

# ***BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL PRESENTS: PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC***

## ***Special Thoughts on Raising Kids***

### **Curfews**

If the subject of curfews brings to mind endless battles with your teen, here's a new approach to try. Treat the last three years your teen is home as practice for the real world. The fewer the rules, the better. Ideally, those rules should be the same as in the real world.

In the real world, there are only a few dorm rules, and those who live in apartments set their own rules. But don't panic! That doesn't mean a teen has total freedom. Instead, we ask them to begin making their own rules.

Instead of telling your teen when to be home, ask, "Where are you going?" "Where can I reach you?" and "When should I start worrying?"

The teen should set the curfew. It may be different each time, just like in the real world. What we're doing is preparing our teens to live as adults.

### **Negotiate**

Parents can negotiate with their teens on behavior they can both live with. If a teen says he'll be home at 5:00 a.m., that's unacceptable. A parent can say, "I'm not up to worrying that late," and recognize the teen is just testing.

### **Two-way Street**

An experienced father of five learned to allow his son Don to make the most of his own decisions, including how late he stayed out. His dad made a deal with him: "I won't hassle you if you let me know where you are and how to reach you, in an emergency. I'll do the same for you, so you'll always know where I am."

This dad learned that curfews are a two-way street. Once he arrived home two hours late to a household of children who were worried sick. From then on he called if he was going to be late.

### **Promise Not to Worry**

Expressing fear and concern has a lot more impact than expressing anger with teens who stay out late without letting us know where they are. A wise parent lets their teen know they're the type who doesn't worry: "If you're late, and I don't know where you are, I imagine you could be lying on the side of a road—and fifteen minutes could mean the difference between life and death if you need a transfusion. But if you agree to always call when you're late, I'll know nothing is wrong."

### **Anger Doesn't Work**

When a teen walks in the door late and is not even sorry, it naturally makes a parent mad. But yelling only makes things worse. Instead, say, "It's lucky for you that I'm angry because I'm not going to talk to you about being late until tomorrow, when I can think better."

As difficult as this is, it helps to remember we can't reason with teens when they're in an emotional state. And the words we use when we're emotional are often the ones we wish we could take back.

It's far more effective to deal with children when they can really hear us; when we're happy and when they're happy.

***Replace anger with concern***