

LIFE READY KIDS

PART 1

EPISODE OVERVIEW

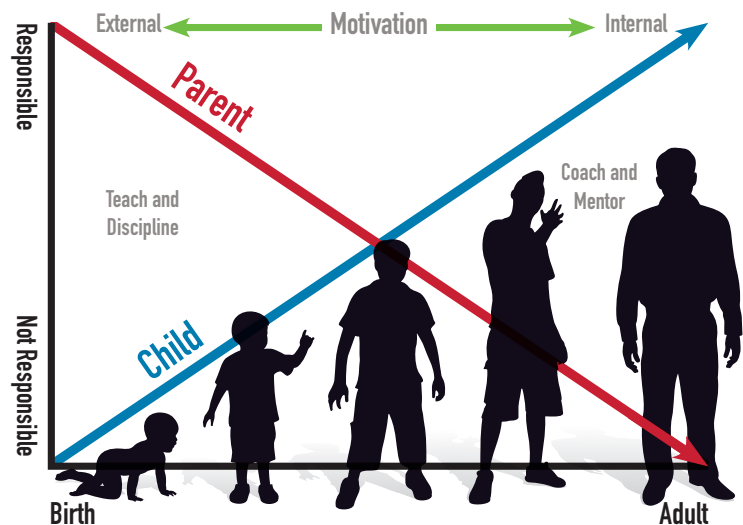
Abundant life isn't about what we avoid; it's about what we do, what we chase. God has a life ready for us that is good.

A lot of people are afraid of the future. There isn't a guarantee of a life without pain and difficulties. But fear doesn't improve parenting. Fear doesn't prepare our teens for life. Our job as parents is to use a combination of teaching, discipline, coaching, and mentoring to help our teens launch into adulthood.

Parents help their teens grow in responsibility and ownership of their decisions.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you agree or disagree with the saying, "The days are long, and the years are fast"?
2. In what ways are our teens showing signs of becoming adults? What's getting in the way of them experiencing growth in responsibility?
3. Stranger danger doesn't work. It increases fear without providing skills to deal with risks. What other things are easy to teach to kids but get in the way of becoming a great adult?
4. It's common to celebrate childhood as a "magical time," but we often don't talk about how amazing it is to be an adult. In what ways is being an adult good?
5. Chuck shared about two boxes, one filled with negative things and one positive. Do you think the future is going to be full of bad things for your child, or is a good life still possible? How does what we think about the future impact how we raise your kids?
6. Looking at the Launch Process chart consider the following:



- › Where are your kids on the line?
- › What areas are they growing in independence?
- › Where are some areas they need growth in responsibility?
- › What things do you need to give up control on for your kids to grow?
- › What can you do to help them reach more independence?

7. How do we decide when to allow our teens to struggle or experience pain? When should we step in to protect them from pain or struggle?
8. How is fear impacting your life and parenting? How do we balance protecting our kids and preparing them for life without your protection?

NEXT STEPS

1. Write out and then share your vision for your future. Describe key relationships, work, play, and service to others.
2. Name three areas you'd like to see your teens grow in responsibility. Do they need teaching, discipline, coaching, or mentoring?

LIFE READY KIDS

PART 2

EPISODE OVERVIEW

In the first part of this lesson, we focused on growing our children's responsibility fueled by strong internal motivation. In this second lesson, we explored how essential our family and parent relationships can be in helping teens launch. All of us benefit from learning to grow while limiting pain and regret. Even though this is a series on technology, our children won't make a change in technology habits until they know how to grow and avoid the traps. Some traps parents often ignore are perfectionism, people-pleasing, and exceptional thinking.

As you explore the questions below, think about what kind of foundation your family needs to face the challenges in life.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. We all experience pain, which makes it harder to trust. How can we help our children move beyond their hurts and start to grow in responsibility and impact?
2. In what ways is it encouraging or discouraging to realize your relationship as a couple makes such a pivotal impact on how your child faces their future and interacts with the world?
3. In what ways does perfectionism harm our children?
4. Why is "people pleasing" such an easy trap for kids?
5. There are three ways to learn, observation, instruction, and personal experience. Which method do you typically use?
6. Exceptional thinkers believe they are exempt from the consequences that everyone else experiences. They also won't trust tools, resources, and principles that help other people. What are some ways to help people with exceptional thinking?
7. What positive changes have you had from being a part of a group? What about from a mentor?
8. Which of your tech habits would you like your teens to copy? Which ones do you not want them to copy?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Parents need to model personal growth. What is one area in your life that you would like to grow?
 - a. What is one way you can "Learn" from the experience of others?
 - b. Identify a group or mentor that you can connect with to grow.
2. As a family, choose some activity that none of you are experts in and would like to learn. Set time aside to start learning as a family.

COMMUNICATING WITH KIDS WHO DON'T WANT TO TALK

PART 1

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Most families fight about technology because it's hard to talk about. Before talking about difficult things, we need to learn to talk about difficult things. This section focuses on becoming the kind of person our teens want to talk to. Our teens often are scared about our reactions to their thoughts and the situations they face.

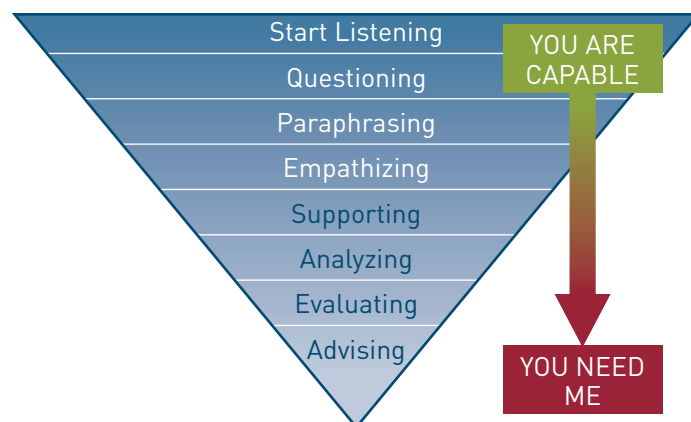
Parents frequently lecture rather than communicate.

Rather than fear, our goal is to develop security and learn to integrate all sections of the brain, including logic, feeling, and positive action.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is someone in your life that you can run to at your worst of times that won't run away? What are they like?
2. What needs to be true about you for you to become the kind of person your kids can turn to?
3. The pattern of this world is to avoid pain and to feel good. How does this pattern help us? How is it hurting us and our relationships?
4. How can we slow down our reaction as well as help our kids learn to take the 3-10 seconds to respond to emotional situations?
5. Which fear response is most common for you and your children? Fight, flight, freeze, or feel better?
6. Which communication strategy from the "Levels of Communication" do you use the most? Which one do you want to use more? How are you going to become a better communicator?

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION



7. What are the benefits of getting permission before you go below the line of empathizing?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Journal about your conversations with family and important people in your life over the next week. Take note of the setting, distractions, skills, and lessons you learned while talking.
2. Make a list of two to three people you like to talk to and why you like to speak to them. Study that list and choose two things that they do for you that you want to do for your children.

COMMUNICATING WITH KIDS WHO DON'T WANT TO TALK

PART 2

EPISODE OVERVIEW

In the last lesson, we focused on listening. In this section, we focus on how to talk, specifically on how to share our worries and concerns. It's essential to know how the other person feels most comfortable talking. You have the choice of "shoulder to shoulder" or "face to face" communication.

Both are important ways of connecting with those we love.

Parents often lecture, focusing on negative things, but the best change comes in encouraging positive behavior. Consequences reduce negative

actions but don't typically promote long term positive change. Affirmations are a tool to cement wise actions.

It's nice to hear "good job," but that usually isn't specific enough. The focus is to give specific affirmations and create conversations instead of speeches.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Wise people learn from hearing advice and don't procrastinate change. What is a recent example where your child responded well to advice?
2. Foolish people deflect blame and put off change. Was there a time recently that you or your child responded "foolishly?" What could you do to reset and try again?
3. Which do you tend to use most, words (lectures), affirmations, or consequences?
4. Why do affirmations not work with negative behaviors?
5. What was a natural consequence that helped your child make changes?
6. Does your teen need to hit "rock bottom" before a change is possible?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Which form of communication do you tend to prefer? Shoulder to shoulder or face to face? Make a list of your family members and list their preferred style.
2. What steps do you want to commit to using to help your children learn?

RAISING KIDS SAFELY IN A PORNO- GRAPHIC WORLD

PART 1

EPISODE OVERVIEW

God created covenant sexuality, which is amazing. Yet sexuality has been corrupted, and pornography has become a preference for many looking for a “safe” sexual experience. This section begins exploring how pornography harms the user.

1. It causes a loss of focus, including time and attention.
2. It increases sexual appetite while decreasing sexual satisfaction.
3. It makes viewers into consumers of people

As we learn these lessons, we increasingly become angry. We help our children when we help them become protectors of the vulnerable. They avoid pornography when they choose not to exploit the weak sexually.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is it important to teach about the positive value of marriage and covenant sexuality?
2. Why is it so uncomfortable or awkward to talk about covenant sexuality?
3. We define pornography by looking at its “form” and “function.” Society speaks a lot about “form,” but why is “function” essential to talk about?
4. Does it make a difference whether someone is seeking out pornography or stumbling onto it?
5. Why is it so especially hard for girls to get help with pornography addiction?
6. We all want to know if we are normal. Google and web searches don’t give correct or helpful answers. How can we help our children with their questions and insecurities?
7. Coolidge Effect results in pornography choices becoming increasingly hardcore or dark. How do the fear of getting caught and shame make it harder for our kids to confess their struggles?
8. People think they won’t need pornography once they get married... but once married, they still use pornography and often have additional sexual problems. Our brain creates ruts. How can getting good at having sex by yourself get in the way of covenant sex?
9. Porn uses and consumes people. Why does the porn industry work so hard to make it seem like it doesn’t hurt anyone?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Use the framework of “Form & Function” to talk about what types of entertainment you want in your home.
2. What are some ways to help our kids answer the question, “Am I normal?”
3. What two steps can you take as a parent and family to protect the innocent or vulnerable?

RAISING KIDS SAFELY IN A PORNO- GRAPHIC WORLD

PART 2

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Using porn has consequences.

We all have vulnerabilities, weak spots, and desires. Porn targets vulnerabilities and creates more vulnerabilities.

God has created life-giving ways to meet our needs and to reduce vulnerabilities. We might not find quick relief, but we can find real relief.

We continued talking about how porn hurts us.

4. It increases a sense of powerlessness and victim thinking

5. Using porn reduces ways for God to work and to experience Him

This section fuels internal motivation to avoid porn. It also encourages us to talk about covenant sexuality.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

“I’m not interested in a world where men really want to watch porn but resist because they’ve been shamed; I’m interested in a world where men are raised from birth with such an unshakable understanding of women as living human beings that they are incapable of being aroused by their exploitation.” – Jonah Mix

1. What does the quote stir in you?
2. Why is the fear of getting caught not effective in preventing porn use?
3. Brains develop worn and deep paths and connections. Things that shouldn’t be connected become habits with nearly automatic reactions. How do we help our children develop healthy brain connections versus unhealthy? How does reading and meditating on God’s word create healthy pathways?
4. Relationships are under attack. Why is it so important to teach about sex in the context of relationships?
5. Which analogy seems most helpful, and why?
 - › Carob vs. Chocolate
 - › Football vs. Football
 - › Fire: can be good or destructive.
6. Why would our kids make better choices when they know we are paying attention to what they are doing online?
7. Chuck shared, “Talking about it poorly is better than not talking about it.” In what ways do you agree or disagree with him?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Take time to identify what are the “barbs” in your children’s life. What’s your plan to help your child address the vulnerability and make it into a strength

Vulnerability	Child/Children	Your Plan
Secrecy		
Shame		
Ignorance about the body		
Ignorance about pleasure		
Fear of overreaction		
People pleasing		
Perfectionism		
Entitlement		
Hopelessness		
Loneliness		

THE VIDEO GAME ANTIDOTE

PART 1

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Video games are a lot of fun. They can also create personal and relationship problems.

Chuck defines addiction as something that's life interfering, relationship interfering, and you can't stop. It doesn't have to be an immoral game for it to be addictive.

Video games are designed to keep our kids playing. Environments like casinos and stores are engineered to and designed to make us lose our time and money. Video games are designed to make money. Video game developers have more knowledge about how and why our kids play them than any other entertainment or marketing company. One of the few things they aren't interested in is our children's best interests.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What things can you think of that may not be immoral but could be addictive?
2. Who do you think is more accurate in knowing if someone has a video game problem, a child, a parent, or a good friend? Why?
3. Why is it so hard to have compassion and empathy for our kids struggling with video games if it's never been a struggle for us? How can we increase our understanding and empathy?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Think about your child's favourite video game. It's important to know why they like the game so much. Research the game online and then talk to your kids about what they like about that game. Use the chart below to note how the game uses elements to keep your children hooked. For example: The game Fortnite uses—role-playing, discovery, relationships and physiological elements.

GAME	DESIGN ELEMENTS USED						
	High score	Beating the game/Finishing the story	Role-playing	Discovery	Relationships	No "End"	Physiological – Dopamine

2. Our kids use video games to try to fill their needs. What are some "real world" activities you can do this week to meet those needs?

THE VIDEO GAME ANTIDOTE

PART 2

EPISODE OVERVIEW

While video games can be fun, they can also create personal and relationship problems. As we looked at in the previous episode, video games are designed to be hard to stop playing. In this section, we look at how video games impact the player and what causes addictions and how to help someone start to break an addiction.

Parents often focus much of their time on getting kids to stop playing video games. Our top goal instead should be to help our teens own the off switch. We need to help them become responsible for how long and when they play. We use affirmations to encourage positive video game playing and consequences to reduce negative behavior.

Chuck focused on three main losses that are a result of video game addiction.

1. **Loss of time.** Not having time for things that are important?
2. **Loss of Impact.** Not being able to feel accomplished or having something to show for their effort.
3. **Loss of connection.** Feeling lonelier and more disconnected after their play

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Video games may look and feel creative, but most games don't require creativity but reward conformity. In what ways are kids creative when playing video games? How are games conforming? Why does it matter?
2. Review the signs below that indicate your child may need help with video games.

Does your child?

- | | |
|--|--------|
| i. Lie about how much or how long they're playing? | Yes/No |
| ii. Try to stop but can't? | Yes/No |
| iii. Have school problems (homework, attention problems in class)? | Yes/No |
| iv. Lack adequate sleep? | Yes/No |
| v. Avoid Family Time? | Yes/No |
| vi. Watch gaming videos? | Yes/No |
| vii. Quit other hobbies and activities? | Yes/No |
| viii. Have increased friendship issues or abandoned friends? | Yes/No |
| ix. Lack ideas on something else they could do? | Yes/No |

3. How would you know if a media choice is negatively affecting your child and what signs are you concerned about?

4. What positive behaviors do you want to see your children have when they play video games?

NEXT STEPS:

Help your child to self-evaluate how their media choices are affecting them and solutions to control the issues:

1. Have your children journal their gaming before and after they play video games. Have them write the answer to the question.

Before they play

- › How long am I going to play?
- › How do I hope to feel when I'm done?

After they play

- › How long did you play?
- › How do you feel?

2. Use affirmations when you see your children using technology responsibly and doing the activities you want to be repeated.
3. Have your children help set guidelines for technology and the consequences that will result should they not follow the expectations.

DISCONNECTED IN A CONNECTED WORLD

PART 1

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Social media tries to meet a need. Human beings want to be connected, be known, and be wanted.

Psychology should be a study of human thoughts and behavior to improve human life. Yet, increasingly it's becoming a tool used for manipulating thoughts and actions all in the name of power and money. Learning how behavior and choices are purposefully manipulated gives us clues on how to train our children to avoid being manipulated.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Social media can bring some benefits to teens when used less than an hour a day. With more prolonged use, social media starts to increase teens' anxiety, loneliness, and depression drastically.

1. What benefits would a teen gain from some social media use? Why would more use undo the benefits?
2. Every generation has a hard time understanding and appreciating generations that follow. In what ways is the current teen social life and structure more complex than those before?
3. Common Sense Media reports that 72% of teens think they are being manipulated to spend more time on their devices. Why do teens still use applications even when they know they are being manipulated?
4. What version of you or mental state do you think is most profitable for social marketing companies? Which one makes you most likely to buy something? How do they put you into that state?

The Fogg Model shows how technology companies try to change our behavior by making things easier, increasing our motivation, and using triggers.

- a. What are some examples of technology making things easier?
- b. What are some examples of technology increasing motivation?
- c. What are some triggers that your favourite apps use to get you to act?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Identify an application or game you want to help your kids play less. Use the Fogg Model to identify how it's changing their motivation, making things easier, and triggering them.
2. How can you help your kids identify the "right amount" of social media and become aware when they are using it too much?

DISCONNECTED IN A CONNECTED WORLD

PART 2

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Social media can be appealing to teens because it gives them feedback on what other people think about them. It also has many challenges.

Social media can have many challenges such as:

- › Crowd-sourcing identity formation
- › Creating dissatisfaction with life
- › Comparing backstage life with others' public performances
- › Encourages people pleasing
- › Narcissism—thinking we are the center of the world
- › Pridefulness—"I'm better than you"
- › Cyber Bullying—Digital devices used to threaten, cause embarrassment, or humiliate another
- › Bigger, Faster, Farther—When teens document their exceptional risky behavior to be noticed

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is "crowd-sourcing" a risk as our children form their identity?
2. In what ways does social media encourage our children to conform to a pattern? Can it also encourage our kids to be more extreme just to stand out?
3. What are the signs that cyberbullying is going on? How do you help your child if they are worried about what other people are saying or thinking about them?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Is there an app that your child might need a break from? Guide your child as they pick one and take a 2-week break. Have them write about their experience.
 - a. Take notes about what they missed about the application or device?
 - b. Have them focus on writing about how many times and when they tried to use the application instinctively.
 - c. How were they able to meet their needs without the application?
 - d. What benefits did they miss not having the application?
 - e. Is there anything that would keep them from installing it again?
2. What sort of values, personal commitments, and accountability do we need to focus on as a family to make social media kinder, and reduce online attacks and bullying?

SMART PHONES & SMARTER PARENTS

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Teens want phones. How can parents help teens develop the responsibility and control of their phones?

Chuck looks at how some apps increase risky behavior and bad decisions and warns parents to be careful of apps which do the following:

- › Encourage connection with people their kids don't know
- › Rely on strangers for advice
- › Focus on secrecy or erasing what they do online

This is followed by strategies for parents to protect children while still allowing them to have freedom to use technology.

The dumb phone is a smartphone that's been "dumbed down" by the parent. It only does things you want while limiting the time and activities you don't want.

- › The parent is the only administrator of the phone
- › Parents are the only ones that can install apps
- › Apps are added and removed based on the demonstrated responsibility of the teen.
- › Parents are the only ones that can delete apps
- › Stop in-app purchases
- › Watch for vault and ghost application
- › Search for hidden apps in all folders and using the search feature
- › Set the phone to work only when you want it working.
- › Focus on building accountability

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what situations is it helpful for your teen to have their "own" phone?
2. How would you know when your teen is ready to have a phone?
3. What process should you use to evaluate whether an application should be added to a phone?
4. In what ways does changing the "smartness" of the phone remind you of the example of giving and taking rope that we talked about earlier.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Set up for yourself and your teen time without technology: one hour a day, one day a week, and one week a month.
2. Set a strategy on the times and places phones are allowed and not allowed.
3. If you already have phones, go through a process of "dumbing down" every phone, including adults. Focus on increasing accountability, reducing the number of applications, and developing personal awareness about how applications impact the user.

RECOVERY

EPISODE OVERVIEW

This session is all about recovery. The clear message is that it's possible. Professional help, including therapists, may be needed, but it's important to know what recovery is all about.

- › Focus on positive—what do we want our kids to move toward?
- › Spend more time on values and buffers than rules
 - › Focus on recovery over abstinence
 - › Make sure our kids are doing good brain care: sleep, exercise, good food, great relationships, brain challenges, and getting used to being bored.
- › Increase resistance making it harder to do the harmful things.
 - › Fight edging—Getting as far away from the behavior as possible instead of seeing how close our kids can get to the act.
- › Pursue their worst fear—Be known, share their struggle with people they trust.
- › Develop and work a plan
 - › Fill our minds with God's things and think about God's things.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Discuss with your children about their use of technology. Is there anything in their life that they are concerned is getting in the way of their relationships or harming them? What do they want more of in life?
2. What are some values that help our children move toward safety rather than rebellion and risk? Help them write them out in statements like, "I want to be the kind of person who _____ rather than _____."
3. Why are identifying threats and developing skills/tools more important than slip reports?
4. What traits make someone a good accountability partner?
5. Check-ins are more than just reporting problems; it's about helping our accountability partner look at their state of mind, threats, and developing tools and skills to meet those threats. How does having a structure and time limit make accountability talks more effective?

NEXT STEPS:

1. In the Biblical book of Philippians, Paul offers timeless advice: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Philippians 4:8. As a family, review that verse then have each person pick two words that stand out to them. Have each person write down a list of "things" that remind them about that word. Encourage them to keep that list close and during later worships complete the exercise for all the words in the text.
2. If a family member or friend needs help with an addiction, download "**5 steps to go porn free this year**" at www.recoveredman.com and use this template to help them create a monthly plan. This resource will work for other habits and addictions as well.