

# Family Connection

*"Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates." Deut. 6:5-9—The Message Version*

## The Art of Talking With Your Family

It seems like such a simple thing, but sometimes talking to those who are closest to you can be hard—at least to talk about things of importance. Of course “how was your day” stuff is pretty easy, but when it comes to the issues of our hearts, sometimes we stumble as we try to step in. There must be a million reasons why heart-level communication is hard - it requires more energy, we are vulnerable, we don't take the time, or have much practice. But, whatever the reason might be for you, God want us to engage our spouse and our children at a heart level. The level where we have hopes and fears, where things excite and overwhelm us, where we really know and are known by each other. When we take time to listen to others it communicates that we really care about them and desire to be a part of the significant areas of their lives. Please consider taking some small steps toward connecting deeper with your family by spending time just simply talking. To some this is nothing of heroic proportions, but for others the thought of trying to connect in your home can be overwhelming. Wherever you find yourself, here are some ideas. Perhaps you can start by playing a game of “20 Questions”, not to integrate each other or put anyone on the spot, but simply to let them talk. Choose a topic and get to know what others think. If 20 seems like too many use the 10 questions in the box to the right. You can try asking one of the questions each night at dinner or before bed or in the car. Another idea is to start asking the open ended question “How is your heart?” Some days you will get a short answer, but other days a longer conversation may develop. Give it time, let trust build, and remember the goal is to get to the heart of those you live with - you may find that they are thinking about some really significant things that wouldn't normally come up in everyday conversation. It is amazing what God can do when we put James 1:19 into practice.

## "Ten Great Questions for Parents and Children"

by Jerry D. Jones taken from [www.navpress.com](http://www.navpress.com)

1. Make believe you are a spy. If your identity becomes known, you will be thrown into jail. How will you disguise yourself to keep your identity a secret?
2. Do people know you mostly as someone who talks or as someone who listens? What is the hardest part about doing the opposite?
3. If you could give just one gift—any gift at all, regardless of the cost to the person of your choice, what would this gift be and who would you give it to? If someone else were to give you any gift, what would you want him or her to give you?
4. What are three of your top God-given talents and abilities? What are you doing to develop these talents?
5. What three things cause you to feel stressed out at home? At school or work? How do you usually act when you feel this way? What do you do to get unstressed?
6. Imagine for a moment that you are like a baby bird in a nest. In what area of your life do you most need to be "pushed out of the nest" so you can learn how to "fly"?
7. What is your favorite story about something mischievous your parents did as children or teens? How does this story help you better understand your parents?
8. If our family were to write a book of humor, what would be some of the funny things people in our family have said or done that you would want to include in this book?
9. In some cultures, people are given a new name when they reach a certain age or milestone in life. If you were given a new name, what would you like it to be? Why?
10. Imagine you are skydiving and your parachute fails to open. On the way down you have three minutes to think about everything you will not get to do. What are five things that you will most regret not being able to do before you die?

## Recommended Resource: [Dangerous Journey](#) by John Bunyan

This excellent book is a beautifully illustrated and abridged version of [Pilgrim's Progress](#), one of the greatest books on the Christian life ever penned. Written by the great 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan Baptist as he languished in Bedford jail, it is the story of Christian, a man so burdened by the weight of his sin that he abandons the City of Destruction and sets off on a journey toward the Celestial City. He finds out early on that the only thing that can relieve him of the unbearable weight of sin is the cross. Along the way Christian is met with some friends, some enemies, and many dangers. Every page is filled with a wealth of biblical truth concerning conversion and the Christian life. The language in [Dangerous Journey](#) has not been modernized so be ready to explain some of the words to your children. I found that this actually worked to my advantage because it forced more discussion with my kids as we read. If you are looking for a way to teach your children about the Christian life, you will find [Dangerous Journey](#) thoroughly biblical, engaging both mind and heart. A true classic!

