

Teen Topics – Understanding Your Parents (Part 2) Leader's Guide

Intro statement for leader: As a follow up to Part 1, which focused on parents' responsibilities in the home, this lesson will explore the teens' responsibilities. This lesson may bring out difficulties students have with fulfilling their God-given responsibilities. Do your best to empathize with any legitimate difficulties students may have and see things from their perspective. By the end of the lesson, you'll have a chance to explain how those struggles do not eliminate their need to follow God's instructions for them. Letting your students know it is okay to be open and honest will give insight into their thoughts, which is key for a study such as this! Honest thoughts being shared in your group will enable you to better know where they are coming from, and in turn, offer timely insights and advice as the series continues.

Lesson Objective: Students will identify responsibilities they have within the home and commit to being the kind of family member God calls them to be.

Intro discussion question: As we continue our series on understanding our parents, let's see if we can identify ten reasons why teenagers would say it is difficult to obey parents. Create a list of responses you believe teenagers would give. From your list, consider which ones you feel would be the top three. (Allow students to create lists individually or in small groups.) Discuss answers and compare lists. Have them share their reasons and rationale behind the top three they selected.

In our previous lesson, we focused on the responsibilities parents have within the home. If you thought we were going to end the series there, you were wrong! In this lesson, we need to consider what responsibilities you as teenagers have within the home.

Our previous lesson discussed responsibilities parents have within the home. This week, let's discuss the responsibilities teens have. Just as parents have obligations, so do teens!

Do you feel that your life can be stressful at times and that you have a lot of responsibilities? If so, you're not alone. Most teens do.

- Discuss: What are some responsibilities you currently have? When you think about a typical day, what things fill up your schedule? (Allow students to share how their days are filled with school, homework, sports practices, other extra-curricular activities, chores, hanging out with friends, video games, etc.).

No one can deny that teenagers are busy people. Some days and weeks don't have enough time to fit in all we want or need to get done. Keep in mind, God is well aware of all that you have to do. He knows you are busy. Yet, in light of that reality, He still gives several key verses that explain the expectations He has for you regarding the relationship you have with your parents.

Bible Verses Relating to Teens

We know God will hold other people accountable for their actions, but we can't forget that He will hold us accountable for our actions as well. Note the commands God give us:

- > ***Eph. 6:1-3 – Obey and honor your parents.***
- > ***Col. 3:20 – Obey your parents in all things.***
- > ***Prov. 6:20-23 – Listen to your parents' instruction/teaching.***
- > ***Also read Prov. 13:10; 15:1; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14.***

Note, the idea of obedience and honor toward your parents is part of the expectation God has for you. In fact, if done successfully, focusing just on these two things will enable you to achieve all that God desires from you within your family. For that reason, let's make sure we understand these terms correctly:

- Obedience: This involves listening to and obeying your parents' rules (in other words, it's doing what your parents say).
- Honor: This involves showing respect toward your parents in both your words and actions because of the role God has given to them.

Obedience focuses on your actions. Honor focuses on your attitude. It may sound simple, but we all know living this out isn't always easy! The big question is whether or not this is actually doable! Can a teen successfully both obey and honor his or her parents at a level that pleases the Lord? If you are questioning the possibility of this ever happening in your home, consider these important points:

1. Achieving this requires that you recognize the God-given role parents have in your life. Showing honor to your parents not only involves respecting them, but also acknowledging the purpose God has for them in your life. Respect is an issue between you and God, not just between you and your parents.
2. Obedience and honor ultimately are choices on how you chose to respond to the situations you find yourself in. And like any choice you make in life, you can respond in a self-centered way or in a Christ-centered way.
 - A self-centered way: You don't like the rules or think they're unfair, so you show your frustration by being disrespectful, not listening, and/or intentionally making things difficult for everybody.
 - A Christ-centered way: You embrace how God has structured your family, understand your parents are simply doing their job, and choose to submit to their authority. Notice Jesus' example of submission in Luke 22:42.

Discussion Questions:

- Consider how the self-centered vs. Christ-centered approach would work in regard to a boss at a job. What do you think would be the result of each response to rules you had to follow in a workplace? (Remind students that they should strive to honor their parents, just as they would a future boss.)
- Do you know #5 of the Ten Commandments? Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and mother. Why do you think this commandment is included with such an important list?

Obedience and respect toward your parents may be a real struggle at times. But if obedience and honor are so important to God, they should be important to us as well. Let's recap a few important things:

Taking Your Role Seriously

Showing honor and obedience is not always easy. See what insights you can gather from these discussion questions:

- > *Are honoring and obeying your parents the same thing? Why are both important?*
- > *For what reasons do you think God commands teenagers to honor and obey their parents?*
- > *Why is it sometimes difficult to obey parents? Do any of these answers give you the right not to obey?*

At times you may be frustrated to where you feel justified to disobey or disrespect your parents. However, maturity leads you to do what you are called to do regardless of your feelings. That's because a mature teenager knows that disrespect will only harm the relationship with their parents and create a worse home environment than they had before. And maturity (along with wisdom) enables an understanding of how to make a situation better for one's self, not worse. A characteristic of spiritual maturity is a willingness to do what is right, even if it's not always easy! Instead of always blaming our parents for conflicts, let's develop the habit of looking at ourselves first and doing what we can to make things better.

Whether you think your mom and dad are the greatest parents or the worst human beings on the face of the earth, there are reasons God commands you to show them honor and obedience. Unless you are being forced to do something sinful, God calls you to obey! It is easy to point fingers when the relationship we have with our parents isn't what we want it to be, but maturity drives us to examine ourselves first. Thinking about your relationship with your parents, how well do you show honor and obedience in your actions, words and attitude? In what specific ways can you do better?

Gospel: We can be grateful that Jesus' desire was that His Father's "will be done" and that He was obedient to fulfill the mission of going to the cross to take upon Himself our sin in order to bring us salvation (Luke 22:42; Phil. 2:8).

Summary: God has given our parents big responsibilities within the home, and He has given teenagers big responsibilities as well. Teens must embrace their calling to obey and honor their parents in a way that glorifies that Lord.

Challenge: Identify specific things in the relationship you have with your parents that make obedience and honor a challenge. Be willing to acknowledge and confess to God aspects you are responsible for that may add to the conflict. Sit down with your parents to discuss the issues you have. You may be surprised that your parents may see maturity in this approach and be willing to work with you on creating solutions to any problems that need to be resolved.