

Before You Ask "What Should I Do about My Kids?", Ask This!

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SUMMARY

The discussion centers on the importance of building a strong foundation in parenting, particularly through self-reflection and personal growth. The Connected Families framework emphasizes connecting with children through love and wisdom rather than control, and highlights the necessity of understanding one's own feelings and behaviors as a parent.

- The Connected Families framework was developed in the 1990s to help parents of struggling teenagers improve their relationships.*
- Parents often seek methods to control their children's behavior, but true growth comes from self-reflection and understanding one's own emotions.*
- A key question for parents is, "What's going on with me and my children?" rather than just focusing on what to do.*
- A reframed version of the Serenity Prayer emphasizes the importance of changing oneself rather than trying to change others.*
- Personal experiences reveal that rigidity and perfectionism can hinder effective parenting.*
- Embracing children as unique individuals and letting go of the need for control fosters a healthier family dynamic.*
- Practical parenting methods are more effective when grounded in a strong foundation of personal growth and understanding.*
- The journey of parenting involves continuous self-examination and growth, rather than seeking quick-fix solutions.*

we started working with parents in the early 1990s it was a group of parents of of struggling teenagers and of course struggling teenagers and their parents have a struggling relationship and these were parents who were coming for encouragement uh for some tools uh and really for some inspiration about this relationship with their kids and uh it was in those early days that we developed this thing we call now the connected families framework and we focused on connecting well with our kids

letting them know they're loved and being proactive to teach and train them up in what God created them for and to correct them in love uh through a lens of wisdom not a lens of control and um very quickly there were a group of parents that as we laid this framework out started learning and growing and being excited and they'd come week after week with stories of how their new approach was really effective with their kids and then there was this other group

of parents who was struggling um and they would they would come back and say I tried that and it didn't work um and it became clear that that there were really sort of two different Focus of these two different groups one of the groups was focusing on what should I do uh and they came looking for a new method to control or manage their kids' Behavior this other group well what to do was an important part of the formula

they were willing to Grapple with and wrestle with a deeper question which we think is the question that's at the essence of building a strong foundation and the question is what's going on what's going on with me what's going on with my children what am I thinking what am I feeling um how can I be a parent who's grown growing and recently we've heard a reframing of the Serenity Prayer which many of you might be familiar with

um and the reframing goes like this God grant me the serenity to accept the people I can't change the courage to change the one I can and the wisdom to know that person is me these were parents who were comfortable with this journey of changing themselves if you will um and that's what growing a strong Foundation is all about when I first started a parent three young children uh I found myself looking for that what should I do answer and it got me nowhere

fast and I found myself face down on the carpet crying out to God just pounding the carpet saying why did you make them like this they were very Lively and intense and why did you make me like this also very and intense I feel like I'm angry all the time and the Lord just gently over time just encouraged me and helped me to look at what was going on in my life which was a lot of rigidity

perfectionism I want things just my way and we'll call it being obedient children and so I had to look at all that yuck and it was a a a process of journaling of Prayer of looking in God's word of talking to Jim of just seeing other resources about what goes on in the heart of a parent and so uh over time I really began to let go of some of that need for selfish control and truly

embrace my children as miracles of god and teach myself to hold on to true faith-filled thoughts about them instead of my judgments this was a long process but through it all I really sensed God's purposes working in me and in our family to to bring Faith alive in the real messes of family life we talk a lot on this site about things you can do as a parent to be more effective but it it's all grounded in

this idea of being a parent who's growing a strong Foundation never perfect never fully arrived but always grappling with this question what's going on and then taking the to-dos that you learn and trying them but understanding we're not going to tell you the the magic pill for dealing with kids who don't put their socks away or won't eat the food you serve them we're going to give you some ideas some methods that we've seen other parents

use but really we found they're only effective when you're working on building a strong Foundation