

# Setting Boundaries with Technology

**Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.** *Proverbs 4:23*

Setting boundaries around phone and online activity can help build a healthy relationship with technology. Collaboratively establish specific guidelines, such as designated device-free times (during meals or before bedtime) and areas in the house. Discuss reasonable limits on screen time, ensuring they have time for offline activities, homework, and quality sleep. Encourage an open dialogue about the apps they use, their online interactions, and any concerns they might have. Make sure the boundaries are clear but also allow room for negotiation and adjustments as needed. By involving them in the process, you're not just setting rules but co-creating a framework that respects their growing autonomy, while ensuring a healthy relationship with technology.

## ➤ conversation starter

Let's talk about adding friends online. It's important to guard our hearts even in the digital space. What are your thoughts on setting boundaries when it comes to online connections?

Having a phone or being online is a privilege. With all privileges, we must be responsible. Let's work together to build some boundaries for our family when it comes to our phones and being online.

## ➤ navigating the conversation:

- **Choose the Right Time and Place:** Pick a moment when both you and your teens are calm and can dedicate some time to the conversation without feeling rushed.
- **Express Your Concerns Positively:** Begin the conversation by expressing your love and concern for their well-being. Frame the discussion around creating a healthy balance, emphasizing the positive aspects of setting boundaries rather than focusing on restrictions.
- **Use "I" Statements:** Frame your concerns using "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, saying, "I am concerned about your well-being," instead of, "You spend too much time on your phone."
- **Collaborate on Solutions:** Involve teens in the process of setting boundaries. Ask for their input on what they think is reasonable and discuss the reasons behind each boundary. Remember, you are the parent and have the final say.
- **Highlight the Benefits of Boundaries:** Share the positive outcomes of having clear boundaries, such as better sleep, improved focus on studies, and enhanced face-to-face interactions.
- **Stay Calm and Patient:** If teens disagree or get defensive, remain calm and patient. Avoid turning the conversation into an argument. Reassure them that the goal is to find a balance that works for both of you.
- **Set Clear and Realistic Boundaries:** Define specific boundaries that are clear and realistic. Avoid overly restrictive rules, but make sure the boundaries align with your family values and the well-being of your teens.
- **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate the behavior you want to see. If you're asking them to limit screen time, make sure you're modeling the same behavior. This reinforces the idea that these boundaries are important for everyone in the family.

