

How to Protect Your Teen From Sexting, Cyber-Bullies

Our teenagers have never known a world without smartphone technology. This is both good and bad. Given the bad stuff that we have walked through with many families in recent years (porn addiction, bullying, self-esteem rooted in number of likes) there is part of me that wishes it would all go away.

It's not going away.

At our Critical Conversations Event, we coach families on all sorts of things related to their kids' relationships. Social media and smartphone use is always a hot topic. If your family is like ours, you have found yourself playing catch-up. Every time you think you're "in the know" about an app or your kid's behavior online, you discover something new. It can be maddening.

You need to do everything you can to stay on top of this.

Talking about this stuff doesn't come easy. Setting parameters is even harder. But you can and you should. The hard part is knowing what to say and what to do.

There are a few essential resources that can help you.

Northpoint Community Church has given parents a few tools that can help you to have key conversations and to set reasonable (and necessary) parameters on your teenager's smartphone use. I'm sharing them here because they can provide a few key elements of your family's strategy to manage technology in healthy ways.

First, there's a great VIDEO INTERVIEW with Andy Stanley about teens and smartphones.

Click on the image below to hear the excellent advice he offers to parents. It's a bit long, but worth every minute.

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Finally, they have created a CONTRACT that parents and teens can sign.

It's pretty solid but simple agreement that parents and teenagers can use to define how smartphones will be used in your home. You can find a downloadable version here.



Remember, the issues your teenager is facing are far bigger than their smartphone.

These tools are an excellent first step to make sure your kids are using technology in healthy ways, but there's much more going on here. What your kids really need is to be equipped to navigate their identity, their relationships, their sexuality and their eventual marriage with wisdom. That's why we wrote The Talks.

