

# Tips for Teen Parents

**Remember,** even though adolescents need to learn healthy independence, they are still under your care and need your support, guidance, and love. The teen years can be hard with many physical changes, transitioning into adulthood, and a teen's growing desire for independence. But they are still your children, entrusted to you by God.

"Children are a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3)."

**Express your love:** Listen. Show kindness, gentleness, and patience while being firm with the truth. Be ready to forgive. Work to develop a loving, open, and influential relationship with your child.

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love (Colossians 3:14)"

**Don't provoke:** Don't add fuel to the fire when you and your child are angry and frustrated. If emotions are high, everyone take a "time-out" and return to the conversation when you are able to calm down.

"...do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)."

**Establish Household Rules & Consequences:** Discuss with your child what is and is not allowed. Be clear and ensure your child understands the rules. Set up boundaries for dating and proper hang out locations. Once the rules are set, discuss the consequences. Follow through with consequences and stay as consistent as you can. Don't affirm, ignore, or minimize defiant behaviors.

## **Create Healthy Boundaries with Electronic Devices:**

- Determine an appropriate age to give your child a smartphone.
- Use parental controls on devices, apps, and programs to block and limit access to explicit and inappropriate content.
- Educate yourself about various social media apps and what your child can developmentally manage at their age and maturity level.
- Set time limits. Make electronics a privilege, not an entitlement.
- Require electronics be used in public places in the house, not behind closed doors.
- You are the parent. If you feel their behavior is being affected by their electronics, you can take their electronics away until they can correct their behavior and follow the rules.

**Teach:** Teach your child about the dangers of risky behaviors, pornography, and sexual activity. Help him/her understand short-term and long-term consequences of his/her choices and possible effects on his/her goals. And remember, more is often caught than taught. Be an example by turning away from and learning from your own unhealthy or risky behaviors.

**Trust God & Take 1 Day at a Time:** "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today (Matthew 6:33-34)."