

Expectations, Expectations

I knew a young lady once who told me that when she was a youth and made a commitment to purity that her parents said that to do such a thing was great but that they didn't expect her to live up to it. After all, both of her other two siblings had made a similar commitment and both of them had compromised sexually, so why would they expect her to do anything different?

Expectations are a powerful thing. Children and youth will live up to or down to the expectations adults put on them. If you and the student's parents don't expect them to want to memorize Scripture, they probably won't. If you don't expect them to grow spiritually, they probably won't. If you don't expect them to read their Bible during the week, they probably won't. If these are the feelings expressed to students by leaders, adults, and parents, then the students will sink to meet these low expectations.

However, when a goal is put in front of them and they are told that they *can* do such and such, an incredible thing happens. Instead of sinking, they can rise to levels that far exceed the expectations given them.

A few years ago I trained a group of sixth graders for a mission trip. Could a group of sixth graders really lead a VBS? Would they really want to learn how to share their testimonies and the plan of salvation? Would they be willing to memorize the "Roman Road?" and commit to weeks and weeks of training, even if it meant missing ballgames? The answer is yes and not only did that VBS have a record-setting attendance, they, one-on-one, led 16 people to Christ during that mission trip, and by the end of the summer they had led 29 people to the Lord.

In our churches today the greatest factor that holds children and youth back from spiritual development is the low expectations of parents and adults.