HeartMatters
DIGITAL MEDIA SAFETY PROGRAMS

Discussion Guide for Truth in Love, Episode 2

Questions

- What are some of the experiences you've had when going to a new school or church?
- What are some things that Pastor Hopkins should have done differently?
- Have any of your friends shared a secret with you like what Carson did?
    - How did you react?
    - What did you do with that information?
- Do you have an easier time listening to others or talking to them?
- Carson has a negative view of God and Christians. He also has misconceptions about Christianity. Why do you think he believes those things?

- Do you think Pastor Glen will treat Carson differently than Pastor Hopkins?
    - Why or why not?
- What do you think will happen with Zane and Carson in the next episode?

Comments

It's important to pray every day and about everything (Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Peter 5:7). Pastor Glen prayed over the kids in the church before they went back to school. Courtney makes it a habit to pray with Zane about the day ahead. Life can be difficult, but inviting Jesus to walk with us makes even hard days at school or work easier. Why? Because we have the best friend ever with us! We can turn to him for protection and guidance at any time (Psalm 46:1).

It's easy to react quickly with an opinion or comment before thinking through what someone is saying. An old saying goes: "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." Proverbs 10:19 shows us that we can get into trouble by talking or speaking our minds too much. Zane admitted to Carson that he didn't know what all to say. His parents didn't have all the answers right away either. But they listened! It's often better to have patience, pray, and do some research before making some comments, especially when it comes to difficult situations. If we listen, think, and ask God for direction more before speaking, we're more likely to say the right thing at the right time (Proverbs 25:11). Good intentions are no excuse for bad actions. It's good to share what the Bible says and to speak out against sin. But if we do it in a way that is only meant to hurt and not help, any truth we deliver may be taken the wrong way or shut out because it wasn't given in a loving way (1 Corinthians 13).

Just because someone says they're a Christian or they go to church doesn't always mean they are a Christian. Also, not every church or pastor teaches the entire Bible. Lots of people like to call themselves Christians. Even fewer actually live it. How can we tell if someone is really a sincere believer? By viewing their actions (Matthew 7:12- 23) and praying for and using discernment (James 1:5, 1 John 4:1, 1 Timothy 6:3-5, Colossians 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:21). An even bigger question is "If you profess to be a Christian, are you living in a way that backs that up?" (James 1:2, 2 Timothy 2:15, Matthew 15:7-9, 1 John 2:4)

Think about Saul (later named Paul) in the New Testament. He was passionate in his fighting against Christians because he thought they were blaspheming God and disrespecting the Jewish religion. He had Christians (young and old, men and women) thrown into prison and even killed, all in the name of keeping God's commandments. It wasn't until Jesus revealed Himself to Saul that he saw that the actions he thought were good were actually the opposite. In the end, Saul repented

of his sin and became a Christian himself. You can read about his story in the book of Acts, starting with chapters 7 and 8.

Carson didn't talk to his mom about his feelings before the meeting with Pastor Hopkins. Zane went to his parents to talk through the confusion and questions he had. Because Zane humbled himself and asked for help, he was able to receive guidance and support. Parents and guardians have more life experience than children do and can often offer advice and new perspectives. Being able to talk through your feelings and asking questions is important. Good Christian counsel can help you with your difficult situations and, in turn, enable you to help others (Philippians 2:4, Galatians 6:2).