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“The only thing that parents can take to heaven is their children”
John Maxwell

A PATHWAY TO MATURITY – OUR ADVICE

Lay out a pathway towards independence with safety rules and increasing freedom. Wise parents let their children make age appropriate choices. Too little freedom and they won't learn to be responsible, too much and they can make harmful choices. Because God has placed them in your care it is your responsibility to decide for them until they have sufficient maturity. Therefore, our advice is to give a set of family rules. You may wish to discuss the appropriateness of them with your children but in the end you need to make the rules.

(Sammy, for each one below give a brief reason why they should wait till that age)

- a. 10 Cycle with friends unsupervised. Pocket money commences
- b. 12 Go to movies in a group.
- c. 13 Cell phone
- d. 13 Puberty rite of passage eg. Adventure trip with same sex parent. 9 pm curfew
- e. 14 Facebook account
- f. 14 Make up
- g. 16 Dating with safety rules. No kissing, No time in bedrooms together. Better to wait till 18. Drink alcohol with the family. 10.30 pm curfew.
- h. 16 Choice not to go to church or youth group. Church and youth group attendance should be non-negotiable until 16 “This is what we do as a family”. The law does not allow them to opt out of schooling before that age and spiritual formation is actually more important.
- i. 18 Serious relationships. Take them to the pub. No curfews but courtesy to advise whereabouts and movements. Pay rent if earning.

A set of rules like this will give your child an easy defence when their peers pressure them. Eg., “I am not allowed to drink until I am 16”

If you have already let your first child have choices which you now regret it is perfectly OK for you to take back that freedom. All you need to say is something like, “We are still learning as parents and we think we have made a mistake. We are sorry about that but we are going to do better from now on. This is how it is going be.”

References:

1. www.parentsinc.org.nz **The White Water Rafting Years: A Common-Sense Guide to Parenting Teenagers** By Mary Grant and Ian Grant

2. Nigel Latta www.goldfishwisdom.co.nz/

