

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white sweater, is sitting on the left side of a couch, looking towards a young man on the right. The young man has curly brown hair and is wearing a dark blue hoodie. They are both sitting on a blue and white striped couch. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

JDM
PARENT COMMUNITY
JDM

THE LAUNCH YEARS GUIDE

18-24

A practical, faith-rooted guide for parents and young adults
Before they leave. While they're in it. As they step into the real world.

© 2026 Jaco Booyens Ministries. All Rights Reserved.
For educational purposes only. Not legal, medical, or counseling advice.
Written by Summer Elliott & Ilonka Deaton

THE LAUNCH YEARS GUIDE

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

A practical, faith-rooted guide for parents and young adults navigating the launch years with wisdom, clarity, and connection.

OPENING

A Note to Parents	1
A Note to Young Adults	2

SECTION 1- BEFORE THEY LEAVE

Build the Plan Before the Pressure	4
The No-Shame Safety Agreement	5
What Needs to Be Ready Before They Go	6
Who They Call in a Crisis	7
Support, Not Surveillance	8
What Social Media Posts Reveal	9
Identity Before Influence	10

SECTION 2- COLLEGE LIFE

When Freedom Meets Access	12
Who You Belong With Matters	13
When the Night Changes Fast.	14
Pressure Is Not Love	15
Sugar Baby University	16
It Rarely Starts With Threat	17
When Attention Turns Into Pressure	18
When Help Asks for Too Much	19
Performance Is Not Identity	20
Do Not Freeze- Start Here	21

SECTION 3- THE REAL WORLD

Freedom Needs Wisdom	23
Home Should Feel Safe	24
When the Paycheck Comes With Pressure	25
When a Match Gets Access Too Fast	26
When Love Starts Costing Peace	27
When Private Becomes Leverage	28
When Busy Starts Becoming Isolated	29
Faith Does Not Stay Strong By Accident	30
When Something Goes Wrong	31

CLOSING

Stay Ready. Stay Rooted. Stay Connected	32
If Something Feels Off- Safety Checklist	33

A NOTE TO PARENTS

**Your role is changing,
but it is not disappearing.**

The launch years can feel exciting and unsettling at the same time.

Your young adult is stepping into new freedom, new responsibility, and new environments. You will not be in every room, conversation, or decision. That is why this season is not about holding tighter out of fear. It is about preparing well, staying connected, and keeping the door open.

They do not need perfection from you. They need presence, calm, clarity, and the confidence that home is still a safe place to tell the truth.

Release and covering can exist at the same time.

“

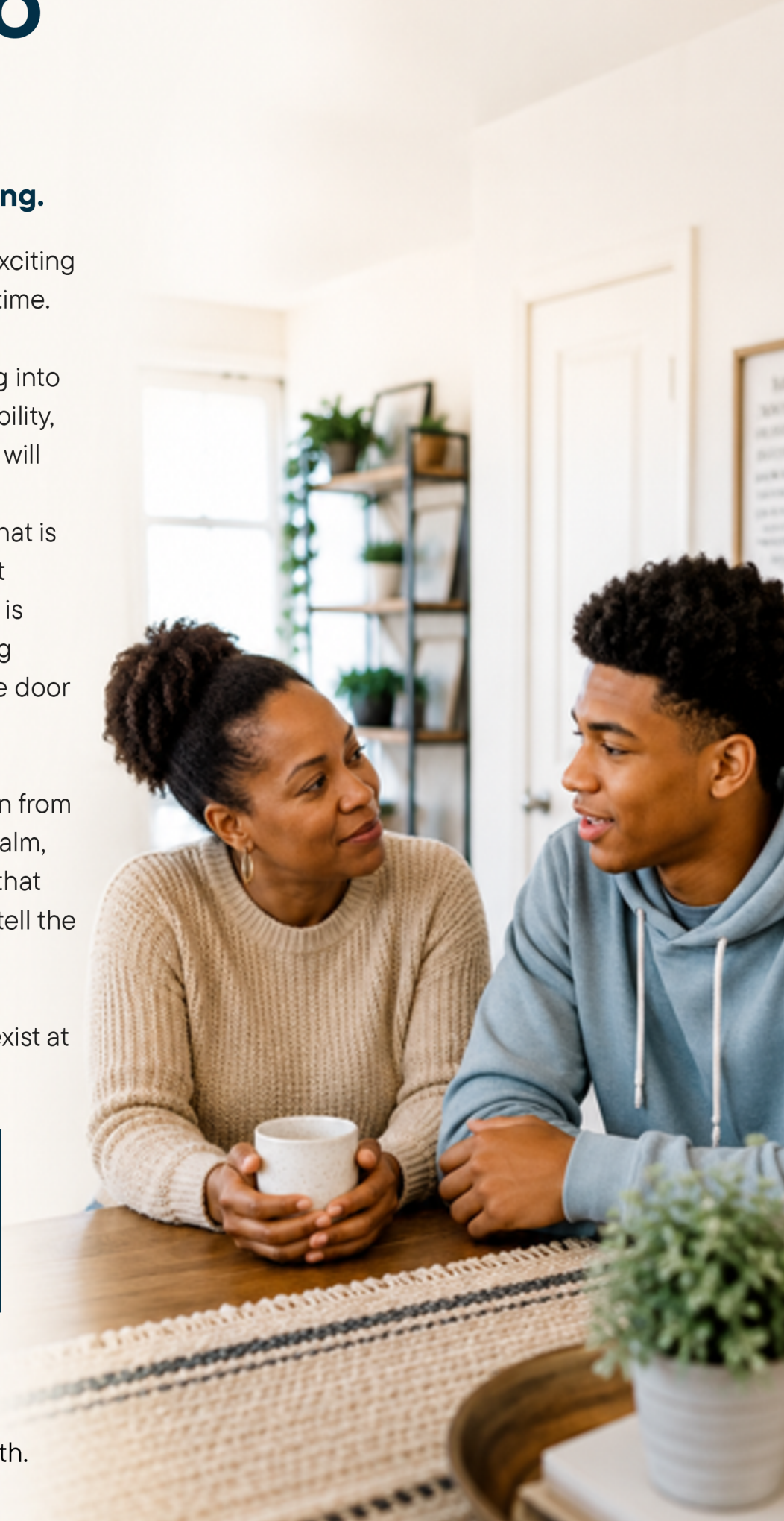
The goal is not control.
The goal is connection.

”

Stay steady.

Stay prayerful.

Stay safe enough for the truth.



A NOTE TO YOUNG ADULTS

**Freedom is real.
So is pressure.
You need wisdom for both.**

This season is exciting, stretching, and sometimes overwhelming.

You may be leaving home, starting over, building new friendships, and making more decisions on your own. That freedom is real, but so is the pressure that comes with it.

Not every opportunity is good.
Not every relationship is healthy.
Not every open door is from God.

You do not have to prove your maturity by ignoring your instincts. Wisdom is not weakness. Boundaries are not fear. Asking for help is not failure.

“

You do not need to be afraid.
You do need to be prepared.

”

Walk with wisdom.
Stay grounded in truth.
Call before it becomes a crisis.



SECTION 1

BEFORE THEY LEAVE

Preparing for freedom before freedom arrives.





BUILD THE PLAN BEFORE THE PRESSURE

Preparation before pressure builds confidence, clarity, and peace.

Before independence begins, families need more than a packing list. They need a plan.

Leaving home brings freedom, but it also brings pressure, responsibility, and situations young adults may not yet know how to navigate.

Before they leave, families should talk through what matters most before the first hard moment comes.

Preparation is not fear. It is wisdom.



TALK THROUGH

- Safety
- Communication
- Digital boundaries
- Finances
- Faith
- What to do when something feels off



REMIND THEM

- Wisdom is not weakness
- Boundaries are not fear
- Asking for help is not failure
- Not every open door is from God
- Preparation is protection



BEFORE THEY GO

- Decide who they will call first
- Make sure key contacts are saved
- Talk through real-life scenarios
- Create a plan before pressure takes over



This is not about fear. ***It's about preparation.***



THE NO-SHAME SAFETY AGREEMENT



WHEN TO SAY IT

Before they leave



WHO IT'S FOR

Parents & young adults



WHY IT MATTERS

Safety before shame

HERE'S THE AGREEMENT:



If you are ever in trouble, call or text.
We will deal with the details later.
Your safety comes first.

THIS INCLUDES:

- ✓ Needs a ride
- ✓ Drank too much
- ✓ Feels unsafe on a date
- ✓ Sent something they regret
- ✓ Is being pressured sexually
- ✓ Is being threatened or blackmailed
- ✓ Does not know how to get out of a situation
- ✓ Feels anxious, overwhelmed, or afraid
- ✓ Is stranded and does not know who to call



The first response should not be shame.
The first response should be **safety.**



TRUTH TO CARRY

Home should still be the safest place to tell the truth.



PARENT REMINDER

Say it before they leave.
Repeat it often. Mean it when it matters.



THE GOAL

Build a family culture where honesty feels safer than hiding.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE READY BEFORE THEY GO

Before they leave, make sure the basics are already in place.

A strong start is not built on assumptions. It is built on clear plans, trusted contacts, and practical preparation.



Emergency contacts are saved



Campus safety numbers are added



Insurance and medical information are accessible



Passwords are updated and two-factor authentication is on



Privacy settings have been reviewed



A late-night transportation plan is in place



One trusted local contact has been identified



A basic budget and emergency money plan is set



Location sharing has been discussed



They know they can call home first



Preparation is not fear. It is **wisdom**

WHO THEY CALL IN A CRISIS

Before they leave, make sure they know exactly who to call and where to go.

SAVE THESE IN THEIR PHONE:

- Mom
- Dad
- Emergency family contact
- One trusted local adult
- One trusted friend nearby
- Campus police or local police
- Resident assistant or housing contact
- Health center or urgent care
- Counseling Center
- Academic advisor

MAKE SURE THEY KNOW:



- Where to go if they feel unsafe
- Who to call if they are stranded or overwhelmed
- What to do if a date or roommate situation becomes unsafe
- Where to report harassment, assault, or stalking

DO THIS BEFORE THEY LEAVE:



- Save key contacts as favorites
- Turn on Emergency SOS if available
- Share location with a trusted person if needed
- Keep insurance information accessible



Clarity in a crisis starts with *preparation.*



Location sharing should never become constant control.

It works best when expectations are clear and both parent and young adult understand why it is being used.

In some situations, a trusted friend, roommate, or nearby peer may be able to respond faster than family who lives far away.

SUPPORT, NOT SURVEILLANCE

Used wisely, location sharing can support safety without replacing trust.

For some families, tools like Life360 or phone location sharing can offer peace of mind during the launch years.

These tools can be helpful when young adults are:



Meeting new people



Traveling



Going out at night



Walking back to dorm, apartment, or car



Using rideshare services



In situations where quick help may be needed

TALK THROUGH

- Who will have access
- When it is helpful
- When it may feel intrusive
- How it will be used in emergencies
- Whether a trusted friend, roommate, or nearby peer should also have access

REMEMBER

- Location sharing can support safety
- It should not replace trust, wisdom, or communication
- A helpful tool is still just a tool
- The goal is support, not control



The goal is not *surveillance*. ***The goal is support.***



WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS REVEAL

What you post can reveal more than you think.

Young adults need to understand that location is no longer just a setting on their phone. It can be revealed through dorm windows, apartment views, campus landmarks, street signs, parking decals, mirrored reflections, routines, and repeated posts from the same places.

Privacy settings matter, but they do not remove every risk.

BEFORE POSTING, CHECK

- Could someone tell where I live, study, work, park, or spend time from this?
- Does the background reveal a dorm, apartment, landmark, or building name?
- Am I posting in real time instead of later?
- Does this reveal a routine, favorite place, or repeated location?

REVIEW YOUR SETTINGS

- Set accounts to private
- Review who can follow, tag, or message you
- Limit who can view stories and highlights
- Turn off location tagging unless it is truly necessary

BE CAUTIOUS IN DMs

- Do not answer casual location questions too quickly
- Be careful with questions about your dorm, apartment, class schedule, or usual spots
- Do not send photos that reveal where you are in real time
- Pay attention if someone keeps trying to narrow down your location

REMEMBER

- Predators, stalkers, and scammers look for patterns
- Your content can reveal more than your live location
- Posting later is often wiser than posting live
- Awareness matters more than assumption



Do not assume someone needs your location setting to find you.
Sometimes your content is enough.



IDENTITY BEFORE INFLUENCE

Before they leave, remind them who they are before the world tells them who to become.




Young adults need identity before influence. New freedom, new relationships, and new environments can shape the way they see themselves if truth is not already rooted deeply. Before they leave, remind them who they are before pressure tries to define them.

They do not just need rules. They need identity. They need discernment. They need the confidence to recognize what is healthy, what is harmful, and what is pulling them away from truth.

REMINDE THEM

-  **Wisdom is not weakness.**
God's wisdom protects; it does not hold you back.
-  **Boundaries are not fear.**
They protect your future and your freedom.
-  **Asking for help is not failure.**
It is strength and maturity.
-  **Not every open door is from God.**
Discernment helps you know which door to walk through.
-  **Belonging should never cost peace, safety, or convictions.**
Real friends will respect who you are.

REMEMBER

-  **You are not alone.**
God goes with you, and He has placed people in your life for a reason.
-  **You are not for sale.**
Your worth is not determined by attention, approval, or acceptance.
-  **You do not have to earn belonging through compromise.**
You already belong because of Who you belong to.

“ROOTED IN TRUTH

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2



The strongest protection is knowing who you are before pressure tries to decide for you
When identity is clear, discernment gets stronger.

COLLEGE LIFE

Navigating what happens on and off campus with wisdom and awareness.

College brings new freedom, new pressure, new relationships, and new environments. It also brings situations young adults may not be fully prepared to recognize or handle on their own.

This section helps parents and young adults think clearly about what can happen in dorms, classrooms, friend groups, parties, dating relationships, online spaces, and off-campus environments.

***This is not about fear.
It is about awareness.***

Young adults need more than information. They need discernment, self-control, truth, and the courage to recognize when something is off before pressure takes over.



WHAT HAPPENS ON CAMPUS AND OFF CAMPUS STILL MATTERS.



WHEN FREEDOM MEETS ACCESS

Living away from home means learning how to protect your peace, privacy, and safety.

For many young adults, dorm life is the first time they are sharing space, routines, and privacy with people they do not really know.

Your roommate's choices can affect your safety too, especially when guests, parties, secrecy, or pressure enter the room.

That means boundaries matter.

TALK THROUGH



- Locking doors
- Protecting personal belongings
- Handling overnight guests
- What to do if alcohol or drugs are present
- When to involve an RA, housing office, or campus staff

WATCH FOR



- Unwanted visitors
- Pressure to keep secrets
- Controlling behavior
- Sexual pressure
- Threats, intimidation, or harassment
- Stealing, snooping, or invasion of privacy

SET EXPECTATIONS



- Decide what privacy looks like
- Know your boundaries before they are tested
- Speak up early when something feels off
- Keep trusted people informed



Feeling uncomfortable is enough reason to pay attention.
Feeling unsafe is enough reason to act.

Shared space should not cost them peace, privacy, or safety.



WHO YOU BELONG WITH MATTERS

The need to belong can make young adults overlook what is unhealthy.

College can be exciting, but it can also be lonely. Many young adults are trying to find their place, build friendships quickly, and avoid feeling left out.

That is why belonging matters so much in this season.

It is also why loneliness can become a vulnerability point.

The desire to belong is not wrong. But belonging should never cost wisdom, conviction, or peace.

TALK THROUGH

- ✓ **Trying too hard to fit in.** Pressure to belong can lead to people-pleasing and poor choices.
- ✓ **Staying in unhealthy friendships.** You are not responsible for fixing, rescuing, or enduring.
- ✓ **Ignoring red flags to avoid being alone.** Discomfort is often your inner alarm.
- ✓ **Finding safe people and healthy community.** Look for friends who encourage your growth and reflect your values.

REMEMBER

- ✓ **Not every friend group is safe.** Pay attention to how you feel around them.
- ✓ **Quick connection is not always wise connection.**
- ✓ **Belonging should not require compromise.** You do not have to trade your values to be accepted.
- ✓ **Loneliness does not mean something is wrong with you.** It can be a signal to slow down and be more intentional.
- ✓ **Be aware of who has earned trust and who has only gained access.**



The first people who welcome you are not always the right people for you.

Belonging should never cost conviction.



WHEN THE NIGHT CHANGES FAST

Freedom can change quickly when alcohol, pressure, and late-night decisions collide.

Parties, drinking, and off-campus gatherings are often treated like a normal part of college life. But these environments can change fast.

Young adults need a plan before they go, not just after something happens.

Parents should not assume a young adult will automatically make wise decisions under pressure without real conversation and preparation. Standards still matter, but so does honest communication. If young adults think they can only come home with a perfect story, they may be less likely to ask for help when something goes wrong.

A lot can be lost in environments where self-control slips, judgment weakens, and pressure grows louder than wisdom.

TALK THROUGH

- Never leave a friend behind
- Have a ride plan before going out
- Watch drinks and do not accept open drinks
- Know when to leave
- Call for help before things get worse

REMEMBER

- Pressure to compromise just to belong
- Distance from the people helping protect you
- Anything that weakens self-control or clear thinking
- Environments where wisdom and discernment start to slip
- Shame that keeps them from asking for help



A standard without a safe conversation can leave young adults stranded in silence.

Safety, truth, and wisdom should still be the goal.



PRESSURE IS NOT LOVE

What honors God should not require pressure, compromise, or confusion.

Dating can be exciting, but it can also become confusing quickly when attention, pressure, alcohol, guilt, or emotional manipulation get involved.

Young adults need clarity before they are in the middle of it.

God's design for sex is not casual, disposable, or disconnected from covenant. That is why abstinence matters. It is not about shame. It is about honoring God, protecting the heart, and refusing to trade what is sacred for what is temporary.

Young adults need to know that boundaries are not a lack of love. They are wisdom, conviction, and protection.

TALK THROUGH

- What healthy dating looks like
- Why sexual boundaries matter
- What abstinence protects
- How pressure can show up emotionally or physically
- What to do if a relationship starts pulling them away from conviction
- Knowing your boundaries before pressure tests them

REMEMBER

- Being pushed to move faster than you want
- Guilt, pressure, or shame when you hold a boundary
- Emotional manipulation tied to affection or intimacy
- Repeated testing of physical boundaries
- Being made to feel "too strict," "too serious," or "not mature enough"



Pressure is not love. Guilt is not care. Compromise is not connection.

What honors God should not require you to violate your convictions.



SUGAR BABY UNIVERSITY

What looks like provision can quickly become pressure, secrecy, and exploitation.

Sugar dating is often marketed to young adults as freedom, luxury, empowerment, or help with tuition, rent, and bills. But what is presented as opportunity can quickly become a dangerous power imbalance.






Parents and young adults need to understand that when money, gifts, trips, housing, or access come with secrecy or expectation, the risk is real.

What looks like help can become control when provision starts shaping access, pressure, secrecy, or silence.







This is not just about dating. It can become exploitation quickly.

What looks like help can become control when money starts shaping access, pressure, and silence.

WATCH FOR

-  Help with rent, tuition, or bills
-  Secrecy around the relationship
-  Luxury gifts or expensive experiences
-  Older people offering “mentorship” or “opportunity”
-  Making compromise sound normal or sophisticated

REMEMBER

-  Money can create pressure
-  Secrecy is a red flag
-  Power imbalance matters
-  You do not owe access to your body, time, or emotions
-  Provision that requires compromise is not from God
-  What is offered as freedom can become control



You are worth more than what anyone can offer you in exchange for access.



IT RARELY STARTS WITH THREAT

Grooming often begins with attention, trust, and special treatment – not threat.

Grooming does not always look dangerous at first. It often begins with someone making a young adult feel seen, chosen, special, mature, or understood.

That is what makes it hard to recognize.

What looks like kindness, mentorship, favor, or support can slowly become manipulation when access increases, boundaries blur, and secrecy grows. Grooming often works by building trust first, then using that trust to create dependence, confusion, or silence.

Anything that slowly pulls someone away from truth, wisdom, and safe people deserves attention.

WARNING SIGNS

- Special treatment
- Fast emotional closeness
- Isolating language
- Secrecy
- Excessive support or access
- Making someone feel indebted
- Private attention that starts to replace safe community

WATCH FOR

- “Don’t tell anyone.”
- “You’re different from everyone else.”
- “You can trust me.”
- “People won’t understand.”
- “I’m just trying to help.”
- Pressure to keep access hidden from others
- Anything that slowly pulls them away from truth, wisdom, or safe people



Grooming often begins with trust-building, not threat.
Secrecy is often where manipulation grows.



WHEN ATTENTION TURNS INTO PRESSURE

What begins as attention online can quickly become pressure, fear, and exploitation.

College life is deeply digital. That means pressure can come through dating apps, DMs, Snapchat, private messages, fake opportunities, and conversations that move quickly from casual to personal.

What begins as attention, flattery, or curiosity can quickly become manipulation when someone starts pushing for secrecy, private photos, emotional dependence, or access.

Young adults also need to understand that compromising images and private messages rarely stay private. Snapchat messages can be screenshotted in seconds. Instagram DMs are not truly private. Text threads often remain long after a relationship ends. What feels temporary in the moment can become lasting pressure later through sextortion, exposure, or revenge porn.

WARNING SIGNS

- Flattery that turns personal very quickly
- Requests to move to a private app or private chat
- Pressure for personal photos
- Fake modeling, job, or “opportunity” messages
- Someone trying to build quick emotional dependence
- Threats, guilt, or fear after you stop responding

REMEMBER

- Attention is not always interest
- Secrecy creates vulnerability
- Fear is often how manipulation keeps control
- What starts online can quickly affect real life
- You do not owe access, photos, or private information to keep someone engaged



What starts as attention can become pressure fast.
Anything built on secrecy, pressure, or fear is not safe.



WHEN HELP ASKS FOR TOO MUCH

Authority should never require secrecy, pressure, or blurred boundaries.

Young adults may meet professors, coaches, supervisors, employers, or leaders who genuinely want to help them. Many do. But not every person in authority handles power well.

That is why young adults need discernment, not just respect.

What looks like help, opportunity, mentorship, or favor can slowly become private access, emotional control, or inappropriate influence when boundaries blur and silence grows.

Healthy leadership brings clarity, safety, and accountability. Unhealthy leadership creates confusion, pressure, dependence, or secrecy.

What looks like help can slowly become access.

TALK THROUGH

- What healthy mentorship looks like
- Office hours and workplace boundaries
- Professional communication
- When to document concerns
- When to involve a trusted adult, supervisor, or campus office
- How to recognize when “support” starts feeling personal, secretive, or pressuring

WATCH FOR

- Secrecy and favoritism
- Emotional dependence
- Private meetings that feel unnecessary
- Pressure to keep things quiet
- Feeling like you cannot say no without consequences
- Confusion that keeps growing instead of clarity



Authority should never require silence, confusion, or dependence.
A safe person will not require secrecy to keep access to you



PERFORMANCE IS NOT IDENTITY

Pressure, burnout, and isolation can quietly shape the college years.

College pressure is not always dramatic. It often looks like exhaustion, anxiety, shame, comparison, and the quiet feeling of falling behind.

Young adults need permission to ask for help before they break down.

Overcommitment is another quiet pressure point. Classes, jobs, student groups, sororities or fraternities, campus activities, church involvement, and social commitments can all sound exciting at the beginning, but too much at once can wear down clarity, peace, and emotional resilience.

Pressure should never become louder than truth. A grade, a deadline, or a hard semester should not be allowed to define identity, worth, or hope.

TALK THROUGH

- Burnout
- Anxiety
- Homesickness
- Shame around grades
- When to ask for help
- What healthy support can look like
- Overcommitment and how to recognize when too much is too much

WATCH FOR

- Withdrawal
- Exhaustion
- Panic
- Giving up
- Hopeless language
- Feeling like failure
- Isolation that keeps growing
- A schedule that leaves no room to rest, reflect, or recover



Performance is not identity. Asking for help is not failure.
Pressure should never become louder than truth.



DO NOT FREEZE. START HERE.

**Get safe. Tell someone. Save what matters.
Get help quickly.**

When something goes wrong, the first goal is not to explain everything perfectly. It is to get safe, tell the truth, and take the next right step.

Young adults may freeze, minimize, blame themselves, or feel ashamed. Fear and confusion often delay action.

You are rarely as alone as you feel in the moment. A trusted friend, roommate, parent, mentor, RA, counselor, or campus staff member may be able to help more than you realize.

The most important thing is not telling the perfect person first. It is telling a safe person and getting out of isolation.

DO THIS FIRST

- Get to a safe place
- Call someone you trust
- Leave the situation if you can
- Get medical care if needed
- Ask for help quickly

TELL THE TRUTH

- Tell a parent, trusted friend, roommate, RA, counselor, campus office, or safe adult
- Do not wait for the perfect words
- Say what you know now and let someone help with the next steps
- Save screenshots, names, times, locations, messages, photos, and anything that helps document what happened
- Use campus resources if they are available



Do not wait for the perfect words. Start with the truth.
What is brought into the light can finally be helped.

THE REAL WORLD YEARS

Living, working, dating, and staying grounded in the real world.

The years after college bring freedom, opportunity, pressure, and responsibility. This season can be exciting, but it can also be isolating, fast-moving, and full of decisions that shape the future quickly.

Young adults are learning how to live on their own, manage money, navigate work, build relationships, and stay grounded in truth while carrying more of life for themselves.

From a biblical standpoint, independence should never mean isolation. Wisdom, discernment, self-control, community, and spiritual grounding still matter deeply in this season.

This section is about helping parents and young adults navigate adult life with clarity, conviction, and practical wisdom.



The real world still requires discernment, boundaries, and support.



FREEDOM STILL NEEDS WISDOM

Independence brings freedom, but it also requires wisdom, awareness, and routine

Living on your own can feel empowering, but it can also create quiet vulnerability when there is no plan in place.

Simple routines protect peace, strengthen safety, and make it easier to respond quickly when something feels off.

People from dating apps, social media, or online marketplaces should never meet you at your home first. First meetings should happen in public places. Marketplace exchanges should happen at a designated public safe-meet location.

A casual conversation does not equal earned access to your home.

Independence should not mean isolation or carelessness.

TALK THROUGH

- Locking doors and windows
- Who they would call nearby
- Late-night routines and parking awareness
- Letting someone know when plans change
- Why first-time meetups should never start at their home
- How to handle dating app or marketplace meetups safely

REMEMBER

- Freedom does not remove risk
- Routine creates safety
- Not everyone online has earned access to your life or space
- A public meetup is wiser than a private address
- Isolation can make pressure harder to recognize
- Simple habits often make the biggest difference



Independence needs wisdom, not just confidence.

Living on your own should not mean living without structure, awareness, or support.



HOME SHOULD FEEL SAFE

Shared living after college still requires clear boundaries, privacy, and safety.

Just because someone is familiar, older, or easy to live with at first does not mean shared living is automatically safe or simple.

Roommates, leases, guests, privacy, and trust still matter. A shared apartment or house can be a blessing, but it can also become stressful, unsafe, or chaotic when expectations are unclear and boundaries are weak.

Healthy shared living is built on honesty, respect, responsibility, and peace. When a living situation starts creating confusion, fear, pressure, or repeated compromise, it deserves attention.

Never invite someone you met online to your home address first. If it is a person from a dating app, Instagram, Facebook Marketplace, or another online platform, meet in a public place or designated exchange location first.

TALK THROUGH:

- House rules and expectations
- Guests and overnight visitors
- Bills and shared responsibilities
- Privacy and personal space
- Locks, keys, and safety habits
- What to do if the living situation changes
- Where to meet online connections safely

REMEMBER

- Unsafe guests change the safety of the home
- Controlling behavior is a red flag
- Financial pressure can create compromise
- Repeated boundary violations matter
- You should not feel tense in your own home
- Never meet online buyers or dates at your home address



Your home should feel safe, honest, and peaceful.
Shared living should not cost clarity, privacy, or peace.



WHEN THE PAYCHECK COMES WITH PRESSURE

Not every opportunity is safe, and not every favor is free.

A first job can shape confidence, work ethic, habits, and independence quickly. It can also expose young adults to workplace cultures they may not yet know how to read clearly.

Not every unhealthy workplace looks extreme. Sometimes it looks like staying quiet to protect shifts, tolerating inappropriate comments because tips are involved, answering texts that feel too personal, or accepting behavior that would feel wrong anywhere else because income is on the line.

In tip-based or customer-facing jobs, pressure can become especially confusing. Young adults may feel pushed to tolerate flirtation, sexual comments, touching, or blurred boundaries because money depends on keeping people comfortable.

TALK THROUGH:

- What a healthy workplace looks like
- How tip culture can blur boundaries
- Why money pressure can make it harder to speak up
- What to document and when
- When to involve management, HR, or another trusted adult
- How to leave a job that becomes unhealthy

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Inappropriate comments masked as humor
- Pressure to be “easygoing” about what feels wrong
- Fear of losing shifts, hours, tips, or opportunity
- “Work family” language used to dismiss boundaries
- After-hours texts or overly personal contact
- Money pressure can make bad situations look normal
- If something feels off, pay attention early



A paycheck should not cost peace, safety, or integrity.

When money starts shaping silence, something is already wrong.



WHEN A MATCH GETS ACCESS TOO FAST

Online dating can be a helpful tool for some people, but the reality is simple: not everyone on the app is who they say they are, and not everyone has good intentions.

Convenience should never outrank your safety, your values, or your peace.

DANGERS TO BE AWARE OF

- > **FALSE FAMILIARITY HAPPENS FAST.**
Good conversations can create trust before you've earned it. Big feelings online do not equal real character.
- > **NOT EVERY PROFILE IS REAL.**
Fake photos, fake names, and half-truths are common. Look for consistency, not just chemistry.
- > **MOVING OFF THE APP TOO QUICKLY.**
Scammers, manipulators, and people with bad intentions often push to text, snap, or video chat right away.
- > **PRIVATE MEETUPS ARE RISKY.**
Never go to someone's home or invite someone to yours early on. Choose public places. Tell someone where you're going.
- > **LOVE BOMBING IS A RED FLAG.**
Intense attention, big promises, and fast commitment talk are often used to gain control, not build real connection.
- > **PRESSURE WILL SHOW UP.**
Pressure to send photos, meet late at night, keep secrets, or move faster than you're comfortable with is not love. It's manipulation.
- > **LISTEN TO YOUR INSTINCTS.**
If something feels off—believe it. Clarity can prevent regret.

KEY REMINDERS



PROTECT YOUR SAFETY

Boundaries early on protect your future self from pain.



INVOLVE WISE PEOPLE

Tell a friend or family member. You don't have to navigate this alone.



MEET IN PUBLIC. ALWAYS.

First meetings should be in safe, public places. No exceptions.



YOU ARE WORTH REAL LOVE.

Real love is patient, respectful, consistent, and never pushy.



Love should not cost peace, clarity, or conviction.

WHEN LOVE STARTS COSTING PEACE

Adult relationships can move fast, but pressure, confusion, and control still matter.

As young adults enter more serious relationships, the pressure often looks more mature, but it is not always healthier. It may come through emotional intensity, financial overlap, fast commitment, sexual pressure, shared living, or the feeling that saying no will cost the relationship.

That is what makes adult red flags easier to excuse. A relationship may look serious, committed, or emotionally close on the outside while still creating confusion, fear, pressure, or control underneath. What feels like being deeply understood can slowly become being emotionally managed.

Healthy love brings honesty, safety, peace, and respect. Unhealthy love often creates pressure, instability, secrecy, or the slow erosion of boundaries.

TALK THROUGH:

- What a healthy workplace looks like
- How tip culture can blur boundaries
- Why money pressure can make it harder to speak up
- What to document and when
- When to involve management, HR, or another trusted adult
- When it may be time to leave a job that becomes unhealthy

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Fast attachment can cloud discernment
- Pressure is not proof of commitment
- Guilt after a boundary is a red flag
- Financial dependence can create control
- Isolation from trusted people matters
- Confusion is not healthy love
- Boundaries protect healthy relationships
- If peace keeps disappearing, pay attention



If love is costing peace, something deserves attention.

Healthy relationships do not require confusion, fear, or the erosion of boundaries.



WHEN PRIVATE BECOMES LEVERAGE

What feels personal, temporary, or convenient can still become pressure later.

Digital pressure often looks more polished than it used to, but it is not safer.

It may come through dating apps, private messages, networking platforms, online marketplaces, shared photos, location access, or conversations that feel personal very quickly. What seems harmless in the moment can become leverage later when trust changes, a relationship ends, or someone decides to misuse access.

That is what makes this different. The risk may not look reckless. It may look intimate, professional, convenient, or normal.

Screenshots, saved messages, compromising photos, shared passwords, and location access can all outlast the moment they were given. Privacy settings may help, but they do not remove the risk that access given too quickly can later be used for pressure, embarrassment, or control.

TALK THROUGH:

- Dating apps and how quickly strangers can gain access
- What should never be shared too early
- How shared passwords or location can become control
- How breakups can turn private content into leverage
- Marketplace meetups and why convenience should not override safety
- What to do when a private conversation stops feeling safe

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Pressure to move private too quickly
- Requests for photos, videos, or location access
- Screenshots or messages used as leverage
- Dates, buyers, or matches wanting your home address first
- Private does not always stay private
- Access should be earned slowly
- Convenience is not safety
- If something feels off, act early



Access given too quickly can become pressure later.
Private does not always stay private.



WHEN BUSY STARTS BECOMING ISOLATED

A full life can still become a lonely one

Isolation in adult life does not always look dramatic. More often, it looks productive.

It can look like a full calendar, a steady job, a busy apartment, a relationship, or a life that seems fine from the outside. But underneath, a young adult may be carrying exhaustion, loneliness, burnout, and quiet emotional depletion without realizing how much it is affecting discernment.

Sometimes the real danger is not crisis. It is slow erosion.

When people are worn down, they are more likely to excuse red flags, ignore discomfort, drift from truth, stay in unhealthy relationships, or settle for whatever feels easiest in the moment.

Being busy is not the same as being connected. And being independent is not the same as being well.

TALK THROUGH:

- What healthy adult support actually looks like
- How burnout can lower discernment
- Why loneliness often hides behind busyness
- What rhythms help protect emotional and spiritual health
- Who to call when life feels heavy, even if nothing is “wrong”
- How to recognize when independence is becoming isolation

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Constant exhaustion without real recovery
- Losing desire for community, church, or honest conversation
- Saying “I’m just busy” to avoid what is really going on
- Burnout can make bad decisions feel reasonable
- Independence should not mean carrying everything alone
- If peace, clarity, and connection keep fading, pay attention



Busy does not always mean healthy.

When connection disappears and exhaustion takes over, vulnerability grows quietly.



FAITH DOES NOT STAY STRONG BY ACCIDENT

Spiritual drift rarely begins with rebellion. It usually begins with neglect, distraction, and isolation.

Faith often weakens quietly.

It may not happen through one dramatic decision. More often, it happens through exhaustion, overcommitment, disappointment, loneliness, unconfessed struggle, or the slow belief that staying rooted can wait until life settles down.

That is what makes this season so important. Structure is no longer built in. No one is automatically making space for church, truth, accountability, or honest conversation.

Community now has to be chosen on purpose. When truth is neglected, discernment weakens. Isolation makes compromise easier. Busyness can slowly replace what once kept someone grounded.

Faith does not stay strong by accident. It is strengthened by intention, honesty, community, and staying close to what is true.

TALK THROUGH:

- What spiritual drift can look like in real life
- How busyness can slowly replace spiritual health
- Why community has to be chosen now
- What habits help keep faith grounded
- Who can speak truth when life feels off
- How to rebuild when faith feels distant or dry
- Why getting involved in a local church and young adults ministry matters

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Losing interest in church, community, or honest conversation
- Hiding behind “I’m just busy”
- Isolation making truth easier to ignore
- Conviction fading while compromise feels easier
- Faith grows weaker when it is always pushed aside
- A local church and healthy young adults community can provide covering, truth, and support



Faith does not stay strong by accident.

What you neglect long enough will eventually stop feeling necessary.



WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG AND NO ONE IS BUILT IN

When Something Goes Wrong And No One Is Built In

Adult life does not always come with built-in support.

There may be no RA, no campus office, no school process, and no automatic safety net. When something goes wrong, young adults may feel pressure to handle it alone, minimize it, explain it away, or wait until they can make sense of it.

That delay can make things worse.

Sometimes the most important step is not having the full plan. It is getting out of isolation, telling a safe person the truth, and doing the next wise thing quickly.

Fear, shame, confusion, and exhaustion can make people freeze. That is why preparation matters. When there is already a plan for who to call, what to save, and where to go, it becomes easier to respond with clarity instead of panic.

TALK THROUGH:

- Who they call first when something feels wrong
- What should be documented right away
- When to leave instead of explain
- How to respond if work, housing, money, or a relationship is tied to the problem
- Why getting safe matters more than getting every word right
- Who can help them think clearly when emotions are high

WATCH FOR & REMEMBER

- Freezing, minimizing, or waiting too long
- Shame that keeps them silent
- Trying to protect the other person instead of getting safe
- Fear of consequences making them stay stuck
- Documentation matters
- A safe person can help before the full story is clear
- The next right step is more important than a perfect plan



When something goes wrong, get safe, tell someone, and save what matters.
You do not have to have the perfect words to take the first wise step.



STAY READY. STAY ROOTED. STAY CONNECTED.

The goal is not fear. The goal is wisdom, truth, and steady connection.

The launch years bring freedom, responsibility, pressure, and new environments. That is why this season requires more than good intentions. It requires clarity.

Parents cannot control every moment, and young adults will not navigate every situation perfectly. But preparation matters. Conversation matters. Boundaries matter. Community matters. Truth matters.

This guide is not about raising fearful young adults. It is about helping families build wisdom before pressure, connection before crisis, and clarity before compromise.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is that when something feels off, they know what is true, who to call, and what to do next.

KEEP BUILDING

- Keep the conversation open
- Keep trust stronger than shame
- Keep practical plans in place
- Keep reminding them who they are
- Keep making home a safe place to tell the truth

DO NOT FORGET

- Freedom still needs wisdom
- Pressure grows in isolation
- Boundaries protect what matters
- Asking for help is not failure
- Staying rooted will always matter



Preparation is not fear. Connection is not control. Wisdom is not weakness.

Truth, peace, and discernment are still worth protecting.

IF SOMETHING FEELS OFF

A QUICK GUIDE FOR WHAT TO DO, WHO TO CALL, AND WHERE TO GO



If something feels off, unsafe, confusing, or overwhelming, do not wait until it becomes a crisis. Start with the next right step.

1 DO THIS FIRST



Get to a safe place.



Leave if you need to.



Call or text someone you trust.



Do not worry about having the perfect words.



If you need immediate help, **CALL 911.**

3 GO HERE WHEN...



Student Portal

For reporting tools, counseling, safety resources, and student support.



Campus Website

For emergency contacts, intervention resources, and support services.



Official Campus Social Media

For intervention, safety education, and support updates.



Many schools have resources in the student portal and official social media accounts for **Intervention & Safety Education**. Save them now.

4 SAVE THIS NOW

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Health Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Trusted Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Title IX / Support Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Trusted Nearby Adult | <input type="checkbox"/> Rideshare App |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Police / Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> 988 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling Center | <input type="checkbox"/> 911 |



Put these numbers in your phone **RIGHT NOW.**

2 CALL THIS NUMBER WHEN...



You feel unsafe right now

911



You are on campus and need immediate help

Campus Police /
Campus Safety



You need emotional support or counseling

Counseling Center



You need to report harassment, stalking, or assault

Title IX / Student Support Office



You are stranded and need a safe ride

Trusted Person / Parent / Friend



You are overwhelmed, panicking, or feel alone

988
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline



You need medical help

Urgent Care / Student Health Center

5 REMEMBER

- Unsafe is enough.
- Confused is enough.
- Uncomfortable is enough.
- You don't need proof to leave.
- You don't need perfect words to ask for help.
- The first step is to get safe and tell someone.

