

Adolescence--Thoughts from a Christian, family oriented psychologist

- Concept of self-fulfilling prophecy and viewing adolescence as a time of "stress and storm" (G. Stanley Hall, 1904)
 - Do we inadvertently make the time of development around adolescence worse by approaching it as something to endure rather than merely an extended transition?
 - might be better served by viewing adolescents as a time of helping to develop the patterns and rhythms of healthy, Christ-centered adult-like identity
- Conventional wisdom that adolescent brains are still developing--still holds water, but some research has challenged: We commonly say that adolescent brains are still developing (true), however, some research (G. Berns, Emory University, 2009) suggests that high risk-taking adolescents may have greater density of developed brain (white matter and myelination) than low risk-taking adolescents [as reported by J. Cloud in Time Magazine, Sept. 2, 2009]
 - take away? Even if there is a connection to trying out adult-like, risky behaviors, and a potential consequence of trying adult-like behaviors is greater brain-development, that does not necessarily include element of wisdom and having context for when the behavior is actually appropriate.
 - James 1:5 - if any of you lacks wisdom...ask
- How to maximize resiliency during adolescence? As a parent, helping your adolescent encounter adversity in healthy, appropriate ways, and helping them navigate stresses is advisable to help them build resiliency. Since protecting kids from all outside adversity is an exhaustive and unattainable goal, helping them prepare and navigate adversity is more likely to help them incorporate a sense of resiliency in their own lives. Models of resiliency include stress as a prerequisite. [book: J.A. Laser & N. Nicotera (2011) Working with Adolescents: A guide for practitioners. Guilford Press]
 - Hebrews 10:36 -persevere to encounter God's promises.
 - James 1:2-4 - consider it joy to face trials...trials produce perseverance...so that you may mature
- What else can you do?
 - Set a good example...take care of your marriages/relationships. The tone of your household is seen and is likely to be acted upon by those who are modeling their lives after you.

Resources:

- www.christianfamilyinstitute.com - sign up for our newsletter
- Laser & Nicotera (2011). Working with Adolescents (referenced above)
- J. Smetana (2011). Adolescents, families and social development: How teens construct their worlds. Wiley-Blackwell
- J. McDowell & B. Hostetler (1996). Josh McDowell's Handbook on Counseling Youth. Thomas Nelson



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