



#RUHooked – Teenagers and Social Media Jonathan Smith

Additional Notes:

We have to address the heart before we can address the behavior.

- A. Pride
- B. Popularity
- C. Rebellion
- D. Acceptance

What is the condition of our hearts?

Understanding whose problem it really is.

How does my use of technology help people to glorify God?

Is the content shining God's light in a dark world?

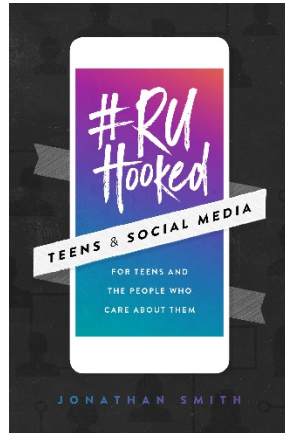
Tools for Success

- A. Set Boundaries
- B. Encourage Godly Relationships
- C. Expect Obedience
- D. Provide Accountability



Resources

Additional Notes:



<https://amzn.com/193988117X>

<https://store.faithlafayette.org/faith-authors/jonathan-smith>

- *#RUHooked* – For teens and the people who care about them
- *iSnooping on Your Kid* – Parenting in an internet world
- *Give Them Grace* – Dazzling your kids with the love of Jesus
- <https://churchleaders.com/author/jonathansmith>
- <http://faithlafayette.org/parenttech>
- <http://www.mobicip.com>
- <http://meetcircle.com>
- <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/12413/microsoft-account-what-is-family>

Protecting Your Family Online

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One of the most common questions I'm asked is how can parents protect their kids online. Many parents have the goal of helping their kids become more like Christ while they use technology but are not sure the best way to accomplish that goal. Combined with the technology gap where kids know more than parents about all these new-fangled devices and what seems like a simple goal of using technology to provide accountability becomes daunting.

The Bible instructs parents to raise their children to live their lives to honor Christ (Eph. 6:4, Prov. 22:6). This applies to all areas of life; from driving to sports to using technology. One of the biggest ways parents can help their children use technology in a God honoring fashion is to spend time with them and their favorite devices. If your child is not a good driver, you spend time with them driving. If your child struggled with athletics, you spend time with them playing sports. Same is true with technology only in this case you are spending time with them so they can teach you. Our children are 11 and 9 and it is very humbling when they teach me things about their devices that I don't know. I try to spend time with them each week having them show me what they like to do on their devices.

As much as I love our children I also know that they are sinners just like their parents and need some help obeying online. They definitely need some accountability for what they do on their devices and how much time they spend on their devices. There are two ways to provide accountability, the first is to control the network, the second is to control the device. By device, I am referring to any phone, tablet, laptop, computer, gaming system, etc.

Network control is setting up a filter on your home router that protects and limits all the devices connected to it. This is what many schools and churches do with their networks to protect their users. Any device that connects to the network has its traffic filtered. One option is called CleanRouter and is available at <http://cleanrouter.com>. This router provides filtering for all devices that connect to the network. Disney also makes a device that allows you to control your home network called Circle, <http://meetcircle.com>. These are just two of the many options out there.

The second method to provide accountability is device control. This involves installing some software on each device you want to manage. Network control only protects devices on the network that is being controlled. What happens when the device leaves that network? For example, your child takes their device to Starbucks or a friend's house. How do you ensure accountability when your child is at a friend's house? Numerous studies show that the first time most children 8-12 years old are exposed to inappropriate content online is while they are at a friend's house.

This is where device control works. No matter where the device is and no matter what network the device is connected to the device is protected. Device control does require more work. With network control you set it up once on the network and all devices on that network are protected. Add it once to your house and you are done. Device control requires you to setup software on each device you want to manage. This can be time consuming to make sure all your family's devices are protected but device control provides much more flexibility in terms of protection

There are again many options out there for device control, and the options vary greatly depending on what type of device you have. From iPhone to iPad to Android to Windows, here are some suggestions.

For iOS devices, which includes iPhones and iPads, as well as all Android phones and tablets my suggested application is Curbi, <http://curbi.com>. Curbi allows you to not only control screen time with set schedules, but also filters the internet connection no matter where the device is or what network it is connected to. While no internet filter is perfect, I have found that Curbi is very accurate in blocking content based on category assignments that the parents can set.

Curbi works by routing all traffic through a VPN connection to Curbi's servers. Some may not like that but I prefer knowing that as we travel and our kids visit friends and family that no matter where they are their devices are protected. In addition, Curbi allows us to set schedules for various apps and emails us a weekly report of how much time our kids have spent on their devices. We can also view the amount of time they have spent per app. Going through a VPN also ensures that

no matter what app is used to access the internet that the content is filtered.

Curbi does take a little bit of effort to setup but their website has all the resources and videos you need to get up and running quickly. We use Curbi on our children's devices. We get an email each week detailing their activity and if anything needs to be adjusted or a website unblocked we can manage everything through a web browser remotely without having to touch their device again. This allows us to dynamically update their filtering settings as needed and on demand.

For Windows based devices that are running Windows 7 or later Microsoft has built in a great tool called Microsoft Family Safety. You can set it up on any Windows 7 or later device by logging into <https://account.microsoft.com/family/about>. Family Safety allows you to enroll your children's devices and set internet filtering, age-graded content limits, and schedule limits for each device. You can also set ratings for Xbox content and Windows Store apps. Best of all it is totally free and already a part of Windows.

Each week it emails us a very detailed report on what each of our children has done on their Windows devices. Many of the Android and Apple solutions are built by third party developers but because Microsoft Family Safety is built by Microsoft, the same company that makes Windows, it is by far the most robust family protection option available. You can manage everything remotely via a website and if a child requests additional time or needs a website unblocked you will get an email and be able to address the issue quickly from anywhere you have access to the internet.

While these options work well for families I'm also asked about how to filtering and manage devices across larger networks, such as for schools and churches. The ministry I serve at has a Christian school and each student in the high school is issued a Windows based device. We have network filtering available for all devices on our networks but what about when students and staff take their devices home? Then what? We use Thirtyseven4 <http://thirtyseven4.com> to protect these devices.

I highly recommend Thirtyseven4 for anyone looking for an antivirus and antimalware protection for their devices. In a larger setting they also provide content filtering and application control through the Enterprise Protection Server. This means that no matter where the device is we are able to provide internet filtering and

content control. We are also able to remotely manage the device if any changes need to be made so for staff members on vacation or students on summer break we are still able to ensure their device is secure, up-to-date, and make any necessary changes to their configurations. The built in reporting for the Enterprise Protection Server helps us with providing accountability for all our users, and in ministry now more than ever it is imperative to have that accountability.

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Protecting Your Family Online - FAQ

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Which option is best?

There is no one-size-fits-all approach here. Each device and user and family is different. At the very least you should consider some sort of device control as without device control you have to make sure your kids are never on an unprotected network. Ideally, you will do a combination of device and network control. A combination will keep all of your devices protected no matter where they are and protect any unprotected guest devices that may visit your home.

How much does it cost?

Many vendors offer free versions of their products but in most cases the free versions will not provide all the protection you need. The only product that is free while still offering its full functionality is Microsoft Family Safety. For the other products, there is a cost to access all of the features, which is totally worth it. Consider the affordable cost of some sort of device or network management against your children learning about pornography on their own.

How much time is involved?

Each of the products mentioned have great support and help pages along with tutorials and videos. Depending on your level of tech savvy you can be up and running in no time. Remember, if your child was a bad driver or needed help with sports you would probably spend as much time as necessary helping them drive and practicing athletics. The same is true here; take what time is needed to ensure your family is protected – from learning it yourself to applying it to your devices.

Will my kids think I don't trust them?

Maybe. It depends on how you present this to them. As your children grow and mature you can grant them more and more access. Many products offer age-grading options so more and more content is automatically available as your children grow older. Our children know that we are watching what they do on their devices. They know the limits we have set and the great freedom they have within those limits. They also are well aware of the consequences of trying

to go around the limits we have set. Again, consider a young person behind the wheel of a car. How many times do you ride along with them before giving them the keys to the family car for their first solo adventure?

Which platform is better for parental control, Apple, Android, Windows, etc.?

Due to the way Apple's software works on iPhones and iPads there are some limits to how much filtering and device control you can enforce. Android and Microsoft allow for much easier device control based on how their operating systems are written. This isn't to say that Apple devices are better or worse, merely to point out that while still effective device control is somewhat limited on Apple devices.

Above all, remember that God is in control. While all parents have a responsibility to teach their children only the Holy Spirit can change the heart. No filtering or monitoring solution is perfect and inappropriate content will slip through. Make sure your kids know they can bring those to you. Spend time with your kids browsing the internet and learning their favorite games and websites. Network and device control are valuable tools but they are not the only tool, it is still important to build a relationship with your kids where you can learn and grow together.

Additional resources are available at <http://faithlafayette.org/parenttech>.

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Technology, Christmas Gifts, and Keeping Kids Safe

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Christmas is a great time of year for ministries as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. It can also be a challenging time for parents as kids Christmas lists are full of the latest high tech gadgets and whatchamacallits so they can visit websites you've never heard of. Here are some tips for parents to help keep children safe on Christmas Day and every day.

I am very pro technology but like most things in life you have to earn the privilege to use it and then continue to use it responsibly. For example, when you learn to drive you don't get behind the wheel of a race car at Indianapolis right away. That isn't saying that race cars in Indy are bad but that you have to earn it and work hard to use it properly.

In the real world we have curfews, why not in the virtual world? Parents should set boundaries on their kids use of technology and devices. I don't agree with the notion that as parents we should let our kids fail first and then pick them up and help them along and allow them to continue making bad decisions so that they can "learn". That is how many kids end up viewing porn or participating in online activities that are not appropriate – often times long before mom and dad are aware. And by the time mom and dad become aware it is too late. (Prov. 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4)

It is also important to encourage Godly relationships. Positive peer influence is critical as over 80% of kids ages 7-10 years old view pornography online at the encouragement of a friend. Do your kid's friends model a Godly example and help them live a life that strives to become more like Christ? Those peer influences in the physical world also impact actions in the virtual world.

Proverbs has a few things to say about this. Proverbs 27:17 talks about iron sharpening iron. Remember that this iron sharpening can happen virtually as well. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." What did it say? Too many friends can be a bad thing? Seem to fly in the face of the goal of having as many online friends and connections as possible.

As a parent I expect obedience. The Bible is pretty clear about the whole children obeying your parents thing (Eph. 6:1) but often the rules seem looser when it comes to online obedience or obeying mom and dad when they don't understand the technology. Internet use, cell phone use, tablet use, video console use, etc. is not a right. It's a privilege that is earned through responsibility. It is not an inalienable right. After all, who is paying for it?

Removing the technology should always be an option that is on the table when it comes to expecting obedience. Granted, some technology is required for school but there must still be a way for young people to accomplish their education and then not use their devices for anything else. If there is a sin issue in their life as a result of the technology then it must be removed, whether that sin is something obvious like pornography or something less obvious like gossip.

The story is told of a traveling salesman back in the good ole days before the internet and cell phones who struggled with pornography

on hotel room TVs. Recognizing this challenge in his life he decided that he would not stay at hotels unless they would physically remove the TV from his room, and if the hotel would not remove the TV from his room then he would stay at a different hotel.

What lengths are you willing to go to in order to help your kids stay pure? It might not be easy but I believe that if we are going to stand before God and give an account for how we raise our children then how easy or convenient it is shouldn't matter. (1 Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:23-24)

Finally, we should provide accountability and set a good example. How are mom and dad using the latest technology and gadgets? Who helps hold mom and dad accountable? What's better, for mom and dad to learn about the latest technology, gadgets, and social media and teach their children, or for the kids to learn about it from someone else?

A recent study of 13 year olds by CNN found that parental involvement and accountability "effectively erased the negative effects" of their kid's online interactions, whether through social media, games, chats, etc. When a secular study says that it seems that, we as Christian parents should take notice and provide accountability.

Here are some accountability suggestions:

1. Spend time with your children online and learn from them. Ask them to show you what they like to do online and their favorite sites. Ask them to teach you how to use the latest gadgets.
2. Check up on their logs and history, across all devices.
3. Use other software for filtering and internet tracking. The goal is not to remove independence but provide accountability to help the children grow and mature spiritually.
4. Find out about other points of access. Where else can your kids get online and use other devices? School? Friend's house?

I believe we are all accountable for our actions. I think we tend to forget what "ALL" means and who it applies to. We are accountable for our actions both in the real world and in the online world. We are accountable for our children, and our kids are accountable for themselves before God. God is still God, even in the virtual world filled with high tech gadgets and toys.

If you'd like to learn more about keeping kids safe and technology, visit <http://faithlafayette.org/parenttech>.

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Keeping Your Family Safe this Summer

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Who doesn't love summer time? The sunshine and warmer temperatures, the family vacations, the lack of school homework, and of course, an evening on the porch sipping a refreshing iced beverage. You would think we would find ourselves outdoors more enjoying creation. Often times though the opposite is true and we end up spending more time looking at our screens during the summer than we do the rest of the year.

Summer time can also be a cruel welcome to reality. As kids, we look forward to summer time because school is out and we get to play. As adults, we realize that summer time is no different from any other time of the year – we still have to work and life goes on as normal. That makes it easy to use screens to keep our kids entertained during those long summer days.

Fortunately, the good folks at Microsoft have built some pretty cool tools into the Windows operating system to make it easy for families to manage their screen time. While other software vendors also have family safety built into their products, Microsoft does it in a unique way that allows for native, remote control over your family's computers without having to install or manage any additional software.

Windows Family Safety is a fantastic tool built right into all versions of Windows. Windows 10 has the most features available but Family Safety is still available all the way back to Windows 7. Using Windows Family Safety, you can set filters and block lists, control access time windows and set curfews, track device location, and even get a detailed report emailed to you about all activity taking place with the computer.

Not only is Windows Family Safety a powerful tool, it is also easy to use and Microsoft has done a great job providing helpful documentation. All it takes is a few clicks and you will soon be monitoring all of the Windows devices in your family.

One feature that sets Windows Family Safety apart from other filtering or block services that are built into some operating systems is that you can remote control the settings. Once setup on the computer, the parent can change settings remotely without having to touch the kid's device. This allows mom and dad to control

the device from anywhere. It also allows the child to request additional privileges and mom and dad to approve the request via email.

The content rating and restriction tools are most effective. If you already have content filtering setup on your home network, Windows Family Safety works right along with it. Then when the child takes their device to a friend's house or other location where the internet might not be filtered Windows Family Safety keeps doing its thing so you know wherever the device is the content is filtered and your time limits and curfews will still be enforced.

You can also set it up to send you a weekly activity report of each child's activity. The report shows you which devices the child used, what they searched for on the internet, how long they used each app, the total amount of time they spent on the device, and any content that they attempted to access and was blocked. This is a tremendous accountability tool – especially when you see what they are searching for online.

If the device is lost or stolen, you can also use Windows Family Safety to track the last known location of the device and disable it to protect your child's personal information.

The goal here is not to be oppressive but to use this tool to help teach them to live a godly life, both online and offline. As the child grows and matures, you can use Windows Family Safety to provide additional online privileges – Windows Family Safety works from the youngest of kids to the oldest of adults. It can even be used for adult accountability.

All you need to get started is a Microsoft account, which you probably already have if you are a Windows user. Teaching responsibility with technology and providing accountability is made easier with Windows Family Safety. Visit <https://account.microsoft.com/family/about> to learn more, get started, and see if Windows Family Safety can help your family.

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