

Helping Your Teen Stand Firm in Our Anti-God Culture

Teenagers today live in a very different culture from the one our parents or their parents grew up in. With this new culture comes so many good things, but it also brings with it a flood of unprecedented ungodliness.

I have had the honor of growing up at the International House of Prayer of Kansas City and have loved living inside the “bubble” of the House of Prayer all my life. For me, this “bubble” meant I was safe; everyone around me had the same opinion and supported what I believed so I really did not have to be rooted in my beliefs.

It wasn't until my junior year of high school that things changed.

That year, I attended a new school where I was in a dual credit program and was surrounded by other juniors and seniors from the Kansas City area. Going into school, I had no idea I would meet such angry, hurting, confused and searching teenagers.

On the first day of classes, I met the girl with whom I was set up to debate. We were given the topic of abortion and had to share our beliefs on the topic in front of the class. Very quickly into my speech, it was obvious that I was a part of a very small percentage in the class who were pro-life.

To make a long story short, I ended up having many conversations throughout the year with the girl I debated that day. Though her opinion on abortion did not change, I saw her start to question if it really was OK. Because of this situation, my beliefs were strengthened, and so was my faith. Standing my ground on something I morally believe is right can make a difference.

Quickly into the year, 1 Tim. 4:12 became a verse I was constantly going back to. It says, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." I realized that I did not have to stand on the tables in my classroom and preach the gospel to be a Christian.

Though I believe there are times that this does need to happen, I could simply take the time to take a girl out to coffee and talk to her about life and the same thing could happen. She would be able to see the love of Jesus in the way I acted, the way I talked to those around me, the way I handled conflict and frustration, and the way I loved others even when I wasn't receiving love in return.

My lifeline in a culture that opposes God has been my secret place with the Lord—that time when I'm alone and I get to talk with Him. I've learned that He loves just talking to me. He loves to share in my day-to-day life, He loves to hear me tell Him the things that made me laugh or cry that day.

Though He knows all things, He loves relationship and relationship comes with conversation. When I take my time to sit and talk with Him daily and read the Word, my cup begins to be filled so I can pour out and have boldness to stand for what's right in the face of ungodliness.

A dying tree is not going to stand when the wind blows. The same goes for me. If I'm not taking care of my relationship with Holy Spirit and taking the time to study the Word, I will start to die on the inside. And when I'm faced with opposing opinions, I won't have roots to stand.

Psalm 1 says,

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a

tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; its leaf will not wither, and whatever he does will prosper (Ps. 1:1-3).

I want to be that tree with deep roots bearing good fruit, but that only comes with delighting in the Lord and meditating on His Word.

Finally, I learned the importance of community. I was not made to do life alone. This is where your family, friends, pastor or mentor come into play. Get people around you who will sharpen you. Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." Having other godly ones around you who will sharpen your opinion and hold you accountable is priceless.

Though we live in a culture that opposes God, we can be burning and shining lamps in our generation. We can be ones that love just as we've been loved. We can be the ones who have deep roots and stand in the midst of intense cultural pressures. Because of our example, many lives will be changed and turned toward the Lord. {eoa}

*Reprinted with permission from the International House of Prayer Kansas City. **Hampton Conder** is 19 years old and will be a freshman in college this fall. She has grown up at the International House of Prayer of Kansas City and is honored to live in Kansas City with her parents and brother. During her high school years, Hampton served in the Global Prayer Room as a worship leader and singer as well as serving on staff with the Children's Equipping Center with their worship department and summer camps.*