

Discipling Our Kids in a Divided Age with J. J. Seid

Episode 132

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:51]:

Well, today, I have one of my very favorite people in the whole world, my own son, J. J. Seid, and he, is going to be talking to us about well, I'll let J. J. explain that, but he is pastor of leadership development at Frontline Church in Oklahoma City, and I'm delighted to have you.

J. J. Seid [00:01:14]:

Thanks for having me on, mom. This is really fun. I think the idea for this podcast started a few months ago when I was talking to you about how there are such great tools and resources for parents who want to disciple their kids in an increasingly divided age, where it seems like the questions are getting harder. Yes. Emotions are raw. Mhmm. And I think parents maybe more than any time in history feel really overwhelmed

With the kinds of questions that their kids are coming home with. You know, to give to give one example, our daughter is 13. Our oldest is 13. We have and then we have 3 boys that are 88 and and 5. But when she first entered into the student ministry at our church, sort of aged into the student ministry, she's immediately put in a small group with several other 6th grade girls who, are totally disoriented and confused about their gender identity, about their sexuality. You know? Girls that feel really welcome in our student ministry because there's a missionary heart to our student ministry, and I'm really grateful for our student pastor for creating that kind of space.

And then in these small groups, there's godly, mature women facilitating the conversation, so that there's an anchor point. But there's 6th grade girls who feel loved and welcomed. Some of them dropped off by parents who don't even attend our church. But their girls are asking to come to our to our student ministry.

And so my 6th grade daughter is already having to move towards love and listen to girls who would say that they're bisexual or that that they are wrestling with transgenderism.

And so as most parents have already realized, this isn't a conversation that we can kick the can down the road on. We're going to have to equip our kids and equip ourselves, and we're gonna have to do it at probably younger age than many of us currently parenting would have guessed 5 years ago, 10 years ago. And, this is something that the elders in our church, leaders above me that I respect and look up to, have realized we need to start having conversations about this. So within our leadership community, we spent the last several years praying and reading widely and asking, what are some of these forces that are deforming our people at a faster rate than we're seeking to form them? What are these sources of deformation that are sweeping our people off their feet? As one of our pastors has said, what used to maybe feel like a lazy river, now feels like a raging rapids.

And it's catching parents off guard, and a lot of us probably feel off balance as we're trying to parent in the midst of that. And it's sobering to realize that even when you're trying to engage your kids in conversations and you're trying to do family worship and you're trying to identify those gospel moments and step into them and have thoughtful conversations that their relationship to screens and media means that there are many more hours a week that a lot of our kids are being deformed than they are being formed on a Sunday morning or in student ministry or around a family meal or in an intentional gospel conversation with one of their parents. And a lot of parents are now realizing that they're playing catch up. And they thought that they were putting in more hours than the world, and they're starting to realize that the world is out breaking up. The world is putting in a lot more hours. As our founding pastor has said, you know, you could call this the 24/7 soft power of the enemy because it's sometimes very subtle, but it's constant.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:48]:

And it wears you down.

J. J. Seid [00:04:49]:

It wears your kids down in ways that you don't even realize. So I don't think we need to throw up our hands. I don't think we all need to move to the mountains. If you already live in the mountains, that's great, I'm jealous, but I don't think we need to flee society. I think there have been great pressures on Christ's Church from the beginning. It's revelatory that we're starting a verse by verse study through the book of 1st Corinthians in our in our church over the next 40 weeks. And as you look at Corinth, you know, here was a city that was basically the Las Vegas of its day.

And scholars tell us that calling someone a Corinthian was basically a shorthand way of saying that they were wilding out sexually. And so the church has always had to plan its flag in a culture that's confused about human personality, identity, what it means to be a human being made in the image of God, what our sexuality is for, what it's not for. These aren't new challenges, but they do feel like they've increased in ways that feel really overwhelming. So I could feel like I feel like I'm re starting to talk in circles a little bit. Let me be a little more specific. I'll give you one example. Knowing that my daughter was sort of starting to step into these kind of relationships or, for example, you as as a you know, I like to joke with you that you were missional before it was cool. You know? The missional grandma.

So we had to have some very candid conversations with Eisley even before we had the sex talk when she wasn't even ready for that developmentally because you had lesbian neighbors that you were welcoming into your home and that you were loving and building a relationship with, and Eisley was around at your house to to greet them. So we had to start to talk about homosexuality and and God's intention and plan for gender and what it means to love somebody who's not living within the framework of his design and may even be lights out to his existence Yes. Or his rule, and what it means to love those people well and not act weird around them and be gracious and hospitable Yes. And not overwhelmed. So we were having to have those conversations with her when she was 9 as I recall just because that was the kind of home that you were, opening, and, and that was that was a great gift. So all that to say, I'm gonna talk about a lot of books, not because I want us to think that if we just read enough, we would be prepared for this current cultural moment, But as a gentle reminder that if we want our kids to be a peaceful presence, proclaiming the gospel in their schools and in their relationships with friends on the street, they're gonna have to be forearmed in some ways. Yeah. Not with a list of apologetic refutations so that they can get in debates with people and sort of dominate them verbally, but so they can be calm and confident enough in their own hearts and settled in their convictions, lacking a sense of shame or insecurity about what they believe so that they can speak with speech that season with grace as the new testament told us. And I've noticed that a lot of that comes from having done your homework

And having your parents shape you to be a nonanxious presence, in such a way that you can have calm, thoughtful conversations where you listen to people well with whom you disagree. Robert Frost famously said, this is an approximation of the quote, the mark of a truly educated man is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:08]:

I know that.

J. J. Seid [00:08:09]:

That's convicting for me. Because I can be a black and white person who isn't as quick to listen as I should be. And so I realized, you know, what Frost is saying there contains a kernel of of truth. The mark of a truly educated man is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper. Christians are often defensive because their insecurities are being triggered. Their anxieties are being triggered. They're being put in situations, and they're being asked to have conversations that they're not prepared to have. And we're not usually at our best in those moments.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:42]:

Yeah. Alright. So give us a tool.

J. J. Seid [00:08:44]:

So yeah. So, one book is written for teens by a Christian apologist, with a PhD from Cambridge named Rebecca McLaughlin. And I always assume that everybody's heard of her and then I keep finding out that they haven't. So I wanna do everything in my power to fix that problem.

And, so she got a PhD. Rebecca McLaughlin got a PhD from Cambridge in Renaissance literature. Her own story involves talking about her struggles with same sex attraction as a young woman. And to this day, McLaughlin would say without being glib that if she were to cheat on her husband, it would be with a woman. And so there's still an awareness for her of her gendered identity being renewed progressively.

And so that gives her some purchase in the in the public square. You know? That she's not talking from the other side of the street.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:37]:

That's right.

J. J. Seid [00:09:38]:

And so she understands some of these things from the inside. She's writing as a woman. She's writing as a woman with a Cambridge PhD, and she's writing as a woman who understands the struggle with sexual brokenness and and renewal of her gendered identity. So she wrote a book called confronting *Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*. And that book won the Beautiful Orthodoxy

Award for Christianity Today, I think, in 2019. So then she did something really beautiful.

She took that book, which is pretty dense, and I would commend it to parents or adults, and she rewrote it for teens. And that book is titled *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask and Answer About Christianity*. I was really grateful for our student pastors across our 5 congregations at our church because they took that book and made it a teaching series, and they walked through it week by week. And they did a good job of informing parents, "Hey, if you haven't had the sex talk with your kid yet, we're gonna be talking about transgenderism next week. So if you need to keep your kids back, that's fine. Here's the material we're gonna be covering. You can pick up a copy of the book for yourself." And she does a great job in that book of making references to things like Harry Potter and Disney movies. Culture. Pop culture things that kids understand to give really vivid illustrations that'll appeal to the imagination, to talk about really complex, tangled topics and simplify them and and make or reveal Christianity to be beautiful, not just true, but beautiful. And so what's really fun is I was able to pick that book up with my daughter, and we would just kinda cuddle at night and read through it together out loud.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:13]:

She loved it so much that when you loaned it to me, she saw it on my bookshelf and she said, Grammy, can we have that book back?

J. J. Seid [00:11:22]:

She starts the book out with a note to parents, grandparents, guardians, and friends, which I think is really good. And then she addresses questions like, Isn't Christianity against diversity? Can Jesus be true for you, but not for me? Why can't we just agree that love is love? Who cares if you're a boy or a girl? Does God care when we hurt? How can you believe in heaven and hell? So digging into to transgenderism, nonbinary identities, same sex attraction, pornography, sexual abuse, marriage, and singleness, You know, she digs into these things and she talks about what's true, good, and beautiful with such winsomeness.

She's really, really winsome. So what I noticed, particularly in some of the really hard chapters around sexuality, is she talks about moving towards and loving people who disagree with you or maybe living out a sexual identity that that is outside of the bounds of scripture and how to be an ambassador, how to be hospitable, how to be kind. And if you are harassed for not using someone's preferred pronouns or you are put in a situation where what you believe leads you as a kid to get picked on or ostracized. She does a good job of putting steel in their spine to say, don't feel bad

about standing up for what you believe. Don't feel bad about having convictions about what's actually gonna lead to flourishing for your friends. So what ends up happening in these situations is we're not just catechizing. Now that's a \$10 word.

Catechesis is the religious instruction for people who have come into the faith recently throughout the history of the church. So some people may have heard the term catechism, learning your catechism. Catechesis is sorta the description of how that instruction happens relationally. So it's just a fancy word for education about how to live the Christian life.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:39]:

And, traditionally, it was done in historic church before baptism.

J. J. Seid [00:13:43]:

And so you had that beautiful pattern of nobody was getting baptized who didn't really understand what they were signing up for and what it meant to be a Christian, that it was more than just walking an aisle or raising a hand or signing a card. But as Bonhoeffer famously said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." So when people were catechized, they had a really crystal clear understanding of, like, "hey, your life might actually get harder." You know? There's gonna be suffering. Jesus promised suffering for people who follow him. Are you ready for this? You know? It is also gonna bring unspeakable joy.

It is gonna bring fulfillment. It is gonna bring a life free from regrets on your deathbed, but it will involve suffering and it might get harder before it gets easier. So we're really called to catechize our kids. You know, we use the word discipleship, and I think that's good. We wanna disciple our kids. Catechesis sort of reminds us that there is gonna have to be some thoughtful instruction

That has a plan. And it's systematic. It's comprehensive. We can't just have a whack a mole approach to this. That's right. Because the issues have become too complicated. And we don't wanna hang our kids out to dry. We're sending our youngest believers into some of the toughest situations

Where parents in the Church might not feel like this conversation's on their doorstep. But when my 6th grade daughter is in a small group with girls who identify as bisexual, the conversation is right in her lap.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:07]:

And so a homeschooled little girl who lives a pretty sheltered life.

J. J. Seid [00:15:11]:

That's right. And I'm encountering a lot of homeschool families who thought just because they kept their kids home that their kids are not getting exposed to that 24/7 soft power of the enemy. And the truth is if anything, it actually makes homeschool families, more vulnerable.

As one person has said, "An unguarded strength is a double weakness." And so some homeschool families are thinking because we've drawn these physical lines, then the world is not catechizing my child. And in fact, they're doubly in danger. And we've seen a lot of stories of homeschool kids recently where that's happening.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:51]:

Yeah. Give me the next tool.

J. J. Seid [00:15:54]:

Okay. Other tools that I think are helpful. You know, at one level, family worship is such a part of this. Yes. And I've noticed I've noticed that there are certain, well, let me start by saying this because I feel like I'm sort of droning on about books. Let me give a brief sketch of how we do family worship in our home, because we have 3 hyper little boys. And I remember talking to a gentleman in his sixties who was a faithful dad, you know, tried to raise his kids in a godly home, but admitted to me, "We gave up on family worship."

It wasn't tenable in our home. You know? It doesn't work for everybody. My fear when I hear people say that is that the form of family worship that they were attempting was not in sync with the attention span of kids. And so I think there is a way to do family worship, you know, sustainably, but a lot of it is understanding how long kids can listen and what they can engage with. And sometimes we'll be surprised by our kids' ability to engage if we just make a few small tweaks. So I started noticing that we had finally landed on something that was working and not because we were so creative, but because we stole from other people and and we read some things that were helpful.

Donald Whitney has a really skinny little book that's probably no longer than a chapter in a traditional book called *Family Worship*. And Donald Whitney has that spiritual gift of making a spiritual discipline sound attainable for normal people.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:13]:

I don't know who this is. Who is it?

J. J. Seid [00:17:15]:

He's a professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:18]:

Okay.

J. J. Seid [00:17:19]:

And he's written a lot of really famous books on spiritual disciplines. And I think his gift is simplicity. You know, when you finish reading a chapter of his on fasting or meditation, you think to yourself, hey, even I might be able to do that.

And I love that about him. So when he writes about family worship, similarly, you don't feel like a failure as a parent. You think, I might actually be able to do that. You know? So that's that's one of his greatest gifts. He has a book called *Praying the Bible*, which is also the length of a chapter. And, again, when you're done reading it, you're like, I think I could actually do this. I think I could learn how to pray scripture. So I really am grateful for him.

I got to sit with him once and and watch him do it in person. And he has a gift for making normal Christians feel like they can do the stuff. So his little book on family worship is entitled *Family Worship*. That would be a great one to pick up. But what we do when I timed it, it takes 7 minutes. And I noticed that if we spent 8 minutes or 9 minutes the wheels came off.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:14]:

The natives get restless.

J. J. Seid [00:18:16]:

You got about 7 minutes, and then they're done. And so if you're trying to do something that takes 15 minutes, you'll just think we can't do family worship, or my kids are incorrigible. And the truth is you probably just needed to stop halfway through.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:27]:

That's right.

J. J. Seid [00:18:28]:

So what we do is we'll open up an age appropriate story Bible. We'll read a chapter while our kids eat. And we've noticed reading a lot of them while they eat actually helps them sit still and eat their dinner.

Carole Joy Seid:

That's right. Being read to really helps them calm down.

J. J. Seid [00:18:44]:

And then we'll go around the table and everyone will say one thing that they wanna say thank you to Jesus for that day. So I'll just say, you know, "Schaefer, what would you like to say thank you to Jesus for today?" Now we've been through every developmental phase. "Nothing. I wanna thank you for nothing." Nothing is something. You know? So you're gonna have different kids. Generally, it's gonna be your more intelligent children who are actually gonna fight this liturgy more. You know? It doesn't mean that they're more hopeless case than anyone else.

They're probably just really smart. And so they might feel overwhelmed by the question. Our kids would go through developmental phases where they don't wanna answer because they felt overwhelmed by the question. So we have to dwell with our kids according to knowledge, to paraphrase Paul's words about dwelling with your spouse according to knowledge. Peter. Did Peter say that? Oh, good. Yeah.

So, someday, I'll let I'll know as much of the Bible's man, I really thought Paul said that. Anyway, dwell with your wives in an understanding way. Was that Peter?

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:37]:

Yeah. Yes.

J. J. Seid [00:19:38]:

So just pay attention to that. You know? You don't necessarily have to force them. When they get to a certain age, we'll say, you really do need to name something, and we'll kinda hold their feet to the fire on it, and we'll help them. You'd be like, I know that you got a new coloring book today. You know? We could say thank you to Jesus for your new coloring book, and they'll be like, yeah. Okay. Fine. You know? And they don't have to be big ethereal things.

Thank you that a friend came over and put Legos today. You know? Thank you that we're having ice cream after dinner. These are all really good things to teach your kids to give thanks for because the point of God's gifts is that we would realize that the giver is even better. So the way in which you enjoy ice cream after dinner to the glory of God is to really enjoy it and then think, man, that ice cream tasted amazing. How much better must be the person who invented taste buds and vanilla?

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:26]:
And then you're creating an attitude of gratitude.

J. J. Seid [00:20:29]:
That's right. And guess what? There's days where mommy and daddy don't wanna do this because something just broke in our house that was expensive, and we're feeling a lot of self pity or anxiety about our finances. And we need to remember to stop and give thanks. And so it ends up being very course correcting for our hearts as parents in ways that our kids don't even realize because there's days we'd rather not do it. You know? So we go around the room. Everybody says something that they wanna say thank you to Jesus for, and then I'll usually pray and sort of sum up everybody's thank yous. Thank you for coloring books and thank you for ice cream. And then we'll sing the doxology.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:05]:
Okay.

J. J. Seid [00:21:05]:
And that's really fun. The younger kids either can't remember the words, and so we let them along. If they want, they can just listen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:11]:
What's the song?

J. J. Seid [00:21:12]:
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. You're not gonna trick me into singing.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:17]:
I'm sorry. No. No. But that's a big churchy word that many people may have.

J. J. Seid [00:21:21]:
That's right. So we just sing that brief little snippet of song. You know? Praise God from all blessings flow. And, and then we sing amen at the end together, and it's beautiful. You know? And there were seasons where nobody could sing on key and you had to, like, cover one of your ears just so you could still sing on key, and sing loud to drown out all the off key singing or the humming that was really not helpful. But it's great. Everyone's participating. You know? We've got 3 little boys. But you can wrap all that up in 7 minutes.

And there's nights where we'll just punt on some of it, and we'll still do the thank yous.

Or we'll read the story bible, do the next doxology and skip the thank yous, you know, because emotions are wearing thin. And sometimes we'll just do the doxology. So it's like you need to receive grace and know that you're not necessarily gonna do this every night, but it's a beautiful piece.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:08]:

And tell me some of the books that you've fallen in love with.

J. J. Seid [00:22:11]:

So this is something that you and I have talked about where in one level, a book worth reading at age 5 is worth reading at age 55, and we say that often. But children's story Bibles are the one area where paying attention to developmental ages in which the books are pitched will actually serve you.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:28]:

It's right.

J. J. Seid [00:22:29]:

So for instance, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* written by Martyn Lloyd Jones' granddaughter, Sally Lloyd Jones, has become a cultural phenomenon in evangelicalism for good reason. It's beautifully written. It it brings in her entire legacy of faith that she inherited and is a wonderful book. Now there was a season where reading that to our firstborn daughter worked really, really well. Trying to read it to our boys, it was falling flat. So, again, you could be easily discouraged and think they're not interested in the story Bible. The truth was they were too young for it.

So we stumbled across a really great little children's story Bible. And the problem is all the titles of these are so approximate, so I always have to look it back up. It's called *The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible*. The author is Jared Kennedy. And Trish Mahoney is the illustrator, and she does a simply superlative job. I went to art school. Not every children's book illustrator is equally up to snuff, but anything Trish Mahoney illustrates is simply fantastic. Now if you look, they'll say that the reading age for that book is 2 to 5 years. So when I had 3-4 year old boys and we set aside Sally Lloyd Jones and we picked up *The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible*, I now had 3 little boys begging me to read another chapter when I could never even get through Sally Lloyd Jones. So it really does show that getting those age ranges right will be the difference between success and failure in family worship.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:00]:

That's so important. Thank you for telling us that. That's really helpful, J. J.. You've been in the trenches and you know. That's really helpful.

J. J. Seid [00:24:03]:

We named a couple others. *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*. See, all these names are so young.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:09]:

Say it again.

J. J. Seid [00:24:10]:

The Biggest Story Bible Storybook by Kevin DeYoung. Published by Crossway. And that's 528 pages.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:16]:

It's a big heavy book.

J. J. Seid [00:24:17]:

That's right. Beautiful illustrations by a nationally famous illustrator and designer who does stuff with Nike and other brands. He's very gifted. They they say that is aimed at 4 to 9 years. K. So those are 2 that we've enjoyed in our house recently. So people need to know what's out there when it comes to kids' story Bibles

David Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible* is really good. We read that one until the cover came off.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:43]:

The Big Picture Story Bible. It weighs a ton, and it's published by Crossway. And what I love about it is it has a ribbon. So it's not designed to be read in one sitting.

J. J. Seid [00:24:53]:

That's right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:54]:

And it's really a theology of the Bible.

J. J. Seid [00:24:57]:

It teaches you how the whole Bible fits together. That's right. And it teaches you how the whole Bible is about Jesus in really special ways. The book is so clever that there

are things being communicated theologically in the illustrations that aren't even reflected in the writing. So the book is communicating on all these different levels.

J. J. Seid [00:25:13]:

It's a really fantastic book.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:15]:

So I would tell a story on that book. Oh, go ahead. So many years ago, when Eisley was a toddler, I was visiting my granddaughter. She was an only child back then. And, you were talking about something in the Bible, and she was sitting next to one of the young men that she probably was kind of fond of, and she gets down from the couch with her chubby little legs and little blonde curls. And she goes over and gets this heavy, heavy book, brings it back, sits back on the couch, turns the pages quietly, keeps turning, turning, turning, then she gets to the page that was pertinent to what you had just taught on, and then she hits him in the leg, and she points with her little finger and looks up at him and goes, like, this is what we're this is it. This is what Daddy's talking about.

J. J. Seid [00:26:02]:

Wow.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:02]:

That that made such an impression on her. There's also a CD that came with it in the olden days.

J. J. Seid [00:26:07]:

That's right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:08]:

And now I think it's more just you go online, and it's available for free. But when she would be a naughty girl at times, Kristen would say to her, Eisley, I think you need a little quiet time. And she would put her in a quiet space, and she would play that CD for her. So she memorized the book.

J. J. Seid [00:26:27]:

That's amazing.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:28]:

It was a very powerful book.

Putting children to sleep, we put you to sleep listening to the book of Luke, and you memorize the whole book of Luke.

So keep going. What else? Give us more tools. And what are some other issues?

J. J. Seid [00:26:57]:

Yeah. So I think a good place to start with your preteen is to read that McLaughlin book together and talk about it as a family. And that'll start a lot of really great conversations. If you've got older kids, a book that that looks really good that came out recently is called *The Wisdom Pyramid* by Brett McCracken. The subtitle is *Feeding Your Soul in a Post Truth World*.

Carole Joy Seid [00:27:21]:

This is for your kids?

J. J. Seid [00:27:22]:

This would be for teens if you have juniors or seniors or maybe even sophomores. *The Wisdom Pyramid: Feeding Your Soul in a Post Truth World*. And so he talks about the impact of social media. He talks about how hard it is to decide which voices to listen to on any given issue. Another book in that vein is called *Before You Lose Your Faith: Deconstructing Doubt in the Church*. And it's edited, I think, by Ivan Mesa, put out by The Gospel Coalition, *Before You Lose Your Faith*.

And it's got a series of articles of people who have sort of announced their departure from the Christian faith and how we reckon with that. Yeah. And what I love is that some of the folks that wrote the articles are people who had deconstructed their faith and thought it would bring great freedom and joy and fulfillment.

And then and then discovered sort of the emptiness of that and came back to historic Christian orthodoxy and wrote about their journey back. Beautiful. So I love that book. That's another book where you could give a chapter or an article to a teen.

And then, another book to throw on the pile here that's probably for parents to read, but it's written at a level where teenagers could read it as well. It's called *God and the Transgender Debate: What does the Bible actually say about gender identity?* It's by Andrew T. Walker. He's a professor at Southern Seminary as well, and he's traveled around the country teaching the contents of this book, having conversations, and he's gone, look, I wanna equip Christians to lovingly, thoughtfully, and biblically engage the discussion around gender identity. He's already updated it into a second edition since he first released it in 2017. 5 years later, he's circled back now in 2022 to update it to a

second edition because this thing is such a moving target, and the conversation is always evolving.

Carole Joy Seid [00:29:15]:
That's right.

J. J. Seid [00:29:16]:

But what I love about the book is the charity and the humility with which he writes. The compassion for people who are actually struggling with gender dysphoria which is sort of a technical term to say, you know, "I'm a girl, but I feel more like a boy. And what do I do about that?" And that's a really honest struggle that a lot of kids go through and statistics show us often grow through and grow out of. So we don't need to panic if one of your kids is struggling with this, but this is the kind of book to pick up and arm yourself, so that you can engage that conversation really thoughtfully and lovingly and be hospitable. When a family shows up at your church who's led their child through a gender transition and they're not believers, how do you move towards them with hospitality and love?

They know what they know and what the culture's taught them. They're probably hurting in different ways and so is their child. So how do we love these people instead of viewing them as an infection point or or a threat to our way of life as the church. You know? The Lord is gonna give us opportunities to move towards people who are hurting and confused. I remember reading an article, either in the New Yorker or in New York Magazine years ago where parents were candidly and openly admitting a sense of terror, that our job is to figure out whether or not to administer drugs to our children, puberty blockers. Right. And if we don't do it, then we might not be sensitive. And if we do do it and then our child later changes their mind, we might have made a mistake.

So we need to have a lot more compassion for parents in the secular space who are being fed a series of statements, and they're desperately trying to love their kids as they've been taught to do so. And it feels like it's almost impossible for them to make the right choice, and they're feeling the weight of all this. And there's an increasing cultural backlash around some of these decisions and how they're made Yeah. And when they're made. And country is even moving to put laws in place. But but the whole point is that there are real human beings at the center of these issues. Who are far more terrified than we are.

And they're longing for guidance and help. And scripture offers so much to us Yeah. About what it means to be made in the image of God, to have our, our gender as a gift

from God, our maleness or our femaleness. So this has become such a politically charged topic, but there's a sense in which it's also a pastoral topic.

Carole Joy Seid [00:31:32]:

So if I have a friend whose daughter comes home and, you know, says, I wanna be a boy this month or whatever, would any of these books be helpful to share with a parent that's walking?

J. J. Seid [00:31:44]:

Yes. I think I think *Confronting Christianity* by Rebecca McLaughlin to be able to pick up just that chapter on sexuality could be really helpful. And then there's another author I wanna name who is actually a dear friend of Rebecca McLaughlin's, and her name is Rachel Gilson. And one thing you could do right now is just go on YouTube and punch in her name, and you'll see multiple talks by her come up. She's spoken at churches. She's traveled around the country.

She went to Yale, is also extremely sharp. When you listen to her speak in public, she's a very gifted public speaker with a lot of poise. And she's recently wrote a book that sort of a one size fits all book. It feels like there's pastoral books. It feels like there's apologetic books. It feels like there's books that dig into what scripture has to say. And this is finally one that I can recommend as a book that sort of folds all those into 1.

And it's called *Born Again This Way: Coming Out, Coming to Faith, and What Comes Next*. The forward is written by Sam Aubrey, who's a very famous pastor. He's been very transparent about his journey of walking as a celibate and and giving his sexuality over to Christ. He's written a tiny little book called *Is God Anti Gay?* Which I love. It's the size of a pamphlet. You can put that in anyone's hands and that would equip parents whose children are telling them you're unloving or you're not sensitive to what I'm struggling with. But Rachel Gilson's story is told from the inside. She was actually in that lifestyle, living as a lesbian, Christ saved her. And then she talks about how she had moments of even falling back into that old life as a Christian, confessing that, receiving fresh grace, and being sort of pulled back towards Christ. I believe she has kiddos. But again, she would very transparently say, hey. If I were to cheat on my husband, it would be with a woman, not a man.

Carole Joy Seid [00:33:35]:

It's not something they ever turn their back on.

J. J. Seid [00:33:37]:

That's right. And so they're recognizing that God is still renewing their gendered identity. It's being healed. It may not be completely healed this side of heaven, but the hope of heaven is a reminder that they're washed and waiting. They've been sanctified, and they're they're being sanctified. So I just love that book. It's tiny. It's only a 160 pages.

I love the description online. A rich portrayal of living faithfully and happily as a Christian with same sex attraction that paints a compelling picture of discipleship for every believer.

So I think a parent cracking some of these books open Yes. The winsomeness Yes. And the skill with which these topics are handled, but then also the hope.

Carole Joy Seid [00:34:15]:

Yeah. Amen. Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:34:17]:

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