

# Teens-2-Pray

## **How do you feel about your parents, figures of authority, and elders?**

These days confusion exists in the minds of young people regarding how they should behave towards their parents, those in authority, and those older than they. American movies and media pronouncements regarding what is considered 'acceptable' in society, is confusing and causes pain and discontentment. There is an emphasis and justification of self-emancipation and self-actualization in the widest possible sense of the term.

Look at the following unchangeable Biblical principles for this generation of young people. They will set you free, give you self-respect as well as respect.

### **Recognize authority:**

There are various forms of authority: the law, your parents, authority figures in school etc. These figures of authority do not exist to destroy, but rather to protect. Once you grasp that their role is to protect you and give you guidance, even if you do not agree totally with the method employed, you will find authority easier to accept. Ask the Lord to show you His heart. Look at how He responded to His parents when they corrected Him.

### **Respect those older than yourself:**

Proverbs makes it clear that we are to treat those older than ourselves with respect. It is wonderful to experience how older people respond to you when you treat them with respect: allowing them to pass first into a room; allowing them to talk before you do; asking them questions, rather than giving them brisk answers. In Western culture, those younger greet first. In other cultures, the older person greets first.

### **Respect the cultural protocol of your ethnic group and the community surrounding you:**

Think about Proverbs 20:29: The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendour of old men is their grey head. Read Leviticus 19:32 also: You shall rise before the grey headed and honour the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.

### **Respect your parents.**

Children who respect their parents always 'win'. God shows us clearly in the Ten Commandments that He expects children to honour their parents. (Exodus 20:12). This is the only one of the Ten Commandments that has a promise attached: those who do will have long life. (Proverbs 3:1-2). This is the only one of the Ten Commandments that has a promise attached. There may be many things that your parents do wrong, but make the choice to respect them, even in our thoughts, despite their wrong-doing (Proverbs 4:23), as this brings God's blessing into your life. Ask the Lord to show you how He sees your parents. Find out a little about how your grandparents treated them as children. All these things lead to why they treat you the way they do, and you may treat your children the same way one day. Thinking about the situation in this way will make you more gracious towards your parents.

**Allow your parents to make mistakes; you do!** They are still human, with weaknesses. As you are gracious towards yourself when you sin, be gracious towards them when they also fall. Proverbs 3:7 warns us not to be wise in our own eyes. Be honest and speak openly with your

parents in a calm way about the things that bother you. You will be surprised how they react to you opening your heart to them. Don't forget to thank them for the times when you know they have made an effort or done something to your advantage.

Listen carefully to their response. They have experienced many things in life already and you will learn from them if you listen and allow yourself to. Compare their teaching with the Word and you will see that much of their instruction has a Biblical basis. Proverbs 1:8-9 tells us: *"My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck."* Proverbs 10:8 also tells us that the wise in heart will receive commands. You may with the right attitude ask your parents why they give you a certain command. Your parents may not give you a reason every time, but on most occasions they will give you the reason for the decisions they have taken. This will give you insight into how they feel about things, and teach you how to make your own important decisions.

**Be humble.** You do not know everything, even if you think you do! You probably feel no one can teach you anything. Most people between the ages of 14 and 20 feel this way, I did. But when I got to about 25 I realized that I didn't actually know as much as I thought I did! In fact, the older I got, the more I realized how little I knew! It is not easy to have a good relationship with someone who is full of pride - often they are shunned by those around them because of their self-righteousness. God despises the proud, but someone who is humble will experience His closeness and favour. Ask the Lord to help you to think before you speak, as you would have others do for you. Once something is said, it is impossible to withdraw it.

I have never seen a young person's life destroyed when living according to these principles, nor have I witnessed them being unhappy, having less self-respect or being rejected by others. In contrast, living in this way brings emotional and spiritual freedom!

Put these six principles to the test in your own life: Read through each of these points prayerfully. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what needs to change in your life. A practical tip for young people is to read through Proverbs and see what you can apply from this book to your own life. You will be spared much confusion and pain through the application thereof, and will live in freedom before God, compelling the respect of those around you.