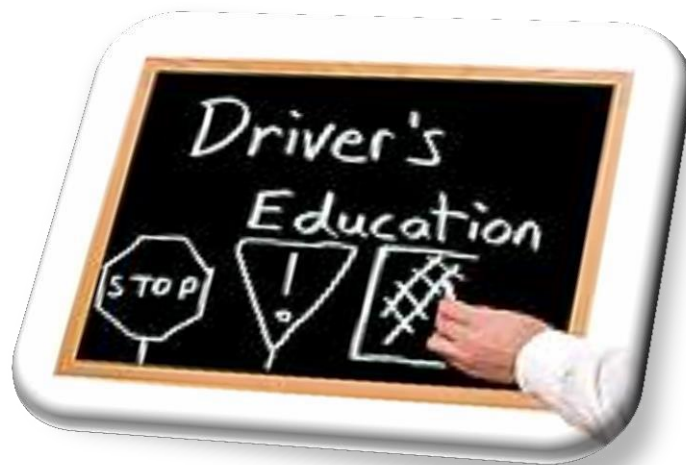


Drivers Ed For Parenting

(A course to help parents drive their teens around life's obstacles)



By Keith Robison

Summary: Why Drivers Ed?

Every parent of a teen will develop conflicting emotions about one of the greatest stages in the life of their child. That is the day the parent acknowledges a new rite of passage in their teen's life, the opportunity to drive a car. It's kind of exciting as well as extremely scary. On the one hand, once they learn how to drive, they can become a tremendous asset around the home by carpooling. Mom or dad will have so much more free time not having to cart their teen everywhere. No more, "it's the end of the world if you can't get me there on time mom". On the other hand, it's also very frightening. How many mailboxes are they going to destroy? How many new dents to the car will appear every month? A warning needs to be sent to all the neighbors to keep their dogs and cats inside or they might become part of pet heaven before their time is up. Insurance rates will skyrocket, and that's before a claim is even made against the policy. I've heard comedian Jeff Allen say when his first teen learned to drive, "Sometimes on Sunday morning we just skipped church and drove straight to the Crackle Barrel because we already had enough prayer time in the car on the way."

I have named this course "Drivers Ed For Parenting" because it has so many parallels to a parent/teen relationship and real-life and what the teen has to learn to drive. I heard a parent tell me once how frustrated they had become because it was so difficult helping their teen maneuver through all of life's obstacles. That made me think of what it was like helping my teenagers learn how to drive and dealing with all the obstacles on the road. I thought about the similarities between what they had to learn to be a competent, confident, and complete driver and what they had to learn to be a competent, confident, and complete person, so I wrote this material. Many of the elements learned in a driver's education course can be transferred symbolically and spiritually to the dynamic relationship between mom, dad, and teen. By applying many of the principles that will be taught in this course, a parent should be able to take some very positive steps in helping their teen maneuver through some tough obstacles they will face in the coming years.

Parents ask questions like; "What's wrong with having high expectations and holding them to it? "How do you help them deal with the disappointments of life without coming across as a know-it-all told-you-so type person?" "Why is my kid so angry?" "Why do we fight so frequently?" "Why won't they talk to me?" "Why has a good kid all of the sudden become rebellious?" "How do you let your teens develop independence without controlling their choices?" How can I help them find their identity?" "Why is my teen so insecure?" "How does a parent help a teen through a crisis?" "How do you keep the teen on the right path so they will make the right choices when they are on their own?" "Why won't my teen talk to me?" "How do I keep my teens from killing each other?" "Why does my younger teen think I don't like them as much as the older teen?" "How do I help my child deal with his self-destructive behavior?" "How do I protect them during the dating years without being "a spy"?" There are hundreds of other questions that have been asked and I hope to deal with many of them in this course.

There is one major question that your teenager will ask silently. It is the most important question that must be answered on the final test. Do you know what the question is? Let's take the journey together and discover the answer to the question your teen wants to know. Let's help them pass the Drivers Education Course of Life so they can be put on a path of success, happiness, and independence.

Course Outline

Introduction-Cheating not allowed

- a. Teens feel cheated
- b. The four things every teen desire

Part I-Before You Drive- General Maintenance

1.1 The number and kind of cars you have (The differences between our teens)

- a. Specialized cars need a Master Mechanic
- b. What's under the hood?
- c. What year model are they?
- d. Are they in the same condition?

1.2 Are they parked in or out of the garage? (Home Environment is very important to Spiritual/Mental Esteem)

- a. The garage is an extension of the home
- b. A garage is a place for security
- c. A garage is a place for protection
- d. A garage is a place where tools are available

1.3 Fuel Tank-Is it empty? (Unconditional love versus conditional love)

- a. What kind of fuel does the tank need?
- b. How to know when the tank is almost empty?
- c. How to fill the tank and how often?

1.4 Checking the oil regularly? (Learning how to be filled with the Spirit)

- a. What if the dip stick is dry?
- b. Where to get more oil?
- c. How frequently do you renew the oil?
- d. Why is it important to renew the oil?

1.5 Properly inflated tires? (The daily grind-where the rubber meets the road)

- a. Checking the air pressure
- b. Dealing with a flat
- c. Rotating the tires to minimize wear
- d. When is it time to get new tires?

1.6 Do wiper blades work? (Knowing God's will for your life and understanding your purpose)

- a. Do they make a funny noise?
- b. Do they leave a smear?
- c. Can you see clearly?

Part II- It's Time for Student Driving

2.1 Safety first

- a. No texting and driving-How technology impact your teen
- b. Driving curfews-Why setting boundaries is important

2.2 Identifying the rules-When to go, when to yield, when to stop. (Teens desire their own identity)

- a. Morality (Mainly sexual)
- b. Ethics
- c. Values

2.3 Teaching them to park-Straight on, at an angle, and parallel (Teens desire their independence)

- a. Understanding how much space is available
- b. When life requires straight answers
- c. When life requires you to look at different angles
- d. When life requires you to be flexible by coming alongside (parallel)

2.4 Teaching them to how to merge and change lanes (How to help them make it in this world)

- a. How to help your teen merge their values into societies
- b. How to help your teen change their position to move forward

2.5 Teaching them how to deal with road rage (Teen/Parent anger issues)

- a. Why others get them angry
- b. The most dangerous type of anger and 80% of teens have it
- c. How to help them overcome their anger

2.6 Teaching them the importance of insurance (Assurance in salvation and daily walk)

- a. Why do we need insurance?
- b. When do you use the insurance?

2. 6 Teaching them defensive driving (Evil impact on their lives)

- a. What to look out for
- b. How to be prepared

Part III-What to Do When...

3.1 They are caught speeding, running a red light, or worse (Teen Rebellion and Teen Crisis)

3.2 They have a fender bender (Accidents Happen-Is it that bad?)

3. 3 They total the car (How to overcome destructive behavior)

Conclusion:

Drivers Ed Test (Parental interactive test)

Introduction- “Cheating Not Allowed”

Before we get heavily involved in our Drivers Ed for Parenting guide along with its accompanying workbook, we need to discuss something very important that sets the stage for this study. As in any course, cheating is not allowed. We are not talking about cheating like you are probably thinking, the kind some of us probably did growing up when we took a test. Instead, we are talking about how one looks at the deck of cards they have been dealt with in life. Many teens feel they’ve been cheated in life and have little value causing a low opinion of themselves. It is imperative that parents understand what’s going on in the mind of their child and how their emotions expose them to real potential danger. Emotions are not reliable, and teens are driven by emotion. These negative emotions can and will cause depression, anxiety, and anger when a young person does not feel life has dealt them a fair hand.

Peer pressure and peer acceptance is a real challenge for many teens. They don’t know how to handle this type of mental pressure, nor do they have enough confidence in their self-identity to overcome these feelings of inferiority. I’ve talked to many teens who most would say are very popular, beautiful, and have it all together only to find that they are very insecure. Comparing themselves to others often leads to resentment, especially if they think less of themselves than they ought. In other words, teens can be very insecure and self-conscious about how they appear to their peers.

A good Drivers Ed teacher, that’s you, knows that one of the first things a teen has to develop BEFORE they ever get on the road is confidence. A conscientious teacher would never take the beginning driver on a busy freeway where cars are traveling 70 miles per hour. Instead, they take baby steps and allow them to feel what it is like behind the wheel of a car. As the beginning driver starts to develop confidence, they move from a protected road course to the real road. However, even then the teacher only takes them on side roads and roads that are less traveled at lower speeds. These driving activities over time allow the teen driver to develop more confidence. This new-found confidence shows the teacher that the teen is ready to take the next big step. These steps will require the teen to drive faster and possibly be exposed to more risk, but this risk is necessary for the growth of the teen’s ability to drive.

☞ A lack of confidence causes insecurity. **In-se-cu-ri-ty** to the teen is **the awareness of the gap between who I want to be and who I am.**

I’ve heard many teens, including my children when they were teens, make comments like:

“Why can’t people (or their parent) accept me for who I am”

“I can never live up to my parents or my teacher’s expectations”

“I wish I could be more popular, athletic, good looking, intelligent, etc...”

These and many more statements are all based on the teen’s inability to develop self-confidence and an inner awareness of their unique characteristics. The sad thing is, many parents refuse to accept that unique characteristic God placed within their teen and instead try to make their teen a little “mini-me”. In my observations of my kids, the time I’ve spent working with teens, along with personal study, I have concluded that almost to a tee every teen needs the **FOUR** following things.

☞ To feel known

☞ To feel accepted

☞ To feel loved

☞ To feel needed

What do all the above have in common? They evoke emotion. We will learn much more about the teen brain and its development later within our course but let me state something that I'm sure is obvious to every parent.

1. The teen brain, specifically the frontal lobe region, is not fully developed yet.
2. Due to that lack of development, the teen often makes choices that bring the typical parental response, "what were you thinking?" A little clue, they weren't.
3. Due to the chemical dopamine that is so prevalent in the early stages of their brain's development, teens not only take great risks but need desperately to "feel". That's why teens on average feel first and think second while adults are SUPPOSED to think first and feel second. The logical part of the teen brain has not fully developed yet.

So, if the emotional part of the brain is going to be prevalent in their forming years, how do we help our teens feel known, feel accepted, feel loved, and feel needed? All of these will be covered throughout this course in detail, but there is a great passage in the Bible that gives us a summary of these four critical lessons in the life of Jeremiah.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

⁶ "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

⁷ But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

⁹ Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth.

1st important point

☞ *Teens need to understand whether they FEEL it's true or not, there are absolute truths in this world and the truth is God can't lie, what He says is TRUE. They can "feel" like gravity doesn't exist but when they jump off a building, they'll know the truth, and it will be painful.*

☞ *There is a wonderful passage in Numbers 23:19 that says, "God is not a man that He should lie nor a son of man that He should repent. Has He not said it, and will He not make it good?" In other words, God is not like us. He doesn't lie and He doesn't mislead. If He says it, you can take it to the bank.*

What can we learn from this passage?

"Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came to me, saying." To appreciate what Jeremiah just said we need to understand the **role** of the prophet and the **responsibility** of the prophet. His role was to speak the truth by preaching and by foretelling with the major emphasis of preaching. He was responsible for making sure that he did not prophesy or speak in the name of the Lord unless he knew it was from God. Why? Because if he was ever declared a false prophet (one who didn't tell the truth and it didn't come into being), then he would be stoned to death. I don't recommend that.

So, what's the truth? You as the parent need to help your teen understand that they indeed are **known**. Let's get real and talk about being popular or known. It's important to your teen that they feel they are known in school by who they associate with and what they do in their school. If they are known then they become confident in their abilities socially, physically, and emotionally.

If a teen feels that no one cares if they exist, then there is a great chance depression can kick in. Not necessarily full-blown depression but enough to affect your teen's outlook. Social media is extremely popular with our teens and yet a lot of research seems to point toward it being a big part of teen depression. Many may have 1,000 "friends" or "likes" on Facebook, but they only have a few friends. They can't live up to their media fascination or tech-fantasy life. Technology can play a huge role in negatively impacting our teens. (We will talk about this more in our section "Texting and Driving"). Jeremiah tells us that God said, "*Before I formed you in the womb, I **knew** you.*" Wow!!! The creator of the world knew us before we were even born. Most teens, when told this, don't get any real thrill up their leg or quiver in their liver because God is not tangible. They can't see Him and even though they may feel Him sometimes, He doesn't impact their lifestyle because the people who are the most important to them, their friends, often don't care about God. Like Jeremiah, teens want and need to be known. Help your teen put in perspective what it means to be known by God. The High School cheerleader may be known in her local school, but I bet if you went to another high school in her city they would not "know" who she is. Then think of all the high schools in her State which I'm sure they wouldn't have a clue or care who she was. Now add all the high schools in the nation and I think you get the point. Yet God is bigger than all of that. He created the world and all the living organisms in it and Jeremiah teaches us that your teen is "known" by THAT person. By the way, God has been talked about for centuries and is still quite popular in conversations. It's like the old saying, "what a friend we have in Jesus". What does a parent do to help their child grasp the significance of knowing that the Creator of the World knows them? This is where the Drivers Ed instructor should take control of the vehicle and help the student experience maneuvering the car. It will take time, patience and a strong floorboard every time they slam on the brakes. Once you as their instructor-parent learn to communicate all the required steps on how to properly drive, then over time they develop independence and no longer need instruction as much. It's at that point your teen will finally get it and realize that having God know who they are is far greater than being known by any human.

Let's get back to our story in Jeremiah and pick up some more truths. Notice God says, He "formed" us. Think about that statement for a moment. What would it require for Him to form your teen? Every little detail about them He thought about before He created them. He thought about their brain, their physical looks, their emotional makeup, their talents, etc...all of these are given to them for a reason. You as their parent must get across to your child frequently that God placed great thought into who they are.

What else can we glean from this passage? God says, "*before you were born, I set you apart.*" God is telling Jeremiah that He chose Him for a purpose and God is telling your teen that He chose them for a purpose. Did you ever play Red Rover? Can you remember how you always hoped you were called because it made you feel like the other team wanted you? Guess what, God wants your teen on His team. He wants them to feel special. It's up to us to help our kids feel accepted and loved by something bigger than they could ever imagine. Please take being an Instructor in Drivers Ed very serious because it will go a long way in helping determine if your child feels valued or devalued, love or un-love, accepted or unacceptable, and known or lonely.

Once known and accepted, now what?

🔗 THEY ARE NEEDED

"I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." As I just stated, God had a purpose for Jeremiah and God has a purpose for your teen. What's your teen's purpose in life? Jesus said one of our great purposes is to KNOW, love and glorify God in our life. Many people are familiar with Jeremiah 29:11 that says, "*for I KNOW the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*"

In today's world, our teens desperately need hope and a future. I don't think there is a parent who does not want to see their child prosper and be successful emotionally, physically, spiritually, and financially. By now it's obvious that we have a tremendous responsibility in helping our teens discover their purpose in life.

I remember telling my kids when they were searching for their careers that God is always more concerned about their character than their career. The old saying it's who you know if you want to get ahead does have some truth to it. If your teen wants to get ahead in life by experiencing more victories than defeats, then knowing God becomes paramount. Man, does it ever get easy on the parents? Just wait until they give you some grandkids, then the fun starts.

SideBar: Don't be surprised if your teen doesn't just jump at the opportunity to live for God.

Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

Teens are professional excuse makers because they are generally insecure in their identity and thus lack confidence. But God is an **overcomer**. We will learn in this course how Christ can help them overcome the many obstacles in their way. Do they have a problem symbolically parallel parking? No problem He can help. Did they get in a serious accident due to a wrong choice in life? No problem, He can help. Are they having a hard time passing life's driver's test? No problem, He can help. Philippians 4:13 says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

So how does God help Jeremiah overcome? Let's review the passage.

⁷But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth.

There are 3 things we can glean from this passage to help our kids learn to overcome insecurity.

- 🔗 #1-He removes doubt and empowers their youth. Don't ever underestimate how God can use their youth to accomplish His purpose. That built-in "risky behavior" in your teen harnessed the right way will allow them to speak up and live for Christ in a dynamic and impactful way.
- 🔗 #2-He removes the fears they face and replaces it with confidence that no matter what, God will rescue them even if they fail.
- 🔗 #3-Finally, God will give them what it takes to succeed at what He has purposed for their lives.

As we take this journey together we need to claim the promise God gives us in James 1:5 which says, *"if any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."*

We need the wisdom to raise our students, so they feel known, accepted, loved, and needed. It takes a lot of effort but well worth it. It's a real treat watching your child develop into a mature, confident, and loving young adult because they understand their value to God. When they like being known by God more than their peers you have been able to help them have their life's Ah-Ha moment!

Now that we know cheating is not allowed, let's start our course by first looking at the requirements for ...

General Maintenance.