

FACING CHALLENGES — A FAMILY DEVOTION



Our teenagers today are facing many challenging issues. As they struggle to navigate their way through what often feels like a minefield of difficult circumstances, they are simultaneously hit with a never-ending barrage of incoming messages and influences that are sowing seeds of fear, doubt, comparison, sexuality, depression, identity, anxiety, and confusion. All of the feelings, raw emotions, fears, and attitudes that build up often spill over into our homes and directly impact the dynamics of our family relationships.

God created the family unit to be the primary place for your teenager to be nurtured, developed, disciplined, and experience His unconditional love and care. If that doesn't sound like your home at the moment, you are not alone. You are also not a failure as a parent. Just the fact that you are reading this shows that you desire to engage. And that's a good thing! So, take heart and know that every family experiences times when they need to press pause, regroup, and hit the reset button to ensure there is a positive atmosphere in the home and that everyone is doing their part to create it.

Much of what you can do (and must do) as a parent revolves around building real relationships, having open/honest conversations, and spending time in prayer. This can take a lot of work and can even be a little intimidating for many, but it's so worth it because just these simple steps can have more of an impact than most parents realize. When it comes to teenagers, it's not always about teaching and instructing. It's often more about connecting, listening, being present, and pointing them to the One who created them and loves them deeply.

Use the passage of Scripture located below and the questions provided as a family. Allow this exercise to be a first step or a next step in your working to keep spiritual conversations open and engage with your teenager by taking time as a family to pause, reset, and seek the Lord together.

STEP 1

Read Ephesians 4:25-32 To Yourself Using One Of The Two Translations Provided Below Or Using Your Own Bible.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

—Ephesians 4:25-32 (English Standard Version)

We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth. Don't get so angry that you sin. Don't go to bed angry and don't give the devil a chance. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need. Stop all your dirty talk. Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say. Don't make God's Spirit sad. The Spirit makes you sure that someday you will be free from your sins. Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

—Ephesians 4:25-32 (Contemporary English Version)

STEP 2

Write Down Your Answers To The Following Questions.

1. What commands do you see in the Scripture passage?
2. Which verse holds the most meaning to you or hits you the hardest and why?
3. How can these verses be applied to the way our family interacts with one another?

STEP 3

Once Everyone Is Done, Discuss Questions #2 & #3 As A Family.

STEP 4

Ephesians 4:29 States That Our Words Should Be Helpful In Building Others Up.

- Have Each Family Member Share Something They Admire About Every Other Family Member.
- Have Everyone Share One Thing They Love About Your Family In General.

STEP 5

Give Everyone An Opportunity To Share One Thing They Think Your Family Could Do Differently To Make It Stronger.

STEP 6

Take Some Time To Plan Something Fun For The Family To Do Together. Brainstorm Ideas Together And Pick One. Choose A Date To Do It In The Next Couple Weeks.

STEP 7

Share One Personal Prayer Request Each And Pray For Each Other.