



## **“THE TOWER OF TERROR:”**

### **SINGLE MOMS GETTING THROUGH THE TEENAGE YEARS**

#### **OVERVIEW:**

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH NEEDING HELP. WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE. I'M SURE NONE OF US STARTED OFF ON THIS JOURNEY WANTING TO BE A SINGLE PARENT! I KNOW I DIDN'T. BUT LIFE HAPPENS – DEATH, INCARCERATION, DRUG ADDICTION, SICKNESS, SHATTERED HOPES AND DREAMS AND DIVORCE. IT'S REALLY NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK IT IS. HOW YOU PERCEIVE YOUR POSITION IN LIFE DETERMINES YOUR ULTIMATE BEHAVIOR. IT'S SIMPLY MIND OVER MATTER! AND REMEMBER, THIS TOO SHALL PASS!

CAN I BE REAL WITH YOU? FACE IT, SINGLE PARENTING IS TOUGH, AND SINGLE PARENTS OF TEENAGERS HAVE A LOT MORE TO THINK ABOUT. INDEPENDENCE, HONESTY, AND TRUST ARE EVEN GREATER CHALLENGES IN A SINGLE PARENT-TEEN RELATIONSHIP. IT IS AN IMPORTANT DUTY TO RAISE TEENS TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE YOUNG ADULTS AND TO HELP PREPARE THEM FOR COLLEGE.

I WANT TO SHARE MY FINDINGS WITH YOU, TO COMMUNICATE SOME HELPFUL BIBLICAL PRINCIPALS THAT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP IN THE FOREFRONT OF YOUR PARENT-TEENAGER RELATIONSHIP AS YOU MOVE FORWARD AND TO ENCOURAGE. AND AT THE END OF THIS STUDY, THERE WILL BE SOME THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK YOURSELF AND MAKE THE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS NEEDED TO MAKE YOUR JOURNEY EASIER AND MUCH MORE REWARDING!



## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:**

1 CORINTHIANS 14:40

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

PROVERBS 22:6

EPHESIANS 6:4

DEUTERONOMY 6: 1-4

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

THE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND FOR SUCH A TASK AS THIS IS THE WORD **“OPEN”**. THIS IS SIMPLY AN ACROSTIC THAT THE LORD GAVE ME FOR YOU TODAY. I PRAYED AND ASKED GOD WHAT HE WANTED ME TO TELL THE WOMEN OF GOD AND THIS IS WHAT HE GAVE ME. AFTER YOU RECEIVE EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE TO POUR INTO YOU TODAY, I PRAY THAT THE CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES CAN BE CONDENSED INTO A SIMPLE FORMULA THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO RECALL THEM QUICKLY AND ON THE SPOT WHEN YOU’RE BEING PUSHED BY THE ISSUES THAT YOU AND YOUR TEENAGER ARE GOING THROUGH.



—Teaching point one: **O** = “ORDER”

**1 COR. 14:40** - “LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER.”

THERE HAS TO BE A CONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT OF RULES AND REGULATIONS. CHILDREN NEED STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE IN ORDER TO LEARN HOW TO FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE LAND AND THE RULES THAT GOD HAS ESTABLISHED FOR HIS PEOPLE! THEY ARE CHILDREN AND HAVE NO BUSINESS MAKING LIFE-ALTERING DECISIONS ON THEIR OWN. THEY HAVE TO KNOW THAT FOR EVERY CHOICE MADE THERE IS A CONSEQUENCE THAT WILL FOLLOW. THEY MUST KNOW THE RULES FIRST BEFORE THEY CAN BREAK THEM. YOU ARE DOING THEM A DISSERVICE IF YOU JUST LET THEM DO WHATEVER THEY WANT, WHENEVER THEY WANT TO. LIFE IS NOT LIKE THAT IN THE REAL WORLD. WHEREVER YOU GO AND WHATEVER YOU DO IN THIS WORLD, THERE ARE LAWS THAT MUST BE KEPT!

Does your teenager have a clear understanding of what is expected of him/her when you are not there?

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If so, are the consequences plainly mapped out so he/she will know what will happen if the expectations are not followed?

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—Teaching point two: **P** = “PRAYER”

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:17** - “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”

CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY TEENAGERS WILL KEEP YOU ON YOUR KNEES. THAT’S WHY IT’S SO IMPORTANT THAT EVEN IN THE MIDST OF CONFUSION AND DISAPPOINTMENT THAT YOU NEVER STOP PRAYING! ALL THAT YOU NEED TO DEAL WITH YOUR TEENAGER, YOU WILL FIND IN GOD! THE BIBLE SAYS TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM IN ALL YOUR WAYS AND HE WILL DIRECT YOUR PATH. THAT MEANS IN YOUR DEALINGS AND INTERACTIONS WITH YOUR TEENAGER, YOU NEED TO SEEK GOD FOR DIVINE DIRECTION AND WISE GUIDANCE. ‘CAUSE YOUR TEENAGER CAN AND WILL TAKE YOU TO A PLACE THAT YOU WILL REGRET AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, YOU’VE SAID SOMETHING YOU CAN’T TAKE BACK. OR YOU’VE DONE SOMETHING THAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR DOING. SO NEVER, EVER STOP PRAYING!

Why is it important for you to always pray?

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What can happen between you and your teenager if you don’t pray constantly?

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—Teaching point three: **E** = “EDUCATE”

**PROVERBS 22:6** - “TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO: AND WHEN HE IS OLD, HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.”

YOUR TEENAGER WILL NOT KNOW THE WAY IF YOU DO NOT TEACH THEM THE WAY. AND IF YOU DO NOT INTENTIONALLY MODEL IT, IT’S IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO KNOW. YOU’VE GOT TO READ IT TO THEM, EXPLAIN IT TO THEM, AND ALLOW THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO DIALOGUE WITH YOU SO YOU KNOW FOR SURE THEY UNDERSTAND IT. AND THEN YOU LAY DOWN YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND THE CONSEQUENCES SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO DO THE OPPOSITE. MAKE IT SIMPLE SO THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ERROR OR CONFUSION – CAUSE ‘N EFFECT OR CHOICE AND CONSEQUENCE.

Why is it vital for you to educate your teenager in every area of life?

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Why should you be the one to do the teaching and not the school or church?

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—Teaching point four: **N** = “NURTURE”

**EPHESIANS 6:4** - “AND, YE FATHERS, PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH: BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE **NURTURE** AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD.”

“**NURTURE**” IS DEFINED AS: 1) TO TAKE CARE OF A YOUNG THING OR 2) TO ENCOURAGE SOMEBODY OR SOMETHING TO FLOURISH. OUR TEENAGERS NEED TO KNOW THAT WE LOVE THEM UNCONDITIONALLY AND THAT WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT THEM, TO ENCOURAGE THEM AND TO HELP SHAPE THEM INTO PRODUCTIVE, SELF-SUFFICIENT CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN. IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT LAYING DOWN THE LAWS OF THE LAND. BUT OUR TEENAGERS DESPERATELY NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE VALUED AND THEIR OPINIONS MATTER. THEY ARE ALREADY ON A QUEST TRYING TO FIND THEMSELVES AND DISCOVER WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEIR PURPOSE AND VALUE IS ON THIS EARTH. MOMS, WE ARE TO VALIDATE THEM AND LET THEM KNOW THEY HAVE SOMETHING GREAT ON THE INSIDE THAT WILL BE A BLESSING TO THE NATION!

How well are you doing at being submissive to the needs of your child?

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## —Teaching point five: PARENTAL MODELING

THE SCRIPTURES MAKE CLEAR THAT “MODELING” IS A KEY INGREDIENT IN THE PARENTING PROCESS. PERHAPS THE CLEAREST AND MOST COMPLETE PASSAGE IS FOUND IN **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9**. IN THIS PASSAGE, WE SEE FOUR PRINCIPLES ESSENTIAL IN PASSING ON SPIRITUAL FAITH TO CHILDREN.

- BELIEF IN GOD: “HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.”  
YOU CANNOT IMPART WHAT YOU DO NOT POSSESS. DO NOT EXPECT THAT YOUR CHILDREN WILL HAVE A DEVOTION TO GOD UNLESS YOU DO. DO NOT EXPECT THAT YOUR CHILDREN WILL WALK WITH GOD UNLESS YOU DO. DO NOT EXPECT THAT CHRIST WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CHILDREN’S LIVES UNLESS HE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOURS. IF THE PARENT’S WALK IS STRONG, THE CHILDREN’S ARE LIKELY TO BE LESS STRONG. THEN, WHEN THEY MOVE INTO ADULTHOOD AND CHOOSE THEIR VALUES FOR THEMSELVES PARENTAL MODELING WILL OFTEN DETERMINE IF CHRST IS AT THE CENTER OF THEIR LIVES.
- FORMAL INSTRUCTION: “IMPRESS THEM ON YOUR CHILDREN.”  
CHILDREN MUST KNOW THE SCRIPTURES. THEY MUST KNOW THE WORDS OF GOD.
- INFORMATL INSTRUCTION: “TALK ABOUT THEM WHEN YOU SIT AT HOME AND WHEN YOU WALK ALONG THE ROAD, WHEN YOU LIE DOWN AND WHEN YOU GET UP (**DEUTERONOMY 6:7**).

IF CHILDREN ARE TO BE FREE FROM BONDAGE AND IGNORANCE, THEY MUST KNOW TRUTH. IN ORDER TO KNOW IT, THEY MUST BE TAUGHT IT. THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS CHILDREN SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN CHURCH, BUT IF PARENTS ARE DEPENDING ON THE CHURCH TO SOLVE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS, THEY HAVE MISPLACED HOPES. THE HOME IS THE DOMINANT INFLUENCE IN A CHILDS’S LIFE.



- CULTIVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: “TIE THEM AS SYMBOLS ON YOUR HANDS AND BIND THEM ON YOUR FOREHEADS. WRITE THEM ON THE DOORFRAMES OF YOUR HOUSES AND ON YOUR GATES” (**DEUTERONOMY 6:8-9**).  
AS YOU CONSIDER CULTIVATING THE ENVIRONMENT TO FOSTER SPIRITUAL GROWTH, YOU MUST CONSIDER TWO ASPECTS. FIRST, YOU MUST ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE, AND THEN ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT.

What, in your home, encourages spiritual development in your children, and what discourages it?

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Have you established a safe environment in your home for your teenager where he/she feels they can communicate with you on different issues they are dealing with?

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**—Teaching point six: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILIES**

**(DEUTERONOMY 6: 1-4)**

CHILDREN ARE TO BE SUBMISSIVE TO THE AUTHORITY OF THEIR PARENTS WHILE PARENTS ARE TO BE SUBMISSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR CHILDREN.

**6:1.** CHILDREN ARE INSTRUCTED THAT THEIR ROLE IN MUTUAL SUBMISSION IS TO OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD, FOR THIS IS RIGHT. WITHOUT LEARNING OBEDIENCE FROM PARENTS, CHILDREN WOULD RUN WILD IN SOCIETY. ALL SOCIAL ORDER DEPENDS ON THIS.

**6:2-3.** THE FIFTH OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, TO HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER IS REPEATED HERE, THEN FOLLOWED BY THE STATEMENT THAT IS A COMMANDMENT WITH A PROMISE. THE PROMISE, THAT THE OBEDIENT CHILD WOULD LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH, IS A GENERAL PROMISE, NOT AN ABSOLUTE PROMISE. CHILDREN WHO LEARN OBEDIENCE TEND TO LIVE BETTER LIVES AND TEND TO LIVE LONGER.

**6:4.** THE FATHER'S [MOTHER'S] ROLE IS NOT TO EXASPERATE HIS/HER CHILDREN BUT TO BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD. GROWING UP IN A CHRISTIAN HOME IS INTENDED TO BE A VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH PARENT AND CHILD WHEN EACH PLAYS HIS PROPER ROLE.

How well are you doing at being submissive to the needs of your child?

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## **I. HOW TO DEAL WITH TEENAGERS AS A SINGLE PARENT**

- ENGAGE ANY SUPPORT NETWORK, FRIENDS, OR FAMILY YOU MAY HAVE. FOR EXAMPLE IF YOU HAVE TO WORK LATE, THEY MIGHT AGREE TO FEED YOUR CHILD DINNER AND GIVE THEM A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO DO HOMEOWKR. YOU CAN PICK UP YOUR CHILD ON YOUR WAY HOME AND RETURN THE FAVOR.
- ASK SISTERS, BROTHERS, AND GRANDPARENTS TO CALL AND CHECK IN ON YOUR CHILD IF SHE/HE IS HOME ALONE. STUDIES SHOW THAT EVEN LATCHKEY KIDS WITHOUT PARENTAL SUPERVISION DO BETTER IN SCHOOL AND SOCIALLY IF THEY KNOW THAT THERE IS SOMEONE CHECKING ON THEM – SOMEONE WHO CARES.
- TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU CAN'T BE THERE ALL THE TIME AND LET THEM KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT. GROUND RULES ARE IMPORTANT. HOMEWORK IS DONE FIRST BEFORE THEY PLAY VIDEO GAMES, ETC. AGAIN LET YOUR CHILD KNOW YOUR EXPECTATIONS.
- GIVE YOUR CHILD CHORES TO DO TO EARN MONEY OR TO EARN FAVORS (LIKE GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS ON A SATURDAY NIGHT) TO KEEP THEM BUSY WHILE YOU ARE GONE. LAUNDRY, VACUUMING, WALKING THE DOG, MAKING DINNER, WHATEVER YOU NEED DONE. REMEMBER, YOU ARE A TEAM!
- KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS AND IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT THEIR INFLUENCE, WATCH THINGS VERY CAREFULLY AND MOVE IF YOU MUST.
- LISTEN AND PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TEENS. TRY TO RELATE TO YOUR KIDS WITHOUT LECTURING THEM. TEENS WANT INDEPENDENCE, BUT THEY LIKE IT WHEN THEIR PARENTS HAVE A CLUE ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THEM.
- ABOVE ALL, MAKE TIME TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD AND DO THINGS TOGETHER WHEN YOU ARE HOME. GO TO A MOVIE. GO SHOPPING. TAKE HIM/HER OUT TO LUNCH AND TALK. ASK QUESTIONS GENTLY, AND DON'T DEMAND INFORMATION, BUT FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN NOW AS THEY GROW AND MATURE.



## II. RAISING TEENS AS A SINGLE MOM

- LET YOUR TEENS KNOW THAT THEY ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO TALK TO YOU ANYTIME NO MATTER WHAT TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT.
- TALK TO YOUR TEENS ABOUT SEX, DIVORCE, AND DRUGS. YOU CAN EVEN TALK TO THEM ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL IF THEY ARE WILLING TO LISTEN.
- IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR TEEN IS ON DRUGS THEN MAKE SURE TO HAVE THEM TAKE A DRUG TEST.
- DON'T PUNISH THEM FOR BEING HONEST WITH YOU OTHERWISE THEY WILL END UP KEEPING SECRETS FROM YOU.
- YOU NEED TO WARN YOUR TEENS ABOUT ACTIONS THAT CAN MESS UP A PERSONS LIFE FOR A LONG WHILE.
- YOU NEED TO STAY IN CONTACT WITH THEIR TEACHERS TO HELP YOUR TEEN IMPROVE THEIR GRADES TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.
- MAKE SURE THAT YOUR TEENS TELL YOU WHERE THEY ARE GOING.

## III. PRACTICAL STEPS

THERE AREN'T ANY EASY ANSWERS. THERE ISN'T A MAGIC VERSE OF SCRIPTURE THAT WILL FIX ALL YOUR PROBLEMS. THERE ISN'T ONE "CURE ALL" THAT WILL REMOVE ALL OF THE CHALLENGES THAT A SINGLE PARENT FACES. BUT THERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL STEPS THAT CAN OFFER HELP AND HOPE IN THIS VERY DIFFICULT JOB.

- HOLD FIRM TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE. IT IS QUITE COMMON FOR THE OTHER PARENT WHO IS GONE NOT TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR EFFORTS AS A PARENT; HOLD FIRM ANYHOW.
- DON'T BE TOO LENIENT. YOU WILL NOT MAKE THINGS BETTER BY ALLOWING THAT TO BE THEIR EXCUSE TO GET AWAY WITH DAMAGING AND DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR.



- DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE VALUE OF TIME. SPENDING ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH YOUR TEENS, ASKING THEM QUESTIONS AND LETTING THEM ASK YOU QUESTIONS IS MORE IMPORTANT IN THIS SETTING THAN EVER BEFORE. MAKE TIME FOR YOUR KIDS.
- FIND A SOURCE OF INPUT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. IN THE ABSENCE OF MISSING PARENT, FIND A GROUP OR AN INDIVIDUAL THAT UNDERSTANDS YOUR SITUATION AND CAN GIVE YOU ENCOURAGEMENT AND GOOD ADVICE ON THE EXTRA CHALLENGES YOU FACE AS A SINGLE PARENT.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GIVE UP! THE EFFORT IS WORTH THE COST, AND YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE FAR BETTER OFF BECAUSE YOU LOVED THEM ENOUGH TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT AND BEST FOR THEM.

HOLMAN N. T. COMMENTARY SAYS THAT **VERSE 4** INSTRUCTS US NOT TO "EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN." BOTH *WRATH* AND *EXASPERATE* COME FROM THE ROOT WORD *ANGER*. THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD STARTING POINT FOR UNDERSTANDING THIS INSTRUCTION.

- OVERPROTECTING CHILDREN
- OVERDISCIPLINING CHILDREN
- EXPECTING MORE THAN THE CHILD CAN EVER PERFORM
- EXPECTING LESS OF THEM THAN THEY CAN PERFORM
- FAILING TO SACRIFICE FOR YOUR CHILDREN
- VERBAL AND/OR PHYSICAL ABUSE
- LEGALISM
- IMBALANCE



## ***THINGS TO PONDER . . .***

THE PRINCIPLE OF MUTUAL SUBMISSION IS THE KEY TO PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS WITH GOD ON YOUR SIDE AND YOUR WILLINGNESS TO REMAIN **OPEN**, I GUARANTEE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LOOK BACK OVER THOSE YEARS AND REJOICE THAT YOU SURVIVED AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR YOUNG ADULT IS NOW RICHER AND MORE FULFILLING!

ALWAYS BE "**OPEN**" WITH YOUR TEENAGER.

- SET **ORDER** IN THE HOUSE
- **PRAY** WITHOUT CEASING
- **EDUCATE** THEM ON SPIRITUAL AND HUMAN THINGS
- **NURTURE** THEM IN THE ADMONITION OF GOD

THEN WATCH YOUR TOWER OF TERROR TURN INTO A THANKFUL AND PROUD HEART AS YOU WITNESS YOUR TEENAGER TRANSFORM INTO A FUN-LOVING, SELF-SUFFICIENT CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULT! YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS YOU!



**NOTES:**

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## *Teen Reading*

### **Non Fiction...**

Make Every Day Count - Teen Edition by Max Lucado  
Live to Give by Austin Gutwein  
Undaunted by Christine Caine  
Not a Fan – Student Edition by Kyle Idleman  
The Circle Maker – Student Edition by Pastor Mark Batterson  
The Story – Teen Edition by Max Lucado & Randy Frazier

### **Devotionals...**

Jesus Calling – Teen Edition by Sarah Young  
Impact: The Student Leadership Devotional by Jay Strack  
Soul Surfer Devotions by Bethany Hamilton  
Streams in the Desert for Graduates by L. B. E. Cowman  
True Images Devotional by Karen Moore  
Once-a-Day Devotional for Teens by

### **On Christian Relationships and Dating...**

The Truth about Breaking Up, Making Up, and Moving On by Chad Eastham  
Wait for Me: Rediscovering the Joy of Purity in Romance by Rebecca St. James

### **For Young Women...**

From Blah to Awe by Jenna Lucado Bishop  
Redefining Beautiful: What Gods Sees When He Sees You by Jenna Lucado  
Girl Talk with God by Susie Shellenberger

### **Teen Bibles...**

NIV Teen Study Bible  
Extreme Teen Study Bible, NKJV  
Rock Solid Faith Study Bible for Teens  
NIV Once-a-Day Bible for Teens

### **Miscellaneous...**

Anomaly by Krista McGee  
Aquifer by Jonathan Friesen  
Crescent by Homer Hickman  
Dark Halo by Shannon Dittmore  
Domination by Jon S. Lewis  
Doon by Carey Corp and Lorie Langdon  
The Fairest Beauty by Melanie Dickerson  
If We Survive by Andrew Klavan  
Merlin's Shadow by Robert Treskillard  
Running Lean by Diana Sharples