

Rock Solid Family Relationships: Satan's War Against the Family


BYU Education Week
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How Will Your Children Turn Out?

"In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an effect on you as the way your children turn out.

"You will either rejoice and boast of their accomplishments or you will weep, head in hands, bereft and forlorn, if they become a disappointment or an embarrassment to you" (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children*, *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50).



2 Timothy 3:1-5

"(1) But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. (2) For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, (4) treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (*Revised Standard Version*, in *Eight Translation New Testament* [Tyndale House Publishers: Wheaton, Ill., 1974] 1543,1545).


A Warning from Elder Boyd K. Packer

"I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now.

"Words of profanity, vulgarity, and blasphemy are heard everywhere... Unspeakable wickedness and perversion were once hidden in dark places; now they are in the open, even accorded legal protection.


Warning (Cont.)

"At Sodom and Gomorrah these things were localized. Now they are spread across the world, and they are among us" (President Boyd K. Packer, *The One Pure Defense*, Address to CES Religious Educators, 6 February 2004, Salt Lake Tabernacle, 4).



A Hemorrhage Among Our Youth

"*There is a hemorrhage among our youth, and we've got to stop it*" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, as told to Elder Melvin J. Hammond, Reported at Philmont LDS Leadership Week, June 2003).



The Devil is Well Organized



"We live in a wicked world. Never in our memory have the forces of evil been arrayed in such a deadly formation. The devil is well organized and has many emissaries working for him. His satanic majesty has proclaimed his intention to destroy our young people, to weaken the home and the family, and to defeat the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ through his great Church" (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 413).

Frequency of Delinquent Activities Ever Done

| | Males | Females |
|---|-------|---------|
| <i>Offenses Against Others</i> | | |
| Cursed or swore at parent | 19% | 21% |
| Pushed, shoved, or hit parent | 10% | 14% |
| Disorderly Conduct, Loud, Unruly | 48% | 43% |
| Suspended from School | 20% | 6% |
| Purposely picked on other kids | 52% | 43% |
| Physically beat up another kid | 25% | 8% |
| Hurt Someone Badly enough, had to visit Dr. | 8% | 3% |

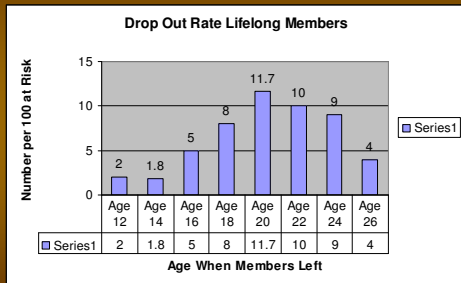
Frequency of Delinquent Activities Ever Done

| | Males | Females |
|--|-------|---------|
| <i>Offenses Against Property</i> | | |
| Stole something from store | 33% | 20% |
| Stole something from locker, desk, purse | 12% | 11% |
| Took a Car without Owners Permission | 8% | 6% |
| Broke into a building, car, house | 15% | 4% |
| Vandalized someone's property | 26% | 12% |

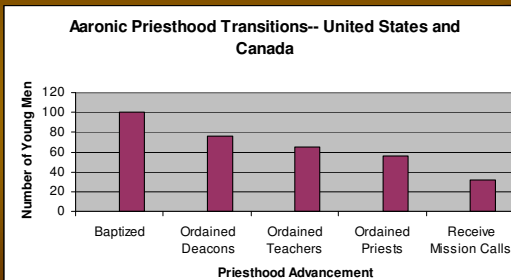
Frequency of Delinquent Activities Ever Done

| | Males | Females |
|--|-------|---------|
| <i>Offenses Without Victims</i> | | |
| Smoked Cigarettes | 24% | 64% |
| Chewed Tobacco | 12% | 51% |
| Drank Alcohol | 24% | 81% |
| Used Marijuana | 7% | 39% |
| Ran Away from Home | 12% | 13% |
| Skipped School | 44% | 41% |
| Cheated on Test | 70% | 73% |
| Read Pornographic Books or Magazines | 46% | 20% |
| Watched Sexually Explicit movies or videos | 46% | 27% |
| Been involved in heavy petting | 22% | 32% |
| Had Sexual Intercourse | 7% | 73% |

Look What Is Happening!



Look Again!



Satan is Winning

"Satan's legions are many. In their battle to enslave mankind, they use weapons such as selfishness; dishonesty; corruption; sexual impurity, be it adultery, fornication, or homosexuality; pornography; permissiveness; drugs, and many others. I believe Satan's ultimate goal is to destroy the family, *because if he would destroy the family, he will not just have won the battle; he will have won the war*" (*Ensign*, January 1974, 108; emphasis added).

Problem #1: Overcommitted & Underconnected Families

Today's families are overscheduled and Underconnected. We spend our days driving our children to Karate and Soccer and Piano and Singing. Who is raising our kids?



The Time Bind

- In a 1990 *Los Angeles Times* survey of 1,000 families, 57 percent of fathers and 55 percent of mothers reported feeling guilty that they had spent too little time with their children. (see A.R. Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When work Becomes Home & Home Becomes Work* [Henry Holt & Company: New York, 1997], 6).
- In a recent Gallup poll, 41% of adult Americans said they had too little time to spend with their families (George Gallup, Jr. and Frank Newport, "Time at a Premium for Many Americans," *Gallup Poll Monthly*, November 1990, 45).

Less Free Time

- Data from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, since the late 1970s, Children have lost 12 hours per week in free time; including a 25 percent drop in playing, and a 50 percent drop in unstructured outdoor activities.
- During this same period, time in structured sports has doubled, and passive spectator leisure (watching others play) increased from 30 minutes per week to over 3 hours.

Problem #2: Isolation from Parents

- "I feel my mom is everywhere and nowhere at the same time" – Kyle, 15 years old
- "Running around like chickens with our heads cut off stresses both us and our kids, and, most important, schools them in a parenting style that will not stand them, or our future grandchildren, in good stead. Our children benefit more from our ability to be 'present' than they do from being rushed off to one more activity. Try to slow down. It is almost always in quiet, unpressured moments that kids reach inside and expose the most delicate parts of their developing selves. Study after study shows that teens want more, not less, time with their parents, yet parents regularly overestimate the amount of time they spend with their teenagers" (Madeline Levine, *The Price of Privilege* [Harper-Collins Publishers: New York, 2006], 6).

The Silver Spoon Syndrome

- Affluent kids are painfully aware that they rate low on their parents' "to do" list.
- There is an inverse relationship between income and closeness to parents.
- Lower socioeconomic kids are far more likely to report feeling close to their parents than kids from high socioeconomic homes
- Kids who don't feel close to their parents are unlikely to confide in them
- Affluent parents underestimate the impact of their absences and overestimate the degree of closeness their children feel towards them



* Data from Levine, *The Price of Privilege*, 32.

Latchkey Kids

A National poll of teenagers funded by the Whitehouse in the spring of 2000 found that over 20 percent of American teens rated "not having enough time with parents," as their top concern. 59% of today's children come home to an empty house—(Dobson, *Bringing Up Boys*, 102).



Raising Children is a Matter of the Heart

"Raising children has come to look more and more like a business endeavor and less and less like an endeavor of the heart. We are overly concerned with 'the bottom line,' with how our children 'do' rather than who are children 'are.' We pour time, attention, and money into insuring their performance, consistently making it to their soccer game while inconsistently making it to the dinner table. The fact that our persistent and often critical involvement is well intended, that we believe that our efforts ultimately will help our children to be happy and to successfully compete in a demanding world, does not lessen the damage" (Levine, *The Price of Privilege*, 14).

Are you a Frantic Family?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. We struggle to find time for unhurried family meals. | T/F |
| 2. We spend too much time getting to and from our children's activities. | T/F |
| 3. Homework can be difficult to squeeze into the children's schedules. | T/F |
| 4. My kids don't have time to hang out and entertain themselves. | T/F |
| 5. I wish we spent more time home as a family. | T/F |
| 6. It is hard to visit relative or family friends because we're too busy. | T/F |
| 7. We don't go on family trips or outings as much as we would like. | T/F |
| 8. Even on the weekends it's difficult to get everyone together because of our busy schedules. | T/F |

To score: 1 point for each true answer. Score of 6-8: You're a serious frantic family. 3-5: Somewhat frantic. 0-2: You should be teaching this class. How do you do it? (see W.J. Doherty and B.Z. Carlson, *Putting Family First: Successful Strategies for Reclaiming Family Life in a Hurry-Up World* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 22).

Problem #3: A Valueless Society

"Solid values and mortality seem to have stopped being a way of life and have simply become a punch line for the jokes of the fast-laners. Gone our the days when cheating in school was just some isolated case of some lazy kid copying off the smart kid; today over half of students admit to cheating. Some kids are even using high-tech electronic pagers during tests and plagiarizing term papers off the internet.

Valueless Society (Cont.)

"Where once a kid could buy illegal drugs on a street corner in the bad part of town, today he can do it on the Internet from the kitchen table while you sit not ten feet away.... One hundred percent of the children with access to a computer can view pornography with the click of a mouse. Our kids today are what I call an All-Access-Pass Generation" (Phil McGraw, *Family First* [Free Press: New York, 2004], 10).

Problem #4: A Materialistic Society

"We go to the mall and we see something— some wonderful widget— and we tell ourselves we have to have it. It's not just any widget; it's made of *quality* plastic. And it's fancier than all the widgets in the neighborhood. So we save up and we get that widget and it pleases us immensely. But stores have lots of widgets, and while we're buying ours, we notice that there's a 'high end' widget that would *really* be fantastic to own: a big screen, hi-speed, digitized, *glorious* widget. After all, the family down the street has now raised the bar: they just got the new, improved, titanium widget. We have to fight back! So we make that next purchase, bring it home in triumph, and we show off our prize to all of the neighbors" (Dean Hughes, *The Cost of Winning*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008], 8).

Road to Happiness?

"The Road to happiness is paved with lovely widgets." -- Dean Hughes



Money Doesn't Buy Happiness

- In the 1990s, the Irish reported higher levels of life satisfaction than both the Japanese and the West Germans, despite the fact that the Japanese and West Germans had twice the income as the Irish
- "People who go to work in their overalls and on the bus are just as happy, on the average, as those in suits who drive to work in their own Mercedes" (D. Lykken, *Happiness* [New York: St. Martins Press, 1999], 17).
- In a study where the question was asked, "How much money would you need to be happy?" People who learned less than \$30,000 a year said that \$50,000 a year would fulfill their dreams, while those making over \$100,000 said that it would take \$250,000 for them to be satisfied (D.G. Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, [New York: Avon Books, 1993], 53).

Problem #5: A Selfish Society

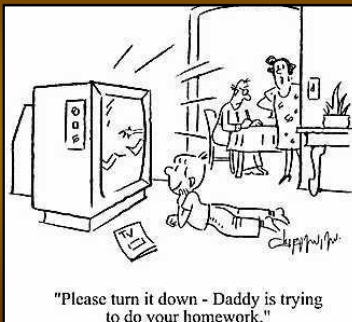


J. Golden Kimball worried about the "modern conception of time," which "so completely fills our days with one pressing engagement after another. He saw people "running hither and thither, until we have little or no time to minister to the needy, the hungry, the naked, the disconsolate ones who are ever with us. It would almost seem that materialism and selfishness and greed have nearly driven out of us that Christlike spirit" (*Conference Report*, April 1934, 32).

Problem #6: An Overprotective Parenting Paradigm

"Sensing their children's vulnerabilities, parents find themselves protecting their offspring from either challenge or disappointment. Fearful that their kids will not be sturdy enough to withstand even the most mundane requirements of completing homework, meeting curfew, straightening their rooms, or even showing up for dinner, discipline becomes lax, often nonexistent.

Look Familiar?



An Overprotective Parenting Paradigm

"While demands for outstanding academic or extracurricular performance are very high, expectations about family responsibilities are amazingly low. This kind of imbalance in expectations results in kids who regularly expect others to 'take up the slack,' rather than learning themselves how to prioritize tasks or how to manage time. Tutors, coaches, counselors, and psychotherapists are all enlisted by parents to shore up performance and help ensure the kind of academic and athletic success so prized in [the] community.

An Overprotective Parenting Paradigm

"While many [teens] may seem passive and disconnected, their parents are typically in a frenzy of worry and overinvolvement. They tend to shower their children with material goods, hoping to buy compliance with parents' goals as well as divert attention away from their children's unhappiness" (Madeline Levine, *The Price of Privilege* [Harper-Collins Publishers: New York, 2006], 6).

Where is the River Taking Us?

"The forces pulling on families are just too strong in the modern world. Ultimately, we must decide either to steer or to go where the river takes us" (William Doherty, *The Intentional Family: How to Build Family Ties in Our Modern World* [New York: Addison-Wesley, 1997], 10).



So What Are We Going to Do?

- 1) Get our priorities straight
- 2) Spending time together
- 3) One-on-one family experiences
- 4) Reclaim Family Meal Time
- 5) Reclaim Family Bed Time
- 6) Take Family Vacations
- 7) Reduce Media Time in the Home

Got Regrets?

"Near the end of his life, a father looked back on how he had spent his time on earth. An acclaimed, respected author of numerous scholarly works, he said, 'I wish I had written one less book and taken my children fishing more often.'

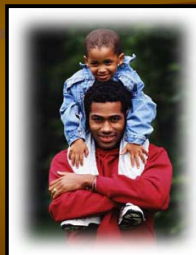
"Time passes quickly. Many parents say that it seems like yesterday that their children were born. Now those children are grown, perhaps with children of their own. 'Where did the years go?' they ask. We cannot call back time that is past, we cannot stop time that now is, and we cannot experience the future in our present state. Time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future but to be used wisely in the present.

"Merely keeping busy is not necessarily evidence that we are using our time wisely. It is with what we are busy that counts" (Viewpoint, *Church News*, 10 June 2000, 16).

Where do we begin?

1. Priorities

"I warn you that if your family does not come first, your family will not last" (Pearsall, *The Power of the Family*, [New York: Doubleday, 1990, 18).



Where do we begin?

2. Time

"If the father, tired from work, spends just ten minutes with the boy, or a half hour, both will fill refueled. If, whether in the boy's infancy or later in life, the father doesn't spend the minimal amount of time with his child, he'll actually end up spending more than that amount of energy dealing with his son's anger, rejection, and abandonment throughout an evening, weekend, or lifetime" (Gurian, *The Wonder of Boys*, 1996, 116).



Crazy about Kids!

"Every child should spend a substantial amount of time with somebody who's crazy about him or her....There has to be at least one person who has an irrational involvement with that child, someone who thinks that kid is more important than other people's kids, someone who's in love with him or her, and whom he or she loves in return....You can't pay a [person] to do what a [parent] will do for free" (Urie Brofenbrenner, "Nobody Home: The Erosion of the American Family," *Psychology Today*, May 1977).

Time Distractions From Family Connections

Check off the following activities that have cut into family time, even if there are some positive aspects to them:

1. ___ Watching T.V.
2. ___ "Talking" on Internet Chat Rooms
3. ___ Surfing the Web
4. ___ Downloading Music
5. ___ Video Games



Time Distractions (Cont.)

6. ___ Instant Messaging
7. ___ Text Messaging
8. ___ Cell Phone Calls
9. ___ Watching DVD's
10. ___ Church Work/Activities
11. ___ Lessons
12. ___ Competitive Clubs
13. ___ Touring Teams



Time Distractions (Cont.)

14. ___ Tournaments
15. ___ Tutoring
16. ___ Going to movies
17. ___ Shopping
18. ___ Field Trips
19. ___ Parties
20. ___ Staying in bedroom with door closed



**Is there anything left for the family?
How can we connect?**

Time Management

"Time management is critical for all families. Most now live in the Laser Lane, hurtling down life's highway at the speed of light. Seventy percent of families now have double incomes. That may mean double the earnings, but it also means double the stress. That's why we have kids booked with activities up the wazoo. Even single-income families get sucked into the competition because they fear their kids won't be able to match up with the obsessively trained double-income kids.

Time Management (Cont.)

"Parents are scared to death that if their daughter isn't in dance lessons before she stops crawling, she'll never get into the neighborhood Bolshoi Ballet. For boys, there's intense pressure to specialize in one sport and make it a focus from toddlerhood through the teen years. Fun no longer seems to be a factor, and the all-round athlete is going the way of the dodo and the eight-track tape.

Competing Parents

"A friend told me that he was confronted one day by another father after his son's junior high basketball practice. 'Your son is the future of this team,' said the other father, who stood about six-eight with an athletic build. 'I don't know if you have the financial resources or not, but your boy needs to be getting private coaching and he needs to be playing in summer leagues and going to all the camps.'

Competing Parents (Cont.)

"I played college ball [the guy mentioned this at least three times during my short speech], and I know what kind of dedication it takes.'

"My friend thanked the other father for his interest, then ignored his advice. He wanted his son to play basketball for the love of the game, and he wanted him to enjoy other sports too. He'd also seen the other father's son play. The boy was fully grown by the age of thirteen and he was only five-seven.

Competing Parents (Cont.)

"He'd told his teammates that he was totally burned out on basketball and hated being pressured to play it. At least twice, the son of that college ball father had fainted in class, either from exhaustion or stress to get out of practice or a game. This kid was headed for serious trouble" (Phil McGraw, *Family First* [Free Press: New York, 2004], 253).

Top Ten Priorities

Put these in rank orders as best you can:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Top 10 Time Expenditures

Put these in rank orders as best you can:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What Will it Take?

- **The million dollar question is what would it take to make these two lists congruent?**
- **Will it take a death in the family, a crisis, a fire?**
- **What are we waiting for?**
- **Next week will never come.**

Where do we begin?

3. One on One Experiences with our Children

"I have always been impressed that the Lord deals with us personally, individually. We bless babies one at a time, even if they are twins or triplets. We baptize and confirm children one at a time. We take the sacrament, are ordained to the priesthood, or move through the ordinances of the temple as individuals — as one person developing a [personal] relationship with our Father in Heaven...Heaven's emphasis is on each individual, on every single person. (President Howard W. Hunter, "Eternal Investments," *Address to CES Religious Educators*, 10 Feb. 1989, 4.)



Practical Solutions

- Never bring work home.
- Schedule a time each week to spend 30 minutes of one on one time with each family member. Plan a family activity every Saturday.
- Interview your children formally each fast Sunday



Practical Solutions

4. Reclaim Family Meal Time

Dr. Blake Bowden of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital surveyed 527 teenagers to learn what family and lifestyle characteristics were related to mental health and adjustment. They learned that teenagers whose parents ate dinner with them five times per week or more were the least likely to be on drugs, to be depressed, or to be in trouble with the law. They were also more likely to be doing well in school and surrounded by a supportive circle of friends. The more poorly adjusted teens had parents who ate with them only three evenings per week or less (see Dobson, *Bringing Up Boys*, 92).



Meal Time is Critical

"Parents need to remember that kids love rituals and depend on them for a sense of continuity and connection. Perhaps the single most important a family can observe is having dinner together. Families who eat together five or more times a week have kids who are significantly less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, or marijuana, have higher grade-point averages, less depressive symptoms, and fewer suicide attempts than families who eat together two or fewer times a week. Eating together reinforces the idea that family members are interested, available, and concerned about each other. It provides a reliable time and place for kids to share accomplishments, challenges, worries, to check in with parents and siblings, or simply feel part of the family" (Levine, *The Price of Privilege*, 33).

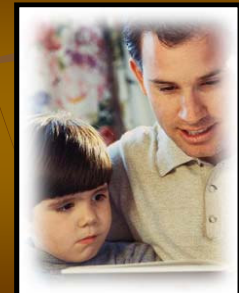
Mealtime Conversation Starters

- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
- If you were given \$500, what would you do with it?
- If there was a fire in the house, what would you do?
- If you could meet any person in the world, who would it be?
- If you could meet someone from history, who would it be?
- Who is your favorite hero and why?
- What is your all-time favorite movie and why?
- What was your most embarrassing moment? Why?
- If you could skip a day of school, what would you do?
- What is your favorite holiday?

More Practical Solutions

5. Reclaim Family Bed Time

- Create a regular bedtime hour and stick to it.
- Spend 30 minutes winding down before bedtime. Bath, snack, quiet time, personal reading time,
- Read books, talk about stuff at the bed side.
- For me, the perfect bedtime is a story with the entire family, a song, and a prayer. Then, the kids know the four steps to bed: put on jammies, brush teeth, say prayers, and get in bed. Then, we can have personal time with our kids once they're in their own beds.
- Have bedtime talks.
- Ritual snack.
- Talks in bed at night
- Special Time. One kid stays up while others are in bed.



Practical Solutions

6. Family Vacations

- Research has shown that the number of families taking vacations has declined 28% during the last two decades, and the average number of nights spent on vacations is 5.



7. Get Rid of the TV and other media

- The average junior high student devotes more time to media than to any other waking activity—7 hours a day to media.
- The average kid spends 4 hours watching T.V. each day.
- “Children spend more time watching television than in any other activity except sleep” (Huston & Wright, University of Kansas. “Television and Socializing of Young Children”).
- From that same study, 54% of kids have a T.V. in their bedroom.
- 44 percent of kids say they watch something different when they’re alone than when their with their parents (25% choose MTV).
- By the time they are 18, U.S. youth will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,00 acts of violence (American Psychiatry Association).

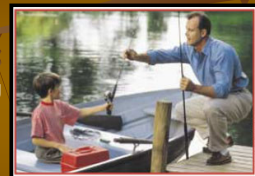
Minimize TV Watching

“We rediscovered card and board games, reading books and magazines, walks, parks, and even going to bed earlier to get that all important sleep so many adults and children need. We have since plugged the TV back in but it is rarely on anymore and even then for [PBS] or a video” (W.J Doherty and B.Z. Carlson, *Putting Family First: Successful Strategies for Reclaiming Family Life in a Hurry-Up World* [New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002], 95).

- One family has a one hour of media limit per day. No media until after dinner. You get one hour a day. Decide how to use it: email, TV, video game. Your choice.

Children Need More Than Love

“Children need more than love. They need continuing relationships with the people who love them. People use to talk a lot about quality time with their children. But they seemed to mean, ‘I’m going to do something very nice and maybe even spend some money on you. But I only have half an hour, so enjoy it!’ That is no way to build a relationship.... Relationships include taking time to be with each other. They are also about sensing the other person’s unique hopes and wishes....”



Got Time?

“Relationships are not built while running a stopwatch. They grow when people take time to be together. But there is more at issue than time. We need to be in tune with the other person’s needs, feelings, preferences. Sometimes the opportunity to show our love comes at inopportune times and in unexpected ways....For each person there is a different pattern of hopes, dreams, needs, and preferences” (H. Wallace Goddard, *The Frightful and Joyous Journey of Family Life: Applying Gospel Insights in the Home*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], pp. 96-97).



Media (Cont.)

- Our family, time for time in reading. Read for media. Read one hour, one hour media. However, TV is off during the school week. TV has been off all summer, and it has been wonderful!
- No computers in kids rooms. Did you know that 25% of preschoolers have a television in their bedrooms? By age 7, 40% do, and the percentages keep going up in adolescence. In Randal Wright’s most recent study, he found that regarding teenagers: 94% had a stereo of some kind in their bedroom; 86% had a TV; 67% had a VCR, and 58% had cable.
- “The more we wire our houses, the less we connect with one another in our families” (W.J Doherty and B.Z. Carlson, *Putting Family First: Successful Strategies for Reclaiming Family Life in a Hurry-Up World* [New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002], 101).

Reclaiming Our Children

"[Parents] stay at the crossroads of the home. Some time ago, I was attending a quarterly stake conference... I said to the President of the stake,... 'Have you some mother here, an older mother, who had a large family and had the joy of seeing every one of her family married in the temple?' He looked out over the audience and he said, 'Well, there is Sister (I shall call her Jones), she has had a family of eleven, and they all have been married in the temple.' And as this lovely white-haired mother stood beside me at the microphone, I said, 'Would you take a lesson out of your book and tell us, what have you done to reach this most marvelous achievement?'"



Reclaiming Our Children

And she replied,... 'I might give you two suggestions. In the first place, when our family was growing up, I always was there at the crossroads of the home, when my children were coming to or going from the home. And second: whatever we did we did together as a family. We played together, we prayed together, we worked together, we did everything together. I guess that's all I can think of.' I said to her, 'Now you have preached two great sermons.'" (Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee*, 139-140).