

HOW TO WRAP THE
AWKWARD GIFT OF

CONFRONTATION

Biblical, Practical and Helpful Insight on Dealing with a Struggling Teen



Confrontation
is one of the
best gifts you
can give your
teen.

The problem is
how to wrap it
so it is more
likely to be
accepted.

Thank you for downloading this resource from Victory Academy for Boys. At Victory Academy for Boys, we believe the Bible is the inspired truth of God and is “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” We believe that “his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” These Scripture verses from 2 Timothy and 2 Peter focus on the importance of the Bible to encourage us, correct us, equip us for every good work (like parenting), and more. We have compiled this guide on confrontation based on Nathan’s confrontation of David found in the Old Testament. We feel this text will be of specific help to parents of struggling teens. We have added some notes of explanation and advice that we hope you’ll also find helpful. We know the battles you face, as well as the discouragement, frustration, and sense of hopelessness you feel; and we care. If you feel we can be of help to you and your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at Victory Academy for Boys.

Before reading through this guide, take a few minutes to pray. Ask God specifically to encourage and instruct you through his Word. Ask that his Holy Spirit would speak these truths to your heart and strengthen you in your inner spirit for the struggles you are facing. Pray that this guide would point you to practical biblical truth for the needs you are facing.

May God bless the reading of this guide to your heart and life.

Sincerely,
Mark Massey
Executive Director
Victory Academy for Boys
www.VAFB.org



Confrontation and giving advice. When we know our teen may be struggling with a problem, sin, or even an addiction, it's never easy to offer helpful correction or give input. In fact, it is like trying to gift wrap a huge, awkwardly-shaped gift that our teen may not even appreciate at the time. You know they will benefit from it, but how do you make it presentable so they will gladly accept it? Even with examples laid out before us in Scripture, it is still difficult at times to know exactly what to do and say to get our friends or family to listen and really hear truth.

In the end, we know we can't force a gift on anyone. No matter how valuable the gift of advice or confrontation, no matter how perfectly wrapped or perfectly timed, it still has to be received. We know that, according to Scripture, wise teens accept this gift of advice and confrontation. We can see that even some marginally wise teens will accept it, although more care must be taken in the giving of it. We also know that the Bible says that a mark of a foolish person is that he will not accept advice (Proverbs 23:9).

A few preliminary thoughts first.

Silence means approval (Proverbs 17:15-17). Remember that you, as a parent, must attempt to give this gift. You can't stay silent and just hope things get better. You can't be the buddy or friend and not be a godly parent.

Remember that advice and confrontation bring results (Proverbs 28:23). It may not be the immediate results you want; but if they accept, you have "gained a brother" (Matthew 18:15) and strengthened the relationship. If the result is rejection, you can begin to follow the advice God gives on dealing with those who are foolish which may include seeking more information from a ministry like Victory Academy.

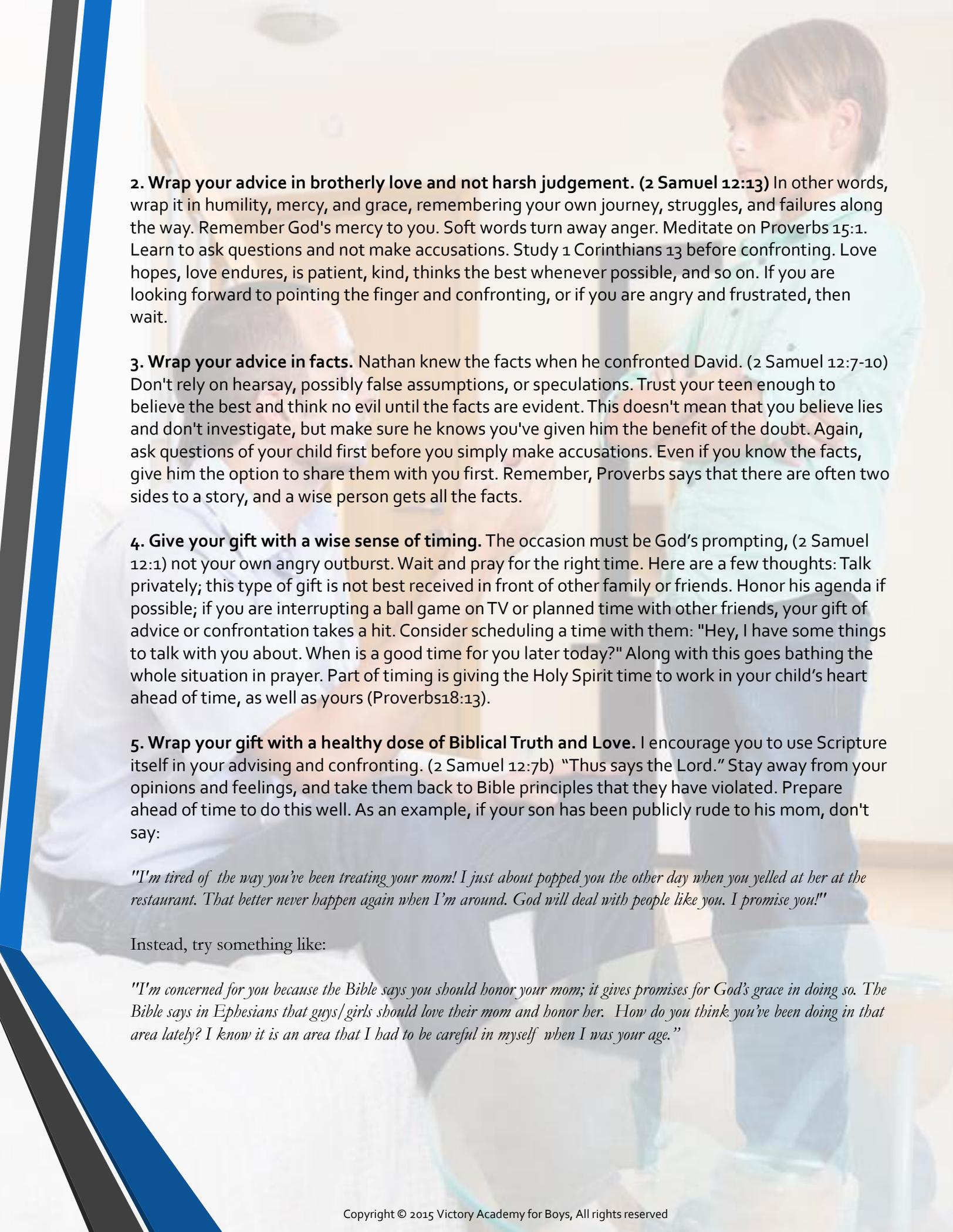
So how do we wrap this gift of advice, wisdom, and / or confrontation?

There are some great "wrapping" instructions in the account of the prophet Nathan confronting David after his sin with Bathsheba. This account can be found in 2 Samuel 12:1-15.

1. Wrap your advice in a relationship of encouragement and knowledge. We know that Nathan encouraged David at times. (2 Samuel 7:3, 12:13) We can also tell from the account in 2 Samuel 12 that Nathan knew David and had a relationship with him. His approach shows his knowledge of David's past shepherding experience (12:3-4), David's knowledge of the law and his sense of pity on the poor (12:1-6). He knew and understood David as a friend would. We assume that Nathan had been an encouragement to David as well over the years. These are good examples for the parent who needs to confront their teen.

If you are not careful about picking the battle you choose with your teen who is struggling, you'll find yourself nagging instead of advising. What's the difference? Nagging occurs when you find yourself constantly irritated with your child and badgering them almost every time you're with them. Advising happens when you pick your battles, letting some (maybe many) issues go while focusing on the biggest issues or the ones the Holy Spirit prompts you about first. Spend your time and energy trying to find the things you can praise in your child's life on a regular basis. He'll be more open to the purposeful, planned confrontation if it is wrapped in a day-to-day flow of encouragement.

Use your knowledge of your teen to formulate the confrontation in a way he'll understand, respond best too and think about clearly.



2. Wrap your advice in brotherly love and not harsh judgement. (2 Samuel 12:13) In other words, wrap it in humility, mercy, and grace, remembering your own journey, struggles, and failures along the way. Remember God's mercy to you. Soft words turn away anger. Meditate on Proverbs 15:1. Learn to ask questions and not make accusations. Study 1 Corinthians 13 before confronting. Love hopes, love endures, is patient, kind, thinks the best whenever possible, and so on. If you are looking forward to pointing the finger and confronting, or if you are angry and frustrated, then wait.

3. Wrap your advice in facts. Nathan knew the facts when he confronted David. (2 Samuel 12:7-10) Don't rely on hearsay, possibly false assumptions, or speculations. Trust your teen enough to believe the best and think no evil until the facts are evident. This doesn't mean that you believe lies and don't investigate, but make sure he knows you've given him the benefit of the doubt. Again, ask questions of your child first before you simply make accusations. Even if you know the facts, give him the option to share them with you first. Remember, Proverbs says that there are often two sides to a story, and a wise person gets all the facts.

4. Give your gift with a wise sense of timing. The occasion must be God's prompting, (2 Samuel 12:1) not your own angry outburst. Wait and pray for the right time. Here are a few thoughts: Talk privately; this type of gift is not best received in front of other family or friends. Honor his agenda if possible; if you are interrupting a ball game on TV or planned time with other friends, your gift of advice or confrontation takes a hit. Consider scheduling a time with them: "Hey, I have some things to talk with you about. When is a good time for you later today?" Along with this goes bathing the whole situation in prayer. Part of timing is giving the Holy Spirit time to work in your child's heart ahead of time, as well as yours (Proverbs 18:13).

5. Wrap your gift with a healthy dose of Biblical Truth and Love. I encourage you to use Scripture itself in your advising and confronting. (2 Samuel 12:7b) "Thus says the Lord." Stay away from your opinions and feelings, and take them back to Bible principles that they have violated. Prepare ahead of time to do this well. As an example, if your son has been publicly rude to his mom, don't say:

"I'm tired of the way you've been treating your mom! I just about popped you the other day when you yelled at her at the restaurant. That better never happen again when I'm around. God will deal with people like you. I promise you!"

Instead, try something like:

"I'm concerned for you because the Bible says you should honor your mom; it gives promises for God's grace in doing so. The Bible says in Ephesians that guys/girls should love their mom and honor her. How do you think you've been doing in that area lately? I know it is an area that I had to be careful in myself when I was your age."

Biblically, the key to solving strife (relational conflict) is humility and truth. This is well stated in Ephesians 4:15 as truth wrapped in love. Wrapping truth in love provokes thoughts of our heart motivations, because when we act in humility and love, we take attacking and offending out of the picture. We can then join with them in the discussion of truth. Biblical truth becomes the light in the situation and does the work of revealing the heart. With this approach, as a parent, you let the power of God's Word, "sharper than any two edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12) do its work. You are then more freed up to love and help them as they learn how to implement truth in their actions.

6. Wrap advice and confrontation with the wide red ribbon of forgiveness. Be ready to forgive **before** you confront if the offense was against you. After the confrontation and advising, forgive. Don't keep bringing up the problem. Move on. If the offense was against someone else or against God alone, assure a repentant son or daughter of God's love and forgiveness as well. Make sure that during the confrontation, you don't bring up past forgiven sins unless they are very pertinent to the current situation. If the advice is rejected, you as a parent can still keep a spirit of sweetness and readiness to forgive when your teen is eventually brought to a place of repentance by God's work in his life. This helps guard your own heart from getting vengeful and bitter and your conversations from being harsh and sarcastic. Although the sin may bring even difficult consequences or punishment as in the case of David, remember like Nathan to remind your teen of God's love and forgiveness. (2 Samuel 12:13)

7. Wrap the gift of confrontation or advice as well as the presentation of the gift in lots of love. Samuel affirmed love (II Samuel 12:25). Remember we referred to 1 Corinthians 13 earlier? Study this passage over and over when dealing with struggling family members. Love goes deeper than feelings and beyond feelings. You may not feel like loving him in any sort of way right now, but you can still act in love towards him according to the principles in 1 Corinthians 13. Assure your teen that you love him no matter what he does. You may not approve, you may have to even separate from him for a while by placing him outside the home in an environment where God can teach them in ways you're not able to, but let him never doubt your or God's love for him.

We hope that these helpful truths will benefit you. If we can be of help to you now or in the future, please don't hesitate to contact us at Victory Academy for Boys. If you are unsure if Victory may be an answer for your family situation, please don't hesitate to contact us at 715-759-5976. You can also download resources from our website at www.VictoryAcademyforBoys.org.

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