

## PARENT CONVERSATIONS

Answering a teen's hard questions

Pastor Michael Ewart shares a template for discussing serious topics with our teens.

**QUESTION:** Our family feels divided over the deportation debate. My teenage son (influenced by public school and media) thinks we're being "unChristian" for not opposing deportation. How do we have this conversation biblically?

**ANSWER:** Great question. And the fact that your teen wants to engage in moral issues is actually a win, even when it's uncomfortable.

Here's a framework I find helpful: Curiosity, Clarity, Comfort, and Connection.

- 1. Curiosity:** Resist the urge to immediately correct views you disagree with. Start by asking questions:
- "Can you tell me more about why you're asking?"
  - "How does this make you feel?"
  - "What are your friends saying? Do you agree?"

Your teen will feel heard rather than dismissed, and you'll actually understand where he's coming from.

- 2. Clarity:** Tell the truth, even when it's hard, inconvenient, or awkward. And the truth is what God says, not what society says.

On immigration, society tends to look at the issue in one of two ways:

- "Illegal immigrants broke the law. They have no rights. Remove them immediately, by any means necessary."
- "Illegal immigrants are victims. They're God's children who deserve unconditional protection, by any means necessary."

Both contain an element of truth worth exploring together. Neither is wholly accurate.

Scripture calls us to show compassion to the foreigner (Leviticus 19:33-34; Matthew 25:35). It also affirms the legitimacy of governing authorities and the rule of law (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14). These aren't contradictions; they are tensions we're called to hold together.

Help your teen see that dismissing compassion isn't Christian, but neither is dismissing justice. The harder, maturer path is holding both.

**3. Comfort:** Don't leave your child sitting in unsettling reality. Point him to God's promises—and ultimately to Jesus.

- He is God, and we are not. We don't have to solve every injustice ourselves. Leave that to him.
- He loves every person more than we can imagine—both those deported and those harmed by lawlessness. How do we know? The cross. Jesus died for all people, regardless of nationality, legal status, or political affiliation. That's how much God loves this broken world.
- He is the God of both justice and mercy. At the cross, we see both perfectly: justice, because sin's penalty was paid, and mercy, because Jesus paid it for us.

We can trust him, even when human systems are imperfect. The world's problems are real, but they're not bigger than the Savior who already gave everything to rescue it. That truth frees your teen from the burden of thinking he must fix everything himself.

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**4. Connection:** End by thanking your child for being willing to talk about hard things. Let him know you value his trust. Encourage him to keep bringing up difficult topics. The goal isn't to win an argument; it's continued connection to keep the relationship strong and the conversation going.

These conversations rarely wrap up neatly in one sitting. And that's okay! Stay patient. Stay curious. Keep pointing to Jesus. You're doing better than you think!



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