see above) you ask about the bible as you do to evaluate culture.
3. Identify – find the common ground we have with our culture. Struggles and Joys. This is critical because it helps us figure out how to serve our culture and communicate the gospel.  
“The world is messed up, so get angry!”  
“The world is messed up, so enjoy life while you can and party, party, party!”  
“No one will look out for you, so take all you can for yourself.”
4. Decide – don’t decide everything for your teens. To teach them to think you must involve them in the decision making process. If you don’t how will they learn to make decisions when they are out of the house and on their own?
5. Redeem – the goal is not to always be against the culture or to condone it, but to be part of redeeming and rebuilding culture the way God would have be.

Remember the air analogy of culture. It is there and we live and breathe in it. What we need is a filter detects and strains out pollutants (a biblical worldview). The danger is that we quickly identify the BIG ones (alcohol, drugs, sex, gangs, etc.) while letting other pollutants slip through (idols of our heart with sinful desires). What are some examples?

### **Case Studies**

*Pirates of the Caribbean* → the culture we live in...hungry not satisfied. Why? Because of the curse. Like in the movie the only hope we have is redemption through the blood of the Son.

#### *High School Music Lyrics - “Breaking Free”*

We're soarin', flyin'  
There's not a star in heaven  
That we can't reach  
If we're trying  
So we're breaking free

You know the world can see us  
In a way that's different than who we are  
Creating space between us  
'Till we're separate hearts  
But your faith it gives me strength  
Strength to believe

We're breakin' free  
We're soarin', flyin'  
There's not a star in heaven  
That we can't reach

**INTRODUCTION**

We will explore our culture of entertainment and the influence of media. It should be understood that we are not blaming media in itself, but we are recognizing its influence as a very significant contributing factor to our “breathing” of our cultural air.

**Media** – Pl. of medias/medium – “means of effecting or conveying something; a channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment.” (Webster)

“Media no longer just influence our culture. They are our culture.” (Rosalind Silver)

**The Rise of Modern Media** (changes by being brought to you rather than you going to it)

- Print media grew rapidly when Guttenberg invented the movable type printing press.
- Radio led to a more rapid spread of information and some entertainment.
- TV came on the scene at the 1939 World’s Fair. 1946 – 10,000 TV’s in US. 1950 – 10.5 million; 1960 – 54 million; 1995 – 99% of households (more owned TV than phone). 2/3 of all households own 3 or more TV’s. It is often the focal point of a living room.
- Movies – 35% of moviegoers are between ages of 12-24.
- Video Games – started in 1972 with Pong. It is more than a \$10 billion/year industry in the US. Children 9-13 play an average of 90 minutes/day.
- Internet is very recent (mid 1990’s)
- Cell Phones – talk, take pictures, email, text, surf web, and watch TV or movies.

**THE INFLUENCE OF ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA**

What effect does this have on our thinking, feeling, and doing?

**Boredom** – Why are we bored? Looking for the next rush, thrill, etc?

What is Entertainment or Amusement? Comes from French word *muser* meaning “to gaze.” It means to keep pleasantly occupied; entertain; to make laugh, smile.

In *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman quotes Robert MacNeil (formerly of the *MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour*) who writes this about the news:

*The idea “is to keep everything brief, not to strain the attention of anyone but instead to provide constant stimulations through variety, novelty, action, and movement. You are required...to pay attention to no concept, no situation, no scene, no character, and no problem for more than a few seconds at a time.”*

“Placebo institutions such as entertainment, gambling, sports, drugs, and media may be palliating or masking boredom so that people do not realize their own hidden hungers.” (Orin Klapp)

**Application:** How does it influence our willingness to patiently and persistently study the Bible? Deal with conflict? Study at school? Manage time? Work ethic?

**Sexuality** – the average TV viewer sees a sexual act or reference every four minutes during prime time and a total of 14,000 instances per year.

1965 – Barbara Eden’s belly button banned by TV censors on *I Dream of Jeanie*.

1994 – Roseanne featured two women engaged in a lesbian kiss.

2004 – during Super Bowl half-time show Janet Jackson had a “wardrobe malfunction” revealing her breast (it was produced by MTV).

Quentin Schultz summarizes TV's appearance message: "It's impossible to miss the point: women are what they look like, not what they accomplish or what they value and believe. Their looks are their essence, for their body determines their identity as well as their image in the minds of family members and especially peers. Without the proper look, identity and intimacy will never be satisfactorily achieved." (Mueller, Understanding Youth Culture, p. 151)

Pornography (statistics from 2004)

- More than 150,000 porn websites growing at more than 200/week.
- New York Times magazine from May 20, 2001 reported that the \$4 billion spent on video pornography is larger than the annual revenue accrued by either the NFL, the NBA, or MLB. People pay more for porn/yr than movie tickets, than all performing arts combined.

How does it affect our thinking, feeling, and acting?

- Is waiting until marriage abnormal? Is a monogamous relationship abnormal? Is a sexual relationship always happy and wonderful?
- Are people objects we use and discard? Does our cultures view of sexuality dehumanize people? Or does it love and serve the person and seek what is best for that person?

Talking with your teenager about sex

- Affirm that sex is good because God made it to be good. It's a natural desire and a good one in the right context.
- Ask them to analyze and evaluate the cultural obsession with sex. (see above)
- Help them understand that sex involves more than a physical act. It bonds people together emotionally. Therefore, pre-marital sex has affects on future relationships.
- Ask them what real love is.
- Warn them of the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Set up best practices and help them recognize ways to avoid temptation and sinful situations.
- Explore how sex outside marriage affects one spiritually. This is key because you want to get to the heart of the matter.

Eph. 4:17-24

<sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

<sup>19</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

<sup>20</sup>You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. <sup>21</sup>Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

**Reminder of our God given role and responsibility:**

To glorify God by leading our children to Christ. We are called to nurture them in the knowledge of Christ's grace and love and teaching them to live obediently to Him. In essence we are called to disciple our children. See: Deut. 6:4-7; Prov. 22:6

Part of the discipling process is to train our children to be Spiritual Warriors. Ephesians 6 makes it crystal clear that there is a spiritual battle taking place that is as real as the physical world.

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

**Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior****1. He will have a heartfelt, internalized fear of God.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Prov. 1:7** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

This means that the fear of God is what motivates the person. Their sole reason for doing what they do "is not because someone is watching, or out of a fear of the consequences, but ultimately because of a deep, worshipful love and reverence for God."(Tripp, p.119)

**2. He will be able to submit to authority.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Our children need to understand that God has placed authorities in our lives for a reason, mainly for our protection and good. Their tendency is to rebel but that is extremely dangerous.

**3. He will be able to separate himself from the wicked.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalms 1:1** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

Your child needs to understand the dangers of hanging out with wicked people. Do we minister and love the wicked? Yes, absolutely. But they are not the crowd we run with everyday and allow to influence our lives.

**4. He will be able to apply Scripture to life situations.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Psalm 119: 9-11** <sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! <sup>11</sup> I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Our kids need to have a thorough knowledge of Scripture that allows them to apply its commands, principles, and perspectives to the many different situations that arise in everyday life.

**5. He needs to be Biblically Self-aware.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Proverbs 20:5** The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Teenagers are very aware of what is going on with everyone else. They don't tend to look inside their hearts. They are very self-conscious about what they wear and how they look on the outside but they rarely take the tour on the inside.

How in the world can I help my kid become a Spiritual Warrior with these characteristics?

- Pray for them, allow the Holy Spirit to work in them.
- Help them understand that loving God comes from their heart not from their actions. Study what the Scriptures teach about "the fear of the Lord" and each one of these characteristics (see Proverbs).
- Look for daily opportunities to discuss these things. Your kids will face situation every single day that will challenge them spiritually. (By the way, so will you.)

"As parents, we need to have a symphonic mentality as we train our children for godly living. We cannot hammer away on one note. We must introduce them to the whole symphony of Biblical wisdom so that they can make Biblically sound decisions. To do that we must know the symphony ourselves, and we must be committed to take the time to talk to our children daily about the principles that apply to their life situations. We need to get away from the quick and easy "do this, don't do that" that we dispense on the fly with little or no discussion or explanation. We need to invite our children to examine and discuss, seeing difficulty and trouble as an opportunity to help them hear a little more of God's symphony of truth and to understand how these notes make sense of life. It is of paramount importance that we do not think *for* our children, but teach *them* how to think about life, employing the symphony of perspectives God has given us in his Word."(Tripp, p. 136-37)

**Recommended Resources:**

*Preparing Your Daughter for Every Woman's Battle: Creative Conversations about Sexual and Emotional Integrity*, Shannon Ethridge and Stephen Arterburn

*Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* by Stephen Arterburn

*Age of Opportunity*, by Paul David Tripp

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### Need for an Accurate Biblical Perspective

<sup>ESV</sup> **Gen. 1:27-28** <sup>27</sup> "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."

<sup>ESV</sup> **Gen 2:25** <sup>25</sup> "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

The problem is that once sin entered into the world our perspective changed.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Gen.3:6-7** <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

The physical bodies that God created are good. We can celebrate the beauty of God's creation. There is a reason why we get aroused when we are with our spouse, we were created that way. Sex in the context of marriage is good and glorifying to God. It's the first command, "be fruitful and multiply". It is not something that we should be ashamed of.

Unfortunately, our culture has distorted and abused what God has created. Remember, we are fighting against spiritual dark forces. Our culture has lied to our kids about sexuality. We need to redeem human sexuality back for the glory of God.

*[What are some lies that our kids are hearing?]*

### Parents need to give our kids strategies to avoid temptation:

- Accountability (family, friends & filters)
- Alternative ideas in relationships, dating & reading materials
- Memorize Scripture
- Run Away

### Adolescence is a Time of Physical Awakening

- Look for signs (what are some signs?)
- You want to be the one who gives them information rather than their friends

*[When have you started to talk to your kids about their sexuality?]*

### Help them Navigate through the Culture

- Dress/Clothes
- Internet
- TV/Movies
- Gender Confusion/Homosexuality
- Try to avoid legalism

*[What discussions have you already had with your kids?]*

### Recommended Resources:

1. *Preparing Your Daughter for Every Woman's Battle: Creative Conversations about Sexual and Emotional Integrity*, Shannon Ethridge and Stephen Arterburn
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