

Teen Topics – Understanding Your Parents (Part 5) Leader's Guide

Intro statement for leader: In our previous lesson we evaluated how to take the parent/teen relationship from good to great by encouraging teens to become active participants in their homes. Such a choice would undoubtedly bless the parents and strengthen the relationship. In this lesson, we'll build on that idea by showing that valuing our parents comes not only by actions, but also by words of appreciation. Words alone are a blessing, but coupled with action, they are seen to be genuine and real. If your students took the challenge to help around the house last week, then things could be ripe for a big breakthrough as they will be encouraged in this lesson to consider thoughtful ways to express their love and appreciation for their parents. This final step can take things from being great to truly amazing within their homes. Pray that your students truly understand the value of their parents, and that their hearts are ready to express an authentic love for their parents.

Lesson Objective: Students will see how expressing their love and support for their parents can create an uplifting relationship and strengthen the special bond they have with them.

Intro discussion question: If you had a good friend who desperately needed encouragement, what are three things you could do that would guarantee to brighten their day?

Discuss answers and compare responses. Ask: If you were willing to brighten a friend's day, would you be willing to do similar things to brighten your parents' day?

In our lesson today, we'll look at the fact that we live with people who need their days brightened. Your parents need encouragement just as much, and if not more, than anyone you know. Let's consider this as we get into our lesson today.

One of the things our study has revealed to us is that though our parents may not be perfect, they do make many sacrifices for us. For this reason, let's consider the fact that we should be grateful for our parents, and willing to show it!

There are many things in life that you can be grateful for. You can be grateful for a beautiful day, you can be grateful for the life God has given you, and you can be grateful, believe it or not, for the family He has chosen for you. Even though your parents aren't perfect you can, in fact, be grateful for them.

If you are serious about having a good home life, using your words to be an encouragement to your parents may be the key to making that happen. Being an active part in the life of your family, like we discussed in our previous lesson, will thrill your parents, but using words to express your love and encouragement has the potential to melt their hearts.

Consider what it would mean to your parents if they heard you say the following:

- "Mom and Dad, you're the best parents in the world."
- "I don't care if you drive me crazy sometimes--I really love you guys."
- I know you want what's best for me, and I greatly appreciate you for that!

Such words convey an important message to your parents that you appreciate them for who they are and what they do in a way that only words can. And doing so honors the Lord and shows your gratitude to Him as well.

Let's see what we can learn from Scripture about this.

Bible Verses on Being an Encouragement

Note what we can learn from the following verses about how or why we should show gratitude to our parents:

- > ***Prov. 31:28 – Recognize your mother for her good qualities.***
- > ***Eph. 4:29 – Speak encouraging words to your parents.***
- > ***1 Thess. 5:11 – Try to encourage and build up your parents.***
- > ***1 Thess. 5:18 – Be grateful for the parents God has given you.***

We see several things we can learn from these verses:

1. Be willing to notice the positive things about your parents, and when you do, don't keep it to yourself. Parents often don't get much appreciation until after their children are grown and out of the house. Why wait? Let your appreciation for your parents be known to them and to others!
2. Kind and encouraging words touch a person's heart more than most things are able to; this is true for everyone, including your parents. Learn to use words with your parents that will be an encouragement to them.
3. You can make your parents better parents. If you want better parents, you can help make that a reality. A grateful attitude and encouraging words build people up. Tell your parents when they are doing a good job, and you may just find that they are motivated to be the best parents they can be!

Learning to Show Appreciation

Displays of appreciation are a tremendous encouragement to parents. With that in mind, take these points seriously:

> Even if there are moments of frustration in your home or things you wish your parents would change about themselves, be willing to recognize that there are countless things they do for you that deserve your gratitude.

> Consider all the reasons you should be grateful. If your parents love you, care for you and provide for you, you should be grateful. Can you list ten reasons that you can be grateful for your parents? (You may find it is easier than you think.)

> Show your appreciation. Consider how your parents like to be shown appreciation. Tell them you love them, give them a hug, write them an encouraging note, or do whatever special things you know would make their day!

Keep in mind, the way you like to be shown appreciation may be different than the way your parents like to be shown appreciation. For example, you may like when your parents buy you something or offer you some spending money. However, your parents may simply want a "thank you" for helping you with a school project or giving you a ride somewhere, or they may appreciate you doing the dishes after a big meal. Those things may make them feel just as appreciated as you feel when they buy you something or do something for you.

Study. Grow. Share.

Expressing love and gratitude may be easy for some of you. If that's you, make expressing your gratitude for your parents a habit. Don't miss opportunities to do so! For those of you who find expressing gratitude difficult—find ways to look past the awkwardness and put yourself out there for the sake of your mom and dad. Do what you know will make your parents happy and let them know you love them.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you like people to show you appreciation? How does it make you feel? (Recognize your parents appreciate it as well.)
- What are some specific reasons you can be grateful for your parents? (Encourage students to answer out loud to break the stigma of saying positive things about parents.)
- Can anyone share an example of why you are grateful for your parents? Can anyone share a story of something nice your parents have done for you or sacrifices they have made for you?
- When your parents do something that helps you out, how can you show your appreciation?
- Have you ever considered publicly complimenting or bragging about your parents? How and why would telling others about how great your parents are have an impact on your parents?

If you do not show your parents appreciation because you assume they already know you appreciate them, you are simply making excuses to be lazy in this area. Step up your game and show your parents the appreciation they deserve!

Gospel: We can be a blessing to our parents in response to how God has blessed us. Ephesians 1:3 tells us how God the Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. These blessings are received through faith in His work on the cross.

Summary: Teens have many reasons to be grateful for their parents. Because of that, teens should take the time to let their parents know they are appreciated and loved. Such words can be the most significant and meaningful words your parents ever hear.

Challenge: Think of a special way you can show appreciation to your parents this week and commit to doing it. Be sure it clearly lets them know they are loved and valued.

Study. Grow. Share.