



INTRO AUDIO:

Can I ask you to take a little bit of time to consider what is the environment of your home? Like I'm not talking about whether you have AC or heat or just open windows. What I'm talking about is the spiritual environment of your home. Is it an environment that magnifies and uplift Jesus or one that kind of does the opposite? Let's dig into it together on God Fearing Kids and Parents Who Raise

MINDI:

Hi friends and welcome to God Fearing Kids and the Parents Who Raise Them. We're glad you're here. My name is Mindi Green

CAREY:

And I am Carey Green.

And today we want to talk to you about the environment and no, we don't want to talk about green thumb type stuff and solar power and wind and all that. We want to talk to you about the environment of your home, because the environment that your children grow up in will inevitably shape their personality, their character, and their faith or their lack thereof. And here is the wonderful responsibility we've been given by God. The environment that our children grow up in is ours to create. So if you're a creative person out there, this is for you. If you're not a creative person out there, you're going to have to learn to be creative because you get to create this environment. So before we dive into the scripture, I want you to take for a moment, this image of a scale that we see all the time, where people would put a weight on one side and other things on the other side and weigh in to see if they could balance it out.

CAREY:

I want you to picture a scale like that. That indicates the environment of your home. One side is going to be a Jesus saturated environment. And the other side is going to be for life of a better term, a sin saturated environment. So on the one side on the Jesus side, we have peaceful. And on the other side, we have stressful. So when you think about those two things in opposition to each other, which direction does the environment of your home tend to tip? Think about that for a moment. Let's do another one connecting on one side and distant on the other, which direction does your homes scale tend to tip? There's all kinds of things we could put on this scale, temporal versus eternal, meaning are you focused just on the here and now, or are you engaging with eternal things through conversation and through scripture with your kids and with the others in your home?

CAREY:

We could put redemptive on one side versus condemning. So how are you dealing with situations? Do people come out feeling a redemptive, sort of a feeling hopeful and strong, or do they come out feeling condemned? And finally let's just about harmonious versus combative, which direction does your home tend to tip? So take a moment, do an analysis of the environment of your home. And it should be obvious as Christ followers. We want our home to be built in such a way that it tips toward the Jesus side of that scale. And that means we want our homes to be saturated with the reality and the truth of

Jesus Christ. Middy. Why don't you look up for us there? Hebrews chapter one, verse number three, and read that to us.

MINDI:

It says he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

CAREY:

Okay. Who's the he it's talking about here.

MINDI:

Jesus.

CAREY:

And the reason we wanted to read this is because having a Jesus saturated home is very fitting for a Christ follower because he is all these things. Mindi just read the radiance of the glory of God. He's the exact imprint of God's nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. So if he's that in control of everything, surely he should be in control of our homes. That's how we want our homes to be oriented because Jesus is the king of everything. But there's another reason we want our homes to be God saturated. And that's because God commands it quite simply many read for us, Deuteronomy six, five through nine,

MINDI:

You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house. And when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates.

CAREY:

Wonderful. And Mindi, you've experienced this a lot in our home. Talk to me for a moment about what this is actually telling us to do. What's the practical day to day, look of this. When we try to implement it,

MINDI:

I see this is meaning, bring your children's thoughts to the awareness of Jesus all throughout the day. Sometimes when I would go and wake up the kids in the morning, I would tell them, did you know, Jesus was here with you watching over you, as you slept, that would give them a feeling that he's with them.

CAREY:

Very good. And something I noticed here in the very first verse, notice, this is a command to parents. It says, you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your might. We've already talked about that in the previous episodes that God fearing parenting begins with you as a parent. And then he gives us these commands to teach his word to our children.

MINDI:

Yes. Another way that naturally that would just happen in our home is we would have Bible verses stuck on the refrigerator, on our bathroom mirror. We would have plaques that would have things about the Bible. And so the kids knew that it was a part of our life too,

CAREY:

Because if our kids don't see it in us or don't see it genuinely flowing out of us, how are they going to respond to that? Typically

MINDI:

They're probably going to see it as maybe being hypocritical or legalistic, just a force thing, but it doesn't come from the heart.

CAREY:

Yeah. And none of us like a hypocrite. I mean, no, we're supposed to love everybody, but hypocrites are especially hard because they say one thing and often try to enforce it on you, but then they do something totally different. And so you lose a respect for them. You lose any motivation to follow their example. And so when we look at what happens in Christian homes, a lot of times, no wonder kids stray away from the church or stray away from any kind of faith of their own because their parents oftentimes have done the very same thing, but they keep saying, follow Jesus, go to church, do this, don't do that. And the kids just kind of blow them off after a while. Now there's some interesting things that he says here in Deuteronomy six, and then we're going to move on into some practical examples of how this might look.

CAREY:

But he says in verse six, these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. So these are things we should be working to get into us. So scripture memory might be good or songs that portray scripture should be helpful for us. And we can do those things in our home as well. We'll talk about some of that in a moment. But then when he says, how we're to teach these to our children, he says all these different contexts. When we sit in our house, when we walk, by the way, I guess in our day, that could be when you're driving the car. And when you're on your way someplace, when you lie down bedtime, you you've always said bedtime is a great time to have good conversations with the kids. Why do you think that is?

MINDI:

I think that they're open to talking. They're wanting to talk. Sometimes they're not ready to go to bed. And if their parents are sitting on their bed, just giving them their time, that's a special thing. And some of the things that we did practically, when our children were little, we would have scripture songs that we played for them over and over and over again. And they still remember them to this day, when they were getting older, we would read scripture to them. We would pray with them. And something that we did as, as they got even older is we'd have talking time with them. And we would switch off our kids because we have five and I would do the girls one night, Carey would do the guys another night and we would purposely have those conversations, always direct our kids' hearts and thoughts to God. But we were asking them questions about their day, what they think, what they feel, their friends and our purpose was to teach them the heart of God and those things.

CAREY:

All right. So I think we get the gist. We've got our kids in our home. We're building the environment. Now let's talk about some practical ways that we can build the environment. Now we have a whole list of things here. I'm just going to read one. Then I'll have Mindi read one and we might comment on them as we go. But the first one is let the name of Jesus be the first and most common name that they hear in your home. I mean more than your name, more than your spouse's name, more than any of the kids' names. I mean, and you may have to work at that. If you have a kid that gets in trouble a lot, because you may be saying his name a lot. So you're going to have to say Jesus even more and that's not a legalistic rule, but you get the gist of this.

MINDI:

And the reason why I think this is so important is because as believers, Jesus is our life. And so we, as parents have learned that he is living through us every day. And so that's very important that we teach our children, that he is living through them when they become Christians. And even before they become a Christian, he is living around them. So Jesus is in our home. His presence is there and we as adults are learning that more and more, but we especially need to be teaching our children as we're learning and the things that we have already learned. So that's why it's easy to have Jesus be a part of it. Like I mentioned earlier, that I would ask the kids, did you know Jesus was watching over you when you were sleeping or when I would go into the kids' rooms and they might have an argument I would bring to their attention. Did you know Jesus heard your argument and it made him sad and he loves you and he wants you to be loving to your brother. Things like that, made it easy to have his name be spoken a lot.

CAREY:

Yeah, absolutely. And times like when the kid comes home from a friend's house and is reporting on something that happened, maybe it was a great thing that the kid's mom gave them cinnamon rolls or something like that. And you can say, isn't that so sweet that Jesus loved you through giving you that through his mom, you can always pull Jesus into it and it doesn't have to feel fake or forced because it's not, you really are trying to guide your children to see the goodness of God in everything and to see his presence. Why don't we go on, look at the next, when they're Mindi, what does it say for us

MINDI:

Openly demonstrate your love for Jesus.

CAREY:

This is back to the issue of us being genuine as parents. We need to be talking about how much we love Jesus, why we love Jesus. The things he's doing that are blessing to us individually so that our kids don't separate us from faith and religious things in their minds. It's very normal for human beings to do that. And we don't want that with our kids. We want the environment to be saturated with Jesus. Our next one says, consider introducing your children to Jesus, to be more important than their ABCs. Now, this one's pretty interesting the way it's said, because we put a lot of emphasis in our culture, on education, on our kids, knowing how to do math, knowing how to write, knowing how to spell, knowing how to do Latin. I mean, whatever. We, we had all these things to a curriculum, but how much of a spiritual curriculum so to speak, do we have in mind? How much are we planning in that direction?

MINDI:

Most of the time, we probably aren't planning very much, but we need to be. And that goes back to our earlier episodes, talking about we as parents need to be in God's word regularly. So as we learn God's

presence in working our life on a day to day basis, we need to be telling our kids that. I mean, I would tell my kids things that God would teach me in my quiet time, even on that same day or if I'm struggling with something, I would tell my kids what I was struggling with and what God was teaching me to do. It definitely is more important. That is the main foundational education our kids need to have all throughout their grown up years.

CAREY:

Yeah. And a helpful perspective, I think sometimes is to step away from the zeal or the passion that you feel about that academic subject, maybe it's math. And think about when my kid arrives in heaven, how much of their math are they going to take with them in need? I mean, none of it comparatively, but how much of their relationship to Jesus are they going to take with them and need 100%? And so that helps us to kind of figure out what's most important. Now we are no way saying neglect, math, neglect, English, all of that. But we are saying priorities. Mm-hmm <affirmative> we have to keep our priorities straight. Okay. What's the next one there

MINDI:

Celebrate the blessings of God, daily, sunsets, food, favorite games, things like that, just anything. And this is also another thing where you would want to ask the Lord, bring to my mind the kinds of things that I need to teach my kids to be thankful for in you. And he will be faithful to do it. He'll bring to your attention something that your child is happy about and you'll come to them and bring God into the situation and help your child to learn, to be a thankful person.

CAREY:

Yeah. Amen. I love that. I love that. And all of this really is the next point. It's initiating conversations about Jesus. I mean, we kind of have to have our eyes peeled for this to be watching for opportunities and things going on in the kids' lives. I mean, for example, when they are kind to their sibling or they do something sweet for someone, we can draw Jesus out of that situation for the kid to see, let them see Jesus guided you to do that. Or if they are already believer, Jesus did that through you, you know, things like that. We can really help our kids to see him and everything.

MINDI:

So the next one is model routine normal conversations with Jesus throughout the day.

CAREY:

So this one is talking about you basically talking to Jesus throughout the day, not being shy, not feeling like you have to get down on your knees, not, you know, any of that. It's just, you're just modeling it as a normal thing that you talk to Jesus. If the cookies, you know, fall off the tray as you're taking them out of the oven. Oh my goodness, man. You know, we all are going to freak out a little bit, but thank you, Jesus. I didn't burn myself or thank you Lord that we have more cookie better. You know, whatever it is, you can find a way to not again, not in a fake way, but in a genuine way, bring Jesus into the context of your home. The next one is praying together about all things large and small. This is so powerful. I remember doing this on a number of occasions, just that come to mind right away when someone in the family was ill or when someone in the extended family had an important thing coming up or when the kids had something happen at a school where a kid was mean to them or whatever, we pray for the kid.

CAREY:

And we pray for this situation that teaches our kids. That Jesus is here as our helper, as our comforter, as our guide in every aspect of life. And then we can go to him for anything at any time.

MINDI:

Yes, that's very good. Let's the next one is pay attention to their fears and help them take those cares to Jesus, their defender and protector. And this one makes me think about, as you're creating this Jesus environment, anytime God shows you averse relating to a certain issue in life, one of thankfulness or one of needing help bring those verses to your children, show them like one of our children had an issue with being fearful and we brought the verse to them about that. God has not given us a spirit of fear and that's something that she wrote on a card and she memorized for herself because that was kind of her issue. Other verses that might talk about anger. If your children have issues with anger, purposely work with your kids about their issues, find verses that apply and write them on cards for them, put it on their bathroom mirror, help them to memorize it at breakfast time, you know, there's so many creative ideas that you can do to bring Jesus into their lives.

CAREY:

Yeah. And don't view those as like a doctor making a prescription. And once they finish the prescription, the problem's all gone view it as this is real life stuff. This is ongoing things you got to revisit and talk about again and help them apply the truth again, because we leak, I mean, we leak truth. It comes out of our brains, just like we have a hole in our head. And so we've got to continue to remember it. Continue to remind our kids, continue to apply it. All of those things. Now the next one here on the list, you want to identify teachable moments and pull in the truth of scripture to teach the biblical truths about the condition of their soul. Now this is a little different than some of what we've talked about. What we're getting at here is you as a parent need to not shy away from talking to your kids about their sinfulness, about the fact that they're fallen and in need of redemption. They're dead in their trespasses. I mean, all those statements that the scripture makes about us before we come to Christ, those are true of our kids before they come to Christ. And so we, as parents want to lovingly help them understand those facts so that they can then receive the greatest hope in the world that Jesus has come to forgive them of those things and to transform them into a new creation.

MINDI:

Yes. And that will also help them to have clarity of what's going on in their mind and what their motives were when they're a little kid and they hit their brother because their brother took their toy. They're just feeling this anger, all they know to do is just hit them. And so in situations like that, we talk it out with them. What were you feeling? Were you mad at your brother? Did you not like him? Help them to put words to what they're feeling and then tell them it's okay to be mad at your brother, but Jesus still wants you to love your brother. And so if your brother takes your toy, what would Jesus want you to do? He would want you to say, please don't take my toy. Or if your brother didn't listen, you'd come and tell mommy. I mean, you just, you instruct them in how to think by what Jesus would want them to think in those instances. But if we just were to say, don't hit your brother, when he takes your toy, all the boy knows is not to hit. He doesn't know anything about how to handle his inward thoughts and feelings.

CAREY:

That's great. I love that you brought in what we might typically do and showed why that's not helpful. That's wonderful. All right. You also can shape the environment of your home to be a Jesus environment by having Christ oriented decor and music and entertainment. Mindi's already talked about this

previously. I mean, one of my favorites that we've had around for a couple of years now is just a, a wooden carved thing that has the quotation from the book of Psalms. Be still and know that I am God. I mean, things like that, that are in your home, that your kids see repeatedly are going to make an impression on their, their souls. And then it's doubled tripled, quadrupled in effect. When they see you living in a way that reflects the fact that you believe those things. So keep that in mind as well.

MINDI:

The next one is age appropriate, Christian fellowship opportunities and programs such as things like youth group at church AANAs conferences, things like that are, are helpful for your children to experience other Christians fellowshiping with them. And if you're going to a church that has those kind of programs that are pretty good and strong, that's very helpful for your kids to be able to grow up in that.

CAREY:

And we're talking here about the environment of your home. Those things are outside the home. We're looking at that as a supplement. So don't look at those events as I send my kids there and they get all they need know when they come home debrief, talk about the experience, helped them to filter out what they've learned according to scripture, as you're teaching it in your home.

MINDI:

For example, it's a huge thing in our culture today, not to judge don't judge me. Scripture talks about us as believers, a spiritual man, judges, all things, and that we are to judge things. Rightly I think what people are pointing at is they don't want to be condemned. They don't want to be totally pushed out of a person's life. How can we know right from wrong? If we don't make a judgment about a person's lifestyle or about something that we see on TV, we have to make judgements every single day about every area of our life. <laugh> yeah. So that whole thing about don't judge me has scared people away from making spiritual right judgements. And so they just say, okay, I'm going to leave it alone. So those are talks that we had with our kids when that started being a huge issue all over, even in the church, just have grace don't judge them. There's just a lot behind there that candy caps us as believers in terms of not being able to know the heart of God.

CAREY:

That's very good. Okay. The next one is face difficult questions, losses, and hardships head on in Jesus strength. So let me give you a real simple example for a kid. If they're brand new kitty, who they got two months ago has run out in the street and gotten hit by the car. Don't hide the kitty, tell the kids it went to heaven or Jesus wanted it and took it or that it ran away. Help the kids deal with the fact that little fuzzy got run over by a car. You want them to learn how to grieve, how to grieve biblically, how to grieve with your help while you're there so that when grandma passes away or their friend at school is diagnosed with cancer, they have some tools with which to deal with that situation.

MINDI:

Yes. That's just another way of helping them to think the way Jesus would want them to think. The next one is start a routine of daily Bible story, Bible reading. Hopefully you are having your time with the Lord every day, reading the Bible. So you would want to do it with your children, maybe at breakfast time, maybe at bedtime. And then as they get older, you encouraging them to do it on their own.

CAREY:

And when you say encouraging, you don't mean, Hey, I wish you'd do that. I mean, you mean instruct them. Yes. Yeah. You teach them. Here's how you do a quiet time. You get out your Bible, you read a chapter, you think about what it says. You pray to Jesus and thank him, you know, those kinds of things. So at a very young age, once they're able to read, you can teach them. I mean, it's a blessing. When we go to visit our son and his family, the boys, he has four boys and the, the three older ones. First thing they do when they get out of bed is grab their Bible storybook. They go sit on the couch and they cuddle up with blankets and they read a story. The one who can read will read out loud to all of them, and then they'll talk about it. And then they'll say a prayer together. And it's just such a sweet, blessed thing to see

MINDI:

The reason why the boys do that is because their parents told them, that's what they need to do. The first thing. So they're doing it out of obedience. The younger one who is five, he's just excited to look at the Bible stories. The next one who is seven. He's probably enjoying reading the stories a little bit, but not too much. You know, it's but he's doing it because he out of obedience, he's not begrudging it. The oldest one who's eight, one day when they were staying the night, the boys were reading their Bibles and the oldest one was sitting on the couch and he was reading through it. And he kept saying, Grammy, what about this? And what about this? And so he was gradually getting more excited about what he was reading and that's what will happen as your kids grow. But it started because their parents told them they had to do it. This is a part of obey to, don't be afraid to say to your children, you have to read your Bible. I mean, that's actually probably the best instruction you could ever give then <laugh>

CAREY:

Yeah, absolutely. And that dovetails into the final one we have on our list. And of course there are hundreds of other things you could do, but establish weekly family times we would do this. Some people will call this family worship. And it's just a time as a family. When you come together and you read the Bible, the dad might instruct the family in some way appropriate to the age of the kids. You'll have a time for prayer, have a time of singing perhaps. And sometimes you just have fun together, but it's a family time. It's when you together are coming around the fellowship you have in Jesus and enjoying all the things that God has for you as a family. So again, let's go back to that scale. In light of all these things, you've heard do an assessment of the environment of your home. Where are you on that scale? Are you leaning toward the sin saturated side? Are you leaning toward the Jesus saturated side and pick out a few things from this list or something else? The Lord may point out to you that you can begin doing to increase the Jesus saturation in the environment of your home

MINDI:

And just an encouragement along those lines. If you feel like you are having a hard time, having Jesus be saturated in your life day to day, I would just encourage you to ask the Lord to make you aware of him throughout the whole day. Ask him to start teaching you in the moment you start learning the moment. You're a little bit more ahead of your children. Start teaching them because the reality is that if you are a believer, you know, lever, you no longer live, but Christ lives in you. And so that is your reality, and God will be very eager and excited to help you to learn of his presence in your life, in your family's life, more and more every day.

CAREY:

Man, that was a great word to end on. Thanks again for listening to God fearing kids and the parents who raised them. We are glad that you're here. Stick around for more episodes. We'll see you on the next one.