

**Look Up
From Your
Phone
So I Can Love You**

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

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Why Journal

There's no turning back. Most people born into this world from now on will *never* know life without digital technology at their fingertips. As of 2017,  44% of the *world* population (the world being over *7 billion people*) has smartphones—and a predicted 59% of the population will have them by 2022 (Sui). This fact is neither good nor bad; it simply is a reality of life. And, short of some dystopian accident  (think of the futuristic books and movies where the common person no longer has access to technology), this is **not** going to change—technology is here to stay.

So . . . forging ahead, as kids and parents, you will need to decide how you are going to navigate this brave new world together (*and since you're reading this, you're not choosing to run away from society and live in a cave . . . yet*). So why should you journal in order to brave this world together? You maybe haven't ever thought about the facts that you are not just randomly here and that your family is not randomly thrown together. You may have never thought about your family being meant or even destined to face life together, but God placed you together as a family. God knew that as people, we *seek, want, and need* other people. We have the natural need to talk and be heard, to show love—and be loved in return. We need to hug and experience physical touch—to *interact with other people*. Basically, we **need** to communicate and care for one another in different ways. As families, we take care of one another's needs.

Again, why should you journal? Journaling gives a flexible way to have that conversation that doesn't always easily happen in "real time." Sometimes schedules keep us from talking—there are jobs, school and extracurricular activities, and of course, *life* (which may include other brothers/sisters/relatives and *their* two cents' worth!). Sometimes we need time to respond (or at least to answer *thoughtfully*, as most of us have had times when we wish we could

take back words we said without thinking!). And honestly, sometimes it's awkward to start the conversation about these things face-to-face (or maybe even to know *what* we should be having a conversation about). And, no, kids, this is not another way to torture you! This is an opportunity to get to know each other, to communicate, to have parents and kids give ideas about how you are going to spend your time and energy (and yes, use the technology with which we've been blessed). Journaling? Just think of it as texting without your phone (*the phone bill may prove that you can text* 😊).

Guidelines and Ground Rules



1. Decide who is going to see this. Ideally, this would just be between you, the parent(s), and you, the child. Because you are being honest, you need to decide what is fair to share with others (like the guidelines you decide for technology use or family-only time, etc.). However, that also means that parents don't share personal entries with friends or other children without permission, and vice versa. Honesty is the key, and if you can trust that neither of you will embarrass the other or share personal things about the other (no matter how juicy), that will help keep you both sharing honestly.

*Initial here that you understand _____
(or make changes/additions you both agree on):*



2. Decide on where/how this journal will pass between you. You may want to use bedside tables or bedrooms as places to pass the book back and forth (yelling, "Hey, you!" as you chuck the book at each other is not a great option). You might mark how far you should go (or have gone) with a sticky note or bookmark, decide to do a section each week, etc.

Here is how I would like this journal
to be passed back and forth: _____



3. Be patient with each other as you navigate and set boundaries. Your family is different from any other family that has been or will exist (*and that's not just because you think your sister is weird* 😊). Remember,

God chose to put you together (and, by the way, God doesn't make mistakes—that's all I'm saying). There often enough is no right or wrong answer (this isn't math class!), but this book will help your family find good answers. This is a tool to help you look at boundaries and good choices for safety, entertainment, and time management. And, you won't know what works for you (or have the blessings of becoming closer), unless you put in the time to find out!

I will take the time to *faithfully* journal and *patiently* think about and *consider* what you write.

Initial here that you (parent(s) and child) understand (or make changes/additions you both agree on): _____



4. Read how to use this interactive journal. Within the entire journal, some sections are marked "Kids" and some are marked "Parents." That being said, you should both read each other's sections. Quickie quiz: Which sections should you read? Both! An interactive journal means that different

people are adding responses for each other to read, think about, and respond to. You can't fully appreciate what the other is journaling unless you read that section and then see how your parent/child responded. Each section will be written for parents, kids, or both,

but the entire book is intended to help you know and appreciate each other better. Also, please understand that some parts of the book aren't specifically about smartphones and screen time, but they're dedicated to helping families simply rediscover each other and grow closer. The better you know each other, the better you can relate, grow closer, and respect each other's viewpoints. When you have finished, the goals are that you will understand each other better, have a plan for how to responsibly use technology, grow in your appreciation for God (who put you together) and each other, and, quite possibly, you might take a little time to look up from your phone so you can love each other even more!



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Anticipated L-O-V-E

Kids (and Parents too!):

Remember when you got your first phone? It may have been a hand-me-down from a parent, or you may have researched it, stalked it, and saved for it. No matter how it came to be yours, it was something you looked forward to having—something you anticipated having and using. You probably gathered friends' numbers and usernames before you even had the phone as your own. And when the phone became yours, it was *amazing*. You showed it to all your friends. You took care of it and probably made sure it had a case and screen cover to protect it. You still check it often and take it with you everywhere. You *love* your phone.



Share your memories of your first phone (or waiting for it, begging for it...):


Kids: _____


What are some things (events, gadgets, etc.) you are still looking forward to (anticipating):

Kids: _____

Not to upstage your trip down “phone memory lane,” but there is another love story that is very similar. It’s *yours*. Your parents anticipated (hoped for, dreamed about) you. They studied baby books and medical journals. And when you came, well, you were *amazing*. Your parents took care of you and made sure you had clothes and a ton of baby equipment. They checked on you often (even when you were soundly sleeping, just to make sure you were still fine). They took you *everywhere* and showed you off. They *love you*—and who can blame them?

Parents, share a memory and/or confession of smothering love 😊: _____

And even greater than phone memories or your parents’ anticipation of you is the love of God for you. See, not only did God put you with your family, but he anticipated you and your needs. He knew all of us—mind blown, because that is *a lot* of people. And since God knows us, he also knows we are not perfect. You may be awesome, but you and no one else on the face of the earth is ever perfect, right, A+ every second of the day. And God *knew* that. Because we cannot live perfectly, God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to live a perfect life for each of us. He anticipated that we would need Jesus. You may have memorized this passage (or seen it on signs or painted on faces at football games):  “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God chose to give us life in exchange for his only Son’s life—that’s true love! That’s really amazing to think about—we don’t have the option to pick our parents or kids (*as many times as you wish you could have!*). Sometimes we can pick our phones, but often it’s just what the carrier offers, what’s cheap, or what hand-me-down you get. But God actually chose to create us, to put us together, and to save us through Jesus! You are special! You are not a whim, a chance coincidence, or the last person left when

choosing teams—you are special, chosen and loved!  “Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Luke 12:7)—think about how deeply God *knows* you—down to the last hair! And he keeps providing whatever we need (something we still have left to look forward to—or *anticipate*). God chose to give us *to each other* to navigate through this life. All blessings are from God, but families are an especially needed and special gift—a gift God anticipated us needing. God *loves us*.

Kids and Parents: Share some of the blessings in your life (people/things/pets).

Kids: _____

Parents: _____

Kids and Parents: You are an anticipated gift; share with ONE word how this makes you feel:

Kids: _____
Parents: _____

This is how we know what love is:
Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.
(1 John 3:16)

