

The DUI

The DUI stands for "Driving under the Influence". We are talking about being influenced by alcohol, drugs, sex (lust), or selfish control. Rebellious teens are influenced by their lust for control just like they are when they lust for sex. They cannot stand to be under the authority of God or their parent and will take whatever steps necessary to make sure they are in control of their lives, even if it means war at home. Once under the influence of selfish control then it's very difficult to reach them. When a teen rebel against parental control in one of these areas (drugs, alcohol, sex, or selfish control), it becomes not only disruptive in the home but can cause a life-changing event for all involved. Just think how confusing it must be for your teen today when it comes to these things. We have States legalizing pot, every beer commercial on television shows you can't be somebody without a beer in your hand, while movies and songs are all filled with sexual overtones and extremely visual words. Teens have conflicting views because parents are telling them to be careful and do not participate in these kinds of activities while the world is telling them they will not be like everybody else if they don't. Every study that been done recently shows over 80% of teens have experienced either alcohol, drugs, or sex by the time they are 18. I wonder what the percentage of teens participating in these activities would be if rebellion was not part of the equation?

When a teen gets involved with drugs, drinking alcohol to get drunk or let their bodies be compromised by immoral sexual activity, there will be signs of rebellion. If your teen comes home drunk one night, it does not necessarily mean they are rebelling against your values. It could be that they caved under peer pressure to experiment with what it's like to get drunk. Many teens find the experience, though fun while doing it, was horrible after the buzz wears off. The next day can be quite educational for them as they get personal while hugging a toilet. A hangover can be one of the greatest natural consequences to teach a teen what is wrong with drunken behavior, especially if they still have to do work or some other activity while feeling so bad. But parents need to be aware of continual acts of drinking binges or drug use as a big red flag. Parents who say they let their kids have their drinking parties at home, so they at least know they are safe are playing with fire by helping light a fuse of rebellion. Not that they are in this case rebelling against such lenient parents, but they are rebelling against God's law of being under the influence of something. If these teens are true believers then they are ignoring what God says in His Word, that their bodies are a temple of the living Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:9) and they are not to be drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit. (Eph 5:18 see below). God knows these are signs of a person beginning a rebellious nature and it must be dealt with quickly before the teen becomes addicted and develops defiant behavior. Parents must always remember, consistent patterns of addictive behavior whether it's with alcohol, drugs, sex, or control will eventually lead to defiance.

Ephesians 5:18 says, *"Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit."* When a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they no longer have total control of their faculties. They are being controlled by what they put in their body. Their minds are not being

influenced by the Holy Spirit because the outside influence dulls their senses. In a way, just like the prodigal son, they are “out of their mind”. When a teen is sexually active it’s usually because they allow their physical need for gratification rule over what their rational and spiritual sides are telling them. They may not be drunk with wine, but they are drunk with passion and lust. Once under this type of influence, whether it’s alcohol or sex, they stop thinking clearly and don’t realize the consequences of their actions. Hanging out the window of a car moving 50 miles per hour while drunk may seem like fun at the time until one falls out of the car and lands on a gravel road that tears up the flesh. Once that person is no longer under the influence of alcohol, they wake up wondering what happened and how are they going to survive this mess. Having sex with her boyfriend may have been what she felt was the most emotional and meaningful night of her life until she wakes up one day with morning sickness and finds out she's pregnant. His love for her quickly dwindles when he finds out and he wants her to abort the child. She still has some of her parents' values about abortion and feels she must have the baby. As commendable as that decision is, her life will still be turned upside-down. She never thought about the circumstances of unprotected sex.

Proverbs 14:29 says, *A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.* Does your teen show patience during discipline or do they burst out in anger and refuse to listen to your counsel? The definition of folly is *a lack of good sense.* We have been talking a lot about not being in their right mind and the need, as the prodigal son learned, to come to their senses. A teen may not like what you do to them when you discipline them, but if they show signs of understanding why they had to be disciplined, then more than likely their act was due to immaturity and not rebellion. On the other hand, if they show they are not letting the discipline positively affect them and continue to *lack good sense,* and through anger or other means rebel against your counsel, then you need to pay close attention to future behavior.

Proverbs 12:1 says, *“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.”*

This verse isn't saying that your teen can't wait to be disciplined and just loves it when you punish them. The idea behind this Proverb is the internal attitude one has about the need to be disciplined every once in a while when poor choices are made. Otherwise, according to this verse, if they refuse to learn from their mistakes and continue doing what has brought on the need for discipline, then they are stupid. It's like when they finally get caught running that red light and a cop tells them to stop. They have a choice to make at that moment. Do they stop or do they try and outrun the cop. Most teens understand they have to finally accept the price for breaking the law and they stop. They understand they must pay the judge (you) the required fine to not get into more trouble with the law. They know following the rules is the right thing to do and needs to be obeyed because those laws were put into place for their benefit. They may not like the consequences, but they understand it’s necessary. It was fun trying to get away with speeding or running a red light but it’s now time stop and be more careful about doing that behavior because they don’t like the results. However, a teen who is under the influence of true rebellion will try and

outrun the cop or they'll go ahead and get the ticket but mutter under their breath something like, "yeah, yeah, yeah, I've heard it all before. Let's just get this over with", and according to scripture is *stupid or lacking proper intelligence*.

Usually, pride enters into the life of a rebellious teen as Proverbs 16:18 states, *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling*. The sad truth is when a teen displays a defiant attitude and shows arrogance it's because pride will not allow them to submit to counsel that they know deep inside is good for them. They would rather as the Proverbs says, be destroyed or stumble before they admit they were wrong and need help. *That's why Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel."*

A parent must determine what stage of rebellion their teen is in by observing how their teen responds to their discipline. I don't mean at the moment of the "fine". I would never expect a teen to jump for joy. They just had the car taken away for the next two weeks because they came home drunk. I am referring to how they respond well after the discipline has been administered. Do they continue to find ways to sneak out of the house to go party? Do they show defiance when you try to discuss this problem with them? Does anger or intimidation factor enter into your conversations with them on their part? (I'm assuming you have yourself under control) Is it getting difficult to manage the other parts of the household and other siblings are affected due to the rebellious teen's lifestyle?

If those situations exist AFTER numerous attempts and you find yourself frustrated and at wit's end because nothing seems to work, then you have a rebel in your home. Many good parents often find themselves having to bail their teens out of jail because of a continual pattern of defiance. Unfortunately, some parents have to deal with unwanted teen pregnancy and the humiliation that is involved with all. There are parents whose teen starts to flunk out of school or is constantly in trouble with their teachers because of their rebellious nature and the DUI'S that are going on in their life. What does a parent do when their teen is refusing to listen to counsel and help?

Dr. John White was an Evangelical Christian author and international speaker who worked with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He wrote many books about students under InterVarsity Press. He also was an integral part of the Vineyard Churches and pastored at Church of the Way. He died in 2002 but was well respected by those who had ministries that worked with rebellious teens. In his lifetime he worked with thousands of students who were runaways from home and rebelled against the status quo of the home. Sadly, he has some very dire warnings for parents of older teens who are old enough to leave home. I think when a teen gets to a certain point, especially after they graduate, where their rebellious nature is destroying the very fiber of the home some tough love has to take place by allowing the natural consequences of poor choices to take effect. I think the majority of rebellion can be dealt with by using some of the principles I will share at the end of this chapter, but for those rebellious teens that refuse to listen and rebel to the point of destruction, there must be some drastic steps. Here are some comments

by Dr. White that I think you'll find revealing. You may not agree with his position, but it should make you pause and think should your teen ever get to this point in their life. What would you be willing to do to help them come back to the fold? Would you let them go as the father did in Luke 15 of the prodigal son story?

Dr. White writes from "Parents in Pain", InterVarsity Press 1979, pp 201,204-205.

God's dealings with his people form a pattern for Christian parents. Like Him, we may eventually have to allow our persistently rebellious children to harvest the consequences of their willfulness. The time can come when we have to withdraw all support from them and oblige them, because of their own decisions, to leave home...

There are times when an explosive situation demands fast action. Bitterness often arises in the "good children" whom the parents may neglect in the desire to restore their prodigal to his or her senses. And sometimes matters go so far that the parents are forced to choose whom they would rather have at home, the problem child, or the non-problem children. The squeaky wheel may get so much grease that the silent wheels disconnect themselves from the axil and roll away.

Parents who are reluctant to take drastic steps should ask themselves. Are they too scared? There is every reason to be scared. What parent is not? The thought of exposing the child to physical hardship, to loneliness, and moral temptation flies in the face of every parental instinct. Or is it that parents fear public opinion? Are they still clinging to unrealistic hopes that matters will magically right themselves if only they hang on a little longer when it is plain, they will not?

Parents who cling to their erring children must realize that by paying debts and legal expenses beyond clearly set guidelines or even offering continued shelter, food, clothing, they can morally become a party to the delinquent behavior. Their actions can make it possible for rebellious children to continue to live as they have in the past. Home for them is merely a free hotel. Instead of helping them to follow godliness, parents are giving their children the message that there is no need for them to be godly since they, their parents, will always look after them and get them out of a hole.

The decision to dismiss children from home should not be made either because it will work or as a matter of expediency. It should be made based on justice. And justice must consider every side of the problem. Is it morally just to keep children at home when other family members suffer deprivation in one form or another because of them? Are they old enough to care for themselves, that is, to hunt for work and provide themselves with food and shelter? Are they legally of age? Have they had plenty of warning of what will happen if they continue in the same way? Have the warnings merely been angry threats or serious talks explaining why such measures should be adopted?...

I do not have all the answers to all the questions I have raised, but I must answer some.

So, what can we do?

First, let us understand why good Christian kids sometimes show signs of rebellion, and a few even jump off the deep end and into the pool of defiance.

Understand why they get the ticket in the first place-

Dr. Tim Kimmel discusses eight reasons he believes Christian kids rebel. I concur with him but narrow down to what I believe are the top 4 in my opinion with a twist. If you'd like to know all his reasons you can find his eight reasons in his book "Why Christian Kids Rebel"-W Publishing Group-2004- pages 33-50

1. **Not knowing Christ personally can be one of the main reasons teens rebel in a Christian home.**

Just because a teen made a profession of faith sometime in their life and prayed what's known as "the sinner's prayer" doesn't mean they have a personal relationship with God. There are many factors involved for your teen to have a personal relationship with God. Jesus said, "You shall know them by their fruit". In John chapter 15:4, Jesus said, "Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine." A true believer is someone who cannot bear fruit unless they are connected to the Vine (Jesus). If your teen only shows rebellion or at least consistent rebellion and no Christ-like fruit, then perhaps they were never connected to the Vine. If a parent assumes that their teen is a Christian and tries to hold them to those Christian standards, but their teen is not a true believer, they will find their teen becoming even more frustrated and rebellious.

Many parents may say, "I saw my teen make a profession of faith in the church or at a teen camp and even saw them get baptized. How can they not be a believer? I'm sure your teen was sincere at the time that they made those decisions. However, was it their faith or their faith in your faith? I know only God knows for sure if your teen made a true confession and profession and there are no magical words or actions that need to be said to guarantee their salvation. True salvation is an act of faith in the heart. A teen can be a believer and rebel in the home due to the immaturity and carnal nature of sin. I'm not saying all kids who rebel in the home are not believers. I'm only saying that it could be one of the reasons a parent is frustrated with the response of their rebellious teen. They can't understand why their teen refuses to turn their life around and why do they continue to go down a rebellious path. If a teen is only a "Christian" by living in the Christian home, then there is a good chance they show these rebellious signs because they don't know Christ. Dr. Kimmel shared a few limit test questions to ask yourself to determine if your child has a personal relationship with Christ.

- a. Does your teen show any remorse when they do things that break God's heart?
“For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.” I John 3:20

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. II Cor. 7:10

- b. Are they inclined towards God’s Word and are they convicted by it when they are exposed to it?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, II Tim. 3:16

“but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.” Psalm 1:2

“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8

- c. Do they want to use their spiritual gifts to strengthen the church and reach out to lost people? (Bear fruit)

“Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed...There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work...But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

I Cor. 12:1, 4-6, 24-26.

- d. Are they sensitive to the condition of other brothers and sisters in Christ and do they care about lost people they encounter at school?

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” John 13: 34-35

“But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”. I John 3:17-18

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

“As my Father has sent me, so I send you.” John 20:21

“We are ambassadors for Christ”. II Cor. 5:20

2. Kids rebel because they are angry-Specifically at God but Parents also

Being a person who had to deal with a lot of anger issues through my teens and eventually my adulthood, I think I understand pretty well why kids rebel when they are angry at authority figures in their life. Many times, your teen will not even show outwardly that they are angry. Some parents feel their teen is a model teen who gives them no trouble for most of their life and then something triggers their anger and they want to rebel. It will all depend on the spiritual maturity of their teen as to whether their anger issues will become something that they manage through, or whether they will allow it to take them down the dangerous path of rebellion. That is why it is so important that point number 1 is not a reason why they rebel (Not having a personal relationship with God).

What can happen to a teen that causes them to get angry at God? Here are a few examples of how teens struggle with deep life issues.

- The unexpected death of a parent or sibling
- An unexpected life-threatening disease such as cancer, diabetes, brain tumors
- Divorce of parents
- How they view themselves as something less than everyone else due to their perceived IQ, physical looks, personality, lack of musical or athletic talent
- Chronic pain
- Horrible crime against them such as rape or incest

Notice what all the above things have in common. Each one of the above things are things that the teen can't control and are life-changing events in their life. We are not talking about things they don't get, such as how unfair a parent is because they won't let them go to a party. We're talking about things that can and will shape them for the rest of their life. A mature adult would even struggle with the above life events but usually can rationale that life is not fair and sin in the world causes bad things to happen to good people sometimes. However, even many adults can't handle such things as mentioned above and they can become addicted to alcohol, drugs, or other addictive behavior to mask the pain and anger. Teens, since they are so in tune with the emotional side of their life, can go off the deep end internally and struggle with understanding the why's. They may not show it on the outside but the inside, they blame God. They don't see how God in the big picture can mold them to become more like Christ even while suffering. They don't want to hear that message; they want solutions quickly and the pain to be removed. They feel God has betrayed them and no longer want to serve Him. That's why you can have a teen that was on fire for Christ in the early stages of their life and active in their youth group, fall from God it seems overnight.

Many parents let their frustration consume their attitude without realizing that their kid may be rebelling and hard to control because they are mad at God. A parent can't argue or yell a teen back to sanity if the child is rebelling against God.

SO HOW DO YOU BRING A REBELLIOUS TEEN BACK WHO IS ANGRY AT GOD?

I think it can only be done through grace, time, and prayer. Did I mention it takes time? A teen who is angry at God and showing signs of rebellion will take mountains of prayer and grace so they will see God through your love for them. It doesn't mean you just let the teen run wild without any consequences, but grace is something most teens don't expect when they rebel. Giving them unmerited favor, in other words, feeling still loved and forgiven no matter how they live help them see how God loves us. **Hebrews 4:16 says**, *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Notice that you can have confidence in knowing that just as grace impacts you when you need it most so too will God use you to impact the life of your teen by offering grace when it's needed most.

Can there be anger toward the parent that leads to a rebellious nature?

Okay, let's look at a few things that can cause a teen to become angry at their parents.

- Their perceived idea of favoritism toward other siblings
- Broken promises that were very important to them
- Feeling that you don't respect them or their opinions
- Requiring them to move away from their friends because in their mind you only care about yourself
- Lack of time given to them on important things
- Screaming at them when they don't do what you want. (Do you like to be screamed at?)
- Their perceived belief of your perfectionism, your constant nagging
- Lack of grace and controlling nature
- Comparing them to siblings or friends in a negative way
- Something that you've done that they feel has brought shame to them

What parent hasn't done some of the above things? If you notice, almost all if not all are things that the parent can control. For example, the absentee parent can start showing up more at activities and life events that are important to the teen. How about when a teen does something stupid, the parent can learn to control their temper and stop yelling in demeaning ways. The parent can learn to stop being such a control freak and offer a little grace every once in a while. The parent can work hard at showing respect toward their teen's opinions, so on and so on... For a parent to reduce the anger their teen has toward them they will have to learn how to do two very important things.

- a. They have to learn to admit when they screw up and confess it to their teen. Too many parents feel like when they blow it, they can't show a sign of weakness to their child by admitting they blew it because it will make their kid not respect them. It's just the opposite. Your teen is not stupid, and they know when you mess up. The Bible tells us that we are to "confess our sins to one another" for a reason. It's not so we can always play off the weakness of each other but to draw strength from each other. The world says to look for ways to blame and feel sorry for what's happened to you. The world has a victim mentality that refuses to take responsibility for what it did wrong. God says just the opposite. Do you know He doesn't want you to come to church and worship if you got something going on wrong within your family, especially a big ole' knockdown drag-out fight with your teen? Matthew 5:23-24 tells us that if we come to altar to worship God and there remember that we have something against our brother or vice versa, we are to first go and get right with our brother (confess), then come and worship God.
- b. After confessing ask for forgiveness and then ask God to help you forget. It's important that you ask the teen to forgive you for what you did to them and that over time you hope they will come to be able to forgive you. Often, in the heat of the moment or what I call the "hurt of the moment", the teen will take some time to be able to forgive. ***"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*** Col. 3:13. Once we have asked for forgiveness we must let our teens know that we will pray for them that they will learn how to forget and not hold it against us just as we are praying that we forget the things they have done to us that have hurt us. The scripture tells us that "God has forgiven us as far as the east is from the west." (Is. 43:25) Forgetting each other's sin or hurt will take God-given supernatural power, but it will be given to you if you ask for it.

Perhaps right now you can think of a few things that you've done to your teen that you feel might be helping them vent some anger toward you. There is nothing better than the present to fix the problem Go to your teen and confess and ask for forgiveness. This is a major healing agent for your teen in processing their anger toward you. It's up to the parent to take the lead role in showing a teen how to handle failure in the right way and how we can learn from disappointment.

3. Teens rebel sometimes because they are in bondage to sin

Teens are no different than an adult who finds themselves in bondage and can't breakaway. Bondage limits freedom and brings frustration which eventually increases anger which leads to rebellion. How does your teen become entrapped to a particular sin that has them become rebellious? It of course starts with Satan. He is a crafty person who knows better than anyone what your teen's weaknesses are, and he develops a game plan to attack. He knows what every teen needs and uses those against them to eventually question God and parent and what's best for them. If you don't already know, your teen needs three very critical things in life. First, they need security, next they need a sense of identity or feeling significant, and finally, they need independence and a sense of being in control of their life

and feeling strong. Notice how Satan can attack each of these areas and cause them to doubt what God thinks and eventually rebel. He will help them feel more secure by offering all types of materialism, money, or sex. Teens associate sex with "I'm loved" and when they feel loved they feel secure. He might get them to feel significant or developing their identity by allowing them to become very popular at school through the personality God blessed them with. Once that happens, they start pushing the independence button because of the pressure to stay popular.

Notice how easy it is for Satan to get our kids guard down. Once they put it down then he hits them with peer pressure or some other kind of pressure to conform. Before you know it your teen might experiment with alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, cheating, etc...How does Satan take those types of things and have them fall into bondage? He holds them hostage to things like guilt and shame. Watch out if your teen has a quick radical shift in their behavior from being a committed Christian. This sudden change often is due to an area of the teen's life that is being held in bondage. They will often react to their parent negatively out of guilt or shame because they don't want to be made to feel bad. More than likely they are already disgusted with themselves internally but can't seem to find a way out of the mess without confessing which puts them right back into the guilt or shame, thus the bondage increases. What's sad is the constant fear they live in because they know sooner or later, they are going to be found out and what will happen to them when their wrong activity is exposed. It's also sad for the parents because they are afraid of the worse and when they find out it is bad; their teen's activities leave scars that are hard to overcome. Another emotional scar that parents have to deal with is intense anger toward their child. They think, "How dare their child take this path after all the things they have done for the child to set it up for success." The parent is usually embarrassed and concerned about what will this due to their reputation as a "good" parent and you will find them also dealing with guilt as to what could they have done better or different?

When a teen is in bondage to a particular sin lifestyle and rebellion enters into the home it seems kind of hopeless, doesn't it? Not from the parent's perspective but the teens'. Most teens don't want to live in bondage as Paul wrote in Romans 7 about not doing the things he wanted to do and doing the things he didn't want to do. In reality, most everyone else will give up on the teen but the parents must not. The teen must know that hope can exist with their parents. Just as offering grace is so important in helping a teen work through rebellion due to anger toward God, hope is so important to help a teen work through rebellion due to being in bondage. Listen to the hope found in Romans 8:38-39; "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

How will a rebellious teen trapped in bondage ever feel hope? They must understand that God clearly states there is nothing the teen can do that will be able to separate them from the love He has for them. It doesn't mean He likes what they are doing and it doesn't mean that He won't let them go through some pain to learn, but it does mean that no matter what, He will never abandon them and will never love them any less. Since we are often the only way our child sees God then we must ask God to help make sure we get that message across to our child. I know all of us are familiar with the following verse from I Corinthians 13, but it's a good reminder of the type of love we are to never withhold from our rebellious teen when they bring embarrassment or shame into the home. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." When a parent has that type of love for their child then the teen can believe there is hope for them and their future even when they are in bondage.

4. Teens rebel sometimes because their parent's faith isn't their faith.

What do I mean by this? When teens get to the stage in their life when they want to push some of the buttons of independence many parents forget that includes religion as well. Often the teen in the early stages of their Christian walk inherits the parent's convictions because it's natural and there doesn't seem to be a reason to question. However, when a teen starts to see the world differently and perhaps has experienced a life-changing event in their life, they may start to question their faith. They will start asking some tough questions as to whose faith is this anyway, mine or my parents? Doubt is normal in growing up but if not allowed to seek and solve then it will lead to certain levels of rebellion. This type of rebellion can be part of their growth in their faith and parents don't necessarily have to be too concerned. Patience will be required to give enough freedom to allow the teen to spread their wings while they go through this doubting process. Let me give you an example of someone who showed doubt in their walk with Christ. His name was Thomas and he didn't buy into the resurrection of Christ just because the other disciples said it happened. Maybe that was good when Christ was alive but now things are different. Thomas saw them put Christ on a cross and kill him and bury him and he wasn't going to play that game.

What a lot of people forget about doubting Thomas was he just wanted the same experience that the other disciples had. (Much like your teen just wants to have the same experience you have with God when things don't go well). In Luke 24:36-43 we find the scriptures say, *While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked*

them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Thomas wasn't in that meeting and when the disciples came to him to let him know about the experience. The story goes on to say, *"So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.* Do you see what happened here? Thomas didn't just buy into what was said by the disciples just because they said so. Instead, he questioned the validity of such an event and said I won't believe until I see it for myself. In many ways, that's what our teens are telling us when it comes to having a deep walk with Christ. They may sow some wild oats and act like God is not real to them when it seemed like just a few years ago He was so real in their early lives of being a teenager. Some teens never waiver from the transition from their parents' faith to their own and Jesus in our story with Thomas acknowledge that when He said, *"Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen yet believe."* In other words, blessed are those teens that don't have to have their faith proven every step of the way. But some teens just can't get a handle of having a relationship with Jesus until Jesus is all they got.

Lecturing and trying to force a teen to believe as you believe will only make them stiffen up their neck and fight back. They want "this walk with God thing" to be on their terms and not yours. You can make them go to church because that's what you do but it won't necessarily cause them to change. I'm a firm believer in helping your teen develop discipline by encouraging them to go to church, but you need to realize that if their character is showing signs of rebellion then more than likely they'll submit because "you're the parent", but there's a good chance when they get off to college you will not be seeing them seeking a local church to attend. I want to make sure you understand that I'm not talking about the teen who is putting up a fuss on going to church because they're tired from the night before or they don't like the music, the preaching, or the youth group. If that's the case, you need to make sure the teen gets enough rest so they can feel more refreshed in meeting their friends at church. If they don't like the youth group, then you need to seriously consider looking into another church that has a youth group that resonates with your teen. I'm talking about a consistent rebellious nature that causes the teen to do things in the home that brings suffering and pain because they are giving up on what seems like their faith in God.

So, what does a parent do when their teen seems to be rebelling against the very fiber of their faith? You need to always be an encourager and allow for Christ to reveal Himself to them as He did to doubting Thomas. Once Thomas had his "come to Jesus" moment he fell to his knees and said he now believes. When your teen is in the clutches of rebellion towards their faith, about the only thing that will bring them back is their own "come to Jesus" moment. Something will more than likely have to happen in their life requiring dependence on Jesus to help rescue them from their despair. They will experience Him in a real way that you the parent couldn't give them. Wise is the parent who will pray fervently for their teen so they may be able to see Jesus in others who have a strong walk with Him. Don't judge your teen during this period. Instead, offer a consistent walk with

God so they see a real God impacting a real person. Let them see an unwavering faith in God and give them the freedom to explore their faith while asking God to reveal Him to your teen during these challenging times.