

Problems Teenagers Face: Staying Strong in a Sinful World

➤ = next PowerPoint

➤ Intro:

- illus.:

- **at high school football game**, walking back from snack bar
 - 3 boys hiding what another boy and girl doing in a corner, broke them up
 - girl in stands laying on boy, broke them up
 - hard to be young Christian living around sin
- **at high school track meet recently**, young people using profane language and acting lewdly, reminded me how hard it can be to be a Christian at school

- **2 Pet. 2:7-8** Lot, righteous soul **tormented**, by their **lawless deeds** – **story**

- what other people do has an affect upon us

- **1 Cor. 5:9-10** we live in the world, and have to associate with immoral people – can't avoid all

- **challenge:** be strong enough to associate with immoral people when we have to, and still stay strong, and be godly

- **How do we stay strong, while living in a sinful world?**

- **series: problems teenagers face**
- **problem we all face**, but seems more difficult for teens – peer pressure, inexperience

➤ **Keep your heart (spirit) right!**

- **Mal. 2:15b-16** problem behind Israel's sin, had **not taken heed to their spirits**, to keep them right
 - **we must take care of our spirits** – be spiritual as we should be – all else will follow

➤ - **Matt. 15:17-20a** if heart right. . . . / if heart wrong. . . .

➤ - illus.: false prophets

- **Matt. 7:15-20** know false prophets by their fruits – by what they say and do, reflects their heart
- **Matt. 7:21-23** so we'll be judged by our fruits

➤ - illus.: not deceive heart – acid test = actions

- **Ja. 1:26-27** if we think we're religious (godly, righteous) and not controlling tongues, **visiting** those in need, and **keep ourselves unspotted** from the world, we **deceive our hearts**
 - **if we do these three things, we'll won't deceive our hearts**
- **illus.: Mike Matthews, teaching James, title of lesson "The Acid Test"** – your fruits
 - **leave one out, fail** – deceive heart
 - **never seen:**
 - **a lukewarm Christian, regularly visit the needy and help**
 - **a strong Christian not visit the needy and help**

- **It takes work to get your heart right, and keep it right! – proactive, preparation**
 - **1 Pet. 1:13-15** prepare mind, fix on hope salvation, obedient children, act as God commands
 - **without first preparing mind**, will not obey God – **Matt. 15:7-12** – heart right, behavior right
 - **What can we do without preparing our minds first, and do a good job?**
 - **school:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well?
 - **sports:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well?
 - Why do teams have sports psychologists?
 - **work:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well?
 - **parenting:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well?
 - **church:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well? – **Matt. 15:7-12**
 - **Bible study:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well? – **Matt. 15:7-12**
 - **personal work:** unprepared, uninterested, not motivated, don't care – do very well? – **Matt. 15:7-12**
 - **What are some things you can do?** – to prepare, and to stay strong through the day
 - remainder of lesson
- **Become strong and stay strong, by spending time with God** – way to get strong is the way to stay strong
 - **word:**
 - **Rom. 1:16** gospel power of God unto salvation – prepare, overcome sin
 - - **2 Pet. 1:2-4** God grants us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true knowledge** (word), become partakers of the **divine nature**
 - - **Eph. 3:16-20** strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the **power that works within us**
 - - **1 Th. 2:13** God's word performs its work in those who believe
 - **know Bible, believe it, live by it – be like the Bereans**
 - - **prayer:**
 - **1 Th. 5:16-18** rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, God's will for you
 - - **Phil. 4:4-7** rejoice in the Lord always, be anxious for nothing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, have the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension
 - - **Col. 4:2** devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it, with an attitude of thanksgiving
 - **walk in Jesus footsteps and follow the apostles' example: pray like them**
 - - **sing praises to God:**
 - **Ja. 5:13b** if cheerful, sing praises – sing and be happy
 - **constantly have a tune of praise in your heart**
 - **include spiritual songs in your music collection – Joseph's radio station – positive messages**
 - - **Col. 3:16** word of Christ richly dwell in you, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God**
 - **We prepare ourselves spiritually by spending time with God!** – word, prayer, singing to Him

- Be strong by **not entangling yourself in the affairs of everyday life** – **attitude and affect**
 - **2 Tim. 2:4** not get entangled in affairs of everyday life
 - **Matt. 6:21** where your **treasure is**, there your **heart will be** also
 - **Where is your treasure? How is that reflected in your life?**
 - **illus.: soldier, Iraq**, not worried about taking care of a cool car, worried about stay alive
 - **illus.: Jeremy Emerson**, basic training, Air Force, not allowed to call wife
 - at graduation, stand at attention till wife tapped him, then could hug 3 seconds and had to separate 5 seconds, no pda in public, not drive vehicle under any circumstance, etc.
 - **sometimes we get entangled in things that might not be sinful**, but they take up our time and energy, distracting us from spiritual things, taking us away from the Lord's work, become wrong
 - **thought questions:**
 - **Are you more concerned with spiritual things** than physical things? – %, **attitude**
 - **Do you spend more free time with spiritual activities** or recreational activities? – %, **attitude**
 - **If you lost all your wealth and possessions today**, how would that affect you? – %, **attitude**

- **Be strong by avoiding sinful situations as much as possible** – if spending time with God. . . .
 - **avoid sinful situations when possible**
 - **2 Cor. 6:14, 17 do not be bound together with unbelievers, come out of their midst and be separate**
 - **not sacrifice your soul to be with the popular crowd**, if their engaged in sinful activities
 - **not sacrifice your soul to do what the world is doing (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Ja. 4:4)**
 - **How?**
 - **1 Cor. 15:31, 33 put to death worldly desires daily, avoid evil companions**
 - **Col. 3:5a consider the members of your earth body as dead to immorality**
 - **illus.: sinful companions (company) lead us to sin**
 - **Study: Rap Music Linked to Teen Sex** (2009, Parents Television Council, parentstv.org)
 - **A new study of teenagers and rap music has found that youths who listened most to "degrading" sexualized lyrics in rap songs were more than twice as likely to have had sexual intercourse** as teens that did not.
 - **The study, which will be published in the April issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine**, found that "people who are exposed to certain messages in music are **more likely to copy or emulate what they hear,**"
 - **One possible conclusion of the study is that teens who hear about degrading sexual practices in their favorite songs might decide to try it out themselves.**
 - **The study also found that 64% of the rap songs analyzed were sexually degrading, compared with only 7% of country songs and 3% of pop songs.**
 - **evil companions corrupt good morals: choosing to listen to sinful music, often leads to others sin**
 - **illus.: psychologist Ruth W. Berenda - peer pressure to conform** – constant pressure to conform to pop culture standards of dress, immodest dress
 - **A few years ago psychologist Ruth W. Berenda and her associates carried out an interesting experiment with teenagers** designed to show how a person handled group pressure.
 - **The plan was simple. They brought groups of ten adolescents into a room for a test.**
 - Subsequently, **each group of ten was instructed to raise their hands when the teacher pointed to the longest line** on three separate charts.
 - **What one person in the group didn't know was that nine of the others in the room had been instructed ahead of time to vote for the second-longest line.**
 - **The experiment began with nine teen-agers voting for the wrong line.**
 - **The victim would typically glance around, frown in confusion, and slip his hand up with the group.**
 - **The instructions were repeated and the next card was raised.** Time after time, **the self-conscious victim would sit there saying a short line is longer than a long line**, simply because he lacked the courage to challenge the group.
 - **This remarkable conformity occurred in about 75% of the cases, and was true of small children and high-school students as well.** (revised from : C. Swindoll, Living Above the Level of Mediocrity, p. 225)
 - **the pressure to conform is strong**
- **avoid sinful language, and people participating** – friends, music, TV, movies, etc.
 - **2 Tim. 2:16-17a avoid worldly and empty chatter**, further ungodliness, **spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:4)**
 - **Eph. 5:4-5 filthy language, coarse jesting** – vulgar
 - **avoid sinful speech, and people participating**
 - choose to be with others as much as possible
 - not expose self to it when have a choice

- **avoid people who oppose the truth, and lead people astray** – people promoting sin – **pop culture**
 - **2 Tim. 3:1-8** oppose the truth, lead people astray – **avoid (vs. 5b)**
 - **illus.: Would you be friends (companion) with the Pope?** – responsible for leading millions to hell
 - then don't be friends with anyone who's leading people to hell
 - ad exec promoting sin. . . / school mate promoting sin. . .

- **avoid factious arguing that's worthless, and reject factious Christians**
 - **Tit. 3:9-11** avoid / reject
 - if no one participates in the arguments of a factious man, he has little ability to divide the church

- **Are you avoiding sinful situations as much as you can?**
 - **Which sinful situations aren't you avoiding that you could?** – would Jesus be there, participating

- **Be strong by associating (hanging out) with godly people** – **godly support group**
 - **the pressure to conform** in a bad way is as strong to conform in a good way
 - need to put “good” “positive” peer pressure in our lives

 - **illus.: Rom. 12:16** not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly
 - be humble, and associate with people are humble – **pressure to constantly conform**

 - **illus.: 1 Cor. 5:11** not associate with any so-called brother if he is an **immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler** – not even to eat with such a one
 - not subject self to “bad” peer pressure / use “good” peer pressure to help sinful brethren repent

 - **surround yourself with people who will be a positive influence** – **godly support group**
 - **Heb. 10:24-25** assembly of church, Christians, most important support group
 - **Bible class, study, worship**
 - **2 Tim. 2:22** flee youthful lusts, **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, **with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart** – association outside the assembly: Christians, family, friends
 - **you have to be the one who takes the initiative**
 - **illus.: Scott Love's mother**, after his father passed away
 - **illus.: new Christians**, those who surround themselves with positive influence and those who don't
 - **illus.: choosing a mate**, someone to help you get to heaven

 - **Are you around people who inspire you to be a strong Christian?**
 - **because of their influence you want** to be strong, don't want to sin
 - **if not**, make the decision to change groups

 - **Are you a strong Christian whose opened up your life in other people who need your influence?**
 - **do you greet brethren** when we come together, and encourage them
 - **do you spend time encouraging weaker brethren** outside the assembly
 - **have them** into your **home**, go **places** together, **do things** together – **their support group**

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **keep your heart right with God**
 - **do the things necessary** to get it right, and keep it right
- **spend time with God:** word, pray, sing
- **not entangle yourself** in the affairs of everyday life
- **avoid sinful situations** as much as possible
- **associate with godly people** – godly support group

- **inv.**