

## Conversations You Have to Have With Your Kids

We've been talking the last few weeks about Crucial Conversations — about how we have conversations (Are our conversations filled with grace? Seasoned with salt?) and who we have conversations with.

And one of the “who's” is our kids.

So when we were planning ahead for this series, Pastor Jack had a conversation with me, and here's how it went:

“Hey Rachel, can you preach this sermon on Conversations You Have to Have With Your Kids?”

And I said, “Yeah”

And it makes sense, right? That the Kids & Youth Pastor would be the one to talk about conversations you have to have with your kids.

Plus, I do have some qualifications:

- I have a degree in child development
- I worked with preschoolers for 15 years before being called into ministry
- I have 4 kids of my own that I have conversations with all the time.

A lot of you already know my kids, but if you don't here's a picture.

**\*Show picture**

Aren't they sweet? Ok, maybe I just wanted to show you all a picture of my kids.

But these qualifications are not why I'm preaching today.

And it's not just because I have a passion for serving with kids.

It's because God wants our kids to hear His truth and understand the depth of His love for them.

## **PRAY**

A couple of weeks ago Pastor Jack had us look at some verses, and one of them was:

**Colossians 3:20**

**Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.**

Parents love this verse. We love to read this one to our kids.

Did you know that you can buy wall art of this verse to hang up in your house?

Look at this, I found this on Amazon.

**\*Show picture**

Unfortunately, as we heard a few weeks ago, that verse wasn't written for parents to hold over their kids heads.

It was written for children.

It was a reminder to kids that their life will be better if they listen to the wisdom of their parents.

Of course, that doesn't mean we don't continually try to get our kids to listen to us.

The issue I see with this whole idea of kids listening to parents is that

Too often parents aren't saying anything worth listening to.

We work so hard to maintain a relationship with our kids.

We hug them.

We kiss them.  
We drive them to soccer games.  
We pick them up from school.  
We buy them Starbucks.  
We will do anything for our kids.

We sacrifice for them, all in the hopes of maintaining that influence on their life

and then when we've got them in a place where they will listen, these are the messages we tell them:

- Don't talk with your mouth full
- Don't sit too close to the tv (or iPad or phone or Nintendo)
- Don't make that face . . . It might get stuck that way

It is important that our kids listen to us.

But perhaps even more important is that we actually have something to say to our kids,

Something that will build them up,  
develop their character,  
and get them ready for life.

So today we are going to talk about 4 conversations you have to have with your kids.

Four conversations that will protect them as they grow up.

Four conversations that will help build them into who God wants them to be.

I know there are some of you here that don't have kids. Or maybe your kids are already grown.

Don't discount these conversations because these messages are not just something that every kid needs to hear.

They are messages that every person needs to hear.

The first message that every kid needs to hear and every person in this room needs to hear is.

**\*1) I accept you for who you are**

Developmentally, this is the first message anyone needs to hear from their parents.

I accept you.

I love you.

I'm so glad you are here.

That is a message that God wants all of us to hear.

Let's turn to the Bible and look at Psalm 139:

**Psalm 139:13-16**

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

This is a message God wants all of us to hear.

I know you. I created you and you are wonderfully made.

Your body. Your personality. Your strengths. Even your weaknesses.

**You were created by God just the way you are and you are usable by God just the way you are.**

That is a truth that we need in the depths of our soul.

That's a message we need to be giving our kids and our spouse and our friends on a regular basis.

That they are worthy of love and affection just as they are.

**\*Show video clip**

Why do we need to be reminded of that? Of the idea of our worthiness?

Because we don't get it.

I'm going to read you this quote:

"The greatest challenge for most of us is believing that we are worthy now; right this minute. Worthiness doesn't have prerequisites. So many of us have knowingly created, unknowingly allowed, and been handed down a long list of worthiness prerequisites:"

"I'll be worthy when I lose twenty pounds.

I'll be worthy if I can get pregnant.

I'll be worthy if I get/stay sober.

I'll be worthy if everyone thinks I'm a good parent.

I'll be worthy when I can make a living selling my art.

I'll be worthy if I can hold my marriage together.

I'll be worthy when I make partner.

I'll be worthy when my parents finally approve.

I'll be worthy if he calls back and asks me out.

I'll be worthy when I can do it all and look like I'm not even trying.

Here's what is truly at the heart of Wholeheartedness: Worthy now. Not if. Not when. We are worthy of love and belonging now. Right this minute. As is.

In addition to letting go of the ifs and whens,”

Let's expand on that and talk about what those worthiness prerequisites look like to kids:

Worthy if I do well in school  
Worthy if my art is chosen for the fair  
Worthy if I am the best on my softball team  
Worthy if I get into that college  
Worthy if I am part of that crowd  
Worthy if I'm asked to prom  
Worthy if I'm chosen for the lead in the play

Somehow in our culture kids get this idea that they have to be good at everything.

Good in math and good in music and good in athletics, and good in science, and good at art.  
It's exhausting.

That is the message kids are getting in our culture and in our schools.

They are desperate for a different voice.

They need us to say you are valuable. You are worthy now. Just as you are.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

I accept you for who you are.

There is also another conversation, and that's that

## **\*2) It's not all about you**

We talked before about how we will do anything for our kids.

We want the best for them, right?

We research the best schools for their education,  
the best pediatrician in town,  
the best little league to sign up for,  
the best ballet studio,  
the best places to camp or go on vacation.

We want them grow up and follow their dreams.

Get into a great college and get job that pays well so they turn around and do the same thing for their own kids.

Seems like a pretty good goal, only one problem. It's not likely to make them happy.

And maybe you understand that from your own experience.

Let me read you another quote,

“Because there is always someone who has more than we have, the constant shuffle becomes a source of pressure that leads not to happiness but to envy, anxiety and stress.”

Would you agree with that statement?

If our goal for our kids is simply get an education, get a job, take care of yourself,

all we will succeed at doing  
is creating hard working, high achieving, selfish people who don't enjoy life.

Yes, I want my children to do well and get good grades and have a great career,

but when the choices we make in our lives leave us no time, energy, or incentive

to focus on anyone but ourselves there is a problem.

**This is not the way God measures success in our lives.**

Let's look at Matthew 23.

**Matthew 23:11-12**

**The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.**

If you want to be great. . . Serve others.

If you want to be happy. . . Serve others.

If you want to find joy. . . Serve others.

It's not all about you. It's about making a difference in the lives of others.

And that's why it's one of our core values here at Covenant Grove.

Impact – making a difference.

What's really awesome is how many of the families and kids here that are already doing this!

**Here is a list of just some of the ways the kids have served others in the last year:**

- Packing meals for hungry kids during Fight Hunger
- Making Christmas Cards and caroling at a Retirement Home
- Building a garden at a local elementary school
- Serving meals to the homeless at the Modesto Gospel Mission
- Collecting art supplies to donate to the Children's Crisis Center
- Building a home for a family in Mexico

These kids are learning that, **it's not all about you.**



And not just learning this lesson, but finding joy in doing so.

This is the time to challenge your child (or maybe even yourself) to get outside of themselves.

So have the conversation that it's not all about you, and find a way to serve.

And if you need ideas, come talk to me . . .

Okay, next conversation.

### **\*3) Make wise decisions with your sexuality**

You knew this one was coming.

Our kids will learn plenty about sex from culture.

It's up to us to get to them before culture does

Because I can guarantee that it won't be the kind of information we want them to be learning.

I know this is a scary subject, and some of you don't know where to start, so let me make this as easy as possible.

### **\*The Sex Talk in three steps**

#### **\*1. Share with your kids early and often about sex starting between ages 8 and 10.**

I know that sounds young, but remember, you want to be the first to tell your kid.

You don't want them to hear it from a classmate or a movie or anything else. You want to get to them.

I was introduced to pornography when I was only 11 years old. And that was from a flyer that was on the ground in a park – and now kids have access to the internet on their phones.

The enemy wants to corrupt us and he starts early. So talk to your kids first.

Also, don't just do a one and done approach.

A lot of parents have the big sex talk with their kids and then don't bring it up again. That doesn't work.

Can you imagine doing this in other areas of parenting?

"Yeah, I just had the big 'Clean Your Room' talk with Cody. I won't have to ask him to clean his room again."

"I just had the big 'Brush Your Teeth' talk with Sadie." We'll never to have worry about cavities.

If we want our kids to make good purity choices, this has to be a regular part of our conversation.

## **\*2. Give them the basics on how things work.**

Tell it to them straight. Talk about body parts and how they work.

This is a story straight from Jack, about his wife's conversation with one of their kids about sex. She detailed how it worked and how sex leads to babies to which their child said, "You mean you did that three times?" To which his wife said, "Well, we've done it more than three times." Then their child said, "Have you done it recently?"

## **\*3. Give them God's gold standard on sexuality.**

- Your body is custom designed by God (Psalm 139:13-15)
- Your body isn't your own, it's God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)
- Keep the temple pure and clean (2 Timothy 2:22)

- Be prepared to be challenged for taking a stand for purity (I Peter 4:1-5)
- God's way is a way of blessings and no regrets (Ephesians 5:25-33)

This conversation is about protecting our kids.

Don't be scared to have it. Help them understand how to make these wise decisions with their sexuality.

Okay, last conversation.

#### **\*4) Put God at the center of your life**

This can be another scary topic for parents because they might think they have to be Bible experts and lead family devotions and know how to pray with all the right words.

You don't need to be an expert in any these things.

God gives us the wisdom, the power, and the words to guide us.

Let's go back to the Bible to see what He says.

#### **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**

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 the commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are 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.

Putting God at the center is not about your knowledge and expertise.

It's about letting God into your regular conversations.

- Talk about Him on the way home from church.

- Read about Him as you put your kids to bed.
- Talk about Him at the dinner table.
- Talk about what God is doing in your life.

This a conversation that needs to be on going, in every thing that you do.

Because if you are talking about all of the ways that God is at the center of YOUR LIFE, then you are helping your kids understand how to put God at the center of THEIR LIVES.

And that is the ultimate goal of all of these conversations – to help your kids and yourselves to know and follow God.

**PRAY**