

Agency in Progression

PART III: Timeframe of Hinge Points

The first section we identified what hinge points are and why they are important. In the second section we identified what the hinge points are for people in this life. In this section we will go over when the majority of people will hit these hinge points in their mortal probation, what parents should teach their children during these time periods and what the individuals themselves should do. Parents, remember Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is easier to choose the correct path and stay on the correct path (habit) then to course correct onto the correct path (breaking habits) and the difficulty associated with removing yourself onto the correct path is directly proportionate to the time spent traveling down the wrong path (ie. the difficulty of breaking a bad habit is proportionate to the strength of a bad habit). Once someone has tasted the good fruit, even if they stray, they will remember and want to come back- "wickedness never was happiness."

(1) The first temptation that people get presented with is appetite. By the age of accountability, age 8, to 14 years old the first temptation of appetite starts to become a reality. If people decide to be chaste or if people decide to be fit/skinny in this time period, it will have repercussions that echo throughout the rest of their life; likewise if somebody decides to let their appetites run wild during this time period (eat whatever they want, pursue sexuality etc) it will plague them their whole life. This more than any of the temptations is inheritable, taught by the parents and is so damning that it can affect "the third and fourth generation." The temptation of appetite, more than any other temptation, falls on the parents to teach correct principles and help their children overcome the physical appetites of food, sleep and sex. In the gospel this is referred to as "temperance."

What is the most important thing to teach your children between the ages of 8-14? To learn to control your mind, your stomach, your sexuality and your fitness. Generally speaking, for a man, his penis and mental laziness (pornography, purity etc.) will be his biggest problem during this time period, and for a woman, her stomach and physical laziness (sleeping vs working out etc.) will be her biggest problem. Things that parents should do: no unrestricted internet, no cell phones, restricted diets, exercise routines, living the law of chastity as a requirement to live in your home, etc. Parents who fail to do these things will be accountable for their children's actions, failing and shortcomings.

What is the most important question that you should answer between the ages of 8-14? The question is "what controls me?" The correct answer should be, "My spirit controls me with the help of the Spirit of the Lord." Make the small decisions every day to feed the spirit wolf and not the flesh wolf. All the little decisions regarding your appetite, "Do I get up early?" "Do I eat that pint of ice cream?" "Do I use the internet unrestricted?" all feed that spiritual wolf which will help you in making the large decisions of living the Law of Chastity and the Word of Wisdom (temperance). The smaller decisions of being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and for men receiving the Aaronic priesthood at 12 will help you with the large decisions. Some might think that these are the large decisions, however even if you make the choice to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and (if applicable) receive the priesthood, if you let your appetites run wild, the Holy Ghost will not dwell in you and "amen to the priesthood of that man," making those decisions irrelevant. If you do let your appetites run wild you can

repent and change later in life, but it becomes an exponentially more difficult process the longer it goes untreated vs. controlling your appetites during this time period. Also, once that switch has been pulled and you are on that track, you will be on it until you course correct. If you wait too long to course correct you will reach the point of no return; once again, this is not because the Atonement can't save you, it is because you become too unwilling to change due to the difficulty.

(2) Between the ages of 14-20 the second temptation will become the next big struggle. If people decide to listen to the keys of the kingdom and personal revelation, and thus the Lord's will, it will have repercussions that echo throughout the rest of their life. Likewise, if somebody decides to follow their own will or that of another's over the Lord's will during this time period, it will plague them their whole life.

What is the most important thing to teach your children between the ages of 14-20? To learn to pray, receive personal revelation and listen to personal revelation and to learn to go to the keys of the priesthood (dead or alive) and listen/read them (scriptures), regardless of their age, experience etc. Generally speaking, the biggest problem for a woman during this time period will be becoming submissive and listening to the keys of the priesthood with titles that don't seem as important, such as father/husband and being bamboozled by individuals they deem to have higher title weight (professor, teacher, scholar, etc). Generally speaking, the biggest problem for men during this time period is learning how to read the scriptures, pray, receive revelation from their father in heaven and to listen and obey and being bamboozled by "knowledgeable/experienced people." Young women should learn to be submissive to their earthly fathers and then to their husbands (as they are righteous) and young men need to learn to be submissive to God.

What is the most important question that you should answer between the ages of 14-20? The question to ask is, "In who's arm do I trust?" The answer should be, "God and His divinely appointed servants (keys)." Make the small decisions every day to feed the wolf of the Lord's will and not the wolf of any other will. All the little decisions regarding your testimony, "Do I pray often?" "Do I listen to the keys?" "Do I listen to spiritual promptings?" "Do I feast upon the words of Christ?" all feed the Lord's wolf which will help you in making the large decisions of gaining and building your testimony of personal revelation and the keys of God (pride vs humility and patience). The smaller decisions you will make during this time period will be a man's decision to receive the Melchizadek priesthood and to go on a mission and a woman's decision of whom to marry. A woman's decision to not get married or a man's decision to not go on a mission during this time period are both in conflict with the commandments of God and thus are a clear reflection of pride. Once again, people might think that choosing to receive the priesthood, go on a mission and who to marry are the large decisions here, but if you don't have a testimony of personal revelation and keys, your mission will be an utter failure and making the choice for your spouse will be like that of a drunk blindfolded fool throwing darts at a dart board.

(3) Between the ages of 20-26 you will be presented with the third temptation- to pursue the world. Men at this time will be drawn towards positions of power and authority, titles, accolades and status and these become the great stumbling blocks of men. The only title and the only calling of any value that a man should pursue is that of a righteous father. Women during this time will be tempted with things of the world- clothes, shoes, cars, houses, etc. Women will be drawn into the workforce purely as a means for them to live the materialistic lifestyle they desire. The only possession of value that women should pursue is that of children. In the gospel this is referred to as godliness, glory etc.

What is the most important thing to teach your children between the ages of 20-26? It is important to note that your children will be grown adults at this time and your direct parenting will be limited. However, your indirect parenting becomes crucial, as well as the past example that you set as parents while the child was growing up under your roof. Support your children as they make righteous choices and don't support your children if they make unrighteous choices. Ie. Pay for your son to go on a mission. Don't let your son live in your home not keeping the commandments. Ie. Support your daughter getting married and helping her raise her children. Don't support your daughter pursuing a materialistic lifestyle. By this you will be teaching your kids "what you seek" ie. The kingdom of God or the world. They will also remember the example you set as a parent while they were growing up in your home. If you valued leather pleated couches and new appliances don't be surprised when your children forgo having kids to buy their own fancy couch and appliances.

What is the most important question that you should answer between the ages of 20-26? "What seeketh thou?" And the answer should be, "The kingdom of God." We learn from Christ, "Suffer the little children to come unto me for such is the kingdom of God." Make the small decisions every day to feed the wolf of God's kingdom and not the wolf of the world. All the little decisions regarding your desires, "Do I delay children?" "Do I put up a maximum number of children to have in my mind?" "Do I invite my friends and family to follow Christ?" all feed that kingdom of God wolf which will help you in making the large decisions of magnifying fatherhood and motherhood. The smaller decisions of building your house unto God and enduring to the end will help you with the large decisions. Some might think, once again, that enduring to the end and building your house unto the Lord are the large decisions, however going through the motions while neglecting the "heavier parts of the law" will yield you a "meager roof over your head in the eternities." Having and focusing on children will act as an antidote to the poison of materialism AND power. We also learn that "he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul"; "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" If you seek the kingdom of God you will raise children in righteousness and bring souls unto Christ.

As stated before, President David O. McKay said that **almost** all of the temptations that come to us, come in these three forms that we have discussed, appetite, pride and the world. I personally believe if you add the temptation to "become a respecter of persons" that it would include **all** of the rest of the temptations that come to you and me.

What does the temptation to be a respecter of persons look like? It is when you treat individuals differently based off of personal preference and not based on principles of God. How is it displayed? It is displayed in parents giving one of their children financial aid and not the other child solely based on preference. It would be like a couple going in to get a temple recommend and only one person getting the recommend because the stake president didn't like the other person, even though he was worthy. This does not mean that God doesn't punish or reward his children, it simply means that the Lord does so equally, fairly and justly. "I, the *Lord*, *am bound* when ye *do what I say*; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise." (D&C 82:10) Likewise, this does not mean that you as an individual or as parents do not reward or punish people/children, in fact, a non-respecter of persons does so often, but it is based on clear and established principles.

You might feel like you are doing something godly by giving something to somebody when they haven't earned or qualify for, but it is just as evil as punishing somebody by hurting or withholding aid that they deserve purely because of a personal grudge or animosity.

An example of not being a respecter of persons is that of Abraham offering his son up as a sacrifice- if Abraham were to withhold his son from God and preserve his life (all seemingly good things) he would be treating his son differently than God's son, for he would be ok with God offering Jesus for him, but would not be ok with him offering his own son to God. He was not a respecter of persons because he was in fact ready to sacrifice his son.

An example of being a respecter of persons is that of Eli and his sons. Eli, in withholding punishment from his disobedient sons, rewarding them, and having compassion on them in their unrighteous state, caused Eli to fall from grace as a prophet of God and eventually lose his exaltation. He was a respecter of persons.

In overcoming the first three temptations the commandment of "love the Lord thy God with all your heart, might, mind and strength" is fulfilled. In overcoming the fourth temptation of not being a respecter of persons the second great commandment of "love thy neighbor as thyself" is fulfilled. This is also why you cannot truly love anyone else unless you first love God. This last great temptation to overcome occurs during most of your whole life, but the hinge points occurs with your children. The small decisions of loving your neighbor as yourself, treating others equally, being bound with your word, will feed the wolf of not being a respecter of persons vs the wolf that is a respecter of persons. Making these smaller decisions now will help when you make the large decision of treating your children the same as those in the world and treating your children the same as each other. Men historically have more of a problem treating their own children differently between each other; women historically treat their children better than those in the world.

Racism, bigotry, etc. are all addressed in this point.

It's important to note, once again, at the conclusion, that just because generally speaking the sexes are prone to specific strengths and weaknesses, this does not mean every member of the same sex is exactly the same. Everyone needs to turn all points into strengths regardless of the starting position.