

Mom Takes Unique Stand After Inappropriate Instagram Post

ReShandra Billingsly Tate's 12-year-old daughter posted a picture on Instragram (an interactive mobile picture sharing app) holding a bottle of vodka with a caption stating, "Wish I could drink this vodka." ReShandra decided on a punishment that would match the misconduct.

She posted a picture of her daughter holding a sign that read, "Since I want to take pics holding liquor, I am obviously NOT ready for social media and will be taking a hiatus until I learn what is and isn't appropriate to post. Bye-Bye."

Although the 12-year-old's face was not shown in the picture, this has been hugely debated since it went viral to more than 10,000 people within hours via Facebook and was covered by national media. I was immediately reaffirmed in my convictions about needing to diligently guard my children in the face of this whole new world of social media.

If you are like me as a parent, you are probably reading this story wondering: How do I set healthy boundaries for my kids in the arena of social media? More importantly, how do I enforce these boundaries when they are crossed? Many times there are more questions than answers in a world where technology moves so fast we can barely wrap our minds around its advances. Here are a few tech tips for parents:

- **Don't sit on the sideline.** Parents, today I am watching more kids win or lose their battle with the world on the basis of their choices with technology. This arena can be a minefield. Kids are naive of the dangers, yet it has been said that they are the natives in the world of technology while we as parents are the immigrants. Don't excuse yourself from this battle because you don't know what you are doing and feel

overwhelmed. You might not be tech savvy, but make every effort to get up to speed with the tech world around you so that you can protect your kids. Don't make excuses. Get in the game!

- **Teach your kids to play by your rules.** Parents, it is important that we give clear-cut expectations and boundaries when our tweens and teens are diving head first into the world of technology. We need to communicate what is appropriate and what is not honoring to God.

- **Only post appropriate pictures.** That means pictures that you would be comfortable seeing on the "big screen" at church on Sunday (you know the one that all the worship songs and announcements are posted on).

- **Stress to your kids that everything they put online is permanent!** Even if they remove it, these posts can be found. Colleges, internships and prospective employers all look at what these young people are posting and it makes an impact on the final decision.

- **Make sure that you have your child's password to all social networking sites.** It is not enough to be able to see what they are posting via being their friend. Privacy settings are always changing and having their password is the only way to circumvent these ever-changing settings.

- **Be sure you actually check in with what your kids are doing online.** Having filtering and monitoring software will help keep you in touch, but it does no good if you never check up on them.

Kids at this age do not see the long-term consequences in their actions. When it comes to online activity it is important that parents help their kids develop this foresight. They will truly reap what they sow when it comes to online activity.

Julie Hiramine is the author of *Guardians of Purity: A parent's guide to winning the war against media, peer pressure, and eroding sexual values*. She is also founder and executive director of the ministry *Generations of Virtue*, which equips parents to empower their children for purity in our world today. Ministering both in the U.S. and internationally, Julie spreads vision and encouragement to parents as she inspires families to raise the next generation to fulfill their God-given destiny.