

At Zion BP's Church Camp in June 08, a forum on "Parent-Youth Relationships: Are they necessarily stormy?" was held. 3 separate sessions were held altogether. At each session each group of parents and youth separately answered 4 questions put to them. They then identified the 2 most important messages that they wish to convey to the other group. The parents and youths after that came together to hear what the other had to say and to ask clarifying questions.

The inputs from these 3 separate sessions have been summarized to take out the duplication and edited to bring clarity to the points raised. We have tried to group similar remarks together for you to see where the "gaps" exists.

It is our hope that these forthright comments that each group made will be the starting point to building better understanding and relationships in the family.

**Q 1: What do you really want to say that you have not been able to say?**

Parent (to youth)

Youth (to parent)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I love you</li> <li>• I am sorry</li> <li>• We are not perfect. Forgive us if we are wrong</li> <li>• I want you to grow up loving the Lord</li> <li>• I care how you are doing spiritually</li> <li>• Be thankful to God for everything</li> <li>• I really like to know what you are thinking</li> <li>• I really want the best for you</li> <li>• I don't mean to nag ....</li> <li>• Take time to explain to me what you want to do if you want me to understand</li> <li>• Your body language and attitude hurt me more than what you say</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I love you (really!)</li> <li>• I am sorry</li> <li>• Practice what you preach</li> <li>• Stop quarrelling (in front of me)</li> <li>• Don't stay angry over small things</li> <li>• You didn't keep the promise that you made</li> <li>• Trust me. I am old enough to make my decisions</li> <li>• Affirm me (even when I fail)</li> <li>• You are over protective</li> <li>• Do correct me but don't nag</li> <li>• You don't always have the right answers</li> <li>• Your life is not the only one that is difficult</li> <li>• Can I have your advice on this?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

- I miss you
- Don't spend so much time on the computer
- Assume responsibility for what you do
- Please share with me your problems
- Let's go on vacation together
- Stop treating me like a child

**Q 2: What would you like most to hear them say to you?**

Parent (from youth)

Youth (from parent)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I love you</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am proud of you!</li> <li>• Well done!</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I appreciate you</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am sorry</li> <li>• You are old enough to make your own decisions</li> <li>• Go ahead and do it. I have faith in you</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I love God very much</li> <li>• I have done my Quiet Time</li> <li>• Thank you for teaching me God's way</li> <li>• I am praying for you</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you wish to pray about this matter together?</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want to do my best</li> <li>• I'll try</li> <li>• I should have listened to you</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have done your best, that's enough for me</li> <li>• It's OK to fail sometimes</li> </ul>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, Dad/Mum</li> <li>• Thank you</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's go on vacation together</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dad/Mum, can I help you?</li> <li>• Can I help you with the household chores?</li> <li>• How are you today?</li> <li>• May I ask for your advice?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You look troubled. Can I help?</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am going to play less computer games</li> <li>• I am going out to exercise</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am going to raise your allowance</li> <li>• No studying today</li> </ul>  |

**Q 3: What DON'T you ever want to hear them say to you?**

Parent (from youth)

- I hate you
- I hate this family
- I hate God
- I don't believe in God
- I think I am pregnant
- I think my girlfriend is pregnant
- I don't need your advice
- I don't want to be like you
- You are biased
- You don't understand me
- Don't compare
- Don't say bad about my friends
- Leave me alone (slams door to room after that)
- Unspoken gestures (roll eyes, show exasperation)
- Saying nothing when talked to (the silent treatment)

Youth (from parent)

- I am ashamed of you
- You are hopeless/stupid/loser/an embarrassment....
- I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore
- You are no child of mine
- You are not my real child
- I wish you were never born
- I am dying
- We are your parents. We know what we are doing
- Why can't you do better in your exams?
- You always.../ you never...
- You are going to fail
- Why can't you be like ... (names another youth)
- You are banned from the computer

**Q 4: What can they do to improve their relationship with you?**

Parent (to youth)

- Vocalize your thoughts; we can't read your mind!

Youth (to parent)

- Don't jump to conclusions too quickly
- Be open to my ideas

- Share with us your thoughts about God and life
- Show in concrete manner your love (hugs, remember birthdays etc)
- Spend time together as a family
- Introduce your friends to us
- Be more polite, courteous and respectful
- Listen
- Respect rules laid down
- Admit when making mistakes and be humble enough to change
- Listen when I am talking
- Stop quarreling
- Lead by your walk, not your talk
- Encourage me more; put me down less
- Take a genuine interest in my life
- Do things that we have in common
- Attend the activities I am involved in
- Tell me more about your life
- Talk to me without judging
- Relax!
- Stop nagging me on things I should do
- Be more sympathetic
- Show concern