

SET HEALTHY EXPECTATIONS

Expectations is a weighty word. Child-development experts say teenagers will either live up or live down to parents' expectations. The trick is to set expectations high enough but not too high. The "Love and Logic" parenting approach, for example, maintains that kids should be respectful, responsible, and fun to be around. Other parents set expectations about grades, household chores, curfews, and other rules.

Although adolescence is a time for increased freedom, kids crave boundaries and expectations. Parents need to keep communication open, offer to negotiate when appropriate, and be willing to serve as the "bad guy" when kids are disappointed or angry. Giving teenagers some say in determining consequences can also make expectation-setting more effective.

Not only do parents have expectations for and of their teenagers, but society and peers cause teenagers to develop their own expectations about what life should be like. Expectations from society and peers often involve entitlement. Many teenagers expect easy success and praise, as well as happiness and wealth without excessive effort. God's expectations of Christian, however, are radically different. He expects sacrifice and selflessness. He warns we'll suffer—but says we'll be blessed for it. Read on to put expectations in proper perspective.

TIPS >>>

Guy Talk, Girl Talk 2 (Simply Youth Ministry) takes another look at worldly expectations:

The world has great expectations for young people, and they're so cunningly and effectively marketed to kids that they breathe them in almost as unconsciously as they do air. Dreams of power, money, and glory often morph into unrealistic or misguided expectations, leading kids to be or do things that God never intended for them to be or do.

In the quest for meaning and significance, kids easily come under the influence of expectations from media, friends, parents, and teachers. Many of these people may even have the right intentions, but all of the pressure potentially creates an insanely stressful weight.

The only way out is found at Jesus' feet, laying down the burden of expectation and being reminded of God's definition of success, which is foreign to this world.

- The world expects us to "Get rich," but **God says**, "Seek justice."
- The world expects us to "Acquire power," but **God says**, "Show mercy."
- The world says, "Become sexy," but **God says**, "Choose humility

God's first and greatest expectation of us isn't that we would give anything to him or do anything for him but that we would receive what he freely offers us. And what he offers is far beyond what we could possibly think or imagine. We're not exactly used to that sort of deal!

THE VIEW

Researchers say many teenagers are overconfident about their abilities and unrealistic about their expectations of success.

- Compared to 30 years ago, teachers give out A's more often even though students do less homework.
- Today's kids are more likely to say they're "A" students, even when they aren't.
- Compared to their peers in the '70s, today's teens have a stronger belief that they'll be great spouses, parents, and employees.

—*Monitoring the Future*

PONDER THIS

- What types of expectations—spoken and unspoken—do you have of your teenagers? Which might be too high or too low?
- How much say do you think teenagers should have in the expectations that are set for them, and why?
- What expectations do you have for yourself? How well do you meet God's expectations?





Setting the Pace

Expert Insights for Parents of Teenagers

By Kevin Mahaffy Jr.

“Hurry up!” “Keep up!” I often say these phrases when I’m leading a group. I’m always seeking to move others forward to fulfill a goal or reach a destination. To that end, knowledge and wisdom are essential. To be a successful leader, I need to know myself and the people I’m leading.

One thing I know about myself is I’m a fast walker. One thing I know about a lot of people I lead is they aren’t. I’m also a missional walker. I want to get us from where we are to where we need to be as fast as we can so we can do what we need to do.

Leaders move at a certain pace,

and it’s natural to want others to keep up with us. But if everyone moved at the same pace as us, we wouldn’t be leaders. (That’s knowledge.) So what are we to do? (That’s the wisdom question.) Should we lower our expectations of others? Maybe so. A good look at our expectations is never a bad idea. But at the end of the day, we still need to hold up high standards and challenge people to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

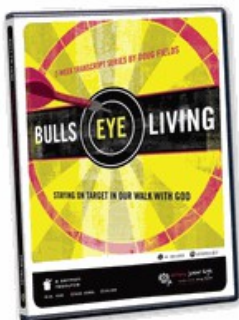
I believe the answer lies in the tension that we as leaders are called to live in. The challenge is to be far enough in front that we’re leading and calling people forward but not so far in front that people

can’t keep up with us. If we walk so fast that we lose people, we might get to our destination, but we’ll get there alone. As John Maxwell said, “A leader without followers is not a leader, he’s just a guy out taking a walk.” God hasn’t called leaders—and parents—to simply go for a walk; he’s entrusted us with the responsibility of taking kids with us, leading them on a journey of faith.

This is the paradox: We must show restraint in order to move. The best leaders have learned this secret. They have raised the bar of their leadership, embracing a higher form that isn’t always fast but is effective. It’s an agape leadership that’s willing to sacrifice for the good of others.

—SimplyYouthMinistry.com

RESOURCE



Bulls Eye Living, a four-week downloadable series from Doug Fields (Simply Youth Ministry), helps teenagers examine their purpose and explore the differences between the world’s values and God’s values.

BIBLE FOCUS

The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing.
—Proverbs 10:28, NLT

My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him.

—Psalm 62:5, KJV

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

MAINSTREAM MUSIC



FUN.

Background: This alt-rock band exploded into mainstream success thanks to the catchy single “We Are Young.” It was featured on TV shows, commercials, and an episode of *Glee*. With a charismatic frontman and sing-along harmonies, fun. is like Queen reborn. But they also drop a few f-bombs on this album.

Albums: *Some Nights* (2012), *Aim and Ignite* (2009)

What fun. Says: Speaking about the current state of music, singer Nate Ruess says, “I think what happened is rap-rock came along and just destroyed it. It polarized everybody and drew a line in the sand to the point where you could only be a pop group or an indie rock group. That’s one of the things that has harmed the music industry, never mind all the technological changes.”

Explore: You can see the video for the hit single “We Are Young” here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv6dMFF_yts. Their albums are also on Spotify.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC



P.O.D.

Background: During the past 20 years, this metal band has sold more than 10 million albums. They’ve had great crossover success, with songs featured in video games and at sporting events. P.O.D. (Payable On Death) is a reference to Jesus’ death, through which we inherit all his assets—including heaven.

Albums: *Murdered Love* (2012), *When Angels and Serpents Dance* (2008), *Satellite* (2001)

What P.O.D. Says: Discussing the four-year break between albums, singer Sonny Sandoval says, “For me, spiritually and personally, I needed to take a break and get away from the chaos of rock ‘n’ roll. I’m a husband and a daddy first and I just wanted to be home with my family. ... It was reconfirmation that this is where I need to be.”

Explore: The new video for “Murdered Love” is at www.payableondeath.com. The band’s albums are also on Spotify.

MOVIES

Movie: *The Bourne Legacy*

Genre: Action, Thriller

Rating: PG-13 (for violence and action sequences)

Synopsis: The next chapter in this franchise deals with the program that created Jason Bourne. Jeremy Renner is another member of the program, and the government decides it’s time to silence him, too. But he wants to live.

Our Take: The “Bourne” films have been smart and suspenseful, so I’d like to believe this one will be similar.

Movie: *Total Recall*

Genre: Action, Adventure

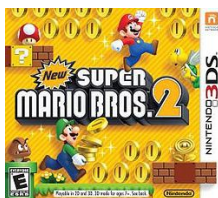
Rating: PG-13 (for intense sci-fi violence and action, brief nudity, language)

Synopsis: In a future where you can pay to have your dreams made into memories, something goes wrong with Doug Quaid’s procedure. Now he doesn’t know who or what is real.

Our Take: Few teenagers have likely seen the original movie. Philip K. Dick, who wrote the story, was fascinated by memories, identity, and trust. This could open a door to discussing our real identity in Christ.

For more media discussions and ideas, go to www.MinistryandMedia.com.

VIDEO GAMES



New Super Mario Brothers 2—*Super Mario Brothers* is a genuine classic, and Nintendo makes sure its most creative people work on the venerable franchise. This is sure to be a great game. (Rated E; Nintendo 3DS)

Darksiders 2—You play as Death—one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—trying to undo Armageddon. This game mixes all sorts of mythologies and tries to imagine heaven and hell as “playable” areas. With angels, demons, blood, and guts, we advise steering clear. (Rated M; multiple platforms)

AUGUST 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
Sunday School 9:30am-10:15am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Worship 6pm			Youth Bible Study 6:30pm-7:30pm			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sunday School 9:30am-10:15am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Worship 6pm			Youth Bible Study 6:30pm-7:30pm			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Sunday School 9:30am-10:15am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Worship 6pm			Youth Scavenger Hunt 6pm-8pm Pizza Fellowship			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Sunday School 9:30am-10:15am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Worship 6pm			Youth Bible Study 6:30pm-7:30pm The Book of James Pt.1			
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Sunday School 9:30am-10:15am Morning Worship 10:30am Evening Worship 6pm			Youth Bible Study 6:30pm-7:30pm The Book of James Pt.2			