

## ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

### *Hebrews 4:15-16*

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Seek to empathize with your student in the midst of their journey. There is often shame and weakness in failures and shortcomings. As parents, you can affirm this hurtful belief, or you can stand against it. When you empathize with their struggle, you create space for them to be honest and open. This same honesty and openness helps them find the grace and confidence to live differently.

## RESOURCES...

### > Web

**FocusontheFamily.com** • Books, Articles and Other Resources:  
**CovenantEyes.com** • Internet Accountability Service  
**CommonSenseMedia.org** • TV and Movie Ratings

### > Books

**Right Click: Parenting Your Teenager in a Digital Media World** by Kara Powell, Art Bamford, and Brad M Griffin  
**Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked** by Adam Alter  
**The Tech Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place** by Andy Crouch



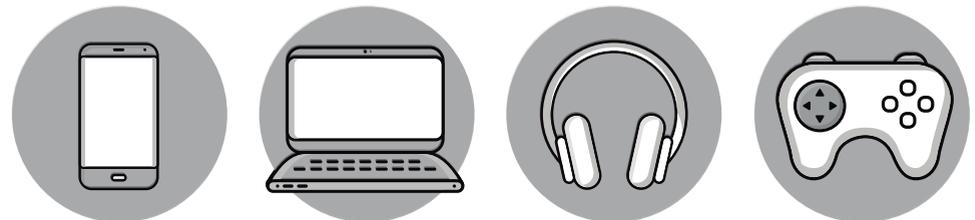
PARENTING  
*resources*

# PARENTING MATTERS: TECHNOLOGY

☐ HIGH SCHOOL ☐

## LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

It may feel like your High Schooler is under the control of a little gadget that governs their mind, body, and soul. Your student probably does almost everything on their devices. Every facet of their life takes place on technology platforms. A landslide majority of their communication is done via technology - through social media, texting, phone calls, and online gaming. Students are creating digital identities. Much of their world (best friends, family, old friends who live states away now and random people they have never met) interacts with them through this identity. The danger of this digital identity is that it stays with them well in their future, longer than they may want to claim it.



## YOU PARENT THEM WELL WHEN YOU...

### KNOW:

Your student is battling for independence and striving to make their own rules. This phase is less about setting up boundaries and more about creating space to uphold those boundaries and values. Students don't always understand the implications that technology has on their lives in the present and in the future. Your role is to be a safe place for them to process through setting up healthy technology expectations and learning to approach their failures with grace.

### EXPECT:

There will likely be anger, frustration and embarrassment when you find out your student has shared personal information, viewed inappropriate content, and/or bullied someone online. Your student is striving to prove that they can make their own choices and be independent, so when they fall short they will not be quick to admit it. Expect to have grace filled conversations regularly. Be aware of your body language, the tone of your voice, and the space you create for these conversations because you are training them up in how to make wise choices in their tech habits. You will be having less face to face conversations with your students, so use your time

### PREPARE:

Your student is developing a more active social life and is therefore spending less time at home. Don't be offended when they communicate with you over technology. Prepare to make the most of your in-person interactions by engaging in genuine ways. Create time and space to connect with them, do something they enjoy and talk about their life. When your student does need you immediately, prioritize being available to them. Don't be afraid to be a part of their tech lives through emoji filled family group chats, sharing funny videos and taking an interest in what they show and tell you.

### TALK:

Discuss the impact of technology on different facets of life. Talk about how it impacts friendships, romantic relationships, college acceptance, education, family time, job prospects, etc. In order to show your student that these things are a priority, you should make them regular conversations in your home. Look for ways to verbally review your family expectations and to encourage healthy relationships apart from technology. Reaffirm their independence and their ability to make wise choices.

## YOUR NEXT STEPS ARE...

Parenting your High Schooler in regards to technology can feel like trying to catch a runaway train. Your teen can probably navigate the tech world far quicker and more smoothly than you can. At some point, they will go off the rails. You might find pornography on their smartphone. You might uncover a politically aggressive or racially charged comment they posted. You might discover that they are bullying a peer online.

Your first response to these situations may be a freak out, but we encourage you to stay calm, gather your thoughts, and engage in active listening. Active listening is the process of identifying the issue, dialoging in order to fully understand one another, then working together to create an action plan to move forward. Your student may think this is lame, but once it proves to be effective it will gain popularity. Here is a framework to guide a conversation with your student.

### Active Listening Response Guide

#### Identify:

Directly mention what has happened. Explain how are they are breaking your family rules / expectation.

#### • Dialogue:

Always listen first. Let them fully explain (or explain what they are willing). Repeat back to them what you hear so they know you fully understand them (they can do the same for you). With many of the above situations, their reactions may come out of a place of embarrassment, shame, or betrayal. While these reactions seem unjustified to you, they feel very justified and real to your student. Validate those feelings before you correct them.

#### • Action Plan:

Work together to make an action plan. Look for steps forward to make sure issue does not happen again. And then ... follow through. Make this a priority, so they know it matters to you.