

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

Intro statement for leader: Our goal for this series was to help teens understand the parent-teen relationship from the perspective of their parents so that they would gain a better appreciation for them and respond to them in the way God has called them to. In this final lesson, our goal is twofold: 1) Show God's role as a Heavenly Father and the significance of that, especially for those whose own fathers have failed them; 2) Give the students a few next steps so they can take the principles they learned from this series on into the future.

Lesson Objective: Students will understand the role of God as our Heavenly Father and commit to being a teen who honors his or her parents out of an honor for God Himself.

Intro discussion question: Which of the following inventions do you think could become a reality first:

- A time machine that can travel back in history.
- A spaceship that can travel at the speed of light.
- A teleportation machine that can transport people to anywhere in the world.

Discuss answers. Explain how many people would love to see these invented one day. But like any invention, a lot of time and dedication would be required.

As we turn our attention to our final lesson in this series on understanding our parents, keep in mind, if you want lasting change in your relationship with your parents, dedication to the relationship will be essential. As we conclude, let's consider a few important details that can help keep your home life what God intends it to be both now and in the future.

***Our study has focused on the responsibilities parents and teens have toward each other, as well as ways the relationship we have with our parents can be strengthened. The purpose of this study was to help us understand our parents better so that we can better relate to them and appreciate what they do. Here are a few final thoughts as we conclude.***

We have spoken a lot about the role our parents play in our lives. Have you ever found it interesting that one of the titles God gives Himself in Scriptures is that of a Heavenly Father? Since God is a divine being, it may sound unusual to be characterized by a human term. Nonetheless, throughout the Old and New Testaments, we see this reference to God as fulfilling this role of a father-figure to us His children. Consider the following:

### ***Understanding Our Heavenly Father's Love***

***We cannot have a study on parents without mentioning God's own self-description as a "Father." The parent-child relationship is intended to be very meaningful and impactful, and it is on this level that God Himself desires to connect with us. There are several truths in Scripture on this topic that can be cherished, especially by those who may have experienced any type of mistreatment or abuse from a parent. We have a Heavenly Father who promises to comfort us (Is. 66:13), to bring emotional healing (Ps. 147:3), to care for us (1 Pet. 5:7), and to never leave or forsake us (Deut. 31:8). Each of these qualities of our Heavenly Father gives us an example of how we can love our own children one day.***

The fact that God describes Himself as our Heavenly Father points to a few key things He wants us to understand:

1. He views us as His children, whom He cares for, provides for, and watches over. He deeply loves us and wants what is best for us.
2. He wants us to view Him as a Father. We can rely on Him, trust Him, and be confident that He will be there for us. Our earthly fathers are meant to reflect this, and we can be grateful when they do. In cases where our earthly fathers have failed to do this, we are reminded that the father figure we desire and crave is ever present in the person of God Himself. And He is a perfect Father to us; One who will never let us down (Deut. 31:8).

God created our parents to have a close-knit, meaningful relationship with us, just as He desires to have a close-knit, meaningful relationship with us. May that be something we never take for granted.

In light of all we have covered in this series, let's consider three final principles that we must always keep in mind to create lasting change within our home:

### **Where to Go from Here**

**Do your part in making the relationship the best it can be:**

- > **Admit your own failures. When you are responsible for family issues, admit to it and be willing to apologize.**
- > **Take steps to change. Consider what needs to be done to improve the relationship with your parents, and do it!**
- > **Work toward harmony. Do not make the mistake of waiting to fix relationship issues later in life. Do it now!**

Never forget, any relationship will require three things out of you to be successful:

- Good communication: Always talk through problems, don't ignore them!
- Commitment: Follow through and fulfill what's expected of you in the relationship. No one can do that except you! Do what you know needs to be done.
- Trust: Demonstrate through your consistency that you are serious about improving the relationship. Change doesn't happen overnight, but healing and growth does happen over time.

Discussion Questions:

- Think about the different tips we have discussed in this series to improve the relationship you have with your parents (e.g., honoring them, helping around the house, expressing your gratitude, etc.). Which do you think will be the most challenging to consistently do? (Discuss with your group strategies and take suggestions from the group on how to deal with those challenges.)
- What things from our study have you found helpful to bring about a better relationship with your parents?
- Do you honestly believe God desires you to have a great relationship with your parents? Why do you believe that is what God wants? (Emphasis how God intends the family to be full of love, support and encouragement, and He wants that for each teen in your group.)

If you are trying to restore a good relationship with your parents, it is important to remember that it may take some time. But consistency on your part will pay off! If you are trying to maintain a good relationship with your parents, cherish what you have and allow it to encourage you to stay consistent. No matter which situation you find yourself in, pray that God will give you the strength to be consistent in being who God has called you to be in your home!

Reflection: Take a moment and consider what you individually need to do to be who God wants you to be in your home. What steps do you need to take—starting today?

Discuss: What support and encouragement could you use to motivate you and help keep you accountable to doing what you know you need to do to make the relationship with your parents better?

Pray: Take time to pray for your teens and their parents. Ask God to strengthen each student to do what God is calling them to do.

***Being able to understand our parents may not always be an easy thing to do. But if we commit to living our lives in the home as God has directed us, we can be assured that our actions will honor Him and that His blessing will be upon us!***

**Gospel:** Jeremiah 17:14 acknowledges that the Lord is the One who brings healing and salvation. May our trust be in God for how His grace is sufficient to save us and bring us healing, even in our relationships.

**Summary:** Just as God considers Himself our Heavenly Father and desires to have a good relationship with us, so too does He want us to have a good relationship with our parents. Making a commitment to being who God has called you to be in your home can bring about lasting change for the better in your home, and can turn your relationship with your parents into something so good that it is beyond what you ever imagined possible.

**Challenge:** Commit to praying for your family. Determine to do what is needed on your end. Determine to evaluate your relationship with your parents on an ongoing basis. Consider what means of accountability and encouragement will help you be successful, and establish a plan for success!