Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Talking with Your Kids about God: Intro, Overview, & Ch. 1 Notes

Introduction

- Discipline & Direction: 2 sides of the coin of godly parenting

  - "When we have **no discipline** and **no direction**, we're leaving our kids to wilt spiritually."

    - Inconsistent meal-time prayers, negotiable commitment to the church, vague Bible references

  - "When we have **discipline** but **no direction**, we're working hard but not necessarily doing the work our kids need most."

    - Consistently mindful of spiritual development, but lacking in awareness of the many things kids need to grow a strong faith

  - "When we have **discipline** and **direction**, we're confident."

    - Knowledge of how to help family grow a strong faith

    - Intentional time each week to grow spiritually as a family

- Practical ways to use this book:

  - Read it 🙃

  - Conversation Guide: Open, Advance, Apply

Overview

- "We don't have to fumble around, hoping that what we've taught our children about God's existence will somehow be enough to ground their faith. In fact, if we do just fumble around, speaking about God in whatever terms feel most comfortable to *us*—like comparing God and Santa—we may unintentionally set our kids up for spiritual vulnerability."

- Most of us can speak of God based on personal (subjective) experience (testimonies, God did this for me/us…), not enough of us can also speak of God in grounded objective reality

- 3 Keys to Impactful Conversations about the Existence of God

  - Intro to kids: explain value of learning about objective evidence for God's existence in nature

    - no matter how sticky the command strip is (how powerful our testimonies are!), it's worthless unless you have the right surface to stick to (a grounded understanding of a reality where God is the rational underpinning where our testimonies can take place)!

- Clearly define the terms!!!
  - atheist: someone who believes there is no God
  - Agnostic: someone who believes nothing is known or can be known about the existence or nature of God
  - Skeptic: catchall of people who reject claims of Christianity
  - Theist: someone who believes in a God who interacts w/ His creation (e.g., Judaism, Islam, & Christianity are all theistic faiths, THOUGH NOT ALL ARE/CAN BE VALID & TRUE AT THE SAME TIME!!!)
- "Big 3" Questions
  - Where did the universe come from?
  - Where did life come from?
  - Where did our moral understanding come from?

Ch. 1 — What Can We Learn about God from Nature?

- General Revelation: God's "Word" in Nature
  - Psalm 19
  - Romans 1:18-20
- What it Reveals
  - Universe had a beginning
    - Universe-causer = **super**natural (beyond nature)
      - Spaceless, timeless, immaterial, and uncaused
  - Life's complexity & "Goldilocks" effect
  - Innate (natural) moral knowledge
- People Disagree over **Evidence**
  - Evidence requires human interpretation
  - W/ humans, there will always be multiple POSSIBLE explanations
    - Possible VS. Probable/Most Likely
- Mind your Presuppositions (assumptions, preconceived ideas at the beginning of investigation)!!!
- Best explanations are often debatable & rarely certain (measuring one's confidence)

Conversation Guide

Open the Conversation (convo-in-the-car approach)

- "Imagine that you grew up without hearing anything that's in the Bible. What, if anything, do you think you would be able to know about God from looking at the world around you?"

Advance the Conversation (dinner table or bedtime devotion moment)

- "Read Psalm 19:1-2, Romans 1:18-20, Romans 2:14-16. What does each passage say the natural world can tell us about God?"

- "Why do you think evidence for God's existence outside the Bible and our personal experiences is important—for both Christians and nonbelievers?"

Apply the Conversation (focus moment)

- Based on what you learned in this chapter, when someone says there's "no evidence" for God (or anything else), what questions could you ask to clarify what that person means?

  - *COMLUMBO TACTICS:*

  - *What do you mean by that?*

  - *How did you come to that conclusion?*