

## PARENTING A YOUNG ADULT

After years of saying, “When I grow up, I’m gonna be...” there comes a point in which your children start going through the steps of actually making it happen. Dr. James Dobson calls ages 16 to 26 the “critical decade” as young people transition from childhood to adulthood. We’ve all heard the phrase “failure to launch” describing young men and women who don’t make that transition for one reason or another. Unfortunately, more and more parents are inadvertently keeping their children from growing up by protecting them from the risks necessary to adulthood. How can you be intentional about successfully launching your older children?

### **STEP ONE: Be a good coach**

As the parent of a teen on the verge of adulthood, you are in the prime of the coaching years. You can motivate, encourage, challenge and advise, but you can’t force feed. You can help your son or daughter articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, remind them of the “basics” they learned during their earlier years, but the time has come for them to truly own their beliefs. Through that process, you can provide a safe environment to wrestle with and even question the values they learned as children. The key to your influence at this point is in maintaining a strong relationship and frequent, open dialogue.

### **STEP TWO: Give perspective amid their big questions**

Making the transition into adulthood, your son or daughter will face big questions like: What kind of work should I do? Where should I live? What should I do with my life? The most important thing you can do during this season is to direct them back to overarching Biblical principles. The last words of King David to his son Solomon (in 1 Chronicles 28:9) provide a model for parents advising emerging adults: “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.”

In the midst of the practical advice parents may offer on setting goals, choosing a job, finding a spouse and so forth, we must also elevate God’s principles such as...

- *Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain (Psalm 127:1).*
- *Lose your life to find it (Luke 9:23-24).*
- *Number your days aright (Psalm 90:12).*
- *Seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).*

A great book to help guide your young adult is “The Purpose Driven Life.” This book will launch them into thinking critically and spiritually about the next step of their life!