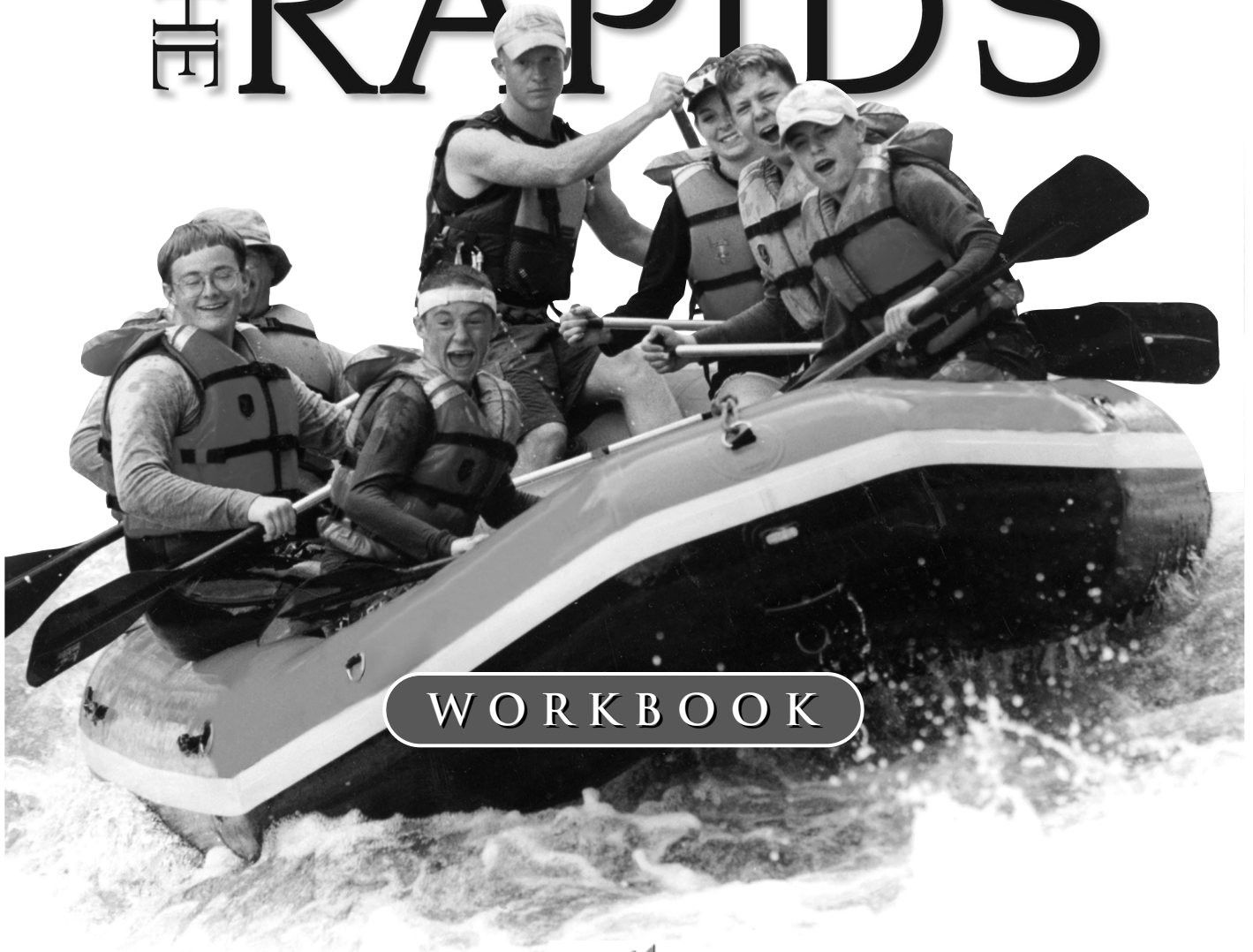


DR. KEVIN LEMAN

RUNNING THE RAPIDS



WORKBOOK



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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The RUNNING THE RAPIDS workbook accompanies the six video lessons by Dr. Kevin Leman. The workbook is vital to the study because it helps make practical application of Dr. Leman's video lessons and is a reference to which you can refer for years to come. ***Use it aggressively!*** Whether you are completing the study with a group of couples or on your own, be sure to take notes on the video lessons and then work through the discussion guide, writing down your thoughts, ideas, and comments. Fill in every blank. **NOTE:** Each lesson — video and discussion — is designed to be completed in 55 to 60 minutes, but if you are unable to finish in the allotted time, feel free to continue it in the next session or complete the lessons on your own. May God bless you in your study of RUNNING THE RAPIDS.

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KNOW THE RIVER

What's So Scary about Adolescence Anyway?

SCRIPTURE



What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.

Hebrews 11:1

**“You make a difference.
You are your child’s best teacher.”**

Raising kids through their adolescent years is like guiding your family in a raft through whitewater rapids. The role of the guide on such a trip is vital. No one would want to take a whitewater trip without a capable guide. Because every parent has taken this trip before, parents can be encouraged because they know the journey already.

As parent and guide, you know the dangers that lie ahead for your teenager. You know the unseen, destructive forces that lie just below the surface. By trusting in God, by having faith in Him, you can find confident assurance amid turbulent waters.

Parents need to relay to their teenagers a sense of trust. Teens can trust their parents because parents have made this trip before and know the issues and challenges that teens face. Parents also need to know that they have much more influence on their kids’ lives than they may realize. Sometimes parents sell themselves short and underestimate their influence, but the parental role is crucial and vital to a teen.

The adolescent years can be the best years in a family if parent and teen draw closer together and build an even stronger relationship of trust and encouragement. Your teenager does not want you to be a teenager. Your teen wants you to be the parent. Parents need to be firm yet understanding and encouraging as teens test their boundaries and search for significance.

Parents need to pay attention to three elements as they guide kids through adolescence. Parents need to . . .

- 1. Decide to major on the majors, not on the minors.** Pick your battles. Not everything is worthy of concern and debate.
- 2. Learn to say positive things to your child.** Children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:3). Make a special effort to affirm your kids when they make good choices.
- 3. Find something their children can do well.** Emphasize this strength and help your teen feel accepted and special.

You are the key in your teenager's life. You may be scared about guiding the raft through turbulent waters, but you know the journey, and you can make a positive difference. Be a cheerleader for your child. Be on your child's team.

Key Thoughts from Video Lesson 1

*“The more trips you take down the river,
the more relaxed you can be.”*

1. The river is adolescence. It's scary to some and not to others.
2. As the parent, you are the helmsman. You are responsible for the cubs who come out of your den.
3. This is what has to connect you to your son or daughter: a sense of trust that you have been down this river before.
4. Don't sell yourself short. You have much more influence in your child's life than you may realize.
5. When does adolescence begin?
Age ten for girls and age eleven for boys.
6. Three elements to pay attention to as you run the rapids:
 - A. Major on the majors, not the minors.
 - B. Learn to say positive things to your child.
 - C. Find something your child can do well.
7. Be a cheerleader for your child.

DISCUSSION

1. One reason parents fear the adolescent years is that they remember the painful experiences from their own adolescence. Think about your teen years. In the space below, jot down a brief reminder of an adolescent experience that left an imprint on your life. Was that experience positive, negative, or both? Discuss it with others in your group.

2. As a parent, your attitude toward adolescence will color how you guide your teenager through turbulent times. Read each of the following statements and check the responses that best describe your attitude toward your child's teenage years. Compare your responses to others in the group.

- I'm scared to death! Someone throw me a life preserver!
- It's no big deal. I'm not worried.
- I'm exhausted. I'm running on fumes.
- I'm excited, pumped, and ready for more.
- I'm overwhelmed. I don't know what to do next.



3. **LIFESCENE:** *Claire gave her parents ulcers when she was a teenager. An obedient child with lenient parents, Claire went wild as a teen and experimented with every taboo. Now that she's the parent of a teenage daughter, she does not want history to repeat itself. Claire drills her daughter, asking question after question, and is often skeptical of the answers she receives. She suspects that Angela is lying to her just as Claire lied to her parents. Claire decides to be anything but lenient and comes down hard on Angela, grounding her at every infraction of home rules. But the more Claire restricts and disciplines Angela, the more bizarre and disobedient Angela becomes. In spite of Claire's diligence and close monitoring of Angela, she fears that Angela is following in her footsteps. Is this raft in jeopardy of hitting the rocks, or is this just a typical family with a teenager? What, if anything, do you think should be done? Discuss your response with others in the group.*

4. As helmsman of the family raft, a parent must decide how active and involved to be in his or her teenager's life. Some parents are too passive; some, too controlling. Rate your current level of involvement in your teen's life by placing an **X** on the following continuum. Then place a **✓** on the continuum to indicate the level of involvement you believe is needed.

<i>Passive Removed</i>						<i>Controlling Dictatorial</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Kids today are growing up too quickly. Television, movies, and peers influence your child's behavior, language, and dress. What signs in your teenager's world illustrate that kids are growing up too quickly? Discuss your insights with others in the group.

6. Dr. Leman encourages parents to talk to their teenagers about potential problems before they arise. But teens often are not interested in discussing matters that do not seem important to them. How can a parent find opportunities for such discussions?

7. Dr. Leman encourages parents to major on the majors, not on the minors. As you think about your home and your teenager, which issues are major, and which are minor? List your responses in the columns below.

Major Issues	Minor Issues

If you are married, complete #7 at home with your spouse. Agreeing in principle with your spouse on major and minor issues is important for a safe trip through the rapids of adolescence.

- 8.** Psalm 127:3–5 states, “Children are a gift from God; they are his reward. Children born to a young man are like sharp arrows to defend him. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them. That man shall have the help he needs when arguing with his enemies.” What have you said to your teenager lately that expressed how much you cherish her or him?

- 9.** You may find it easy to be critical of and negative about your teenager. How can you avoid being a negative parent and instead genuinely and appropriately affirm your teen? Share your responses with others in the group.

- 10.** List some things your teenager does well. After completing your list, make a mental note to affirm your child in these areas.

- 11.** Based on the issues you have studied in this session, what changes do you think you need to make in relating to your teenager? Jot down your thoughts and share them with others.

- 12.** Join others in your group and pray for one another. Ask the Lord to guide you and other parents in being caring, loving, and involved guides as you steer your family through these critical years.