

**Kirk Cameron's**



# engage

Five practical lessons for raising your  
kids in a social media generation

**Five-Lesson Study Guide**

**Kirk and Chelsea Cameron's**



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# Understanding your child's mind



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## Lesson 1

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S MIND



## LESSON ONE STUDY GUIDE

As parents of children raised in a “social media world,” we are embarking on unexplored territory. And frankly, for some (or even many) of us, it’s a journey we were thrust into without proper preparation. If that’s the case, you’re in the right place!

Understanding how to navigate this social media journey with your children starts by understanding what exactly is going on in physiologically and psychologically with your child. Until recently, we had no idea of the short-term and long-term effects technology can have on young brains. What was once accepted, like sitting your children in front of the television without regard for time, is now being cautioned against by scientists and researchers alike. The science is clear: Our children’s use of technology can negatively impact the rest of their life. That’s where Dr. Ian Armstrong comes in. As a neuroscientist, he’s sounding the alarm when it comes to the misuse of devices like smartphones and gaming systems by our children and teens.

If you’re worried about your child’s use of technology, again you’re in the right place. Take heart! After learning about the function of your child’s brain from Dr. Armstrong, you can use this knowledge to change the path for your child’s future. You are the perfect parent for your child because God chose you to parent them. Be encouraged, help is on the way.



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**Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.**

1. Why is it important that you understand how your child's brain is developing? Have you and your spouse taken this into consideration in your parenting decisions?

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**Psalms 139:13-14 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

2. Dr. Armstrong shared that it's important for your child's brain to receive stimuli in many different areas of life. List 3-5 different ways your child is exercising their brain other than the use of technology. If you struggle to come up with some, then list ideas for you to introduce to them.

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**Proverbs 10:8 The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.**

3. Dr. Armstrong explained the function of the prefrontal lobe, and how this is not fully developed during teenage years. Have you seen evidence of this in your child's life? How will this knowledge impact future conversations and decisions regarding technology?

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**Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

4. Social media can cause stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, and even addiction. Have you seen any of these reactions in your child? Have you seen them in yourself? How can you pay more attention to the physical effects of your family's interaction with technology?

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**Matthew 6:22-23 The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

5. Pornography is widespread throughout our society. Chances are your child has already been exposed to it, since the average age a child views pornography is 8 years old. Are you involved enough in your child’s life to know if they have been exposed to pornography online? If not, how will you and your spouse become more involved in their technology use? How will you start this conversation with your child? (Don’t worry, we will also help you with this below!)

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**Proverbs 10:17 Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.**

6. Dr. Armstrong stresses that the real problem with technology is the amount of time children and teens are spending in front of a screen, especially when considering the brain development taking place at a young age. Estimate how much time your child is spending on their digital devices below. Are you currently setting screen-time boundaries for your family? Why or why not?

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“If we don't understand the problem than we don't really know the best way to address the problem.  
-Kirk Cameron



# Take Action

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- At the end of the lesson, Dr. Armstrong stated that the real problem is the overuse and misuse of technology. Set aside one or two evenings this week for you and your spouse to discuss practical rules and boundaries for your family to follow. During your discussion, identify the current activities in your child's life that might be healthy or unhealthy for your child's brain. From here, make a plan that will help your child be most successful. After your conversation, take your family to a technology-free event, like going to the zoo, taking an art class, or volunteering to help those in need.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Have you ever come across inappropriate or graphic content online? How often does this happen?
- Do you feel like you are addicted to your smartphone? If you didn't have access to a smartphone, how would that make you feel?

## DEEPER DIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We all know that the sin in our lives and the lives of our children is a result of a deeper heart issue. We want to give one question/theme each week that will help you and/or your child look further into the heart to identify the real problem and to surrender it at the foot of the cross.

This week's deeper dive question is for your kids: What does God say we need to make the best decisions in life? What are you lacking at this stage in your life to make the best decision for yourself and others? What do you think the Bible means when it talks about "foolishness"?

Parents, use Ephesians 6:1-3 and Proverbs 22:15 to guide the discussion.

## Additional Resources

Now that you know how your child's brain is being impacted by technology, it's time to do something about it! But where do you start? Thankfully, there are apps, books, devices, videos, and more that will help you and your family fight against the dangers of technology. We have researched and collected some of the top resources that aim to help your children have healthy relationships with their devices. Find out what works best for your family!



**Circle:** A smart way for families to manage content and time online, on any device. Circle pairs with your home Wi-Fi and lets you manage every connected device on your network, both wireless and wired, without ever needing to put software on them.

**(FREE) Starting the conversation:** Are you looking for help when it comes to starting conversations with your child about technology? Want to get their buy-in? Lifelock, the internet security company, has created a neat tool to help you do just that. It's called "The Smart Talk" and It helps create a contract of sorts with your child and even schedules check-ins..



**(FREE DOWNLOAD FOR ENGAGE MEMBERS) Axis parent guide on teen slang:** The Axis parent guide on teen slang is a helpful tool so you can understand your teen's vernacular and stay in the know. We've partnered with Axis to offer you this guide as a FREE download. Get your copy by visiting the downloads section inside this week's lesson.



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## Additional Resources (cont.)

**(FREE) Moment Family app:** Monitor your entire family's iPhone and iPad use from the comfort of your own phone.

**Covenant Eyes:** This service allows you to filter and/or monitor your internet activity for adult-related content.

**How to set parental guides on your iPhone:** Did you know that you have several options for setting up parental controls for your iPhone? This article tells you how to do it!



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How to maintain harmony during  
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Why being 'right' in marriage is  
wrong

Four ways to take judgement out  
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