

CA 19 EMAW 19 WHO'S IN CONTROL?

Music Theme

FOSTER: They sat silently in the room. The mom dabbed a tear from her eye with a tissue and stared out the window. A thousand thoughts flooded the dad's brain.

"How could this have happened?"

"Is this my fault?"

"How did life in our home spiral out of control so quickly?"

"Were we wrong to have rules?"

A nurse interrupted their private thoughts.

"The exam is done. You can go back in now. Your daughter's contractions are just 5 minutes apart. You'll be grandparents soon,"

"Grandparents" he thought. "We're about to become grandparents... of a baby with no father and our 17 year-old daughter."

Welcome to Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and Kent Darcie is with me. Raising teenagers can be challenging under the best of circumstances. Today we will discuss the difference between trying to control teenager's lives and training them to have meaningful lives. Whether we control or train can have a large impact on the way our teenagers approach life, so we'll discuss this important topic when we return to Champions Arise.

Music theme out

FOSTER: Kent, I doubt there's a parent listening where fear doesn't strike their heart at the thought of their 17 year old daughter getting pregnant like I shared in the opening.

KENT: A daughter being pregnant and unmarried is a lingering fear many parent's carry with them. And I think one of the reasons it creates fear—and there's a lot of reasons—but one of the reasons is because it's an area we really don't have control over.

FOSTER: We really don't, and we don't like that.

KENT: No. And we're talking about daughters getting pregnant, but it could be our son getting his teenage girlfriend pregnant, or our teens spending time with the wrong crowd. Or abusing drugs or getting drunk. There is a long list of things, but all of these have one thing in common, parents often feel they have no control. And, like you said Foster, parents, but I would add men in particular, don't like being out of control. So to avoid the potential of these type of situations, we try to control the teenager so they **won't do** any of these terrible things. When really the biblical way is to train them.

FOSTER: Control, at least for guys, feels better.

KENT: True. And I love thinking I have control, but controlling, and when I say controlling I'm referring to out-of-balance controlling—over-controlling, that type of control in parenting, and particularly parenting teens, may **seem** like it's working in the short-term, but it can have disastrous results in the long term. An example is the story you told at the beginning of the program. That was based on a true story. And the details behind the story are worth noting. The dad had forbidden his daughter to date until she was 16. And the indication is that he didn't use the biblical principles of raising children we talked about in our last program.

FOSTER: And if any of our listeners would like to hear that program you can listen to it at our website championsarise.org. It was called "Turning Children's Hearts to their Fathers."

KENT: Yes, it would be very helpful to listen to that program. But the dad we're talking about had a posture of, "I'm the boss and I say you can't date until you're 16." And this program is not about the ages kids should date. That's between God, you, your wife, and your teenagers. But his rule was no dating until you're 16 years old. There was no training or discussion as to why. And the parents didn't teach the daughter wise principles to live by. The focus was the rule.

FOSTER: And I'd guess the daughter wasn't happy with this rule.

KENT: She felt the rule was totally unfair. She was embarrassed when her friends asked her why she couldn't date. She felt like her Dad didn't trust her. When she'd try to discuss how she felt with him, the talk always ended in angry words and tears.

The dad felt that his leadership was being challenged. From his perspective, he was just trying to protect his daughter. But communication between them just stopped.

The mom noticed that the daughter felt humiliated at being the only one who couldn't date, but deep resentment was building in her that neither of the parents saw.

FOSTER: And someday she was going to turn 16.

KENT: She did and the rule ended. And because there was no training or perspective or quality communication in the parent-child relationship, when the rule was gone, so was she.

The daughter had a date almost every night. And now that she could drive, the dates took place after school, or she'd meet the guy somewhere else. She was almost never home, and the parents had no idea who she was with. When her parents did meet a boyfriend, these were not the type of guys they wanted their daughter to be with.

FOSTER: Were the parents communicating with her?

KENT: If you call fights over how late she stayed out and who she was with, communication. Sometimes she'd stay out all night. So the parents were very concerned because that type of behavior is going to produce consequences. The daughter's **consequence** was getting pregnant at 17.

FOSTER: Now Kent, you're not saying that the parents were wrong to have rules.

KENT: Oh, no. Rules are very important. But they must be applied biblically, and we looked at that last week, but I think it's important to do a brief review.

FOSTER: But before you do that, if you joined us late, this is Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. We're discussing the problem of *trying to control* teenagers instead of *training* teenagers to have a meaningful life. Kent, you were going to give a brief overview of the three biblical principles we discussed on our program last week.

KENT: These come from the book "Every Man a Warrior" by Lonnie Berger.

- First, "*It's the father's God-given responsibility to train his children.*" This principle is based on Ephesians 6 verse 4. So Foster, earlier you asked if it was ok for the parents to have rules. Rules are a part of training because they are important for our well-being.
- The second biblical principle we discussed last week was "*Children get their self-image from what they believe Dad thinks about them.*"
Children get their self-image from what they believe Dad thinks about them.
When we try to control our kids. And again, when I say control, I'm not referring to making sure your kids behave at the store, I'm talking about the big, life-impacting issues. When we try to control our kids, this is what we're saying:
 - You don't know how to think; therefore I must do the thinking for you
 - I don't believe you have what it takes to make good decisions or be successful.
 - You are not responsible or worthy of my trust.

FOSTER: None of those statements sound good for molding their self-image.

KENT: It's worse than that. I read a phrase recently that talks about this. It said "Trying to control our teenagers imprisons them in permanent adolescence, destroys their self-esteem, builds resentment, and keeps them from maturing as they should." Ephesians 6:4 basically says the same thing. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord." [NLT]
There's two things here. "Don't provoke your children" –that's what controlling does. "But bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord." That is what biblical training does.

FOSTER: So how do we train vs control our kids? Let's be real here. Teenagers can be a handful and there is a natural tendency, particularly for men, to want to control the situation.

KENT: Before I answer that question, I want to mention something. Champions Arise is by men, for men. So our focus in these programs is identifying and equipping men to do what God calls them to do. I say that because we recognize that parenting is a team effort. We want a mom and dad working together. However, there is a biblical burden on the father to take the lead. And in the case of parenting, that leading includes setting a Christ-focused example. And too often men aren't doing that. So if I sound like I'm focusing on men, I am, but it's in the context of couple's parenting together in a biblical way. So... what was your question again? I'm sorry

FOSTER: I'm glad you clarified that for our listeners. The question was how do we train vs control our kids?

KENT: The thing is, control has to be age-appropriate. When our children are young, we need to control almost everything they do—to protect them.

However, if we want them to mature as teenagers, and not provoke them to anger, we need to focus on *training* them. And the goal of training is to increase their *ability to think* **and** to increase their *capacity* to make good decisions. Because we aren't always going to be there.

FOSTER: True, someday they're going to grow up and, hopefully, become independent.

KENT: That's our intent. And the third biblical principle of raising children is "*The words spoken to a child will determine his or her destiny.*"

And we see this when we look at five goals of training a child.

- The first goal for training is: to help our teenagers think and make wise decisions. Teenagers who believe they can make good decisions have a great chance of succeeding in life.
- The second goal is to help them learn the consequences of the decisions they make. "Don't do it," is not explaining and teaching the consequences.

FOSTER: That's basically what the dad did in the story we told earlier.

KENT: Yes. The rules weren't the problem. The issue was they were applied in an overly controlling manner. They didn't apply these training steps to their daughter. And the results were very bad.

- The third goal, and this one is really important: is to help your teenager to believe he or she can succeed. You, their father, should be their biggest encourager. Make sure they know scriptures like Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," or Matthew 19:26, "with God, all things are possible."

My friend this third principle says the words you speak to your child will determine his or her destiny. Think about the last few conversations you had with your teens. Were they controlling or training? And remember we know how hard it is. I had three teenagers and I messed up a number of times. Control is an easy trap to fall into, but training is a better way.

FOSTER: and biblical

KENT: and biblical

- The fourth goal for training our teenagers is to give them the freedom to mature. That means letting them fail. I'm not talking about life altering issues. Sometimes we want to protect our teenagers from mistakes and that's not always the right thing.
- The final goal of training teenagers is to keep communication open and focus on the relationship.

FOSTER: Kent, talking with teenagers can be a challenge. It's often hard to know what they're thinking.

KENT: A lot of times they don't know what they're thinking and feeling. But other times we don't know, because we don't ask. We need to ask questions. Not interview style like on the news, but just to learn about them. And also, thoughtful questions help them to think things through, and show them... we value their opinion and skills.

And for you fathers of teenage daughters, you have the added challenge of not thinking like a female. This is another area where your wife can really help. Because she may understand feelings in your daughter that you don't. And you can avoid the temptation to control, which often has roots in our fears. You want your daughter to be successful, confident, and capable of making solid, biblical decisions when you aren't around. But that comes through training, not controlling.

FOSTER: You know Kent I can related to the teenage girls part. Did you have any girls?

KENT: Yes I had one

➤ **FOSTER:** I had two and the training approach really makes sense. I wish I had applied that principle more in my fathering.

KENT: Me too. And I would say to men like you and me, who have grown daughters, you can still build her confidence and encourage her. Just begin right now.

For those of you who have teens and think it might be too late, with God's help, it is never too late. And for the rest of you fathers, start applying these biblical principles today.

FOSTER: Thanks Kent. We'll be right back.

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Program Close

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed the difference between controlling teenagers and training them for a meaningful life. This program was based on Lesson 7 in the book "Every Man a Warrior," Volume 2, by Lonnie Berger. You can learn more about his book and listen to this, or any of the programs in this series at our website championsarise.org. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

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