

## Teen Topics – Understanding Your Parents (Part 1) Leader's Guide

Intro statement for leader: As a follow-up to our Intro lesson that brought awareness to potential frustrations within the home, Part 1 begins to lay an important foundation of understanding the frustrations from the parent's perspective. Teens, of course, prefer to look at problems solely from their own perspectives. However, use this lesson to encourage your students to see there is another side to at-home-aggravations. There are two parties involved in the parent-teen relationship, and if teens are willing to see things from their parent's perspective, it can do wonders in helping them realize that patience and grace is needed on their part. Ask God to use this lesson to enable your students to see, if only a little, into the world of a parent.

Lesson Objective: Students will consider the time and effort parents put into managing a home and raising children, allowing them to gain a better appreciation for all that parents do for them.

Intro discussion question: What are the top five emotions a new parent may face in the weeks leading up to the birth of their first child? Next, what do you think are the top five emotions parents face two months after their child is born when they are awakened in the middle of the night for the third time to the sound of a crying baby? Are the emotions the same or different? How have they changed?

The birth of a child brings many emotions of excitement and anticipation, but it also requires long nights, hard work, and a lot of patience. A newborn brings both extremes of emotion into the life of a parent, and the parent's life is never the same again.

Our last lesson introduced our series on understanding our parents. We'll tackle a variety of issues that deal with struggles teens may face within the home, but as we look now at Part 1, let's attempt to do something that may be somewhat impossible. Let's focus on trying to see things from our parents' perspective. Let's begin.

***In order to understand our parents, we must first consider the world from their perspective. When you were born, your parents received a great bundle of joy (you!), as well as a great bundle of responsibility!***

We are tempted to think life revolves around us, and so when our parents make rules that keep us from getting our way, we get frustrated. We must remember that our parents sacrificed a lot of things they once cherished in order to fulfill their role as a parent.

- Discuss: What types of things did your parents give up in order to bring you into this world? (Discuss things such as extra time with friends, personal hobbies, relaxation time, travel, entertainment, etc.)

Your parents gave these things up willingly and by their own choice to bring you into this world. And since you are now beyond the childhood years, that means they have endured these sacrifices for a long time now. When you think your parents are a hassle, remember the sacrifices and responsibilities that go into parenting. It shouldn't take too long before you should recognize the appreciation they deserve.

You may think your parents are guilty of taking your freedoms away. But never forget, your parents love freedom as much as you do. Yet they abandoned their opportunity for freedom to focus their life on you! Sure, it may have been their choice to do so, but regardless, are you not grateful they made that choice? They abandoned many things, and they did so for you. Their freedom was replaced with the big responsibility of raising you correctly. Believe it or not, raising a child is no easy task.

Let's take a look at some key Bible verses that relate to parents and see what we can learn.

### ***Bible Verses Relating to Parents***

***Considering that we are all accountable to God concerning how we obey His Word, let's consider what our parents are answerable for. Here are a few of the many verses dealing with the role of a parent. Note the responsibilities they have:***

- > ***Prov. 22:6 – Train your child to live as God intends.***
- > ***Deut. 6:6-7 – Teach your child about the things of God.***
- > ***Prov. 13:24 – Parents must discipline out of love.***
- > ***Eph. 6:4 – Don't stir your child to anger, yet instruct them.***

Parents are human beings. They have dreams, hopes, and goals of their own--many of which were set aside for you. On top of that, they have to balance their own life responsibilities: health, sleep, future, finances, friends, their own parents, etc. And, on top off all of that, they are accountable to God for how well they parent.

While there may be some very real frustrations you deal with at home, it is important to consider things from your parents' perspective. The verses we just looked at highlight a few key, yet significant, God-given responsibilities parents have.

### **Considering Life from a Parent's Perspective**

*Looking at the above verses from your parents' perspective reveals the real significance of what is being said:*

*> Your parents will one day stand before the God of the Universe and give account for how well they raised you (no matter how difficult you make things on them).*

*> Your parents must figure out how to effectively instruct, discipline, and raise you (all while keeping up with your other siblings, a house, job, other obligations, etc.).*

Sometimes we are tempted to think that since our parents are adults, parenting is easy for them. However, handling big responsibilities on top of other big responsibilities is never an easy task.

Discuss: Some of you can probably relate to handling big responsibilities. Does anyone have the responsibility to take care of a pet? What type of pets do you have? What responsibilities do you have that are needed to care for them? (Discuss how there can be 10-20 things required to be done on a routine basis.) Most of us can agree that caring for a pet is a big job. Now imagine how many things go into caring for a human being! There are more things that need to be done, and there is a lot more at stake if someone fails to do a good job.

With this in mind, there are two things that teens need to consider when relating to their parents:

- Show some patience! Your parents are human beings, just like you. They've experienced stress, frustrations, and feeling overwhelmed in ways you never have. They have a lot going on. Don't add to their burden.

- Give your parents a break! Sometimes we try to make our parents' lives difficult when we are frustrated at them. However, there is no need to do so, parenting is already difficult. They have welcomed and embraced that reality. Cut them some slack. Find some gratitude in your heart for what they've done for you.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some specific things your parents would have had to do for you when you were a baby?
- What are some specific things your parents have done for you in the last month?
- What is something you've done for your parents in the last month?

*We are tempted to think life revolves around us, and so when our parents make rules that keep us from getting "our way" we get frustrated. We must remember that our parents sacrifice a lot of things they once cherished (extra time for friends, spouse, hobbies, etc.) in order to fulfill their role as a parent. When you think your parents are a hassle, remember the sacrifices and responsibilities that go into parenting. It shouldn't take long before you appreciate all they do for you!*

**Gospel:** Philippians 4:8 tells us how Jesus humbly obeyed His Father even to the point of dying on a cross. This act of obedience to His Father was for the purpose of taking our sin upon Himself, that we may find forgiveness through His sacrifice.

**Summary:** The parent-teen relationship is a two-way relationship. Both you and your parents have a role. It's important to take time and consider things from your parents' perspective. When you do, you can better appreciate what they have sacrificed for you.

**Challenge:** Have students list out specific things their parents have individually given up in order to raise children. Have the students identify sacrifices that have been made for them. Allow students to share a few things they identified and encourage them to consider how they can show their appreciation to their parents for those particular things.