



**BECOMING A
REAL TEENAGER**

C.B.MARTIN

WITH

WARREN W. WIERSBE

Genuine: Becoming a real teenager

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INTRODUCTION

In the opening programme of the UK TV series *Young Apprentice*, Lord Alan Sugar says to the 16 and 17 years olds gathered in his boardroom:

You are young. Don't try and pretend that you know it all, because, believe me, it will be embarrassing.

These people are smart, ambitious, and some have already successfully started their own businesses. But they are still teenagers. They are not kids, but they are not yet adults. The most successful (and likeable) contestants are the ones who don't pretend to be something they are not. They have huge potential, but at the same time are willing to learn.

Of course, others are arrogant, paying no attention to their teammates and failing to listen to Lord Sugar's advice. They confuse pig-headedness with leadership and think they know it all already.

Which is the genuine teenager? A genuine teenager today will be a genuine adult tomorrow. The teenage years are a wonderful opportunity, a bridge between childhood and the responsibilities of adult life; a time of transition, to prepare and invest for tomorrow. But it's also a time to enjoy; without rushing ahead to the

next thing and failing to make the most of today. But that is not the image sold by the media. A young person is worth millions just as long as they live up to the fake image of a teenager created by the advertisers; they were being prepared for it even as a pre-teen when they were marketed Bratz Dolls and 'No Parents Allowed' signs for their bedroom door.

The teen market for mobile phones, music, fashion and entertainment is massive. Being a teenager is no longer about preparing for adulthood but playing at being an adult; being part of a culture isolated from the real world. The message is all fun with no responsibility, and spending plenty of money along the way.

In *The Last Battle*, the final book in the Narnia series, we find that one of the characters, Susan, has lost all interest in the world of Narnia in her eagerness to grow up. Her life is all about parties, new clothes and lipstick. If the Narnia books were written today, perhaps Susan would have been too preoccupied with fake tanning, Botox and the latest reality TV show to have any time for Narnia!

Today's teenager wants all the trappings of adulthood but isn't ready for the consequences. Playing at being an adult means fake ID for underage drinking and clubbing, buying more and more clothes and gadgets they don't need, sex when they want with who they want. But when this sort of teenager comes face to face with debt, unplanned pregnancy, heartbreak, alcohol addiction or yet another trip to A&E, they are ill-equipped to deal with the fall-out.

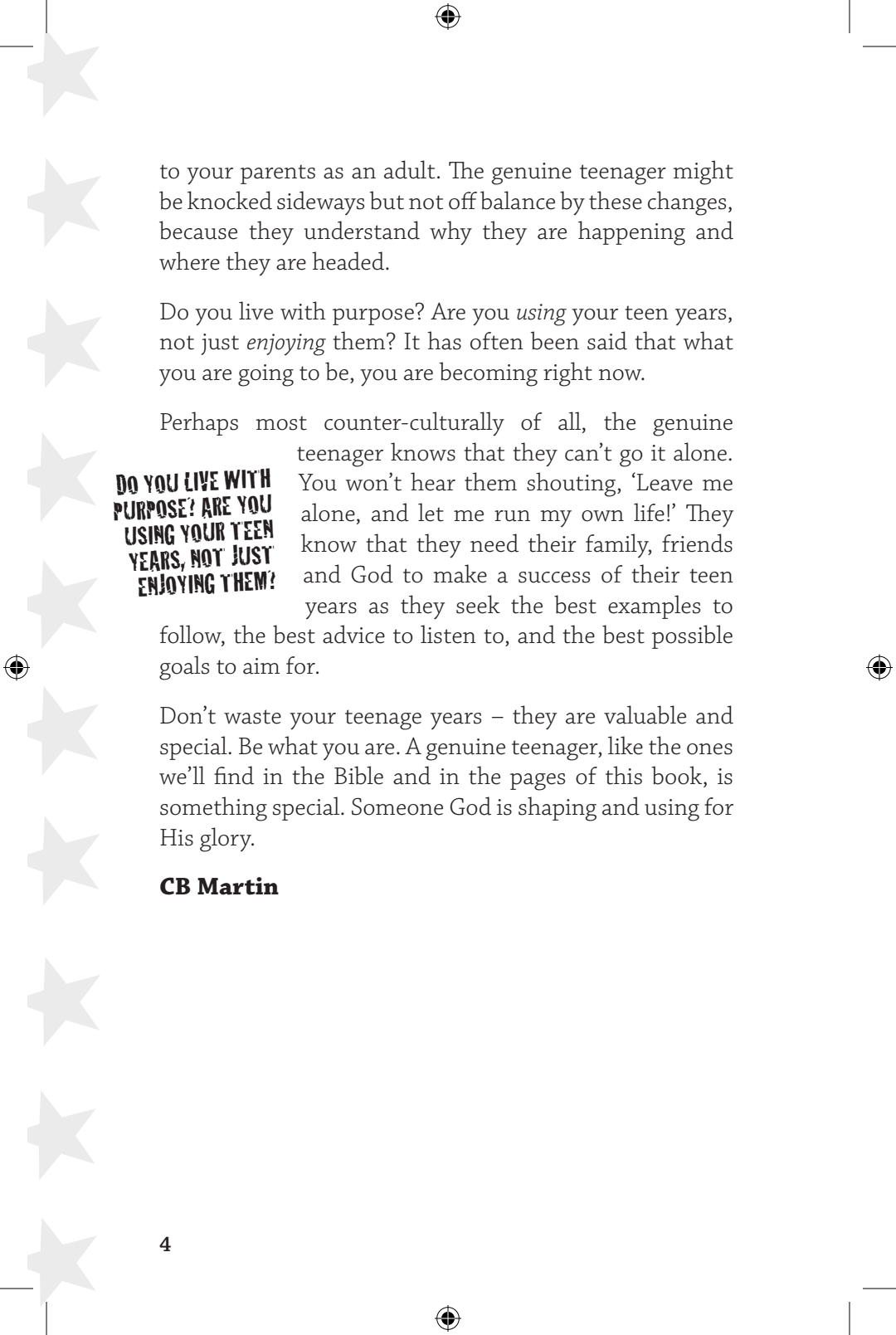
The genuine teenager values their teen years, making the most of them, investing in them as they prepare to

become an adult. Used wisely, they will be fruitful and fun. Used poorly, they can make a mess of their adult lives before they have even started.

This book aims to share some basic Bible principles which can make your teenage years a success not a failure. We will see genuine teenagers from the Bible in action, and learn from their successes and failures how to be a genuine teenager. We'll see how God turns Joseph's dreams into reality, and how David's teenage years prepare him for a royal future. A look at Daniel will show what it means to be a transformer, not a conformer. Mary demonstrates life-changing faith. Timothy helps us to see what it means to be a young and faithful leader. Not forgetting, of course, the most genuine, perfect teenager of all, Jesus Christ, and we'll start to see how all the others point to Him. We will see from these case studies that the genuine teenager accepts who they are, understands themselves, lives with purpose and knows they can't make it on their own.

If you're a teen, have you recognized that these are transition years? Like learning to ride a bike with stabilizers or drive a car with your instructor on the dual controls, you can learn to be an adult in a safe environment. If you invest in your teenage years, you will reap the rewards as you enter into adulthood. Do you understand yourself? Everything is changing in your world, physically and emotionally, relationally and even spatially as you prepare to leave home and start to relate

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to your parents as an adult. The genuine teenager might be knocked sideways but not off balance by these changes, because they understand why they are happening and where they are headed.

Do you live with purpose? Are you *using* your teen years, not just *enjoying* them? It has often been said that what you are going to be, you are becoming right now.

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Perhaps most counter-culturally of all, the genuine teenager knows that they can't go it alone. You won't hear them shouting, 'Leave me alone, and let me run my own life!' They know that they need their family, friends and God to make a success of their teen years as they seek the best examples to follow, the best advice to listen to, and the best possible goals to aim for.

Don't waste your teenage years – they are valuable and special. Be what you are. A genuine teenager, like the ones we'll find in the Bible and in the pages of this book, is something special. Someone God is shaping and using for His glory.

CB Martin