

**Conversations: Listen More, Talk Less**  
Part 3 - Understanding Your Child  
Sunday, November 26, 2017  
Ted Cunningham

1. Ted reiterated today, healthy people are not threatened by listening to other people's opinions and perspectives. Why should Christians, of all people, not be so easily offended by the thoughts, views, opinions, and beliefs of others?

2. Are you a listener or a speaker in waiting (not really listening to empathize with your child or the one sharing, but already preparing your response), when it comes to conversations with others?

***Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*** Deuteronomy 6:4-7

3. "Family is where life makes up its mind." - Dr. Chuck Swindoll. What strikes fire within you about Dr. Swindoll's quote, inspired by Deuteronomy 6:4-7?

4. Ted shared about the importance of family conversations for understanding and influencing your child's heart. What important heart and life lessons impacted you the most from your family life, growing up years? Does someone have an example of a success story of how you listened to your child's heart and as a result gained greater influence in their lives?

5. Which of the following parent/child conversation killers do you identify with the most? Can you share a story which speaks to your identified conversation killer struggle?

**Parent/Child Conversation Killers**

Screaming, yelling and arguing

Solve the problem before they finish sharing

Turn everything into a life lesson

Remind them how it was when we were children

**Listening is the secret to future conversations.**

***20 In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" 21 tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Before our eyes the Lord sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. 23 But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. 24 The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.*** Deuteronomy 6:20-24

**Bee quiet**

***Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.*** Proverbs 17:28 Illus. Jack Herschend

“The fewer words a parent uses, the more authoritative a parent sounds. The fewer words a parent uses, the clearer the instruction.” - John Rosemond

6. As you are fighting for the heart of your child, how do you trust the Lord with your child’s heart as you move from control (rules, expectations for obedience, etc.) to influence (role-modeling, watching your life)?

Answer: If we want influence in our children’s lives, we must prepare for such future conversations by being good listeners now, seeking to understand their heart, and paying attention to secondary conversations. We must be ready to answer the questions of our children when they begin questioning why we believe and behave the way we do. *Use the following verses and commentary from Ted for stimulating conversation around question #6.*

Control <-----> Influence

**Bee understanding**

Fools find no pleasure in understanding, but delight in airing their own opinions. - Proverbs 18:2  
Three things amaze me, no, four things I’ll never understand—how an eagle flies so high in the sky, how a snake glides over a rock, how a ship navigates the ocean, why adolescents act the way they do. – Proverbs 30:18-19 (MSG)

**Mom: “What does IDK, LY, and TTYL mean?”**

**Son: “I don’t know, love you, talk to you later.”**

**Mom: “Okay, I’ll ask your sister.”**

If we want to keep the priority conversation going, we need to keep secondary conversations going.

**Video games**

**Phones**

**Curfews**

**Friends**

**Dating**

**School**

**Jobs**

7. Can you share an example of conducting a secondary conversation and listening to your child, avoiding shutting them down? Or, can you share an example of conducting a secondary conversation and not listening to your child, leading to their shutting down on you?

**Listening does not mean agreeing.**

8. Does anyone have a story of listening to your child, but then coming back and using, “Nevertheless...”? (demonstrating the third BEE, **Bee kind Kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healthy to the body.** Proverbs 16:24

**Obeying does not mean agreeing.**

9. What is the difference between obeying and honoring your parents?

Be on your child’s team, but be the coach, not a teammate.

Coaches can listen and understand without becoming teammates.