



006: Don't fear your authority (or your kids)

INTRO AUDIO:

If I were to ask you, if you're willing to do whatever it takes to equip your kids, to be adults who honor and love the Lord, you'd likely say yes, but what if I asked you this question? Are you willing to do whatever it takes to overcome your own fears and insecurities and baggage so that you can best equip them to be that kind of adult? This is Goding kids and the parents who raise them

MINDI:

Welcome friends to God, fearing kids and the parents who raised them. This is Mindi Green

CAREY:

And I'm Carey, welcome. Glad that you're here with us today. Today, we want to encourage you not to fear your authority as a parent. That may sound kind of strange, but there are parents all over the place who just seem to be afraid to be the parent when that's the role that God's given them. And part of what goes along with this too, is don't be afraid of your kids. Fearful parents sometimes let the kids run all over them. And so this short episode, we just want to address some of the reasons why this might happen and what you can do to take steps in the right direction. If you find yourself in those shoes, the best place to begin with this is with Ephesians chapter six, verse one, and Colossians three 20. They both kind of say the same thing. Ephesians six one says children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. And Colossians three 20 says children obey your parents in everything for this pleases, the Lord. Now both of these are commands to children, but the obvious inference from these passages is parents are in authority over the children. That's why the children have to obey. So let's talk about that for a moment. That's a, that's a reality that God has given us.

MINDI:

It needs to be kind of a boundary for us. If children are supposed to obey their parents and I am a parent of children, then I am responsible to make them obey. That is what God is calling me to do.

CAREY:

Yeah. And we, in many ways are standing as a surrogate in the place of God, in the lives of our children, especially when they're very young, we are representing God to them. So like God determines boundaries. Like God determines what's good for us. We, as parents are to do that for our children. And that's what our authority is all about. It's for their good. And so there are some important things for us to understand about this authority that God's given us first off, it's been delegated to us by God. This is something we didn't earn. We didn't work to get, we don't naturally come by it, but God gives it to us anyway.

MINDI:

And he knows we are not prepared or practiced at

CAREY:

It. Yeah. And he knows most of us didn't get a user's manual or anything like that. Or instruction mail. We just have to go after this with His help. And so it is something that's been given to us. It's been appointed to us sometimes. I think it's God's sense of humor to give people who are such fumbling, bumbling idiots at times, this big role. But yet he says in our weakness, he is strong, just like he said to the apostle Paul. So that's a great reassurance that we can have something else to keep in mind in. This is that we represent Him and we're to parent for Him. And for His sake,

MINDI:

Our family, as a whole, the parents and the children needs to glorify the Lord. So that needs to be in the forefront of your mind. As parents are your children bringing glory to the Lord by their good behavior, by their obedience to you. If they're not, then that's a sign you have work to do. Especially if your children are younger, you are responsible to teach them to obey,

CAREY:

Right? And implied in all of this is that as a representative of a God, to your kids, you're to do what's best for them. And what's best for your home in your family. A and God defines what's best. So knowing scripture and knowing how to apply, that is a big part of it. And it's really a role of wise and humble service Mindi. And I have kind of joked with each other at the end of a long day of parenting. Sometimes that we are servants of all that. That's our job. That's our role. And the parenting role is one of making sure everyone else's needs are met and everyone else's guided in the right direction.

MINDI:

It's hard and it's exhausting many times, but that's where the humility needs to come in. We need to be willing to let God use us in those things.

CAREY:

And so, as you think about this reality, that parenting is an authority that's been entrusted to you by God. What rises up inside of you? What emotions do you feel intimidation? Do you feel scared? Some of you may feel confident, perhaps you feel something else. I mean, stop for a moment and just assess where are you really when it comes to this? I think anybody with a with any sense will feel a little bit of intimidation and a little bit of fear about this, because it is a big job. I mean, we're crafting human beings commissioned by the guy of the universe. I mean that that's a big responsibility, but the wonderful thing is that His grace is sufficient. He's there to help. And he will guide us in the process now to kind of assess where you're at. We want to describe some things we've observed over the years that fearful parents commonly do or don't do.

CAREY:

And you just take these as maybe that warning light on the dashboard to say something in your exercise of authority as a parent is missing or needs to be tuned up. The first one, fearful parents tend to allow tantrums and emotional manipulation by the child. Sometimes stupid pop, psych magazines have told you, just ignore them, let it happen. You know, they'll learn that they don't get a response. That's the

dumbest advice in the world, because you're just exactly, you're, you're just letting disrespect have its way in that circumstance. And you're not curbing it at all in that child's heart is not being guided toward God. So that's the thing that fearful parents do.

MINDI:

Yes. And in that situation, just think of a tantrum. If you allow your child to throw a tantrum and do nothing about it or walk away or ignore them or just whatever, have you taught them and train them how to deal with the emotions that they're feeling at that moment? No, not at all. You're actually allowing them to express their emotions at the highest peak level possible for them. And they're just going to get worse and worse and it's going to cause great damage to you and to their life and their children. If you don't help them in those situations.

CAREY:

That's a great example. All right. Fearful parents also tend to waiver and wobble on boundaries and rules. So they may have the rule today, but then tomorrow they don't because the circumstance is different in the kid is pleading and begging this time or something, you know, fearful,

MINDI:

Are they given to their manipulation?

CAREY:

Yeah. Or they give in to the kids whining or whatever. And that leads to the next one. Fearful parents often will bribe or barter with their child. So if you'll be good, I'll get you ice cream. Or if this or that, you know, those kinds of scenarios

MINDI:

Or another scenario with a younger child, which we've heard many times a parent will ask their child to do something and they, they aren't obeyed. So they start counting one, two. I mean, that's a form of being a fearful parent. If you asked your child to do something and they don't obey, you need to teach them how to obey instead of giving them all of these opportunities to not obey all the way up to count to five. Yeah. You're not doing any good to the child's heart.

CAREY:

Yeah. You're basically teaching that child. You don't have to obey until I get to five. So that means all the words you set up until that point they can ignore. You're training them to ignore you. Yeah. Another thing we see fearful parents do is they allow disrespect and that could be rolling of eyes, stomping of feet. The tantrums would definitely qualify. What are some of the things you could think of here? Mindi

MINDI:

Talking back? I don't know if you mentioned that. No. Yeah. That's definitely important because when they talk back to you outwardly, you know, it's something they've been doing in their heart inwardly. And so you want to be able to address that.

CAREY:

Great. Well, let's get really practical here. Sometimes it's helpful to know the reasons why a bad behavior is indeed bad. And when it comes to fearful parenting, there's a lot of harm that can come from parenting your kids from a place of fear. First off it develops insecurity in your child. Mindi, why don't you describe that one for us?

MINDI:

I think it's because there's a lack of boundaries, especially with a child who is strong willed, they need clear strong boundaries. And so if a parent is feeling fearful and secure themselves and they allow the child to throw tantrums, they allow the child to talk back to manipulate. That's not keeping peace in the home. Like the parent might think it's actually causing the child to grow up with insecurities and feelings and condemnation.

CAREY:

Yeah. And imagine if that child is even older and the parents have not enforced any kind of boundaries because of their fearfulness, that kid, when they hit late elementary, early middle school, those times when they're needing a secure environment, in which to quote unquote, discover themselves and learn how to be in the world, they're going to be even more insecure. They're going to struggle. They're going to have a hard time because their parent who is supposed to be guiding them in wisdom, hasn't been guiding them in wisdom. And so they're going to tend not to turn to you for advice because you've already demonstrated you don't have much wisdom to give them because you haven't ever given them boundaries.

MINDI:

Yes. And another thing about being fearful in giving your child boundaries is it makes them feel that you don't love them. And that could be confusing to the parent because they're thinking, you know, why do you think that I've been kind and gentle to you? I haven't been hard on you. I haven't been disciplining you. And it actually makes the child feel like they're not loved. And I'm speaking from personal experience on that

CAREY:

Hebrews chapter 11 says a father who loves his son, disciplines him for his good, there is a wisdom in discipline because it's curbing the heart attitudes and behaviors that are harmful to the child and guiding them into heart attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial for the child and for their good. And so discipline is definitely something that a parent should do out of love.

MINDI:

Another thing that is harmful when a parent acts out of fear or insecurities, it makes the child the priority rather than God's will and ways. So if a parent neglects to discipline his child, because they like to be more kind and compassionate merciful, instead of exhortative maybe, or firm they're putting their own comfort ahead of God's will. And that is definitely going to cause damage because the child's not going to learn God's will, they're just learning that they're fit that they threw. Or the manipulation that they said is what gets their way. And they're not even thinking what God wants. It's just all self-focused at this point.

CAREY:

Yeah. And they learn that the intensity of emotion or volume of screams that they do is what gets their way. And doesn't help them understand anything about how to live life. Well, it's just whatever I can do to get what I want. That's what works. And it becomes very pragmatic in that sense. Uh, another harmful thing that comes from fearful parenting is that it nurtures and allows simple behavior and patterns. I mean, they grow, they get bigger, they get more problematic over time. As you out of fear, let them go on. It is a destructive thing to your child to let them do whatever they do because you're too afraid to do anything about

MINDI:

It. And I think that is why a lot of times we hear about the terrible teens or the rebellion that happens when children become teens or they get into drugs and drinking and, and sex and, and all that kind of stuff. Many times that's when the struggles of parenting happens. And that's because the parent has been afraid to train their child with godly healthy boundaries up until that point. And so now they're seeing the bad fruit of it. And sadly, we, as parents need to admit it is our fault. That doesn't mean that we can't have forgiveness from the Lord. And it doesn't mean that we can't start on the path of making things new and better, but we need to admit it is our fault instead of saying, oh, now they're in a teenager now they're 17, 18. They make own decisions. It's not my responsibility. That's absolutely not true. The reason why they're making those bad decisions as a teen is because you trained them to make those bad decisions.

CAREY:

Yeah. Which brings us to the final harmful thing. We have jotted down anyways, that fearful parenting puts the child on a path towards self-destruction. They are not guided well, they are not guided in wisdom and in, in kindness and in the discipline, that brings wisdom. And so they just kind of go their own way. And if you remember the book of judges, when it talks about that whole season, when there was no king, when there was no leadership in Israel, it says, each man did what was right in his own eyes. And it says that repeatedly throughout the book, and you see the consequences of that, it's just idolatry and rebellion against God and nothing good that came about. And so God would have to raise up these judges periodically to deliver them because he was being faithful to His word, to His own people.

CAREY:

And folks, we don't want to put our kids on that servant path where what they do that is wise in their own eyes, leads them down paths of self-destruction. Let's talk about some of the cures to fearful parenting. First off, it's hard, but true. You just have to accept and embrace the role that you've been given. God has given you this role. There's no way out of it. No way around it. And honestly, why would you want to weigh around it? This is one of the most significant, important world. Shaking things you could ever do with your life is to raise children to love and honor the Lord that will have an impact far beyond anything else you could ever do in life. So take the role seriously.

MINDI:

Yes. And recognize that you will give an answer to God. This is an area of obedience for you. And just think about it. What do you hear from older parents? Much of the time you hear of either their joys or their sorrows of what's going on with their kids. And it's not that after their parenting job is done. So to speak. When the kids move out, their life is completely separate. A parent's life is full of their children's lives, good or bad for the rest of their days on earth. So here you're raising children and it's going to

affect you. Do you want to be in your eighties, sitting on your rocker, on your porch, being able to thank the Lord for what he did in your child's life, because you took this role seriously to train your child in the way he should go. And you fought your fears and you did what is right. Or do you want to live a quote, unquote, comfortable life giving into your fears. And then when you're 80 sitting on your rocking chair, sad and crying because your kids have gone to all those things that parents regret.

CAREY:

Yeah. The next one that we have jotted down here is that it's important to see the lack of confident parenting for what it really is. In other words, let's call fearful parenting what it is it's neglect and a lack of love. And that may sound pretty harsh, but that's exactly what the scripture say. Proverbs 13, 24 says, whoever spares, the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. So in this verse, that rod is an instrument of discipline. It's what they would give spankings with in the day. And here, he's talking about withholding that confident guidance is hatred towards your kid. It's not loving them as you should. It's just an amazing contrast. And that the scripture would care for us enough as parents to say it. So boldly to us, I think is something we need to open our eyes and pay attention.

MINDI:

How many times have you, as a parent said to yourself, or a friend or your spouse, how you hate that your son or daughter does a certain behavior, or you're complaining to your girlfriend, that something that your child always does, that needs to be a catch in your spirit. That there's a behavior that you are not liking, that your child is doing. You are responsible to help train them out of it. Don't complain to anybody about your child, complain to yourself and then to the Lord and ask Him to give you wisdom, how to correct it, because it's your responsibility. You're training them to win at the game. So just a loving, encouragement to you as parents. If there's something that's bothering you about your child, go to the Lord and ask Him how you need to handle that, what you need to do, how you need to train them in right behavior and ignore what you are fearing and determine to obey what the Lord shows you to do with your child.

CAREY:

Amen and amen. We talked last episode about leading the heart of your child to the heart of God. And that attitude, that view that everything you're doing as a parent is being done to lead the heart of your child to the heart of God can really operate as a preventative, to fearful parenting. It can help us to be more confident because our goal is no longer confrontation of a bad behavior. Our goal now is leading my child to understand God's heart and to align their heart with His. And so it feels less intimidating. It's really more of a, a positive spin that we can put on it.

MINDI:

So just a good concluding thought is that you, as a follow of Christ, you need to be thinking that God, your savior wants you to parent your children the way he would want to parent them. So Christ is living in you and you need to daily be asking the Lord, how do I parent my child? And so you need to be 100% dependent on Him daily. That's why you're asking and praying constantly for wisdom and insight. And you're going to scripture. So we want to encourage you. Parenting is a form of complete dependence. Parenting is an opportunity to be completely dependent on the Lord each and every day.

CAREY:

Well, thanks again for being with us for this episode of God, for your kids and the parents who raised them. We look forward to connecting with you again soon.

MINDI:

Thank you so much.