

THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

Common Ground: How to Ask Your Kids Better Questions

By Will King

In order to connect with our kids, we need to be sure we're asking great questions. It's easy for us to get frustrated when we communicate with our kids, because they give us one-word answers or just grunt. One of the worst questions we can ask our kids is, "How was your day?" This is a weak question, for a few reasons.

First, it's way too easy for them to dismiss the question by simply saying "fine". That's the typical answer. Occasionally, we might get more if something notable happened at school or church. However, if we don't take a genuine interest in their answer, they are likely to revert back to "fine".

Second, when we ask the "How was your day?" question it can seem hollow. Do you really want to know how their day was or are you simply asking because it's part of your routine? I have fallen into this trap many times and have to fight against it.

I would ask my kids as we sat down for dinner, "How was your day?", because I was hungry and ready to eat,

not because I was looking for stimulating conversation. I just wanted to stimulate my stomach. Thankfully (through great experience!), I have learned some better techniques! I have learned to ask better questions. You can not only learn to communicate better with your kids, you can learn to be a godly dad.

Numbers can help.

For example, instead of saying "How was your day?", you might say, "Tell me the top three things that happened today." Or you could say, "Tell me five fun things you did today." These types of questions and statements trigger a different part of your children's brains. Numbers questions require thought. Your kids need to think about their day and process their answer.

Be prepared. As they answer these questions, if you're actively listening, you can always ask solid follow-up questions. This shows you are paying attention and invested in them. How about another technique I've picked up over the years.

Play the extremes.

You can ask, "What was the best and worst thing you saw today?" It doesn't have to be things they did directly. It could be the best and worst thing they

ate that day or game they played or conversation they had. When you play the extremes, you get the bonus of hearing what they value.

I was talking with my oldest daughter about the best thing she did that day, and her response was “recess and lunch.” She’s my girl! I followed that up with, “What was the worst thing you did today?” She answered (again affirming her lineage) by saying, “Math.” I was able to follow-up both of these responses and learn that at recess there had been a great new game invented which made no sense to me. She tried thoroughly (in vain) to explain the rules to me.

I also learned she did not enjoy math class, because they started fractions. Seriously, if you enjoy math, especially fractions, God has definitely wired you special. Also, you can chase the “top three best or worst” questions with a simple follow-up like, “Why was that on your list?” It gets them to elaborate, and as they do, you learn a lot about what they value (or don’t). You do this and you’ll connect with your child like never before.

Ask scenario questions.

I sometimes do this with arbitrary things that have nothing to do with how their day went. I might pose a scenario like, “If you could only eat three foods for the rest of your life, what would they be and why?” Or I might say, “If you were a furry woodland creature what would you be and why?”

I sometimes get memory-making answers from my kids. These types of questions almost always start longer conversations. It gets them to think outside the box, which usually leads to them asking me similar questions or other questions that are not even remotely related to what we were talking about. Just because we got a conversation rolling, they felt the

freedom to ask something that maybe they had been pondering a while.

I was talking with my oldest son one day and I asked him if he could have any super power, what it would be. We both talked about what our favorite super powers were and discussed why we chose those specific ones. We both changed our answers about ten times during the conversation and added multiple powers.

When our kids ask us deep questions

This led to him asking me some pretty deep questions about who God is and how powerful He is. We had a great conversation that blew his mind about God being in all places at all times. Talk about a super power! Connecting with your child like never before means asking good questions that can help our kids open up about what’s going on in their world.

It tells them we care about them and we want to dive into what they’re experiencing. It tells them we understand them, or at least, we’re trying to. Ask questions that will lead to conversations they will remember for the rest of their lives. Be consistent. This is not a one-time deal.

The Left's Incoherent Idea of "Justice"

Kyle McIver

Justice is a hot topic as of late. Social justice and racial justice are at the forefront of our cultural conversation, and not without good reason. Beyond these more well-known forms of justice, Democratic politicians are lobbying for economic, environmental, and even reproductive justice — varieties that weren't part of our vocabulary until recent years. I think we all agree that justice is a worthy pursuit, but I can't help but be perplexed by the way the word is being used.

To begin with, justice has been reduced to a tag-line, an add-on to somebody's pet cause. But the pursuit of justice requires much more substance. You see, there's an underlying assumption when we talk about justice. If you're pursuing justice, then you've identified an injustice. And if you've identified an injustice — a wrong that needs to be put right — then you're operating with a standard of morality.

Yet the narratives around justice are being sustained by those who balk at the idea of absolute truth. Many who are driving conversations around justice right now identify with the Democratic Party or are politically on the left. Their justice-seeking orients around race, minimum wage, global warming, abortion, and tax rates. But the left seems unaware that their version of justice is so warped that they've forfeited the very idea itself. The same people advocating for these forms of justice are also supporting the destruction of personal property, dismantling of the nuclear family, and defunding of the police. They say they want justice and peace while at the same time working to destroy its very foundations.

The root of the problem is that the worldview driving their pursuit of justice can't sustain a coherent, moral standard. Consider the following assertions made by these justice-seekers:

- You can't tell a woman it is wrong to kill the child in her womb, but you can tell parents what is and isn't acceptable to teach their children in public schools.
- You can't hold gender as binary and exclude a biological male from competing in women's sports, but you can celebrate a woman being chosen to run as Vice President, and must decry a supposed (binary!) gender wage gap.
- You can't be guilty of racism if you're

black, but you can know that any white officer who shoots a black man is guilty before even considering the evidence.

- You can demonize people or classes based on their ethnicity and income, while simultaneously elevating others by the same, subjective standard.
- You can't expect everybody to work, but you can raise tax rates and take money from those who have worked very hard to become successful.

Such brazen contradictions as the left is propping up simply can't remain upright. A worldview divided cannot stand. Inevitably, under the weight of its own hypocrisy, the whole structure is going to collapse.

In the absence real truth and objective morality, tag-line forms of justice serve political agendas instead of real people. Vaguely defined problems delivered with charisma yet lacking clear solutions may win followers for a time, but they leave real people devastated in their wake. Hollow definitions of justice not only fall short, they also muddy the meaning of the word, making it that much more difficult to have productive conversations about actual justice.

Real justice is coherent and rational, not contradictory and partial. It promotes productivity and flourishing, not looting and rioting. I honestly believe that many of the people pursuing these lines of justice sincerely want to do good. But until they come to terms with their self-defeating worldview, they can't possibly achieve anything resembling genuine justice.

Social Justice ≠ Biblical Justice

(See Exodus 23:2; Deuteronomy 16:19-20; Isaiah 30:18; 61:8; Romans 2:11)

See Also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFNOP2IqwoY>

FUNNIES

If you want to know what an orator is, I'll explain: If you meet a man and ask him how much is 2 and 2 and he says 4—he is not an orator. But if you ask another man the same question and he says, “When in the course of human events it becomes necessary to take the second numeral and superimpose it upon the figure two, then I say unto you and I say it without fear of successful contradiction, that the congruential results amount to four.” —Brother that’s an orator.

Fred decided to sell his house and realized that before he could sell it, he'd have to clean out his garage. Everybody tried to get him to throw this away and that away, but Fred needed it all; it was too good to throw away. So he rented a mini-warehouse and moved all the stuff from the garage into it. Soon after burglars broke into it. “What really hurt,” Fred said, “was that they didn't even take anything.”

A boatman ran a ferry across a mountain stream full of whirlpools and rapids. During a crossing in which the frail craft was tossed back and forth by the swirling waters, a timid lady in the boat asked whether any passenger ever were lost in

the river.

“Never,” the boatman reassured her, “We always find them again the next day.”

A missionary in Brazil was tempted to swim in the Parani River when the temperatures reached 120 degrees, but he was afraid of the piranhas.

His neighbors assured him, though that only while swimming in schools do piranhas bite people, which they never did in that part of the river. So each afternoon for the rest of the summer the missionary enjoyed cooling off in the river.

Months later, the missionary heard reports that a local fisherman had fallen out of his boat and had not been found. Alarmed, the missionary asked his neighbors if perhaps the man had been eaten by piranhas.

“On no,” came the reply. “Only while swimming in schools do piranhas bite people, and they never swim in schools around here.”

“But why not around here?” the missionary asked?

“Oh,” his neighbors casually replied, “they never swim in schools where there are alligators.”

A patient complained to his doctor, “I've been to three other doctors and they don't agree with your diagnoses.”

The doctor said, “Wait till the autopsy. They'll see I'm right.”