

Talk About It

Small Group Discussion Guide

I Have Questions

Parenting

September 28-October 1, 2023

Start Talking

What is your idea of a great vacation? Do you have a favorite—or amusingly least favorite—vacation memory?

Main Idea

We are in Week 4 of the teaching series “I Have Questions”. Cypress asked 10,000 people what questions weighed on them. We have discussed Anxiety & Mental Health, End Times & Spiritual Warfare, and Marriage. This week, we will be taking a look at Parenting. Parenting is perhaps one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding things we can do in life. Is there a right way? A wrong way? What if I’m not perfect? What if my kids aren’t perfect? How can I become the parent God wants me to be? Rest assured that there are no perfect parents or perfect kids! In fact, God was the perfect parent for Adam & Eve and yet they found a way to disobey and experience the consequences. So, let’s take “being perfect” completely off the table! Every parent is unique, every child is unique, every family is unique, and every stage of life is unique. Let’s dive in together to discuss the biblical principles and promises that can shape us as we model for our children what it is like to know and serve the Lord!

Personalize It

1. What is the goal of parenting?
2. What kind of household did you grow up in? Were there ways your parents parented you that you liked? Disliked? How do you see that affecting how you parent today?
3. Rules, boundaries, and consequences (“RBC”) need to begin when children are young. Why is this so important to teach? Why is this so hard to teach?
4. Review the “timeline” that was presented (see below)—Ages 0-5 providing “protection & discipline,” Ages 6-12 training in “character & values,” Ages 13-18 coaching “privilege & responsibility,” Ages 19+ “friendship with boundaries.” What are some ways to intentionally parent the unique challenges of each season?
5. Is there a “parenting” opportunity for those who don’t have children (or “grandparenting” for those who are older)? How might God use you for others?

Let's Do It! Commit to a step and live it out this week!

1. Get to know your kids. Create an opportunity this week to spend some one-on-one time over ice cream or a bike ride or a movie night. Ask what they struggle with and share what you struggle with. Invite them to pray with you for each other and let them know how much you really do love them—just as God loves you—no matter what!
2. Pray for your children regularly—by name and by circumstance—and ask God to do in them what only He can do and to equip you as the parent to do what He has called you to do, and

for wisdom to know the difference. Do you already do this? If so, share some ideas with others about how you started and how you maintain this. If you don't do it, what can you set in place to start doing it?

3. Personalize scripture when you read it. When God speaks of His principles, they are for all of His followers. Try reading scripture with your name in it and write down what He is saying to you. Take time now to reread Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and insert your name as you read it. Talk with your group about what each truth means to you.
4. What values do you want for your kids that you need to start modeling in front of them?
5. Equip yourself. Download the Cypress app and explore the resources on the links in the Teaching Notes for conversation starters on sexuality, temperament, phone agreements, and more.

Let's Pray

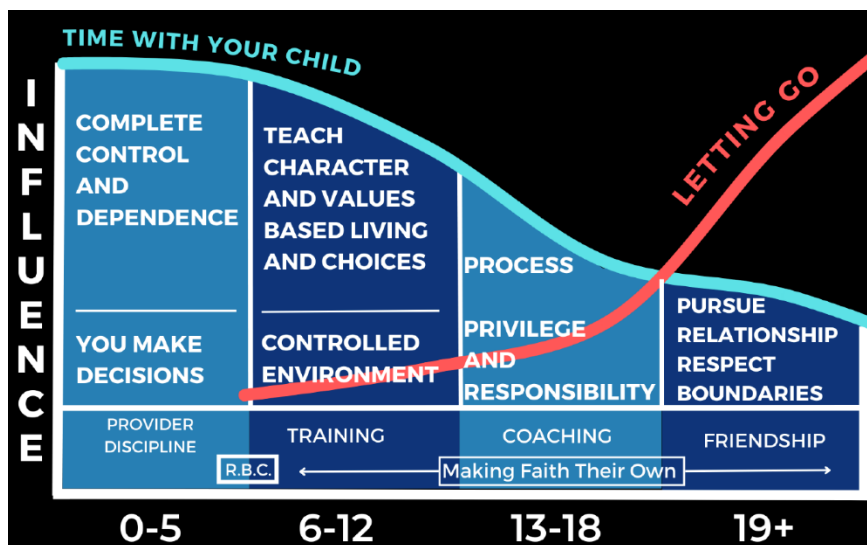
Lord, parenting is hard work! There are so many days when I don't feel equipped or qualified—or just have the strength to do it, let alone do it Your way. And then so often I feel guilty because I think I'm messing it up and failing my kids and failing You. Father, help me recognize those and other lies and not let them get any airplay in my mind. You did not call me to be a perfect parent! You ARE the perfect parent and yet Your kids run their own ways sometimes, too. So, help me remember that I don't have to be perfect, and help me keep seeking You, praying in all things, trusting You with the things that are beyond my control, and coloring them with love every day the best way this "broken crayon" can. Thank you for being the perfect I can run to with anything, anytime. I love You and thank You for loving me no matter what. In Jesus' name, Amen.

App Notes & Key Scriptures

Disclaimer.... There is no such thing as a perfect parent, there is no such thing as the perfect child...

Having said that, there are some Biblical principles and promises that certainly can increase the likelihood of success in what could be one of the hardest but also most important jobs you will ever take on... raising a child and preparing them for life.

Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.
NLT Proverbs 22:6



A Call for Wholehearted Commitment

“These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. “Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

NLT Deuteronomy 6:1–9

Key Principles...

1. What’s modeled is ingrained more than what’s taught

If you want it to be important to your kids, be sure it is visibly important in you as well...

2. Discipline and instruction in love is love

Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.

NLT Proverbs 13:24

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

NLT Ephesians 6:4

Problems when it comes to discipline...

- No clear boundaries
- No consistent consequences

...

We want to rescue our kids from the pain of discipline or consequences and often we are stifling their growth and development by doing so...

3. You are training to send

Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”

NLT John 20:19–21

4. Keep growing yourself as a parent and stay connected to Christ and your people

Equip yourself....

Resources online...

Holy Sexuality Project / Understanding your child's Temperament / chore guide / parent child cell phone agreements / conversation starters and a whole lot more...

<https://cypresschurch.tv/recommended-curriculum>

<https://cypresschurch.tv/kids/family-resources>

<https://cypresschurch.tv/extra-family-resources>

<https://cypresschurch.tv/students/parent-resources>

5. Be involved in their life and always point them to Jesus