

**Announcer:** Welcome to the Not On My Watch Podcast where real life issues facing the family and the church are addressed with bold and uncompromising truth. It's time to reject the mediocrity of the day. Live courageously in the face of danger and declare not on my watch. Here are your hosts, Jeff, and Rochelle Ferguson.

**Rochelle:** Welcome to the Not On My Watch Podcast. We are Jeff and Rochelle. And we have a special guest today that we are excited to introduce to you here in just a moment. Just a moment. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you so much for subscribing on all the things, YouTube, Facebook, Apple podcast. I don't know. Every

**Jeff:** platform imaginable.

There's out there that I can't even remember the name to,

**Rochelle:** but we're so excited that you're on them. Like, I mean, we use them, we're on there, but

**Jeff:** anyways,

**Rochelle:** let's go. You know what we mean. So, hey, we are so excited to have a special guest today. Our first guest.

**Jeff:** You

**Rochelle:** are our first in studio guest. Our first guest in the studio.

This is actually very appropriate because you were my first child that I gave birth to, so wow, okay we got real. This is our oldest daughter, Madelynn. Madelynn, do you want to introduce yourself to the Not On My Watchers?

**Madelynn:** Sure. I'm Madelynn and I'm 14 and I'm going to high school, and I like to play soccer and stuff like that, and I like hanging out with my family.

**Rochelle:** Okay, when she just said she's going into high school, I about died. Well, I was...

**Jeff:** I was thinking in my heart, she, I like hanging out with my family. I was, I'm glad,

**Rochelle:** like you heard the pause, I'm like, she's going into high school. But the high school thing, can I be.

**Jeff:** honest with everybody watching?

**Rochelle:** I'm like, I'm getting the scares.

**Jeff:** Me.

**Rochelle:** I don't know. The middle school has been pretty scary, huh? Okay. So yes, she has survived the middle school years. I don't know. We have about like 20 days left of school when this is being filmed. So, I think she's going to survive middle school. But what we are talking about really is middle school and cell phones heading into high school.

And, you know, we will link. A previous episode that we've done.

**Jeff:** Because we've done a previous episode and it's been us talking. We've done a couple episodes. We presented the research on cell phones, what we think about cell phones with the research shows. But we wanted to say, hey, let's sit down with our 14-year-old daughter and let's talk about this with her.

Yeah. Not just what we think, but let's talk about what she thinks as well.

**Rochelle:** And this is a real life human.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Rochelle:** She is incredibly smart. She is awesome. Madelynn's wonderful. So glad that you're our first guest. And so, we're talking to a middle schooler, almost a high schooler. I know you said that about how she has survived 14 years of her life, all kindergarten through eighth grade without having a cell phone.

I mean, there was moments where it was touch and go. We were doing, you know, resuscitative work, but I'm just kidding.

**Jeff:** She's just like, I can't handle life without one.

**Rochelle:** I'm going to die. Okay. All right. So, this, that is not true. She did not say that, but so tell us Madelynn, what it's like to be a middle schooler that does not have a cell phone.

Maybe you could tell us like how many, what percentage, just give us, give us an overview. It's very interesting.

**Madelynn:** Cause like most kids, like probably 95 percent of my grade have a cell phone. And so, you're like one of the five percent and you don't and so yeah.

**Rochelle:** Yes, so you are, you are unique. You are, you are a jewel.

**Jeff:** A gem.

**Rochelle:** A gem. That's what her dad always says. But really, so about 95 percent of your class I would actually guess it's even higher. Probably 95 to 98%. 98 percent of your class has a cell phone. Probably. And so, what are your, your particular school rules? You don't have to mention your school's name on here.

Just tell us your school rules. Are kids allowed to bring a cell phone to school? What happens?

**Madelynn:** So, kids, so middle school kids are allowed to bring a cell phone, but that's actually changing next year. So like kids, like they're not supposed to have them. But like at all. So, you're supposed to leave it in your locker, but most kids put it in their backpack because they're afraid of like kids seeing it.

So, like, they just put it in their backpack, and they turn it off. And, like, some teachers turn on their airdrop and they can see, like, who has it, who has their airdrop on. And they're like, oh, give me your phone. So, yeah. And those are my favorite teachers.

**Rochelle:** Shout out to all you middle school teachers who are, oh, just doing the good hard work. Okay, that's good hard work.

**Jeff:** Advocating for digital purity. Oh, my goodness.

**Rochelle:** I don't

**Jeff:** know. Did you

**Rochelle:** have to think about that? I did.

**Jeff:** It just came to me,

**Rochelle:** sometimes,

**Jeff:** anyway,

Hey, how does this feel?

**Rochelle:** Okay. Well, here's one thing I do know is the, so kids are not supposed to have them, but they do teachers catch them. I do know that when I pull up for pickup Madelynn's yeah, no. What were you going to, what did you just do? Yes. Most kids are not talking to each other. They're talking, looking at their phones, scrolling, and Madelynn's talking to humans.

Okay. So, what are the rules about self? And we heard about school and kind of your anomaly there. What are the rules in the Ferguson house? about cell phones?

**Madelynn:** You have to be like safe with them. You can't just do whatever you want on them. It's not a playground or it's not a free-range playground.

And you like, you have to be careful with like what apps you're downloading and who you're texting. You have to make sure like who you're texting and like who it actually is.

**Rochelle:** That you're texting a real life human. Okay, so what age can people in the Ferguson house get a cell phone? Probably going into high school.

Probably going into high school. Probably.

**Jeff:** Because we're not even there yet. So, you think, I hope. Are you hoping? Are you hoping?

**Rochelle:** Yes. Okay, see. Are cell.

**Jeff:** phones bad in your opinion?

**Rochelle:** No.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Rochelle:** Do you think mom and dad think cell phones are bad? No. No. Why, why do you think that we have rules about when to get them?

**Madelynn:** Because sometimes you don't need them and you're sheltering says like you're younger You're probably less mature than you'll be in like two or three years.

**Rochelle:** Yes, so partly I'm trying to save you from looking at pictures of yourself that you've posted on social media going Why did I do that?

**Jeff:** Someone needs to save me of that.

**Rochelle:** No, this is Jeff's Yes. Social media presence. Are you ready? I'm sorry. Well, I'm not saying you even like...

**Jeff:** Are you going to make fun of me in front of our daughter?

**Rochelle:** Yes. What would change? No, I'm just kidding.

**Jeff:** You know what? You're right. Which is fine.

**Rochelle:** I'm just saying that's a joke.

There are some people are like, oh, I knew it. Okay. No, this is what, this is what Jeff likes to do on social media. He watches like these videos of like wildlife.

**Jeff:** Okay, sorry.

**Rochelle:** She's laughing because it's, is it true? So,

**Jeff:** I'm not on social media a ton. However, when I get on there and I see Like these reels come up.

Two hippopotamuses going at each other in the wild. I'm like, I gotta watch this.

**Rochelle:** You mean fighting, right? Fighting. That's what I mean.

**Jeff:** Fighting, like. I just want to be really clear about that.

**Rochelle:** I have gotten like, drawn into these, I've literally gotten drawn into these videos, and I even shared one today with Madelynn and she goes, if you find it again, let me know.

It was this cow. Like where the veterinarian was like releasing like built up gas, which I know it's like why would I watch this? But it's interesting. Okay, so I just For

**Jeff:** the men in the audience if you are drawn to wildlife fighting Just leave it in the comments. I mean, I don't feel better. But anyway, okay

**Rochelle:** So yeah, so the rules, Madelynn knows rules, we're, we're talking about getting, we're talking about it, it's probably going to happen.

Madelynn's like really about getting a phone going into high school, but we've even talked about it. What are some rules that we will have with the cell phone? So can you just, maybe, we're preparing, we're doing what, we preach we are laying a foundation, we are training, we are guiding, and before we just launch out, we're doing all of this stuff.

So, what are some of the rules that we have talked about with you that will be in place for cell phone use? You can't

**Madelynn:** just search up anything, you can't just text everybody and everyone, and you can't just download every app that you want. Yes.

**Rochelle:** Will I have passwords to things? And can your cell phone, is it yours that it's like you can do whatever you want with?

No. No. And can it be in your room at all hours of the night? No. No. Okay. I'm just stating a few of them there. Okay. So, what have been some of the negative things that have happened or maybe things that you've experienced as a result of being one of the only kids, one of the only kids...4 percent or whatever, of kids that don't have a cell phone in middle school.

What are some negative things?

**Madelynn:** Probably just communicate with coaches, cause like a lot of coaches now, they just like to put everything out there on digitally. So, like, every practice is digitally, so like, I have an iPad, so I've kind of gotten around that. And then also just like, people, feeling left out by people, and so,

**Rochelle:** yeah.

No, and these are real things. Like, so some of it, we've been able to find a workaround, iPad. She has an iPad, you know, there's been texting that you can text with your friends that, you know, we know about and things like that on an iPad. You've been able to kind of keep track of being a part of different sports teams because you're on a lot of sports teams.

**Jeff:** Yeah. And so, you're able to keep in that communication. So, you're not left out of when practices are, when games are, all that stuff.

**Rochelle:** Or some of the even text communications that go on with, with some of that. I just hear that being a lot of reason why parents are like, well, my kid was not able to know about sports teams.

Some of the things, well, you know, there are ways to do that without giving a cell phone. But, you know, the reality is, is that it is true. You just said it. You, there have been times where you've been left out of things.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Rochelle:** I don't really know as a parent, I can see why you'd feel this thought like, oh, I don't want them to feel left out.

I don't want you to feel left out, but I care about your brain, literally your spiritual life, your all the things that matter. And that's why we really have chosen this path.

**Jeff:** Yes. No. I thought you have on that. No, I, I want to think longer. I don't want you to, I don't want you to be left out either, but I want to think longer knowing that as you continue to get older, obviously I want you to be able to have conversations with people, have conversations with adults and obviously learn how to use you know, you know, devices, phones appropriately, but you know, I don't want to open up that before it's too soon.

So, this is, I want to think longer a little bit. Okay. So, we talked about some of

**Rochelle:** the negatives. So, what are some of the positives? Has there been anything that you're like, wow, that has helped me, that my parents have, you know, helped me by like, what has helped you by not having a cell phone at the age of 14?

So, people

**Madelynn:** just like ask for your number and you're like, I really don't want to give them my number. You can, do not have to worry about, like, if you have to lie or, like, just give a random number that you don't even know who it is, like, you can just, like, honestly say, I don't have a number. They'll be like, oh, okay. And then they walk away from you.

**Rochelle:** This is epic. Yes. This is a real-life story. We won't mention names. We won't mention situations.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Rochelle:** I'm just letting her know this for, we were having a private conversation, well, okay no, but this really happened. You had somebody that asked you, hey, I want to put you in a group text, or I want to text you.

And you were like, you did not want to be in that group text, is that correct? Yes. Yeah, you felt uncomfortable by that. And I remember, because I kind of overheard it, or I don't even remember exactly how that happened. But you said, I don't, I don't have a cell phone. And then I remember you got in the car, and you were like, I'm so glad I could say that.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Rochelle:** And you're like, I didn't have to lie.

**Jeff:** Yeah. Absolutely. And

**Rochelle:** I want you to have to lie. Lying is a sin. Lying is wrong. Okay. Let's see. What age do you think kids should get a phone? If you were in charge, what age do you think kids should get a phone?

**Madelynn:** Probably like coming the end of eighth grade or like coming out of eighth grade.

Like

**Rochelle:** really? Do tell, so

**Jeff:** she's advocating in front of everybody a couple months prior, but hey...

**Rochelle:** Yeah. Why do you, I mean, have you noticed that it's been, there's been what? Why would you say that?

**Madelynn:** Like before eighth grade or like

**Rochelle:** why would No, no. Why would you say those age? Why not like 12 when a lot of people get a phone or 10 or something like that?

Like 12 was

**Madelynn:** just. People are, like, going to be immature with it, most likely. Unless you're just a really immature 12-year-old, which props to you. But so yeah. People probably are not

going to use it wisely. And then they're going to look back and be like, aw, I shouldn't have done that.

**Rochelle:** Yeah. And I'm just going to insert this comment that you told me earlier.

And you can disagree with me publicly, and that'll be fine. You will not be in trouble. I'm just letting you know. But you said a lot of drama at middle school surrounds cell phones.

**Rochelle:** Yeah, it's the start of it. The start of it, or the perpetuation, or the continuation of drama. Yeah.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Madelynn:** Yeah, which I know several people have had to have their phones turned in and like principals and administrators have had to look through them.

Yeah.

**Jeff:** Because of the

**Madelynn:** text they sent or the things they posted or things they verbally said to the person on like online communication and stuff like that. Hmm.

**Jeff:** Hmm. Wow.

**Rochelle:** Yeah. So, the bottom line is that you, this is just a little interview with our real life.

**Jeff:** Yes. Yes.

**Rochelle:** 14-year-old. And I think, you know, this is my perspective.

I know that I'm a mom and I'm biased and it's okay. Yeah. But I think Madelynn is incredible. I think she's awesome. I think if you were having, you can tell she's mature. If you were having a real-life conversation with Madelynn in real life, like talking to her. She can look you in the eye, she can have a conversation and she is a joy filled person.

And I, I attribute that so much to who the, you know, she loves Jesus. She serves him. But also, this, she hasn't had to deal with some of the things that kids are dealing with at the age of 10 that they shouldn't have to.

**Jeff:** Yeah. And here

**Rochelle:** she is almost 15 and, well, I don't know if you're almost, but. 14 and a half.

**Jeff:** Let's not hurry this along.



**Rochelle:** And you know, it's, we're going to be introducing a cell phone, but we're not going to be jumping into like, Oh yeah, all social media. You know what? All social media shouldn't be for all adults. Like, I mean, seriously, just cause China made the app doesn't mean we should download it.

Or anybody I'm not, I'm not dogging on the Republic of China or whatever. I'm just saying anybody like just because an app is available, does it mean. That we should be downloading it doesn't mean it's healthy and it's definitely not healthy for kids to have to manage all of that. They're just, if we want to study and do the research about brain development, about emotional development, about spiritual development if we introduce some things too early, we are not helping our kids.

**Jeff:** And I know people, you know, see the stuff out there, but, but lawmakers are starting to even be vocal about this. We're, we're just talking about the, the world, the secular world out there.

**Madelynn:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** And so, I think we, as parents, our desire is to say, hey, no, we want to be vocal about this, even in our own home.

And so, we can read the research, which we should and all that stuff. But this is real life. Madelynn's real life, 14-year-old, real life people, and there, we have to steward those lives as best we can.

**Rochelle:** And so, parents, this is, you know, you might go, man, you guys like to talk about this a lot. Yes, we do. This is a counter cultural idea.

And I believe that, that if you do the research yourself. If you really read about all these developmental things, if you really read about anxiety and depression, do the research, I guarantee you, you will come to some of the very same conclusions.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Rochelle:** And so, we're raising awareness and I just want to say publicly for everybody to hear for all of the world, for all of life that I'm so proud of Madelynn.

I'm so proud of the decisions that she's making, and I just want to say, I believe that parents Yes. Do the research. Think twice. And, and, and implement a rule that, that, you know, is doing the best for your kid.

**Jeff:** Yes. Madelynn, I just want to say thank you for being the first guest on the Not On My Watch podcast.

I'm proud of you too. I want to say that too. I'm honored. You're honored. Well,

**Rochelle:** You'll always have this distinction. Yes. All right. Well thank you so much for listening, and until next time, we will see you on the Not On My Watch podcast.

**Announcer:** We'll see you

**Jeff:** then.

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