

Teaching Teens to Manage Their Time



"The bad news is that you can't get back those hours your family has wasted, but the good news is that God has given you more hours to live!"

The most valuable commodity God has given us is time. We only have a certain amount of it on this earth, and what we do with our time says a lot about what we find most important. Think about that for a minute and then answer this question, "What do you spend the majority of your time doing?" Another important question would be, "What is your teen spending the majority of his/her time doing?" These sobering questions remind every parent that every moment in your family's life is worth fighting for. The bad news is that you can't get back those hours your family has wasted, but the good news is that God has given you more hours to live! To make the most of every moment, consider the following when fighting for time with your family. First, you must start with the truth. Asking the questions above is a great starting point in determining if you should change or continue what you are doing. This exercise for your family is NOT intended to be a "pity party". It is simply a way to deal with reality. Once you have the truth staring you in the face, then you can move forward with a plan. Next, figure out how you want to spend your time and help your teen make a plan as well. You definitely need to give them some control, but remind them, for example, spending all their time playing video games is not the best idea. Take some time to coach your teen in figuring out what activities could be eliminated, changed, or increased that would make the most of his/her time. Then, you must teach and model a simple two letter word, "no". Not many people have mastered using the word "no" because it's so much easier to say "yes". But, how many "yes's" have caused you to live a downward spiral of stress and fatigue? One good thing about having a plan is that it will greatly increase your chances of saying "no". You know what is most important because you know what you and your family should be doing. Solomon figured out that time is precious after he had wasted many of his years. At the end of his life, the one thing he figured out was this, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV)

Do you think your teen's schedule is out of control? Here are some signs to help determine if your teen is on the verge of burnout:

1. Your teenager is acting depressed. He doesn't want to do anything, he has lost interest in things he likes to do, and he has decreased attention or effectiveness when doing things.
2. Your teenager is feeling some anxiety for no known reason or he is acting over anxious. He unable to relax, is not sleeping well, having nightmares, restless, etc.
3. Your teenager is suffering from insomnia. He is unable to get to sleep at night or he wakes up and is unable to go back to sleep.
4. Your teenager is either overeating or under eating, as both are a response to being stressed.
5. Your teenager is giving in to impulse behavior, more than normal, and is showing signs of emotional instability, more than normal.
6. Your teenager is experiencing neck or back pain.

(parentingteens.about.com)

Pulse

Here are some interesting thoughts on teens and how their time is spent:

Students 12 to 17 years old were asked, "What activities do you regularly spend time doing?" (top five answers)

- 74% - Play sports
- 64% - Exercise
- 56% - Play video games
- 55% - Read a book
- 53% - Go to the mall

(teenage research unlimited)



The Parent POV

(point of view)

Have you ever really thought about how your teen spends their time? For that matter, have you ever thought about how you spend your time? Is your family spending time on things that last? Here are some questions to help your family make the most of your time.

1. If you could be doing anything with your time right now, what would it be? Why?
2. What did Jesus do with his time? (Don't accept the "churchy" answer...really get your family to think!)
3. Make a list of the things you do in a day. Rank each activity based on how much you like doing it. Share with the family your results.
4. On your list, what activities are insignificant and what activities are meaningful? On your ranking, where do the wasteful and important activities fall?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will help your teen realize that each second is precious, and that they will use the time they have wisely.
2. God will protect your teen from laziness and procrastination.
3. God will allow you to set the example for your family on how to spend time.
4. The time that you spend with your family this month will be fruitful, encouraging, uplifting, purposeful, and memorable.

Verse of the month

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV)

It's very interesting that Paul reminds us not only to be careful, but to be VERY careful in how we spend our time. We have one life to live, and the way we live our life is obviously very important to God. It is so easy to float through a day without accomplishing much at all. That is exactly what the enemy wants us to do. If we are not very careful in the way we live, our activities become unwise, and we waste valuable opportunities to build God's Kingdom. To make the most of every opportunity, we must start our day asking God to help us accomplish His plan, not our plan. Ask God to help you stay focused on the important assignments He has given you, giving much attention to your personal relationship with Christ and to your family. Yes, the days are evil, but we serve a God who has overcome the world! Go out and make the most of every opportunity today.



Did you know...

- Adults and teens will spend nearly five months (3,518 hours) next year watching television, surfing the Internet, reading daily newspapers, and listening to personal music devices. (census.gov)
- The average American high school student spends five hours on homework per week - that's the daily amount in most high-achieving nations and less than one-tenth of the approximately 60 hours per week spent outside of school, apart from sleeping and eating. (usaweekend.com)
- 69% of teens say they hang out/spend most of their time with a group of friends while only 8% of teens say they hang out/spend most of their time with family. (horatioalger.com)



Music alternative

Rebecca St. James is a multiple Dove Award winner, a Grammy winner, named six-time "Favorite Female Artist" in CCM Magazine, and "Best Female Artist of 2006" by Christianitytoday.com. In April 2006 she won yet another Dove Award for her participation in the "Special Event Album of the Year" for her dramatically charged song, "Lion", used in the movie "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe." Along her path to success, she has had 17 top ten singles, nine of which have reached the number one spot on the charts. So far in 2007, her groundbreaking project, "Pray", has reached RIAA gold record status. (rsjames.com)

trends

What is your must have gift for the holidays?

Money – 32%
Other – 19%
Clothes – 15%
Electronics – 10%
CD/DVD – 9%
Books – 9%
Jewelry – 6%

(teenfx.com)

musicspotlight



Albums:

"Reminder" - 5/2007
"Let it Die" - 5/2004
"Monarch" (Lay Down Your Jeweled Head) - 9/1999

Background: Feist was born Leslie Feist in Calgary in the mid 70's. She got her start playing in a high school punk band called Placebo. The group won a contest and played their first gig opening for the Ramones, all while Feist continued perfecting her rock ways. During this time she strained her voice so much, she was told she would never sing again. In 1998 she moved to Toronto to seek medical assistance with her voice. While there she bought a guitar to temporarily replace her voice. One year later she was playing guitar for By Divine Right. Though touring with the group, she still managed to self-release her debut solo album. In 2002, Feist collaborated with Peaches, and the result was critical success among Indie crowds and a JUNO Award for Alternative Album of the Year.

What parents should know: Feist's music is very poetic in nature. Most of her songs deal with relationships, heartbreak, self reliance, and remaining strong through it all.

What Feist has to say: "Music is now an isolating experience—in a great way. You have your iPod and your really good headphones, and you go into your music, voyage into your own choice." (popmatters.com) **Q:** How do you escape from the world around you? How did Jesus escape from the world around him?



filmwatch

Make sure you know the new movie releases targeting teens.

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
Enchanted	PG	For some scary images and mild innuendo	Comedy	Amy Adams, Patrick Dempsey, James Marsden
Fred Claus	PG	For mild language and some rude humor	Comedy	Vince Vaughn, Paul Giamatti
Bee Movie	PG	For mild suggestive humor	Animated Comedy	Jerry Seinfeld, Renee Zellweger, Matthew Broderick