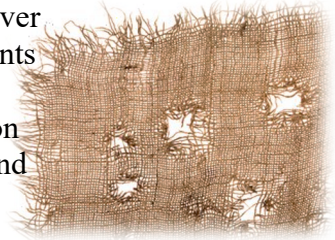


Questions About God And Life

Asked by children and their parents or grandparents

Steve Alley

Today's parents or grandparents are faced with a more challenging world than ever before. The "moral fiber" of today's world is fraying and filled with holes. Even if parents or grandparents create a strong, faith-based home, their children are all exposed to very confusing messages that come through friends, teachers, social media, movies, television programs, and news stories. The world's new challenges cause parents, grandparents, and children to ask deep questions about life, God, and choices. Today's Church must work hard at giving biblically-based answers to these tough questions.



The children's ministry (CM) should work together with the adult Bible studies, adult Sunday School classes, and any family ministry program that exists in the local church to provide parents and grandparents help in dealing with the serious questions that they and their children may have. Unfortunately, in the past, some churches have been hesitant to address some of these issues because they were too "political," or because the church believed that they shouldn't be involved in anything other than "teaching the Word." Because of this hesitancy, the world has been the only voice that is heard about many of these "hot topics." Today's Church needs to be more vocal and clearer about what God teaches regarding these "hot topics." Today's children need to hear God's voice FIRST before they hear the world's views. Here are some questions that children and parents/grandparents are asking about God and life today:

By Children About Choices

1. How do I know what is "right" and "wrong"?

Today's world has dismissed God and His biblical standards. Children are left to decide what is "right" and "wrong" based on their own feelings, and what they hear from others. Bringing them back to a firm foundation of biblical standards is critically important!

2. How do I know what is a "good" TV show, game, movie, or website, and a "bad" one?

Every parent's dream is to teach their child discernment. This is God's "dream" for us as well. The discernment of what is "good" or "bad" is based upon how the child views "right" and "wrong." If a child only bases his/her discernment on what feels good or what seems right, he/she is going to be "like a boat tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14) Connecting children to the "solid rock" of Jesus is critical.

3. What do I do when I encounter a "bad" TV show, game, movie, or website?

If a child discerns that something is "bad," teaching him/her to turn away is a vital lesson. This is a challenge for adults, youth, and children alike. The world offers things that are "pleasing to the eyes," and that draw us in for more. Once we are "hooked" by the enticing appearance, it is very difficult to turn away. Psalm 119: 9-11 is a great answer to this question: "...how can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your Word..." The more we expose children to God's Word, the better they will be at turning away from the "bad" things in life.

4. How do I handle feeling “unpopular” when I don’t talk or act like others?
Feeling “popular” is something that every person, no matter what age, desires. Peer pressure makes children want to “fit in” and possibly compromise their values. Helping children value “honoring God” more than they value “popularity” is a great goal. Exposing them to significant people, who can share their personal testimonies, can inspire children to take a stand for God among their peers. Jesus calls them “blessed” when they become unpopular for God. (Matthew 5:10-12)

5. How can I feel good about who I am?
This question has always challenged children; but, in today’s world, they are encouraged to question everything, even their gender. It is important for those who are significant in the child’s life to downplay stereotypical gender characteristics, and to focus on the individual child’s interests, talents and abilities. Some may say that boys should play football instead of enjoy ballet dancing. Those same people may tell girls that they should be more interested in dolls than in competitive sports or auto mechanics. Focusing on the child’s identity in the eyes of God will reduce the confusion regarding their birth gender. Remind them that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made...” (Psalm 139)

6. What is wrong with homosexuality?
Children today are conditioned to view homosexuality as “normal.” Society will tell the children that there is nothing wrong with being homosexual, or transgender. Children need to understand God’s perspective regarding the LGBTQ issue. God loves everyone, but He clearly says that homosexuality is a sin. Children need to be challenged to love those who are drawn to the LGBTQ community, without judgement. God is the one who judges right from wrong; our “job” is to love others, regardless of their lifestyle. We need to help children understand that loving someone doesn’t necessarily mean that we endorse their choices.

7. What is wrong with sex before marriage?
Today’s world will tell children that sex is a beautiful thing, which it is, and it should be enjoyed by all. The world will mock waiting until marriage. The world will call that perspective “old fashioned” or “prudish.” Children need to be encouraged to understand God’s perspectives as they are revealed in the Bible. God clearly says that sex should happen after marriage. (Hebrews 13: 1-25)

8. How do I know whether a certain clothing or fashion trend is ok?
This decision, like every other choice in life, must be based on God’s perspective; not on the world’s. Today’s world will tell children that every fashion is “good.” The “old fashioned” concept of “modesty” must be taught from an early age. Being “cute” or “pretty” doesn’t need to be sacrificed for modesty. The question both boys and girls need to ask regarding their clothing choice is, “What am I communicating by wearing this?” If the clothing style or fashion exposes a significant amount of skin, then it might lean further to “sexy” than “modest.” Each family will make its own standards. Hopefully, those standards are based on scriptural concepts. (1 Peter 3: 3, 4)

By Parents About Their Child’s Faith

1. How can I make sure my child doesn’t grow up like me?

This question is very deep! Within the question, there is both a confession and a cry for help. The question implies that the parent or grandparent recognizes the value of going to church and obeying God's standards. Many parents/grandparents bring their children to the CM out of guilt. This shouldn't change how you treat the children or how you treat the parents/grandparents. Being very clear about God's standards while you interact with the children should be one of your basic goals in the CM. Encourage the parent/grandparent by telling them that they are doing the right thing, and that their child "sees" their effort to draw near to God. Remind them that Deuteronomy 6:4-9 states clearly that God wants them to commit themselves to God first, before they can influence their child for God.

2. How can I teach my child about God when I don't understand Him myself?
This is a great question that opens the door to spiritual encouragement. Compliment the parent/grandparent and assure him/her that nobody truly understands God. As kkkkkk
3. How can I make sure I don't force my child to believe before he/she is ready?
4. How can I make sure to give my child the freedom to make his/her own decisions about God?
5. I've made some mistakes about God myself, how can I "undo" those with my child?
6. How can I help my child feel good about who he/she is?
7. What do I teach my child about homosexuality?
8. What do I teach my child about sex?
9. How can I help my child grow up to be able to choose between "right" and "wrong"?

There are many "avenues" through which helpful answers to these question can be given. Giving these answers may seem complicated or uncomfortable at first, but the local church must be brave enough to take a stand for God on the issues and challenges that we all face. We must also empower the parents or grandparents to give their children answers based on biblical principles. The "avenues" through which answers might be given are:

- **Sunday & Midweek Sermons**
- **Adult Sunday School Classes**
- **Adult Midweek Bible Studies**
- **CM Sunday & Midweek Classes**
- **Parent/Grandparent Seminars**
- **Family Programs**
- **Youth Ministry Programs**
- **Marriage Seminars & Retreats**
- **Men's Ministry Programs**
- **Women's Ministry Programs**
- **Daddy / Daughter Events**
- **"Mommy And Me" Events**

Each church will have its own "style" and "message" to give. This is understandable. It is critically Important that parents, grandparents, children, and youth hear what God says about the "hot topics"! It would be great for the children to hear what God says before they hear what the world says! This is much like how bank employees are trained to recognize counterfeit bills. The employees are exposed to the feel and look of legitimate currency to such a degree that when they encounter a counterfeit bill, they

immediately know the difference. If our children are repeatedly and consistently exposed to what God says about today's "hot topics," they will immediately recognize a "counterfeit" belief when they hear it in school, online, in the media, or from their friends.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22: 6