WHEN YOUR TEEN IS STRUGGLING

By: Mark Gregston
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Reviewed by: Lon Woodbury

The author, founder and director of Heartlight Ministries in Hallsville, TX, a Christian oriented residential program for adolescents in crisis, drew on his 30 plus years of working with youth and families in crisis to write this book. From that experience, he has developed a system for helping children work through their pain. What's more important, his advice has helped many parents become more effective in helping their children so that often residential placement is no longer needed.

This book is obviously a Christian-based guide; every aspect of his advice is biblically based. However, as one reviewer pointed out, even if every reference to Christianity and the Bible is removed, the book would still stand as an effective approach solidly based on accepted principles of effective work with families with a teen in crisis.

Chapter by Chapter, the author goes through the various aspects of how some children think and act and what parents need to keep in mind. First is to not give up hope, but trust that there is a solution somewhere, and somehow, for without hope parents could never do what they need to do. Next is the importance of wisdom and understanding on the part of the parents. It is vital to understand that the objectionable behavior is a symptom of something, and the sooner a parent figures out what it is a symptom of, the sooner healing can begin. It continues in this vein for another 13 chapters, each easy to read and to grasp the basic ideas.

The book is an easy and relatively quick read. Part of it is the obvious empathy the author has for the children and the parents he describes and the suffering they are going through and bringing on themselves. But the gripping part is his use of what you might call case studies. Each chapter describes an important aspect of which parents must be aware and then proceeds to describe children whose experience are good examples of what the author is talking about. In his description, both the child and parents become real people with understandable

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