

ON THE OTHER SIDE

INTRODUCTION

If you're a parent, you may wonder: *What's it like to be on the other side of my kids?* Our Student Ministry Director shares what he sees in students and how both our parenting strategies and overall relational health directly impacts them. Even if you're not a parent, these five things can help you have a positive impact on the next generation.

PART 5

VIDEO NOTES

There is a very real possibility that the five things Jordan shares, parents already know. But effective parenting isn't about knowing these, but believing and acting on them, too, even if they make us uncomfortable or require us to do some hard work on ourselves. Here are five things that can positively impact your relationship with your child if you truly believe them:

- 1. Your words and your actions matter.** Nobody's words hold the weight yours do. In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us to not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only say what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. The reason Paul explains the opposite of unwholesome talk is to emphasize that it's the heart of your language that really matters – your words will either build them up or tear them down. But even more than your words, your actions truly communicate what you value and how you feel.
- 2. Seek to understand instead of assuming you understand.** The average high school student today, has the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the 1950s. This generation of students was the most anxious generation ever recorded, and that was before the events of the last three months. It can be easy to dismiss their stress if you're comparing it to your stress. Instead, look at life through their eyes and not simply your own. Part of our responsibility as parents is not to look down on our kids

simply because their young so that they will understand that they have the ability to be an example for others.

- 3. Loving one another matters.** How your kids see you engage with, communicate with, talk about, respect, and love your spouse will impact them for the rest of their life. If you're wondering what you can do to be a better parent, taking a hard look at your marriage may be incredibly beneficial. Or, if you're divorced, it might look like extending forgiveness and kindness to your child's other parent. It may be one of the greatest gifts that you can give your child.
- 4. Your love for your child isn't predicated on their performance.** Praising them for their performance isn't wrong or bad, but it can't be the only thing for which you praise them. Focusing on who they are and not solely for what they do also makes it easier to come to you when they've messed up. They know whether they succeed or fail, make a good choice or a bad one, the love you have for them won't change.
- 5. They need you just as much now as they did when they were little.** Aspects of your character will either make it easier or more challenging for your child to see aspects of God's character. And, as they age, they don't need you to dress and feed them, but they do need to discover your heart and for you to discover theirs.

*"I would say listen to your parents. I think the older you get and the more mistakes you make, the more you realize how much your **parents really do care** about you and how they really do understand you. I wish I would **have listened to them earlier** but now I'm excited to **be their friend** and it's really comforting to know that I have them in my life for what's next." – a senior in response to asking what advice he'd pass on to the next class*

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. What stood out to you the most from this conversation? Was there anything challenging, encouraging, or that you disagreed with?
2. What words, or lack thereof, shaped your childhood?
3. When you think of your children/the next generation, do you tend to think you know what it's like or are you curious about the world they face?

4. Our culture tends to prioritize kids above all else, sometimes at the expense of our other relationships. How do you feel about that? Has that impacted the way you parent or do life with your spouse/friends?
5. Why is it so easy to praise and criticize performance in our children/the next generation? What would it look like to emphasize *who they are* rather than *what they do*?
6. Did your parents lean in or disengage as you got older? Why do you think older seasons of life can be more challenging to continue investing in our children's lives?

THIS WEEK

Spend some time thinking about these five things and ask God which one you may need to internalize/believe so that you can continue to grow and develop the relationship you have with your children. Remember, it's never too late!

"Don't let anyone **look down** on you because you are **young**, but set an **example** for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

1 Timothy 4:12