In an old text book on my library shelf is a representation of the adolescent period of human development. It is a drawing of a convoluted tube – lots of twists, turns, tight squeezes; it indicates that a child enters one end and, after some obvious discomforts eliciting groans and some painful yelling, emerges as an adult.

Changes in society have made things even more complicated for preadolescents and adolescents since that book was published. Values are no longer held in common by various components of society.

Puberty, an automatic trigger, ignites the adolescent changes, bringing about many biochemical changes that affect every aspect of the adolescent’s life. These biochemical changes have a profound influence on the individual’s cognitive abilities, including a shift to a greater capacity for, and interest in, abstract thought which, while making problem-solving more appealing, can also increase worry and argumentativeness. It is not difficult to see how this impacts the person’s emotional state and affects relationships – both social and spiritual.

Author Walt Larimore, M.D. addresses these factors, and more, in his book God’s Design for the Highly Healthy Teen. The purpose of the book is three fold:

- Assessing the teen’s health (physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual).
- Focus on fixing the “spoke” that’s broke
- Benefit from immediate action

Using a wheel as the measuring tool, he sets criteria for measuring the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual well-being of a teen.

He designates the hub of the physical wheel as trust that the teen’s body will develop properly if nurtured. Designating the vertical spokes as criteria, provides measure of exercise and rest factors.

Through the horizontal spokes he provide criteria for measuring nutrition, substance abuse, growth and immunization.

The hub of the emotional wheel is that your teen’s emotions will develop properly if nurtured. The vertical spokes become criteria for measuring love/respect, affirmation/appreciation. The horizontal spokes are used to measure media/learning and boundaries.

The hub of the relational wheel is trust that the teen will be nurtured in healthy relationships with others and self. The vertical spokes address measuring parental and family relationships – he addresses various family structures – while the horizontal ones address connectedness and performance in school and extra curricular activities.

For the spiritual wheel, the hub represents trust that the teen will trust in and nurture a healthy relationship with God. The vertical spokes address a personal relationship with God and prayer. The horizontal spokes provide criteria for measuring spiritual instruction and spiritual activity.

The book includes an index of the various topics it addresses. Dr. Larimore does not shy away from discussing topics that some find uncomfortable such as sexuality, including masturbation; substance abuse; media; boundaries; and more. To receive your FREE copy of Walt Larimore’s book, God’s Design for the Highly Healthy Teen, simply call MCL at 1-800-767-8837. We look forward to receiving your call. Supplies are limited so please call today.

– L. Beaven, Editor