

## ***Launching Young Adults***

After years of saying, "When I grow up, I'm gonna be..." there comes a point in which your children start going through the steps of actually making it happen. Dr. James Dobson calls ages 16 to 26 the "critical decade" as young people transition from childhood to adulthood. We've all heard the phrase "failure to launch" describing young men and women who don't make that transition for one reason or another. Unfortunately, more and more parents are inadvertently keeping their children from growing up by attempting to shield them from the risks and responsibilities that are necessary in order to transition into adulthood. How can you be intentional about successfully launching your older children?

### **STEP ONE: Be a good coach**

As the parent of a teen on the verge of adulthood, you are in the prime of the coaching years. Motivating, encouraging, challenging and advising will be much more effective than attempting to force our beliefs on our children. You can help your son or daughter articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, and remind them of the "basics" they learned during their earlier years, but the time has come for them to truly own their beliefs. Through that process, you can provide a safe environment to wrestle with and even question the values they learned as children. The key to your influence at this point is in maintaining a strong relationship and frequent, open dialogue.

### **STEP TWO: Give perspective amid their big questions**

Making the transition into adulthood, your son or daughter will face big questions like: What kind of work should I do? Where should I live? What should I do with my life? The most important thing you can do during this season is to direct them back to overarching Biblical principles. The last words of King David to his son Solomon (in 1 Chronicles 28:9) provide a model for parents advising emerging adults: *"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever."*

In the midst of the advice parents may offer on setting goals, choosing a job, finding a spouse and so forth, we must be guided by God's principles such as...

- *Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted (Psalm 127:1).*
- *If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it (Luke 9:23-24).*
- *Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so we may grow in wisdom (Psalm 90:12).*
- *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need (Matthew 6:33).*

### **STEP THREE: Give a vision for marriage and family**

Parents today often go to extremes to help their children get ready for college and the workforce, but don't know exactly what they can do when it comes to preparing them for the more important work of marriage and family. While a small minority will be called to life-long celibate service, most are called to marriage and family (Genesis 2:18-24). We sometimes overlook how much marriage and family serve as the organizing structure of life and the prime arena for our spiritual development. Even if the culture discourages you from taking an active role in this transition, you have a vital part to play in helping your children "leave and cleave." Actively living out your Christian faith at home is the foundation, and daily prayer for your child's future spouse and children builds on top of that. But our highly sexualized and anti-marriage culture also makes it essential that you provide guidance and oversight to help your children form strong families as a key emphasis of their launch into adulthood.

## **GOING FURTHER - Resources**

**Recommended Website:** [Boundless.org](http://Boundless.org) webzine provides young adults with a community of mentors and fellow believers throughout the season of transition from high school to starting a family.

**Recommended Books:**

***Life on the Edge*** (by Dr. James Dobson) offers Biblical principles to help young adults face "crucial questions about identity, education, marriage, career, God's will" and more.

***Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*** (by Sharon Daloz Parks) reexamines the twenty-something years and shows how crucial it is to create mentoring environments that recognize, support, challenge, and inspire the promise of young adults live.

***Listening to God in Times of Choice: The Art of Discerning God's Will*** (by Gordon T. Smith) acknowledges that all Christians yearn to live at the center of God's will, but the advice we often get conflicts. Some tell us to look for the one perfect plan. Others tell us to develop wisdom to make wise choices. This author suggests that we develop discernment through which we can understand God's will, not just in times of crisis, but throughout our daily lives.

***GOING FURTHER – Maranatha Support***

**Faith Path: Launch (COMING FALL 2018)**

This free kit is available for download or pick-up from the Faith@Home Resource Center. It includes a special video and other tools to help you launch your young adult as they leave the nest.

Having a healthy community within which to explore the big questions of this stage of life and with whom you can grow spiritually is vitally important.

**Intersect: A Place for Young Adults** is a Ministry for anyone in their 20-30's. To get connected contact Matthew Jarocki (715) 650-7172 or Gabe Van Natta (715) 651-3075.

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