

## The Terrible Twos

Children are a blessing from God... Right?

There are stages in the development process of a child that challenges this statement – newborn, teenage, move back in after college, **terrible twos!**

What is it about the “terrible twos” stage that makes parenting so difficult? It’s the learning of, & the abundant use of two words – **“Why!” & “No!”**

If you are a parent, do you remember how you felt during this stage?

- “What happened to my sweet little child?”
- “I have completely failed as a parent!”
- “Will this ever get any better?”

Why am I talking about the “terrible twos” today?

- **Because I believe we are in this stage as a church!**

It’s been 2 years now since Pastor Jay & myself have filled the role of being your pastors. And for two years things have been running pretty smooth.

We have been learning how to be your pastors, & you have been learning how to be under our leadership, much like a new parent-child experience!

But we have now hit that two-year mark, and we are starting to hear and experience some of what the “terrible twos” stage of life is often known for.

Here are some of the “why’s” we are hearing:

- 1) **Why aren’t we doing the things that will grow our church?**
- 2) Why do we have to change and do things different?
- 3) Why can’t we be more like... or why can’t you be more like...?

**“Because I said so” is not an adequate answer to these “Why” questions!**

These are all valid questions that need valid answers from your pastors!

Answering the “why” questions is critically important to the development of a church, just as it is with a child. So let me respond to these questions.

- 1) Growing a church is very complicated! It’s not easy!
  - **There is numerical growth & there is spiritual growth!**
  - There is a worldly approach & a Godly approach.
  - **There are seasons of growth & seasons of pruning that enable it!**

2) If we don’t change we will die! Change is essential for new growth!

- **Transformation only happens through change!**
- Unity in the body only happens through a willingness to change!

3) We have to be who God has called us to be!

- We can learn & grow along the way, but we have to be who we are!
- **How does one define a healthy church or a good pastor?**

Answers to the “why” questions can lead to understanding & wisdom, but it can also lead to the second “terrible twos” word – **“No!”**

When was the last time you remember saying “no” here at church?

- “No, I will not listen to what was preached b/c I don’t want to change!”
- “No, I will not reconcile with that person b/c they hurt my feelings!”
- “No, I will not trust that this is God’s leading, b/c I don’t like it!”

How often is this word “No” the one that so quickly rolls off your tongue?

And how often is that “No” accompanied by more than just the word?

There is a time and a place for asking “Why”, & there is an appropriateness for disagreement, but the question that needs to be answered is, **“Is this stage of our development leading us closer together or further apart?”**

Will we, when this stage is over, love each other more & still call ourselves family? **There is no perfect church, just like there is no perfect family!**

But in the midst of conflict, in the midst of disagreement, in the midst of our “why’s” & “no’s”, will we strive w/one another towards God’s future for us?

**Proverbs 6:16 – “There are 6 things that the Lord hates, 7 that are an abomination to him:”**

- 1) **Haughty Eyes** – People who are too proud to change!
- 2) **A lying tongue** – People that don’t speak the truth!
- 3) **Hands that shed innocent blood** - People who attack others unjustly!
- 4) **A heart that devises wicked plans** – People who create drama!
- 5) **Feet that run to evil** – People who have to be in the middle of conflict!
- 6) **A false witness who breathes out lies** – People who gossip & slander!
- 7) **One who sows discord among brothers** – People who divide the church!

A fool-proof church is one that navigates through the “terrible twos” and comes out of it with a greater understanding & a desire to be in the family!