

Signs of Rebellion

by Evangelist Dan Woltmann

Regardless of your involvement with young people, knowing the signs of rebellion can help you in your relationships with the young people in your life. Some of the signs are subtle, others are very obvious. Often we ignore the signs by thinking the young person is having a bad day, or that they are just “being kids”. The signs of rebellion are gradual; you may not notice them at first.

Not wanting to do family activities	Talking back to parents
Friends – change of or wrong type	Neglecting responsibilities
Grades may go down	Facial expressions
Ignoring rules of the home	Type of music
Their clothes	Questioning authority
Bad attitude	Little communication
Constant depression	Limited interest in spiritual things
Lack of gratefulness	

Some of the signs are considered “normal” by the world. However, these signs are a clear indication of your young person’s thoughts and feelings; consider them a spiritual thermometer.

How do you handle rebellion?

- **Be right with God and with others.** The only way you can help a child in rebellion is to be right with God. An adult that is out of God’s will is not spiritually able to discern the needs of a child in rebellion. Adults at odds with others, whether in the home or in the church, are hindrances in dealing with a rebellious child. Young people sense tension among adults easily. Young people are very perceptive and know if you are “walking the walk” and not just “talking the talk.”
- **Be ready - watch for signs, anticipation.** Do not wait too long before handling rebellion. “My child will not rebel. He comes from a good Christian home, attends a Christian school and is very active in church.” *Every child has the potential to be rebellious.* The earlier you catch rebellious behavior (pre-school is not too early!), the less heartache you will have.
- **Be real - be yourself, be honest.** Children have an innate ability to know when an adult is hiding something from them. Do you air your past indiscretions? No. However, you also do not want to come across as “perfect”. Depending on the situation, you can share a similar experience from



your own life or that of another. You must be honest with young people. Young people see deception constantly through the media and many times within their own peer group. An adult that is honest with them will be more important to them than you can imagine.

- Above all, **do not panic if you are faced with a young person who is in rebellion.** Patient, loving and prayerful attention to the rebellion will go far in helping the young person.

More thoughts on rebellion

If those in authority . . .

- . . .do not keep promises, it gives a child a false sense of security.
- . . .refuse to admit wrong-doing, a child will learn not to trust any decision.
- . . .do not have proper priorities, the child feels he needs attention.
- . . .are too permissive, it is a sign of rejection.
- . . .discipline out of anger, the child will be bitter.
- . . .are impatient, a child will seek attention elsewhere.
- . . .are inconsistent, there will be rebellion.

If a husband doesn't show a definite love for his wife, there will be rebellion.

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