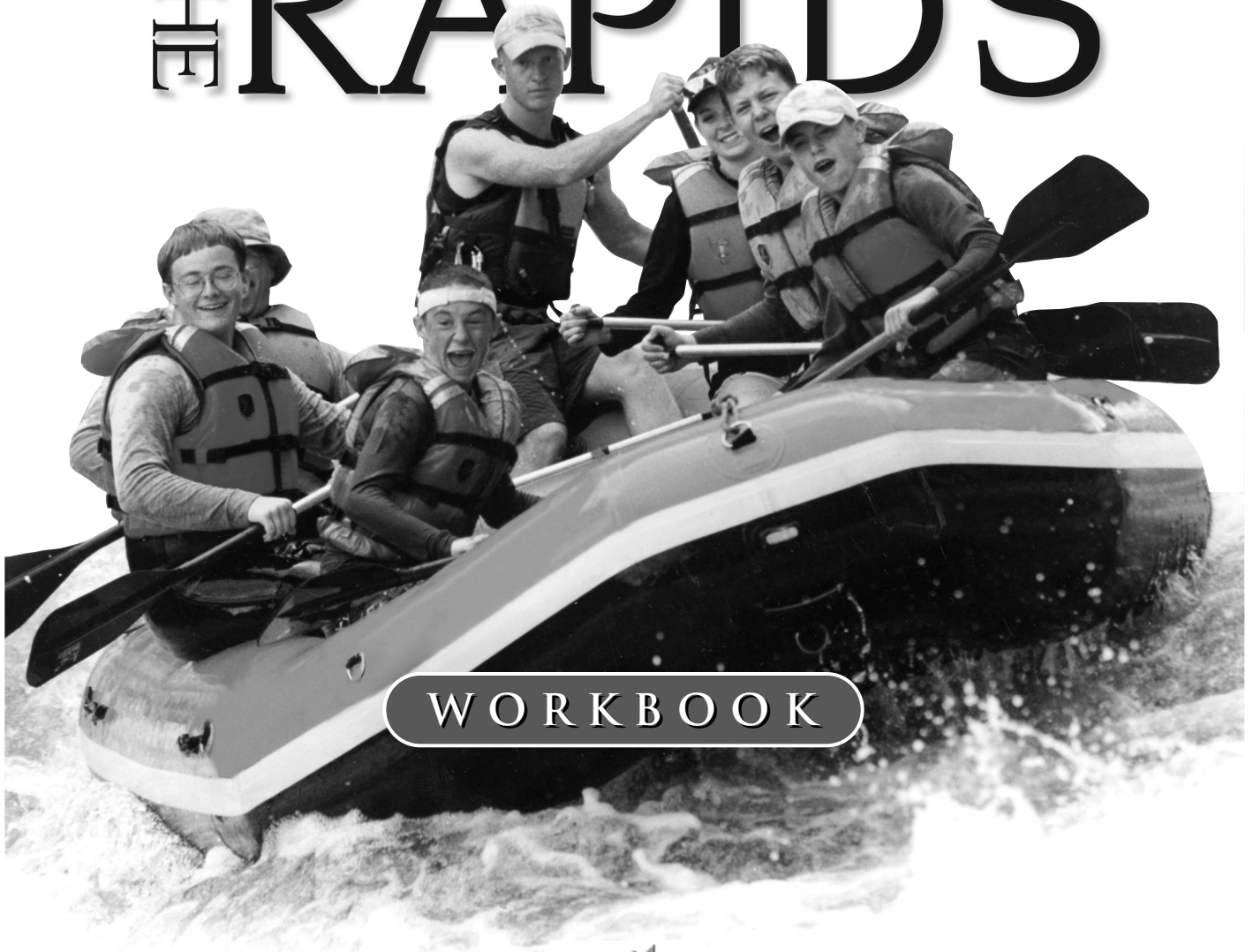


DR. KEVIN LEMAN

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 RIDERS

What Is Acceptable and Unacceptable Teenage Behavior and Why?

“Be quick to listen to what’s going on in your kid’s life.”

Parents probably do not have a clue how bad life is for teenagers today. Kids are up against it. They face pressures we never faced growing up. Parents need to know what to expect from their teens during adolescence. What’s normal behavior for a teenager today? There are perils ahead in your teenager’s life, but there are calm times, too. Even in calm times there may be problems under the surface.

Parents need to adopt smart strategies and know their kids. Smart parents find ways to spend time with their teenagers, whether it’s driving them to a sports event or a pottery class. The drive to and from such events offers opportunities for conversation and listening. Be quick to listen to what’s going on in your child’s life, and look for teachable moments.

Do not endure “smart mouth” comments from your teen. Parents can withhold a variety of privileges and freedoms to help curb sarcastic or disrespectful comments from teenagers.

Kids get hammered at school by derogatory nicknames and sarcasm from friends and peers. Try not to hammer your child or continually find fault. Instead, come alongside your teen and be an encouraging parent.

Respected psychologist Bruce Narramore describes *normal* negativity and *inappropriate* negativity during the teen years. Knowing when your teen’s behavior crosses the line from normal to inappropriate is a judgment call.

SCRIPTURE



Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older, he will remain upon it.

Proverbs 22:6

Occasionally the parent will have to be the NFL referee and throw a flag, calling the teenager to account for crossing the line.

A child who feels close to his parents is less likely to engage in destructive behavior. By caring for and staying close to your child, you create a healthy shield around him/her. By your love, consistency, and involvement in your teenager's life, your child knows whether you are with him/her or not. Come alongside your child and discuss his/her problems. Throw out a life preserver and bring your teen on board.

There is something healthy about an unhappy teenager. Parents' goal is not to make their children happy all the time, nor is their goal to control their kids. Parents' goals should include loving and encouraging their kids and teaching them to be responsible and considerate of others.

Key Thoughts from Video Lesson 3

“Each child brings to life a variety of different experiences and needs.”

1. We probably don't have a clue how bad it is out there today.
2. Kids are up against it. They face pressures today that we never faced.
3. Parents can curb “smart mouth” comments from their teenager.
4. Be quick to listen to what is going on in your child's life.
5. Kids get hammered at school by their peers. Don't hammer them all the time at home.
6. Dr. Bruce Narramore distinguishes between *normal* negativity and *inappropriate* negativity.
7. A child who feels close to his parents is less likely to engage in destructive behavior.
8. There's something healthy about an unhappy teenager.



DISCUSSION

1. In the many years since you entered adolescence, great changes have taken place in our world and your community. Your kids face issues and pressures today that are extremely complex and troubling. In what ways is being a teenager tougher today than when you were an adolescent? Write down your insights and discuss them with the group.

2. Of all the issues and temptations facing your teenager today, which ones give you the greatest concern and why?

3. Teenagers are not always ready to talk about their troubles and experiences when parents want to talk. Sometimes you have to just “be there” at the right moment and be a good listener. What is your secret to being a good listener and staying in touch with what is going on in your child’s life? Write it down and discuss it with the group.

- 4. LIFESCENE:** *John and Grace thought they were doing a good job raising their kids. Their firstborn, Taylor, has been the ideal child. She makes excellent grades in school, helps with chores at home, studies, and applies herself. Then along came their second child, Bradley. He loves video games, sports, and NASCAR. He seldom does his chores around the house, and his room is often a mess. Bradley hates school and hates to study. Sometimes John and Grace think he must have been adopted, but they know better! Everything John and Grace have done to encourage and motivate Bradley to be more like Taylor has been ineffective. They are at their wits’ end. What do you think would help John and Grace relate to Bradley? Write down your ideas and discuss them with the group.*



5. Dr. Bruce Narramore, a well-known psychologist, contrasts the *normal* negativity expected in teenagers during adolescence with *inappropriate* negativity. Circle the words below that describe your teenager. Like the NFL referee, the parent has the difficult responsibility of determining when *normal* negativity approaches *inappropriate* negativity.

Normal Negativity	Inappropriate Negativity
Increased assertiveness	Chronic irritability
Direct expression of opinions and ideas	Chronic negativism
Increased forgetfulness	Rebellion
Complaining about chores	Defiance
Goofing off or being silly	Isolation
Making decisions that parents disagree with	Depression
Keeping secrets from parents	Raging outbursts
Occasional stubbornness	Prolonged, angry withdrawal
Periods of critical or condemning attitudes toward parents and other authority figures	

6. Dr. Leman advises parents not to be trigger-happy about marching their teenagers off to a counselor. He recommends throwing kids a life preserver—coming alongside them and discussing their problems with them. If you have tried coming alongside your teenager and discussing troubling issues, tell your group what you have learned about opening such dialogue. Do you find it easy or difficult to do? How do you initiate dialogue in a non-threatening way?
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7. Dr. Leman says in the video lesson that there is something “healthy about an unhappy teenager.” In other words, it is appropriate for teenagers to be unhappy at times. Do you agree or disagree? Complete one of the following statements, and be ready to share your response with the group.

I agree because

I disagree because

8. Remember Vitamin N (saying no to your teenager). Some parents have trouble giving their children this important vitamin. Why is saying no a challenge for some parents? Jot down your thoughts and discuss them with the group.
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9. Here are some proverbs that refer to wisdom and teaching. How do these scriptures speak to your role as a parent? Read the scripture and then summarize the truth of the verse in the space to the right.

Listen to your father and mother. What you learn from them will stand you in good stead; it will gain you many honors. (Proverbs 1:8–9)

Just as a father punishes a son he delights in to make him better, so the Lord corrects you. (Proverbs 3:12)

But you—all you do is sleep. When will you wake up? “Let me sleep a little longer!” Sure, just a little more! And as you sleep, poverty creeps upon you like a robber and destroys you; want attacks you in full armor. (Proverbs 6:9–11)

Happy is the man with a level-headed son; sad the mother of a rebel. (Proverbs 10:1)

Some people like to make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise soothe and heal. (Proverbs 12:18)

If you refuse criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept criticism, you are on the road to fame. (Proverbs 13:18)

An old man’s grandchildren are his crowning glory. A child’s glory is his father. (Proverbs 17:6)

- 10.** Facing the consequences of a poor decision is one of the best ways that teenagers learn and develop. Describe a recent situation in which you allowed your child to experience the consequences of a poor decision. Write a brief description of that event, and discuss it with the group.

- 11.** Getting to know your teenager requires time—time that often comes at great personal expense. Are you willing to make the sacrifice of time to *really* get to know your son or daughter? What time can you clear in your schedule to spend with your teenager?

- 12.** Based on what you have learned in this lesson about knowing the riders, what adjustments or changes do you need to make in your life to better guide your children through the turbulent waters of adolescence? Write down your ideas and discuss them with the group.

- 13.** As you close this lesson, take time to pray with your group about what you have learned today. Ask the Lord to make you a better listener and a more loving parent. Include any other help that you need to be the parent your children need.