

Why I Read My Daughter's Texts

Yes, I am that mom. Every night, I read my daughter's texts and log into her social media accounts to look at the direct messages and friends lists. I am the one who "stalks" anyone on those lists I don't know. I am the mom who knew about Yik Yak two days before a student used it to make a bomb threat at my daughter's school because I was checking texts.

One of my girl's friends said to her mom, "Mrs. Teri Lynne knows everything. She might even know before it happens."

As much as I'd like to claim prophetic power and insight, the truth is, what I know is less about being social media savvy and more about being sin savvy.

I am an often weary warrior in the battle between flesh and Spirit. And because I know the war waged in my own heart, I don't doubt for one second the same struggle is very real in the heart and mind of my daughter — because she is made of that same broken, fallen, human DNA I am.

When I check her phone or stalk her friends, it isn't really about trusting her ... it's about trusting God and His Word. And Scripture is clear we have a very real enemy.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5.8 ESV)

Y'all, I believe every word of that verse. The devil is real and he is our adversary. Just as God is FOR us, Satan is AGAINST us. He prowls around LOOKING for someone to devour. I'm going to stand between him and her as much as, as strongly as, and as confidently as I can.

No, I can't make her decisions for her. But I can be wise and discerning and actively involved in what is shaping her worldview and her choices. And I can point her to the truth that we are to be vigilant about what we allow in our hearts and minds.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4.23 NLT)

When I check her phone, I don't do it in secret. She knows and, yes, it frustrates her. And I'm okay with that. I have had to be okay with knowing there will be days when she thinks I am the worst mom ever. I have had to learn to accept that she views me as mean and overprotective and strict. But, I also know this, those texts and images and conversations I've been concerned about have opened the door for conversations about the very real struggles she faces every day. We've had honest conversations about why boys feel like it's okay to ask girls for nude pictures ... and why girls send them. We've talked about why texting leaves so much room for misinterpretation and why some conversations need to be held face-to-face.

THE FATHER KNOWS BEST

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but WITH EVERY TEMPTATION he will also provide THE WAY OF ESCAPE, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Cor 10.13 ESV)

We talk about how my constant checking of her phone gives her an out. I can be the means of escape God uses to keep her from giving in to a sinful temptation. She can use me as the reason to remove herself from a group text when she isn't comfortable. She can use me as an excuse for not visiting a website everyone else is checking out. She can blame me for the fact she isn't allowed to have certain apps or social media.

I've learned this, my girl isn't looking for ways to be foolish or make mistakes. She deeply desires to be an example for others and to love the Lord well. But she isn't always sure how to face the pressure the world is putting on her. She hasn't always found her voice for standing strong. She's only 15. And yes, she is just three years from high school graduation ... but she is still a child and she still needs her mom to be both her advocate and her protector. And sometimes, she just needs me to be "the out" when she's struggling.

Being a mom is hard. Most days I am certain of this: I am not enough. But even in my not "enoughness", I also know this: I'm the only mom she has. Yeah, I mess it up all the time. I speak too soon and listen too late. And sometimes I forget who the real enemy is. But I also lean hard into the Word and I pray earnestly for wisdom.

Yeah, I'm the mom who checks her phone. But I'm also the mom who knows this is true:

The thief comes ONLY to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10.10 ESV)

The enemy of my soul is also the enemy of hers. His mission is to steal her joy, to kill her spirit, and to destroy her life. So I stand in the gap with fervent prayer and prayerful action. Because I cling to the hope and promise of Jesus and the ABUNDANT life He has for her, I will continue to be the mean, overprotective, strict mom. I will check the phone and have the hard conversations and share my own sin battles and tell her that the Bible is true and that God is faithful.

And to you, mom deep in the trenches, don't give up! Keep battling on behalf of your child. Know the enemy and teach him or her to know the enemy as well. Lean into the Word and pray for wisdom. You are not alone!!

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