

IParenting

Wednesday Night Bible Study

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All right, does any of that sound familiar? A little bit? Maybe you don't want to admit it.

Let me give you a couple of qualifiers before we begin. 1. Tracy and I have three children aged 17, 14, 13, and we have no idea what we're doing. Qualifier 2 is the fact that all of them are teenagers and have access to the same social media and the same devices that were shown in this episode with Diane Sawyer. So the question today is simply this: how do we look at Scripture and navigate this e-world or electronic world that we're going through?

The first thing I want to begin with, though, is to give you a very important necessary perspective. Luke 15 is a very famous chapter, in fact it's the only chapter in Scripture where Jesus tells three straight parables in a row. Typically he'll tell a parable, maybe two and then he'll explain the. This is the only time where he tells three in a row and he actually begins chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke by saying this parable, singular, in other words, all of them though different stories are about the same concept. The reason that's important is we know this chapter best because of the story of whom we call the prodigal son. You know, the young man who demanded his inheritance, went out and lost it with riotous living and came back home very repentful to his father, willing just to be a servant but received the ring and the robe and such? But for tonight's purpose, what I want you to understand is his older brother didn't leave the house. His older brother complained, "You know, I haven't messed up. I haven't wasted my living. Why are you so excited about him?" The reason I want you to grasp that tonight is both children grew up in the same home with the same instruction and responded differently.

So that being said, I want you to hear, parents, okay, as parents, it is not necessarily your fault if your kids make bad decisions. Please here that clearly because in that story one made a wise decision, one made a bad decision, and they grew up with the same rules, they grew up with the same parameters. So I think that's an important perspective here. As we are raising children, many of you are further along the path than I have been so far, that just because a child makes an ungodly decision, an erroneous decision, a poor decision, does not necessarily reflect on your diligence to biblical parenting. Please hear that very clearly because they have a relationship with God and they have a responsibility to either foster that relationship or go contrary to. So I think that's an important perspective to begin with.

So now as we translate to these devices and I think it's very appropriate that I have mine with me tonight, I want to ask a series of proverbial questions. I know you know the answers to them but I'm going to ask them anyway. About what age, and you can interact, do you think it is appropriate to turn, shall we say, power tools over to your children: lawnmowers, chainsaws, weed eaters, what age? Just give me an age. 14, I hear a 14. 10, there you go, good call. 12. Basically I get it. Let me ask you another: at what age do you feel comfortable with your child driving an automobile in a public arena? 30. 12. All right, the reason I say that is I want to show you a headline that was in a European newspaper very recently. Are you ready, here's the headline: NASA moon landing, how Apollo 11 landed on the moon with computers weaker than your smart phone. You realize that even though we joke about chainsaws and lawnmowers and automobiles and such, that the technology that is in this device right here is a lunar module of the sixties, and when our children have these devices in their hands, they have at their fingertips, they have at their disposal access to more computing power than landing on the moon.

If I had asked you the question: how old should your child be before they land a spacecraft on the moon, you would have laughed at me because we would think, "Oh, no, no, no, only the most specialized, educated, trained people in the world should ever be able to take that type of endeavor," and yet you saw on that video and we've seen today that even children before they can speak are handling these devices, and I think that's important for us to note how much power our children have access to with these devices, how much information is out there, and literally as we saw with the swipe of a finger or the click of a button.

So tonight I just want to ask six questions that all of us as parents and grandparents and those who love children are asking in relationship to technology. The first one doesn't sound like it's a technology question but I promise you it is. The first question is this: who should parent your children? I know it's rhetorical because it's you, however, how often do we allow the culture to parent our children? How often do we allow our peers to parent our children? How often do we allow – listen to this – the latest research or the newest book to parent our children? The Bible is definitive from beginning to end that God has allowed children in your home, they may be biological, they may be foster, they may be adopted, they may even be borrowed for whatever it may be, but those children are in your home and under your sphere of influence for a very strategic purpose and it is not to allow someone outside of your home to raise them. The Lord has allowed them in your life for you to have the privilege of raising them.

In kind of a guiding verse, I think this can go for all things in life but particularly parenting, is Philippians 4:8 where it says, "Let finally these things be in your mind, that which is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue and praise, think on these things." Now that being said, when we talk about parenting, this is technology and every other aspect, can we trust the culture, can we trust the latest research, can we trust even our peers to be true and honest? Probably not. Can we trust the culture to be just? I guarantee you we can't trust the culture to be pure. Have you seen a commercial during a ballgame lately? I mean, you cannot trust sources outside of your relationship with the

Lord and thereby your relationship to your family to be honest and true and virtuous and of praise and that which honors God. So as a parent who hopefully is raising your children biblically, it is your desire to honor the Lord by raising our children in a manner that honors God and does not just necessarily make them en vogue with the relevant culture.

Some years ago a Christian statistician by the name of George Barna, he wrote a book entitled "Revolutionary Parenting," in other words, how to parent like nobody else does, and by the way, it was a typical research book. You know, the first chapter is the book and the final seven are just the research to prove the book. Here's what he said, there are really three ways you can raise your kids: you can either raise them the way you were raised; raise them the opposite of the way you were raised; or you can raise them God's way. Now think about that. How many times have you said, "Well, that's the way I did it and you're gonna do it at that age too." You're just simply saying, "You're gonna do it the way I was raised." Or how many times have you made this statement, "You know, that's not the way I grew up and that's not the way you're gonna grow up either." Or, "I did that and you're not." But the powerful statement of it's not the same or different, it's how does God desire us, I got news for you, there might be times in life that you were raised in a godly manner, and there might have been some times that you weren't whether you're reciprocating that or not in your current state and condition. So the goal of tonight whether it be with media or any other device, is that when we have the privilege of parenting, whatever that looks like, to do so in a God driven, godly manner, desiring that their lives honor God more than please their peers or more than make them in style with the latest culture.

Question 2: so how do we parent our children, particularly in light of technology? One of the key passages is Deuteronomy 6 and I've given you the references tonight not only on the outline that hopefully you picked up but also on the screens. Deuteronomy 6 is the John 3 of the Old Testament. You know, John 3:16, the building that we're in, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." I mean, that's kind of the hinge verse that we can base all the New Testament on. Well, Deuteronomy 6:4 is the same for the Old Testament where it says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God." It is the distinctive verse, in fact, if you want to get technical, it's the only verse in the Old Testament that has capital letters in it almost as if the Lord is emphasizing this point. But prior to that verse and immediately following, there are all these instructions that the commandments and the precepts and the principles of God are to be talked about in the home, they are to be spoken off the lips of the family, they are to be discussed in the morning, discussed in the evening, they are to be put on the frontals of the house and be worn wherever they go, and when you begin to dissect that passage, you discover that if the word of God and if God himself is gonna be honored in a home, it happens because whoever is the leader at home, the parental figure in that home has to direct and guide so.

So just some characteristics of parenting that you see in that passage. Number 1 is this, it's very distinct, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God." John 3:16, that's very distinct. Allow me to give you some interesting news and you probably know this: if you

are leading your home with a biblical Christian perspective, you are in the statistical minority in our culture and you're doing something very distinct. You're saying, "I'm not gonna do it the way the world says to do it, I'm gonna do it the way God says to do it." They were distinct in Deuteronomy 6, we should be distinct as well.

It says that they are to be diligent. When you talk about it in the morning, when you talk about it at night. Now I know this is going to come as a surprise to y'all but there are times in the evening when we prepare for our family devotionals that I don't want to. I'm tired. How is that for honesty? I'm tired. I'm just not in the mood. But what does Deuteronomy 6 say? Do it in the morning. Do it in the evening. And so you're diligent in the fact of one of the worst things I think we can do when it comes to imposing Scripture and Christian principles in our family is to say, "Well, it won't hurt to just skip a day or two." You know a day or two turns into a week or two, right? A week or two turns into a month, and pretty soon you wake up and you're kind of like this family on the screen and say, "How did this happen?"

So to be diligent, to be dedicated. It said to wear them, you know, on the frontlets and all these different, that it takes dedication because you've got to persevere through this thing called culture to make the preeminence of Scripture and godly principles in your family's life.

Determination. I'm gonna go ahead and tell you what you already know: it is easier to do it the world's way. It's easier. It is just easier to say, "You know what, I'm just going to slip it into neutral and let it go." But what do you see in Deuteronomy 6? They did it day after day, night and day. They continued to do so. They even decorated their house. There is this determination that we are going to finish the race.

And last but not least, demonstration. You notice in the video how many of the kids said, "Well, I'm just doing what you're doing, mom, dad." You do understand that even with technology, if you set up the best parameters in the world and you don't follow them yourself, don't expect your kids to either. And in Deuteronomy 6, it wasn't just instruction for the kids, it was instruction for the parents as well. The parents were demonstrating, they were modeling for their children what does it look like to wake up, go throughout the day and go to bed with a godly biblical perspective.

So what are the qualities or the consequences? As you read Deuteronomy 6, here's what the Lord promises. He says if we put him at the forefront of our parenting, if we make him the focus of all of our family interaction, he says that several things will take place. He says that he will go before them, he will lead before them, he will protect them. It says he will be gracious unto them and he will give them to them abundantly. Now that's not just natural blessing, that means supernatural provision and protection. You can never do wrong by putting God first. Ever. So when we do that in our home, though we may not see the fruit in the next week, we may not even see it the next month, in fact, some of you who have had kids grow up and become now adults and you're now having grandchildren that are a part of your life, you've testified that you're grateful for what the Lord has done now, and some of those teenage years you didn't know how things were

gonna turn out but you stayed dedicated, you stayed distinctive, you stayed determined and you hung in there and what happened? Eventually over time fruit was produced.

We live in a world today of instant gratification, a world that says if it hasn't been working for four hours, switch to a different plan. Last I checked, God hasn't changed Deuteronomy 6. He hasn't changed it. He hasn't said, "Well, you know, it's a technology-based world now so instead of talking about it in the morning, in the evening, just send an email, it'll be fine. Don't worry about it. Just send a text. You know, instant message. Put it on Snapchat. It'll be fine." He made it clear, you know, it's interesting about Scripture that they didn't have electricity, they didn't have indoor plumbing, they didn't have anything that we have as far as a modern convenience, yet that's just as relevant to our lives today as it was to theirs. Make the word of God important when you get up, as you go through the day, when you go to bed. Make it the center of your life and your family.

So question 3. This is where it's gonna get real pertinent, all right? I'm gonna lean back here. When do you start parenting in relationship to technology? You ask 10 parents, you're gonna get 11 different answers, all right? However, I'm gonna give you some of the Meyers' family rules tonight, the Meyers' family rules don't have to be your rules. You have your own relationship with the Lord, your own relationship with your kids, but as we are progressing through life, we are discovering that they are working for us. We've made a few mistakes along the way as we all have and we've learned from them. This is what the Meyers family has done because people ask me all the time, what age is the right age to give my child a device that can land on the moon? What's the age? And do you know what the answer is? I don't know. I don't know what the age is. I can tell you what we did. We allowed our children to have a mobile device, a phone, when they would find themselves in an extracurricular activity that was after school that we would have to be notified of when it would end. In other words, football practice. When they got to the level of playing soccer and football where practice oftentimes was at an off-site facility, 8 o'clock at night, or after school until we didn't know when, that we allowed a device to be on their person so that they could communicate with us because oftentimes coaches cancel practice, or sometimes they decide that practice is gonna be cut short 45 minutes early, and if you're in a different situation, or in my case a meeting or such, you know, I don't know what's worse having a kid with a cell phone in their hands or sitting on the side of the road for an hour. So in our family, we made the decision that when they would need to communicate with us, then they would have access to them.

Now here's where it gets a little entertaining for the Meyers family. A couple of weeks ago our youth group went on a mission trip to Memphis. None of my kids took their cell phones and they survived. It's amazing. They survived. They're going to camp next week and they're not taking a phone. Do you know why? Because Dan Strickland has my number. Every person who is an adult on that trip has my number and do you know what? If there's a problem, they can get a hold of us. When a kid goes to camp, this is just Jeff parent talking here, the purpose of youth camp is to go be alone with God and be with your friends. Instagram can wait as far as I'm concerned and there is nothing that could or would happen to them in that environment of a physical nature or whatever that I would not be notified of through the proper procedures. Now, that doesn't have to be your

family rule as our family is not your family, but I have learned that they come home happy and they've got smiles on their faces because they actually spent time with their friends, they spent time with the Lord, and so I want to encourage you don't be scared to parent because I do understand that what I just shared with you is very different than the way the world sees most things.

So when do you start? Well, I'm not gonna give you an exact age, I'm not gonna give you an exact scenario because that's between you, the Lord and your family, but I want to give you some information here, some quotes that I find interesting and I've classified them as preschool and elementary school. This first quote comes from James Dobson and when it comes to the Christian community, I think we all agree he's a pretty solid Christian-based parenting expert, so to speak, has been since the late sixties. He says this quote, this is, by the way, from the book "Bringing Up Boys." He did write a book called "Bringing Up Girls." We didn't feel like we needed to read it. Okay, here's what he says in "Bringing Up Boys." He says, "Even at three years of age, a child is capable of learning that the flowers, the sky, the birds and even the rainbow are gifts from God's hand. The Christian worldview teaches that good and evil are determined to by the God of the universe and that he has given us an unchanging moral standard by which to live." Now let me unpack what that means. That means that your children and your grandchildren have grasped a worldview what's important, what is not, what's valuable and what is disposable, what is real, what is false, by the time they are three years of age. In other words, they're gonna understand, they're gonna believe in a Deuteronomy 6 based home, they're gonna understand by three that there is a God because you talk to him. They're gonna believe that church is important even though they can't read because you're here on a regular basis. They're gonna understand that there is a Creator that loves them because you talk of that. Much the opposite, if we allow all of their worldview to be shaped by the world, then that is a competing message to the worldview of Scripture and oftentimes we look at a one-year-old and a two-year-old and they can't focus real well as far as their eyesight, they can't communicate verbally real well, they can't even walk or run necessarily at the smoothest level and we think what can they get? They can get a lot, is what they can, and one of the things that I want to share with you tonight is it is a whole lot easier to parent at three than it is 13 because at 13, they might be faster than you. At three it could be close but you can do it, I promise you.

A story that my father-in-law shares. My father-in-law is a retired attorney and he was a partner in the law firm there in the central Texas area, and one night or one day one of his law partners came in and he was just beat, I mean, he was just exhausted, I mean, just worn out, and he's like, "What is wrong with you?" He said, "Man, we didn't get any sleep last night." He said, "Well, what happened?" Well, they had a three-year-old, pretty pertinent information, and the three-year-old wouldn't go to bed, wouldn't go to sleep, and I know there are a lot of opinions on this but just deal with the story. He said, "So we allowed the three-year-old to be in our bed," and he said, "Well, okay, but did he keep you up all night?" He said, "Did he keep us up all night? He wouldn't take his cowboy boots off and he kicked me all night long." You know, if I was a 30 something practicing attorney, I'd better be able to get some cowboy boots off a three-year-old. But what is that teaching that child? "I can do what I want to do and not even my parents can stop me."

So I want you to understand even James Dobson is saying that the big things in life, that there is a God and the Bible is true and there is a Creator, our kids are learning those things even before they darken the door of the school, whatever that school looks like.

Moving on to elementary school here, this next quote is by a secularist. He, to my knowledge, is not a believer in Jesus Christ. He would not claim that the Bible was true. All he is speaking of is biological science. One of the most revolutionary statements I've heard about children in recent days, this is by a guy by the name of Bruce Lipton, all right? He says, "The most influential perceptual programming of the subconscious mind occurs from birth through age 6. During that time, the child's brain is recording all sensory experiences as well as learning complex motor programs for speech, crawling, standing, and advance activities like running and jumping. Simultaneously, the child's sensory systems are fully engaged downloading massive amounts of information about the world and how it works. By observing the behavioral patterns of people in their immediate environment, primarily parents, siblings and relatives," he's not a believer by the way, "children learn to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors," listen to the statement, "It is important to realize that perceptions acquired before the age of six become the fundamental subconscious programs that shape the character of an individual's life. A child's perceptions of the world are directly downloaded into the subconscious during this time without discrimination, without filters of the analytical subconscious mind which doesn't fully exist." What he is saying from a strictly biological perspective, and that's his world that he lives in, he sees the world, you know, through a microscope, is he is saying that the way our children think primarily has been set by the time they go to second grade.

So is this shaping their thinking or are we as parents? Think about that for just a moment. How often do we use these devices as babysitters, teaching tools, whatever they may be, and not even thinking, "Well, they're just four years old, it's not that big a deal. It's just a cartoon." But understand that by the time they hit age 6, all those neurons have hit to such a level that their way of perceiving things has been established.

Now allow me to give you an example that he uses in one of his many books that he's written. He says if someone grows up in a home where they're told from the moment that they can have a conversation that nobody in their family is smart, everybody in their family is dumb, we're just dumb, we're not smart people, then they begin to think that they're dumb, and by the time they hit second and third grade, they don't try like others students try, they don't want to excel because they have been told so much that they are dumb. Why is that important? Because we have to ask ourselves is technology communicating more to our children than we are, and if it is, then they're gonna believe, receive and accept what it's giving them because that's what they're hearing. So you and I are in great competition here because this is easily accessible, it's 24/7, it never shuts off, and it's got more power than the lunar module that we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this year.

All right, question 4: where do you start? This is where it gets to brass tacks and, again, allow me to say this is between you, God and your family, but I'm gonna give you a lot of Meyers-isms, so to speak. The first place to start is in your home. It's your home and in our case it's our phones and it's our plan, which means it belongs to us. We pay the bill, not them. We bought the phone, not them. So guess who's in charge of it? Us, alright? Now you say, "Well, that's obvious. That's a simple principle." You'd be shocked how many people allow others to control things they own. That's my phone, that's my cell phone package, and I've established a policy and I've established a rule and if you don't like it, then I'll just take my phone back. Who is the parent here? Remember the three-year-old with the cowboy boots? That story relates to 13-year-olds as well.

So let's talk about your home, locations and times. In the Meyers' home, you are not allowed to have a technological device in your room. Period. That includes pads, iPads, phones or TVs. We are very gracious and allow them to have radios. Please note the sarcasm. Now the reason I share that with you is real simple: you were a teenager and I was too. Think about the thoughts you had and the things you did behind closed doors as a teenager and now imagine if you'd had a cell phone to go along with it. You see how much more accessible those things are in this world? And it is my home and I have the privilege of raising them as Deuteronomy 6 in the fear of the Lord here, and it is just not wise to give a young person access to all the world's knowledge with unsupervision. It's not wise. So we have a rule, you're not allowed in any room in the house that is closed off.

Now, let me give you a qualifier here before you think we're just legalistic, okay? I have one of my children who loves to work out. He has a weight bench in his room, okay? That's just what he loves to do. Well, when he works out, he loves to have music going. I mean, that's who he is. He's a teenager and I get it. So he comes to us and he says, "Hey, mom and dad, I'm gonna go work out, is that okay?" Sure, no problem. He goes in his room with the door open, works out. I know between sets he's changing songs but do you know what he knows? We walk by and can walk in any time. The door never closes. We're not gonna deprive them of the enjoyment of life but as parents we are gonna guide them so as not to allow them to go places that maybe they never intended to go because a lot of times some of the stuff they fall into comes to them. We're gonna talk about that next month with an expert who's going to come and share kinda how some of that stuff happens.

In your home, number 1, public places. You see, another thing we don't allow in our home, we do not allow two electronic devices at one time. Let me tell you what that means. If there's a ballgame on the TV, there's not a phone in your hand. There's not a phone in your hand. If you want to get on your phone and chat with your buddies, you can go in the kitchen and do that. Oh, by the way, that's a public place. That's fine. Just don't go into your rooms or anything that's locked down. You can be in a public place but no two at one time and if you feel like the need to do so, then you can go into the kitchen or go into the dining room, whatever it may be, and do so but you're not gonna do it at the same time.

Now, that's just the Meyers' rule. That doesn't have to be your rule but the second aspect of that is the times, that we lock it down at 9 o'clock at night. I know, we're horrible people, phones go up. Phones go up, all right? You say, "Why do the phones go up at 9?" Because that's when we do our family devotionals. Do you know what happens when we're doing our family devotionals? In the other room, here's what you hear, [buzzing, buzzing, buzzing]. That's all you here, all right? How much Bible study are you gonna get done? You're just not, all right? So they go down at a certain time. By the way, and we'll talk a little bit about this more in a moment, we actually have a device on our phones that at 10 o'clock at night, their phones shut down unless I put in a code. Sorry. You're not gonna get up at midnight and get on your phone. The only way to get on their phone is to push the emergency button and it calls me.

All right, so, that's your home. Second, public places. Let me tell you what breaks my heart. I go to a restaurant and see a family of five, nobody's talking, they're all looking down at their screens. Here's what we do, there are times, hey, there are times where we're talking at the table at a restaurant or even in our home and something will come up, and I know it's going to shock you, in our family we're talking about sports of some kind, and somebody will say, "Well, look, what was their record last year?" And we'll say to one of them, "Hey, get out your phone and look that up." Soon as they do, we put it back down. In other words, if we're gonna be at a restaurant, if we're gonna be in a public environment together, the phones are not out. I'm paying good money to eat food and look at their eyeballs, okay? So that's just our rule. Hey, they've got them with them. We're not depriving them, so to speak, and there are times we'll ask them, "Hey, we need to know the answer. Can you look that up?" So we still utilize but we don't let them control us. And by the way, our young people need to learn how to have conversations. They need to learn how to look people in the eye. They need to learn that you don't have a conversation looking down, you have it looking out, and the best way to do that is as a family or whomever, just one on one, whatever it may be, and so we hope and try to demonstrate that even in public places.

All right, times of privacy. I am not the technology expert. That's what Tal Prince(ph) is gonna be next month, okay? When he comes, he is the expert on technology. He knows everything about the apps and the hidden apps and how everything works and how they are monitoring and all those things, but let me tell you what you can do, what you have access to, and we practice. I see everything that my kids do on their phone. Everything. You say, "Do you sit there and watch it all day?" I don't have that much time but I do have an app that sends me an alert if something happens that shouldn't. In other words, they know if I'm gonna look at it, daddy's gonna look at it too. If I'm gonna say it, daddy's gonna read it. Do I read every one of their texts? Man, I don't have time for that but I will tell you it's a wonderful preventative medicine when they know that that conversation isn't necessarily private, when they know that that web search has somebody looking over their shoulders. I have a funny feeling it changes their behavior.

That being said, we have technology on their phones that not only does that but blocks certain types of searches, certain types of websites, certain types of apps. Now, I know what you're thinking, well, they're smart and they're creative. I get all that. If that's what

my kid wants to do, then he can go and do it on a device that's not mine. But if that's my phone, my plan and my home, then we're gonna go by what I think important is what would God want us to say, what would God want us to look at, what would God want us to view, and hey, that's between them and God if they want to sneak around somewhere else but it doesn't have to happen in my home and on my devices. So I want you to know that we've installed protective apps and programs and they have them for android, they have them for iPhones. You're gonna hear about that next month because there's a lot better stuff out there than probably we utilize, but I just want you to hear that we have access to all that. I can go back right now and not only can I go look at every conversation they've had with every friend they've had, but I can even go, I've got one that drives, I can go back and look at where he's driven and how fast he's driven so that when he tells me, "Dad, I wasn't driving that fast," I'll say, "Oh really, let me show you something right here."

So in other words you say, "Well, aren't you invading their privacy?" No, they're in my home, I'm buying their food, I am their privacy because I'm their parent. So I think one of the things that we've forgotten today is you have the biblical right to be a parent. Don't let this lost world say, "Oh, just let them choose." Folks, we've got elementary school kids today trying to choose what they're gonna be one day and they don't even know if they want chicken or ribs for lunch. I mean, seriously, and so please do not think that you are a legalistic overreaching parent and the proof is in the pudding. If any of you have had any kind of conversations with my kids, they're normal kids, they have personalities, they enjoy their friends, they have fun, they play games. They're normal kids even with these parameters on them.

So how do you discipline? Two more questions. First thing is be honest and realistic. Nobody, even your child, is perfect. I know that may shock some of you but your kid is not perfect and neither is mine. I'm gonna go ahead and say stuff, I've said this publicly before and I'm gonna say it again: every one of my children have viewed things on electronic devices that they should not have viewed. How's that for honesty? They've already things that they shouldn't have read? It's true. Do you know why? Because we are sinful creatures and we are disposed to sinful behavior. Your kids are gonna mess up. Did you mess up? I did. They're gonna mess up so be honest with yourself. That doesn't mean we excuse it but please be realistic that there are going to be times where your child makes a poor decision when it comes to technology, whatever that looks like in your particular context.

Which means, second is this, be gracious and look at the long-term picture. I've heard people say, "Well, I caught, you know, so and so, they were looking at this or doing that. We're just going off the grid. No more and we're throwing it all in the trash." I hate to tell y'all but this technology is not going away anytime soon. In fact, as you get older in your teenage and collegiate and even your workplace years, it becomes more and more almost of a necessity in some situations. So the role isn't to keep them from it when they make a mistake, hear this, it's to graciously guide them how does the Lord want to redeem and restore this so that you learn how to navigate under his provision and not our natural sinful inclinations. So I would encourage you to be gracious, long-term perspective.

Lastly, be clear, confident and consistent. You notice on the video we showed that the mom said they used to have rules but they just fell away. If there's one piece of advice whether it comes to discipline on any other issue but particularly technology, you've got to make it very clear when you say phones go off at 10 and they say, "Mom, it's only 10:10, don't worry about it." You say, "Well, that's close enough." No, 10 means 10. You've got to be clear because as soon you allow 10 minutes, the next thing you know you're gonna allow two hours or whatever it is in your context. You've got to be clear, you've got to be confident, you've got to be consistent.

Now there are two things in the Meyers house that can get you in more trouble than anything else. Are y'all ready to hear? Here it is: you lie to us or you do something improper against our rules with technology. It's real simple. If you have your phone somewhere it is not supposed to be, at a time it's not supposed to be, I don't care if you were listening to the Bible app, it's mine for a month. No questions asked. You say, "Well, what happens?" They get sweeter and nicer. I'm serious. It's amazing how much better their disposition gets when they not budge from it.

True story, not that I would tell you a false one. Remember the whole reason for the phones were because of the sports? One of my children right now currently does not have his phone. Now I'm gonna be honest, what he was doing on his phone wasn't what we would call inappropriate but he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. So too bad. That's the rule. That's what we do. With that being said, he was at a sports practice the other day and he was supposed to get out at a certain time and he was nowhere to be found. Now I'm in panic mode as a parent. I go up there a certain time in the evening and he's supposed to be there. I go here, I go there. So what did I have to do? Now this is horrible, I had to actually call his coach, "Do you know where he is?" And he said, "Did he not call you?" I said, "Coach, he doesn't have his phone because he got in trouble." He said, "That's good parenting." I said, "Thank you, Coach. Where's my boy," that's right.

Now why do I bring that up? When you are very clear with discipline with technology, do you know who it inconveniences the most? You. It's, "I can't wait for this month to be over. I need him to be able to text me when he's at work and he's gonna be 30 minutes later than what I'm expecting and I show up and I have to wait there." Who does that inconvenience? Me. But to cave in on it and to give it back says, do you know what, when it comes to technology, it's not as important as dad's schedule is and that's the wrong message to send because I want them to make wise decisions. So I won't even tell you what happens to them if they lie to us. That's a whole other story.

All right, so question 6, this is it. This is the finale for the evening: why should you parent so differently? Why? Because it's so much easier to let the phone be the babysitter. It is so much easier to sit at a quiet table in a restaurant and nobody's talking, everybody's just looking down and doing whatever they're doing. It is so much easier not to fight. It's so much easier not to argue. Hey, by the way and I know you know who my kids are and you can ask them and they'll verify, one of the most entertaining come to Jesus meetings, by the way, a come to Jesus meeting in our home, it could actually be called a come to

Tracy meeting, if that makes any sense. We had a come to Jesus meeting because when we got our kids their phones, you understand that the only purpose was so they could communicate. We didn't buy them a phone so they could do social media, we bought them a phone so they could call us at ball practice. So we bought them the, you got it, two dollar a month phones, and do you know what? They were embarrassed and I don't care. One day they all rallied up together, I don't know whose room they were in but I think they thought they were being smart. They all got together and they had a game plan and they were gonna get mommy and I, they were going to get us, and they came in and they said, "Oh, we are being left out." We said, "What do you mean you're being left out?" They said, "We are being left out of stuff with our friends and with school, even our church friends." Gotta throw a little Bible in there. I said, "What do you mean you're being left out?" And they said, "You do understand that these phones we have, that they cannot do group text with more than 10 people." Okay. And I said, "Okay," and so I said, "Well, what's the solution?" And they said, "Well, we either gotta get this nicer different kind of phone that can or you have to use an app like group meet or one of those." And I said, "Well, there's an easy solution, use group meet." And they said, "Well, our friends don't want to use group meet." I said, "Well, then I guess they're not your friends." They whined and they whined and they whined and here's what they said, and by the way I think from their perception they were absolutely true, they said, "Dad, you don't understand that because our phones are antiquated, they're cheap and they can't do what others, people make fun of us at school." And I said, "Congratulations." And they said, "Why?" And I said, "Because those aren't your phones, they're mine and I'm proud that they're antiquated and old and cheap." And they said, "Well, dad, we've been thinking," bad bad phrase, "you know, we work and we all have jobs, can we just buy our own phones?" I said, "No." They said, "But we have the money." I said, "Too bad. It's my phone plan and I decide who buys the phone, they're gonna be my phones. I hope you enjoy your two dollar phones." They said, "But dad, people are mean to us. They're ugly. They make fun of us." I said, "Well, congratulations, welcome to the world."

I want you to know that that was one of the hardest two hours I've had as a parent because all of us as parents want our kids to have friends. We don't want them left out when all their buddies are going out to eat and they didn't know it was happening, but is it worth the price of one dinner with their buddies for maybe a mentality that having the latest technology is more important than how we govern our home and our family? And I don't know what your rules are gonna be in your home but in ours, we've established them, they're clear, they're consistent.

Why do we do this? Why do you parent so different? Because as a parent, grandparent, custodian, whatever you are of children, God has called you to protect them, to shepherd them. He's not called you to imprison them. In other words, sure, they have their phones on when we go to a restaurant, okay? Sure, I understand they have them in these variety of locations. Trust me, we are not imprisoning them. And by the way, even if they didn't have one, I wouldn't call that prison, okay? But our goal and our job as a parent is to protect our children to the best of our ability, to guide and to navigate them through this very difficult technological world. And last but not least, we are called to prepare them for adulthood, not to promote adolescent popularity. I'm gonna say that again: we are

called to prepare them for adulthood, not to promote adolescent popularity. The lessons that you teach, the behavior that you model at age 3 and at age 13 will eventually establish in their lives, because here's the deal and my wife and I have talked about this, I've got one that's a high school senior this next year, he's gonna move out of my home and he's going to live at a place that's not under my roof and do you know what? He may even have a phone that I don't buy. He's an adult. Imprisonment would be to say, "Do you know what? I'm gonna just make sure that I still have tabs on you, boy." You see, my goal is to prepare them so that when they do go wherever they go, that they've established biblical principles in their life that will guide them even when mom and dad aren't there, and even when the rules are with them in the remains, whatever that may be. So I want you to understand, that's why we're doing this. Not to lock them down, imprison them, get legalistic, but to teach them and prepare them and navigate them through this world because eventually that cute little baby that had the cell phone in the video, your children and grandchildren, they're eventually going to become adults like us and have we navigated them and taught them scripturally what it looks like to put God first and allow other things to come secondary.

Now I mentioned in July we're gonna have an expert by the name of Tal Prince who is going to be here. He is an expert on all things technology. That being said, he's gonna talk to you, we're gonna have it for two hours that night, it's gonna go from 6 to 8. He's going to talk about apps. He's gonna talk about websites. He's gonna talk about all types of scams that are out there. He's gonna go really into the technology so that when we as parents see things or hear things, we can have the knowledge of saying, "Okay, that's what that really is. It doesn't look like what I think it looks like," because some of these apps and stuff are masks for other things that can even bypass even some of the parameters that we put on devices and such. He's gonna talk about that and also I want to make mention tonight that August 9, guys, Rick Burgess is gonna be with us and he's gonna be talking with us men about being not only men but being husbands and even being parents. He's a little bit further the stage than I am as far as raising kids and such and he's gonna address some of these matters as well.

So as you depart, please understand this is between you, God and your family. We believe in a God of grace. We are called to parent in grace. We are called to give grace. But with grace also comes responsibility on how to utilize what we've been given grace with and for.

Let me pray us out of here and we'll take off.

Lord Jesus, thank you that even in a world that is, shall we say, inundated with technology and apps and websites and phones, that Deuteronomy 6 is still just as relevant today as it was back then. God, I pray for us as parents and grandparents and guardians and such, that Lord, give us the fortitude, the wisdom and the determination to care more that our kids grow up in the fear and the admonition of you than they have the latest and greatest most popular stuff in their hands. Help us, O God, to be about your business in the midst of our families. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

All right, guys, God bless, take care and send me a text message. Just a joke. Just a joke.

Raising “G” Rated Children in an “R” Rated World

iParenting

The necessary perspective

Luke 15:11-32

The availability of “power”

NASA Moon Landing: How Apollo 11 landed on the moon with computers weaker than your smartphone (Sabastian Kettley, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1143593/NASA-Moon-landing-Apollo-11-computers-weaker-smartphone-NASA-news>. Accessed June 25, 2019)

Question #1: Who should “parent” your children?

Phil. 4:8: True, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtue, praise

Question #2: How should we parent our children?

Deut. 6:1-11: Characteristics and consequences

Characteristics of parenting:

Distinct, diligence, dedication, determination, demonstration

Qualities or consequences derived:

God goes before, is gracious, gives abundantly

Question #3: When do you start parenting in relation to technology?

“Preschool”

Even at three years of age, a child is capable of learning that the flowers, the sky, the birds, and even the rainbow are gifts from God’s hand. . . The Christian worldview. . . teaches that good and evil are determined by the God of the universe and that he has given us an unchanging moral standard by which to live (Dobson, James. Bringing up Boys. 249-250).

“Elementary school”

The most influential perceptual programming of the subconscious mind occurs from birth through age six. During that time, the child’s brain is recording all sensory experiences as well as learning complex motor programs for speech, crawling, standing, and advanced activities like running and jumping. Simultaneously, the child’s sensory systems are fully engaged, downloading massive amounts of information about the world and how it works.

By observing the behavioral patterns of people in their immediate environment—primarily parents, siblings, and relatives—children learn to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors. It’s important to realize that perceptions acquired before the age of six become the fundamental subconscious programs that shape the character of an individual’s life... A child’s perceptions of the world are directly downloaded into the subconscious during this time, without discrimination and without filters of the analytical self-conscious mind which doesn’t fully exist. (Bruce Lipton, author of The Biology of Belief. <https://www.healyourlife.com/are-you-programmed-at-birth>. Accessed June 25, 2019)

Question #4: Where do you start parenting with technology?

Your home:	Locations and times
Public places:	Interaction and interpersonal skills
In times of “privacy”:	“Protective” apps and programs

Question #5: How do you discipline via technology?

Be honest and realistic:	Nobody, even your child, is not perfect
Be gracious with a “long term” perspective:	The technology is not going away
Be clear, confident, and consistent:	Establishing “parameters”

Question #6: Why should you parent so “differently” via technology?

Called to protect not imprison
Called to prepare not promote popularity