



A weekly resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

PARENT/TEEN CONVERSATIONS

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Parent: how was your day?

Teen: good.

Parent: what was good about it?

Teen: nothing.

Parent: what did you do?

Teen: nothing good...

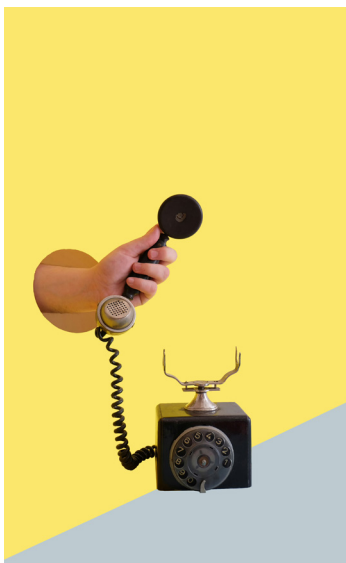
[end of "conversation"]

If this is how a typical conversation between you and your child unfolds, don't worry, you're not alone! It can be challenging to have open and honest conversation with teenagers, even just about basic day to day details. Continue pursuing your child, it's worth the effort.



What is Happening?

- Every teen/parent relationship is unique. Depending on the dispositions of the teenager and parent and the teen/parent relationship, conversation can be challenging at times. Every relationship will also change as a child grows. A natural part of adolescent development is discovering independence and identity as a person apart from the family unit. This is a healthy and normal part of maturing. In the midst of this development, conversation and connection with parents and other adults is vital for healthy emotional, spiritual, and relational development in adolescents.
- In addition to the normal challenges teenagers and adults face in communication, the current cultural moment may be making interpersonal connection more difficult. Technology certainly impacts relationships. If left unchecked, technology can create separation and distract from meaningful interaction.
- With such a high focus on self-autonomy and individualism, submitting to authority is often frowned upon. Stereotypes such as an older generation being "stuck in the past" can also close lines of communication or create negative assumptions.
- These different factors may further make basic conversation challenging, let alone dialogue concerning deeper topics.





WORD

What Does God's Word Say?

From the onset of God's good created order, the family unit was initiated and designed to help humanity flourish. Humanity's call in Genesis 1 is to be fruitful and multiply, to create life and cultivate it in a way that brings flourishing. To live faithfully as redeemed humans under the way of Jesus, we are to help others flourish. Child development and a flourishing society can't happen without communication on all levels. For parents this must take place in the home.

Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes the idea that faith is passed on through the daily interactions and conversations of life. It's just as much "caught" by daily conversation as it is "taught." In order for this to occur our speech must help bring life, not tear down. The Apostle Paul states that our "speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..." (Colossians 4:6). Does the speech in your home preserve and bring life?

Proverbs 12:18 & 29:11 talk about being wise with our words. A key factor in communicating with children, especially teens, is doing so with thoughtful wisdom. It's so easy to want to react strongly to brazen things said. Being measured and patient in our conversation - so that it can be gracious & seasoned with salt - is important. Followers of Jesus are to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Much wisdom is needed to know when and how to thoughtfully communicate when a teenager is not making conversation easy.





WALK

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

(Colossians 3:12-14)

Conversation Starters and Questions:

This parent prompt is focused on helping normal conversation develop. There are certainly times for direct or pointed conversation concerning discipline, correction, or specific topics. Pursuing normal and regular communication will help support these types of conversations as they occur or are needed.

Keep Going

Regardless of how your conversations currently unfold with your child, keep pursuing your child. Continue to show you care and want to be involved. Ask questions about the normal parts of life. It is important to communicate in the ordinary so you are able to communicate in the extraordinary.

Be Present and Remove Distraction

To facilitate basic family conversation, make it a priority to have family meals a regular part of your family’s rhythm. Before or during dinner have everyone share something they are thankful for. Setting up technology free zones or times (in the car, at the dinner table, during family time) for you to purposefully be present with family members will prove beneficial. Make sure to explain the reasoning and goal to help others see the value and goal of a new rule.

Ask Questions

Bring a simple topic to discuss during dinner. An example would be having everyone share one thing they are thankful for. Consider using a CPYU TableTalk to foster conversation about specific topics. Think through when your child(ren) is most open to communicating. Take time to understand the things that your children are passionate about and talk about those things so you can understand their interests, passions and heart better. A great place to pursue conversation is in the car. Turn the music off or down and talk about the day. Here are a few sample questions to help get you started:

- Who is your favorite superhero, and what quality do you like most about them?
- If you had to eat one vegetable every day, which one would you choose?
- If you had to choose one person to be like, who would you choose and why?
- If you could meet Jesus in person and ask him one question, what would it be?
- What’s the most popular word kids are using at school right now that you think I’ve never heard before?



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