

Milestone Five: Preparing for Adulthood

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Becoming an adult is a welcome, yet daunting task for most teenagers. The newfound freedom and relaxed structure leads to excitement as students embrace a new world. What students often don't see is the responsibility associated with this new freedom. For every good decision to be made, an equally negative one can result in life-altering consequences.

Parents have an amazing responsibility to prepare their son or daughter to embrace growing up from all perspectives. The Milestone Path places this time of transition to occur at sixteen. Most students will get their driver's license and keys to either their car or a shared vehicle. They will have an unprecedented amount of freedom. Yet before engaging this new freedom, parents must prepare their adolescent to see this freedom through God's heart.

Discussion: What would you say are your biggest challenges right now with your 10th grader? What questions about Preparing for Adulthood do you have? Where do you need the most help?

Remember Psalm 127

*"Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.
² It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,*

*eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.*
³ *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.*
⁴ *Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.*
⁵ *Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate."*

A Great Resource! <http://wearesoma.com/resources/living-legacy/>

Identity in Christ

Your son or daughter's foundation in life is built on his or her identity, perceived or otherwise. Building truth into their lives and reinforcing their true identity in Christ can create a solid foundation to endure the pressures and storms of life. **Matthew 3 & 4 speaks to our Identity in Christ!**

- *Made in His Image...Ephesians 4:20-24* Paul is encouraging the Ephesians to remember God made them in His likeness. They are incredibly precious and valuable to God no matter how he or she may feel about herself at any one moment.
- *Created with Purpose...Jeremiah 29:11* God spoke these words to Jeremiah reassuring him that a plan existed for his life. God created your son or daughter with a purpose much greater than his or her own. He created them (and us) for His glory and good.
- *Known and Loved...Psalm 139:1-18* God's intimate and personal knowledge of every person is overwhelming, yet encouraging.
- *Loved to Death...John 3:16* As God's people, God saw that we were worth dying for.
- *Called to a Full Life...John 10:10* Your son and daughters are called to have an abundant life. This kind of life is only found in relationship to God. Following Jesus is the only way to live a life of purpose and abundance.

- *Forgiven...Romans 6:17-18, Romans 8:1-2* Every person messes up and every person sins against God. However, once a person receives Christ, sin no longer controls his or her life, but he or she becomes a slave to righteousness and free from sin. This doesn't mean he or she won't mess up again but that forgiveness now reigns instead of condemnation.

Teenagers will search for their identity often throughout the middle school and high school years. It is crucial to help them understand and ask the question, "Whose am I?" instead of just, "Who am I?" Remind them often they are loved as a child of God and they are loved as your child.

The Biblical Roles of Men and Women

Understanding the Biblical characteristics and roles of men and women will help teenagers grasp God's heart for them. Influences from all areas of life constantly beg for your teenager's attention. Many will attempt to redefine manhood and womanhood. What examples of this do you see in culture today?

- The feminization of men
- The lie that men and women are the same
- Women need to dress to attract men's attention
- Men lusting after women is normal and should be expected
- Happiness and the accumulation of stuff is deserved and a valid life goal
- Lying and cheating is appropriate if the end result is "good"

Throughout Scripture, God defines what a man and woman should look like. Leading your son or daughter well through this phase is critical to developing a Biblical worldview. Learning to evaluate everything through the lens of Scripture will enable your son or daughter to see through lies they will encounter each day.

What is a man?

- Lover of God. (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37)
- Lover of Others. (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:38)
- Loyal (Hosea 6:6)
- A Servant Leader (Matthew 20:26-27)
- Kind (Ephesians 4:32)
- Humble (Philippians 2:3)

- Honest (Ephesians 4:35)
- Self-Disciplined (1 Timothy 4:7-8)
- Excellence (1Corinthians 9:24)
- Integrity (Proverbs 10:9)
- Perseverance (Galatians 6:9)

What is the Biblical Role of a Man?

"Then God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded him saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

From one of the earliest passages of Scripture, God's role for man:

1. Obedience to God's will (A will to obey)
2. Work the ground (A work to do)
3. Love his wife (A woman to love)

Jesus modeled these characteristics and these roles perfectly:

1. A Will to Obey (John 5:30)
2. A Work to Do (John 17:3-5)
3. A Woman to Love (Revelation 21:9)

Jesus modeled each of these to the point of death...

Discussion: How do you model this?

Finding Biblical Balance

Strength & Power

Loyalty
Purity
Self-Discipline
Excellence
Integrity
Perseverance

Gentleness & Tenderness

Lover of God
Lover of Others
Servant Leadership
Kindness
Humility
Honesty

Four Principles of Biblical Manhood in an unbiblical world...

1. ***Reject Passivity*** – Proverbs 28:1
2. ***Accept Responsibility*** – Luke 12:48b
3. ***Lead Courageously*** – Deuteronomy 3:6
4. ***Expect the Greater Reward*** – Revelation 22:12-13

The important key here is to understand biblically what Manhood truly is and articulate that in a way to your son that communicates and motivates him well.

What is a woman?

Lover of God (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37)

Lover of Others (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:38)

Proverbs 31

- Noble (10, 25)
- Respected (28)
- Diligent (13)
- Early Riser (15)
- Provider (14)
- Steward (15-16)
- Wise (16, 26)
- Strong (25)
- Persistent (19, 27)
- Resourceful (18, 21-22)
- Hospitable (20)
- Confident (18)
- Happy (25)
- Faithful (27, 30)
- Blessed (28-31)

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" Proverbs 4:23

Discussion: Who are some examples of godly, Biblical women? How do you model this?

What is the Biblical Role of a Woman?

A man is the spiritual *leader* of the home.

A woman is the spiritual *heart* of the home.

- **Through relationships:**

- God
- Marriage
- Family
- Friends

- **Through mission:**

- Church
- Community
- Finding Balance

- **Through reflection:**

- Knowing Who She Is
- Walking the Talk

How do I teach my son or daughter to embrace these roles?

Faith Talks: At this busy stage of life, it is tempting to stop having faith talks because of the challenge of multiple individual schedules and the reality that your child is becoming an adult. However, weekly intentional times of conversation around the Scriptures couldn't be more important through this time. Committing to family Faith Talks will model the importance of family above individual schedules and busyness of life. It will also model the importance of staying connected to God and His Word when life is crazy.

God Moments: Spend time with your children. The time you spend will supply ample opportunities to speak into your child's life. Capitalizing on God Moments will give you the opportunity to informally guide them through the pitfalls of life. Years from now, you will probably be the one they still call for advice and a fresh perspective.

Modeling: During this stage, your son or daughter will watch you intently to see if you are living out your own teaching. They will catch your behavior, responses and priorities. Model well.

Discussion: What are some of the best practices you've found for staying connected to your son/daughter? What has helped keep the lines of communication open? What has hurt that?

Spiritual Gifts and Service

As a child progresses toward becoming an adult, it becomes more and more obvious of the certain ways God has wired them. Children will share many attributes of their parents but also develop characteristics and passions that are unique. Parents have an important responsibility to help their kids discover how God has wired them.

Spiritual Gifts: Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit when a person becomes a Christian. They are used to build up the church (body of Christ). A person will have one or more spiritual gifts to be used in the church.

Student Life Groups: During your child's 9th grade year, he or she discussed Spiritual Gifts intently. This is a great time to follow up and help guide the discussion with your child. They are wired and gifted uniquely to honor God with their lives.

Additional Resources: Kingsland provides additional resources to help guide your child to understand how God has gifted them.

Talents and Abilities: God wires every person uniquely. Becoming a student of your child will help you understand how God has made him or her and what talents and abilities they possess. Helping them discover talents and abilities will help them learn to serve in ways that challenge and encourage them according to the strengths God has given them.

Passions: Talk to your son or daughter about passions he or she may have. These could range drastically and change throughout adolescent and young adult years. Help them understand and evaluate their passions in light of Scripture. God can use a God-given passion in a child's life to accomplish great things.

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:7

Spiritual gifts are always given to build up the body of Christ. Discovering one's gift can be exciting but be cautious to help your son or daughter understand that it isn't about him or her. Gifts are given to serve others and that will indirectly bless them with true meaning, purpose and fulfillment.

Discussion: What are your teen's spiritual gifts? Talents? Passions and desires? Have you told them what you see? How might you go about sharing what you see in them?

Serve Together

One of the most powerful opportunities parents have is to expose their children to serving together as a family. Take opportunities often to serve others as a family and encourage your child to look out for the interests of others always.

Kingsland Opportunities:

- Caring for Katy
- Community Group Mission Initiatives
- National and International Mission Trips
- Katy Christian Ministries, Clothed by Faith, Etc.

As a result, your son or daughter will develop a love for serving others that he or she will pass down to future generations.

Rite of Passage Ceremony

The *Rite of Passage Ceremony* will hopefully be one of the most memorable experiences of your son or daughter's life. It is the moment when you visually begin to release them to adulthood.

Kingsland recommends this at age 16 but you must decide when your child is ready. The ceremony should require sacrifice on your part as parents and should be a meaningful event.

Why celebrate a Rite of Passage?

1. Remembrance – a memory of commitment
2. Reminder – a reminder of commitment
3. Reference – accountability of commitment

Preparation – The most important aspect of the Rite of Passage Ceremony is the years of preparation that will go into your son or daughter. The ceremony is culmination of years of investment.

Without the investment, the ceremony is merely a ceremony. With years of pouring into your son or daughter, a Rite of Passage becomes an ownership event. Your child will now own his or her faith and

take responsibility for their actions. They will still have a couple of years at home but the change will progress rapidly.

How do you prepare:

- Consistent weekly investment of Truth into your son or daughter (Faith Talks and God Moments, Celebrating the Milestones and Walking the Path)
- Daily praying as a couple and individually for your child
- Daily praying with your child
- Creating family moments (meals, vacations, days away)
- Family Traditions
- Involvement in your child's life (sports, school, shopping, fishing, etc)
- Communicating every day

Planning the Event

Step 1: Choose a date, place and nature of the event (formal, one gender only).

Step 2: Formulate a guest list – those who have invested in your child through prayer, discipleship, etc.

Step 3: Send invitations.

Step 4: Prepare an agenda

- What will happen?
- Expectations of your son or daughter – Communicate to your son or daughter what he or she will be required to know and/or say.
- The Charge – Charge your son or daughter to become a man or woman of God.
- Gift Presentation – Present your son or daughter with a meaningful gift to remember the occasion.
- The Blessing – Write a blessing to your child concerning his or her passage to adulthood. Comment on the journey you've been on together and the hope of great days ahead.

Step 5: Memory Tokens/Experience for Guests

Characteristics of a *Rite of Passage* Ceremony:

- Meaningful
- Sacrificial
- Well Planned
- Touted

- Priority
- Memorable

The Preparing for Adulthood Milestone will be an entry into adulthood. Prepare your teen to embrace the world of freedom and responsibility with a Biblical worldview and foundation.

Examples of Blessings and a Prayer for our Kids using Scripture:

- “(Name of child), may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26
- “(Name of child), may the Lord keep you from all harm as you trust in Him. May he watch over your life, your coming and your going, both now and forevermore.” Psalm 121:7-8
- (Name of child), God, the Father is constantly transforming you into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. I can see his characteristics developing in you in these ways . . . (Verbalize the characteristics you see). (Name of child), may you always reflect the Lord’s glory. I believe you will.” 2 Corinthians 3:18
- “For what is my hope, my joy, and my crown in which I will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you, (name of child)? (Name of child), indeed, you are my glory and joy.” 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
- “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of God, the Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (Name of child), you are precious and worth more than many sparrows. May you never be afraid. God will always care for you.” Matthew 10:29-31
- “May God make all grace abound to you, (name of child), so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

Prayer Example:

Father, in this world, we will have struggles, but we take courage because you have overcome the world. Where inappropriate and immature behaviors are all around us, it can be more difficult than ever for us to remain focused on You. But for Your children, God, for those who choose You, there is no other choice but to live a life devoted to You. We want our desires and efforts to remain pure lead to a life of abundance and fulfillment serving You!

Help us all to keep the commitments that we have made to You. Help (name of child) to become the (man/woman) that you desire for him/her to be. Lord, forgive our family when we fall short in our pursuit to honor You. Help us to support, forgive and encourage one another to seek after Jesus no matter what. Give us the strength today and let us always remember that the reward for following You will be well worth it.

Amen.

Example Invitation

Dear Joe,

_____ turns **16** on October 24th!

We are going to have a "Rite of Passage" ceremony on- **Friday, Oct 27th from 6-8pm** for him and would love for you to participate as one of the important mentors in _____ life.

Ssshhh...it is a surprise!

I am asking a small select group of men in _____ life to share words of wisdom, influential moments, and/or positive insight/words you have observed about _____ and in your own life.

You can write this down, share a gift, or make it simple- by verbalizing what you believe _____ should know about life and the **importance of "becoming a man"** with God's intentions.

You can share words you wish you would have heard when YOU turned 16 or whatever speaks to your heart to share.

Possible Topics could include- family, faith, peer pressure, college years, dating, relationships, career, etc.

On the surface _____ seems like he has it all figured out but he struggles like every teenager as he tries to find his way and place in the world. We believe that intimate and brief discussions with influential men in his life will help him navigate the near future, set his life on a course for success and something he will cherish forever!

Following the "Rite of Passage" share time with _____, we will have dinner and a video slideshow about his life.

Of course, you are invited to stay for the whole event or leave after sharing with _____, if you are not able to stay long.

Please let me know if you will be able to participate in this special moment in _____ life.

If you are not able to attend, would you be willing to write _____ a letter with words of wisdom and encouragement for him?

Thank you for the positive influence you have been and will continue to be in _____ life!

With our sincere gratefulness for your positive influence in our son's life,