3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future: A 60-Day Exploration of Who You Were Made to Be

by Kara Powell, Kristel Acevedo, and Brad M. Griffin

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The Teenager's Guide to Exploring Identity, Belonging, and Purpose

Today's teens can be overwhelmed by the need to "have it all figured out." Fuller Youth Institute authors and researchers Kara Powell and Brad M. Griffin discussed this need in their recent book, *3 Big Questions that Change Every Teenager: Making the Most of Your Conversations and Connections*. Through in-depth interviews combined with surveys of over 2,000 diverse teenagers, Powell and Griffin discovered which questions float to the top for so many teens.

Joined now by Kristel Acevedo, a Spiritual Formation Director and discipleship writer, ***3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future: A 60-Day Exploration of Who You Were Made to Be*** (Baker Books, December 2022) takes the research of *3 Big Questions that Change Every Teenager* and makes it approachable and practical for today's teens. Through thought-provoking yet bitesize "posts"—Powell, Acevedo, and Griffin invite teens to explore, wonder, seek, and wrestle with the questions that are constantly on their mind:

- Who am I? The question of *identity*.
- Where do I fit? The question of *belonging*.
- What difference can I make? The question of *purpose*.

"While many questions are on the minds of today's teenagers, we've unearthed the three primary questions we believe undergird all the rest," wrote the authors in *3 Big Questions that Change Every Teenager*. "They aren't just *young people* questions; they are *people* questions. They aren't relevant only to adolescents; they are relevant to [all of us] … But for young people, the 3 big questions of identity, belonging, and purpose are at a constant, rolling boil."

The authors believe that the journey through these questions can change teens just as much as the answers themselves. *3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future* challenges teens to think deeply about the questions that matter most, all while growing in their relationship with God and those around them.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kara Powell, PhD, is the Chief of Leadership Formation and Executive Director of the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) at Fuller Theological Seminary (see fulleryouthinstitute.org). Named by *Christianity Today* as one of "50 Women to Watch," Kara serves as a Youth and Family Strategist for Orange and speaks regularly at parenting and leadership conferences. Kara has authored or coauthored numerous books, including *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager*, *Faith in an Anxious World*, *Growing With*, *Growing Young*, *The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family* and the entire *Sticky Faith* series, and *Can I Ask That?* Kara and her husband, Dave, are regularly inspired by the learning and laughter that comes from their three teenage and young adult children.

Kristel Acevedo is the Spiritual Formation Director at Transformation Church in Indian Land, South Carolina. Originally from Miami, she is a writer and speaker focused on discipleship, Bible study, and multiethnic ministry. Kristel and her husband, Alex, have two young children.

Brad M. Griffin is the Senior Director of Content for the Fuller Youth Institute, where he develops research-based training for youth workers and parents. A speaker, writer, and volunteer youth pastor, Brad is the coauthor of over a dozen books, including *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager*, *Faith in an Anxious World*, *Growing Young*, several *Sticky Faith* books, *Every Parent's Guide to Navigating Our Digital World*, and the series *Can I Ask That? 8 Hard Questions about God and Faith*. Brad and his wife, Missy, live in Southern California and share life with their three teenage and young adult children.

QUOTES

“ God doesn’t expect you to be perfect or to meet a long list of requirements. God created you the way you are and is joyfully watching your personality, gifts, and unique quirks unfold. God’s expectation is that you will be *you*—the person God created, not the person everyone else expects or pressures you to be.

“ Wanting to belong in and of itself is not a bad thing. We were created to belong. Seeking to belong is normal. The problem is when we think certain unhealthy tactics will gain us that belonging. People-pleasing is one of those unhealthy tactics.

“ Although we have different gifts, it’s the same God who distributed them all. The Lord chose everyone’s gifts on purpose and for a purpose. We can trust that God’s intention is good and that we are not lacking in anything.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Thank you for joining us. We want to talk about your new book, *3 Big Questions that Shape Your Future*, but let's back up to the genesis of this book—*3 Big Questions that Change Every Teenager*. Tell us more about that book and how it led to this one.
- Why are the questions of identity, belonging, and purpose so important for teens, and why are they so important *right now*, in our world today?
- When it comes to identity, teens must deal with the tension of who their friends, parents, coaches, ~~etc.~~ and others want them to be and who God expects them to be. How can teens start recognizing the differences in those expectations? On the other side, how can adults be better at pointing teens toward who God wants them to be—without just adding more pressure?
- What are some of the areas in a teen's life that affect their sense of identity the most?
- Social media causes so much comparison for teens and adults. What are the pitfalls of comparison when it comes to exploring identity?
- In the second section of *3 Big Questions that Shape Your Future*, teens will tackle the question of belonging. You mention in the book that "God has created us to be in community WITH God and WITH others through Jesus." Will you unpack our need for belonging based on this?
- How can teens grow in their relationship with God? How does a relationship with God help teens answer their biggest questions?
- The opposite of feeling belonging is feeling like an outsider. What comfort is there for teens when they feel this way?
- Talk a little bit about authenticity. Why is authenticity important for teens who are wrestling with the question *Where do I fit?*
- *3 Big Questions that Shape Your Future* also includes the *huge* question of purpose. Purpose is a hard topic for adults to address; how should teens start approaching this question?
- What are some questions that teens can ask themselves to start figuring out their purpose?
- Where can our audience go to connect with you and purchase a copy of the book?

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