



## 008: Don't excuse your kids' behavior

### **INTRO AUDIO:**

Can you remember the last time you had to devote intense energy and focus to learning something, maybe it was music lessons or some new skill for your job. We all have been through that situation. And today we're going to talk about how that relates to godly parenting. This is God-fearing kids and the parents who raise them

### **MINDI:**

Welcome back to God-fearing kids and the parents who raise them. We are so happy to be with you. Again, I am Mindi green

### **CAREY:**

And I am Carey, and we are excited to talk to you today about something that we see happen fairly often in parenting circles. You know, you just have to be at the playground with a group of moms or dads, and you see this happen. You can see this in social environments at church where parents are interacting and the way we've come to describe it is parents making excuses for their kids, behavior. Mindi, let's just talk about some examples. Get just so people know what we're talking about.

### **MINDI:**

For example, if you're having a play date with other moms in one child is being really fussy and cranky. You don't see the mom doing any kind of discipline, but she just says, oh, he's tired. He missed his nap. And that just excuses it. She doesn't crack it. She excuses

### **CAREY:**

It. And none of that is to say that the kid didn't miss their nap or that they're not tired or fussy or cranky or whatever. But the issue is that behavior that is negative toward other kids or toward the situation is going on and it's not being addressed. All right, give us another example.

### **MINDI:**

Your child is too shy. They're not very social. So you excuse that and you don't encourage them in how to love and consider others like Jesus would want them to.

### **CAREY:**

Yeah, we've seen, and we've even had kids who we would have there with us in a social environment. And we would say child, this is Mr. Smith say hi to Mr. Smith. And they refuse they back behind us. They hide their face. They don't want to say anything. And the parent many times would excuse the behavior by saying, oh, he's, he's shy.

**MINDI:**

Another example would be siblings having arguments and fighting and being unkind to each other. And the parent just excusing it as kids will do that. Boys will be boys. Siblings will fight and they don't correct their unkindness towards each other. They just tell them be quiet, number, arguing, number fighting. And then they go about whatever they're

**CAREY:**

Doing. And that last one you brought up is one that possibly could be a podcast episode all in itself, because there are all these things of conventional wisdom in our society. Boys will be, boys is a great example, or teenagers are going to rebel. Things like that. That you, as a parent, don't have to accept. Those are not things that have to be true of your kids. But we'll talk about that maybe at a later date, but those are some of the examples of what we mean when we say that we shouldn't be excusing our child's behavior. Now we want to unpack a little bit why it's not good to do this well first. And probably the most obvious is you're just allowing your child to sin with no attention being drawn to it, no opportunity or initiative to address it as not a good thing. And so the child's left to kind of make up their own mind about it. And what are they going to make up their mind about? They're going to make it up their mind that it's okay.

**MINDI:**

And it's going to cause them to develop bad habits. Like if a child is tired or if there's anything that's making them feel cranky, they've learned that it's okay for them to act on those feelings. I'm tired. So I can be irritable towards my little brother I'm cranky so I can disrespect my mom.

**CAREY:**

And maybe one of the biggest things when it comes to long term effect is you're not training the child to discern between what's good and what's evil. What's right. And what's wrong. Hebrews five 11 through 14 is kind of a longer passage, but I think it's important for us to read. This is one of the biblical writers addressing a congregation of believers. Now, granted, these are likely adults that he's writing to, but as you hear what he says, you'll realize how much this applies to kids.

**MINDI:**

Okay? This is Hebrews five, 11 through 14, about this. We have much to say, and it is hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing for though, by this time you ought to be teachers. You need someone to teach you again, the basic principles of the Oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child, but solid food is for the mature. For those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Did you notice how it said constant practice? That is really what training is all about. It's constant training daily and reminding and gently nudging our children to discern good from evil.

**CAREY:**

Yeah, absolutely. Now something we've talked about in various illustrations between ourselves that I think is very pertinent here is when you're learning any skill, whether it's studying for test or a musical instrument or some kind of proficiency at work, you constantly repeat those actions. You constantly drill yourself on the facts. You need to know you take it very seriously. So it's kind of baffling that parents don't take that same mindset. When it comes to training your children, you're training human beings to

be godly God fearing human beings. It's going to take the same kind of diligent practice and the same attention. So I also thought it was interesting in there, Mindi, that it says the constant practice, but it also says to distinguish between good and evil to have discernment. It uses that word as well. I mean, isn't that what we're doing when our child is doing something they shouldn't do, we're not approaching discipline from a standpoint of just clamping down on them because they're doing something wrong and scolding them. That is definitely not the goal. The goal is to help them develop and sharpen their tool of discernment so they can cut through the right and the wrong and divide. Rightly what is good? What is bad and choose the good.

**MINDI:**

And do you realize by what Carey is saying that learning to discern between good and evil learning to distinguish good from evil that keeps you from being a legalistic parent, a legalistic parent would say, stop yelling at each other. Be nice. All they know to do is that they can't yell. They have to be nice. And that's just putting pressure on them to act good, but they don't know in their heart. Why should I not yell? Why should I not express my feelings in this way? What about this whole situation is wrong? I don't know, but all I know is I did wrong and I have to do something different. So if that's the way a parent teaches their heart's not being trained.

**CAREY:**

Hmm. How would you respond to a parent who says, but that's how they feel. They should be allowed to express how they feel. And if they have to yell to do it, sometimes we need to yell. I mean, how would you respond to that?

**MINDI:**

The parent needs to discern from God's word, what behavior is, right. All yelling is not wrong, but man's anger produces sin. God's anger does not. So is it God's anger or is it man's anger? They have to take the time to discern that in the child's heart. They have to ask them questions. What's going on? What are you angry about?

**CAREY:**

Yeah. Which kind of goes back to the point we were talking about earlier, this is hard work. This is work. That requires diligence on a appearance part. You can't expect to have microwave parenting where you have a 32nd solution to most problems. It just isn't that way because you're paying attention to heart attitudes, to behaviors that flow out of those and the right and the wrong from God's perspective. And that's what you've got to address. And you've got to bring your kids along, because they're not as old as you. They haven't seen life like you have. They don't know what you know. And so you've got to teach them to know what you know, right? So let's talk about what to do instead. Instead of excusing our kids' behavior, what are the things we should practically be doing? Let's just walk through it step by step.

**MINDI:**

We, as a parent, need to be asking the Lord to give us wisdom and discernment, to notice our kids' bad behavior. As a mom, you're going to be busy making dinner. You're going to be busy at the park, going to the grocery store, whatever it is you're doing with your kids. And you might not be thinking you might not notice a bad behavior, but one, you need to ask God to show you the bad behavior and to have his mindset of what he thinks about their behavior. That's got to be the first step.

**CAREY:**

So would you suggest this goes on a daily prayer list for moms and dads?

**MINDI:**

Absolutely.

**CAREY:**

Yeah. We should always be leaning on the Lord in this. None of this is about us figuring out some formula, that's going to make our kids, the perfect God-fearing kids. We need, God's help to know how to guide our kids in that direction. And let me put it in a different context than what you just did. If it's a dad, who's come home from work. He needs to somehow get his mind ready as he is on the way home praying, asking the Lord, okay, I'm going to step into a context where my wife's been with the kids all day, the kids likely are going to need me. They're going to need my attention and my discipline in some ways, Lord, help me have wisdom, have discernment. As I go home to do the real job that you've put me on this planet to do. And that is ministering my home.

**MINDI:**

That's good. Put a note on your dashboard of your car to remind you husband, put little alarms or reminders on your phone, whatever you need to do to help you to be mindful of training your child in the way they should go.

**CAREY:**

And so once we've gotten into this habit of asking God to help us notice the behavior, when we see it, we need to call it to the attention of the child. We don't ignore it. We don't excuse it. Even if we're in a public place, we can take the child aside and we can call it out.

**MINDI:**

I think an example that can be a little bit awkward is when your child is not behaving very nicely to another adult or at church, and they're really shy and they hide behind your leg. You can't really do a whole lot in that moment. Let's say you're walking into church, you're getting ready to go sit down or take them to Sunday school or you're at a grocery store. And someone talks to your children. Just keep note that you're going to talk to them when you can and prepare them. Next time you go to the store. Next time you go to church, prepare your little boy, your little girl. Remember how, when Mr. Smith said hi to you last Sunday, and you hid behind my leg this time. When someone says hi to you, I want you to smile at them and say, hi, and that's all you need to do. You kind of coach them through baby steps of what they need to do.

**CAREY:**

Yeah. And you're using the situation as a training time. Remember that illustration of the kind of training we do when we really want to learn something new. Well, we really want our kids to learn these new things that have to do with God honoring behavior and behavior. That's loving toward others. And so every opportunity of discipline is an opportunity to train them.

**MINDI:**

Yes. And it's always important to tell the reason why, like you would tell your little boy, do you know why I want you to say hi to Mr. Smith? I'm sure they wouldn't know. And you would tell him the reason is because I want you to love him when you smile at them and say, hi, you're being loving to them. And Jesus tells us in the Bible to love one another. And so I'm helping you to learn how to love others. It's simply that.

**CAREY:**

And tying that into God's love for them, just like God loved you. You want to love other people. You want to show them. God's love by the way that you act toward them. And these really lead into the next bullet point we have here. And that is we want to explain the biblical truth to our kids. If we have a Bible verse memorized on this, if we have a, a section of scripture that we can bring down to their level, whatever age they are and explain to them what the Bible says about this kind of an issue we need to go there. We need that truth that the scripture says is sharper than any double edged sword and can divide between soul and spirit, thoughts and intentions of the heart. We need that power to come to bear on our children's little souls because they need that kind of wisdom.

**MINDI:**

And just to insert a reminder, we cannot be controlled by the busyness and the rushing of our lives. You might be thinking as you're listening to us, I don't have time to think about that. I don't have time to sit down and have these little talks with my kids all the time. Then that means you're too busy because your higher priority is training your children. If you have children.

**CAREY:**

Yeah, that's great. It makes me think of the working mom who yes, maybe the Lord wants you to have a job outside the home. But as far as the Bible teaches about priorities, your first priority is husband and kids. And so if your job is too much to enable you to do the job you need to do with husband and kids, the home, you need to make some changes. You and your husband need to prayerfully. Talk about that. We can do a whole episode on that as well. Let's move on. The next one is that you want to always highlight God's desire for that child in a situation like you're talking about. So what is it that God wants you to be? And why does he want you to be that way and highlight the fact that God will help them? God will be their source of strength. He will be their life, especially after they've placed their faith in Christ. Jesus lives in them. The holy spirit empowers them just like he does in adult. And so we need to teach our kids those truths from an early age.

**MINDI:**

And it's so valuable to teach these kinds of things and have these kind of conversations with your children. When they're dealing with emotion from age two, all the way up to 1220, I mean, we always are having to fight our emotions. So when you can help your child at a young age, when they're feeling cranky, they wake up from their nap. They're feeling cranky, or they didn't have a nap. So they're too tired. You want to help them to know how to act in spite of what they're feeling fast forward it to grade school. There's going to be a lot of emotions going on there. Little boys start getting aggressive in Ory. And <laugh>, you're kind of wondering what's happening to your sweet little boy. You got to help them to, first of all, understand what are they feeling? And they can't always tell you what they're feeling, but that's alright. You can at least tell them how they need to be acting. And you can tell them why, because God is wanting this from them and why he wants it. And he loves them and he will empower them to do

it. And then when they're a teenager, I mean, teenage girls, we all know they have a hard time with their emotions when they're feeling insecure and their peers are hurting them and all different ways.

**CAREY:**

Yeah. And I think the long and short of it is that we have to remember this aspect of training. This aspect of every moment you are on as a parent watching your children's behavior so that you can guide them. You can instruct them, you can equip them to handle the things that go into being a human being, emotions, thoughts, bad treatment by other people, hard circumstances. All of those things are going to be challenges that require our attention as parents.

**MINDI:**

So remember a good way to think about it is don't excuse your child's bad behavior, train your child's bad behavior to become good behavior.

**CAREY:**

Hmm. And then so doing your training, their heart.

**MINDI:**

Yes.

**CAREY:**

Before we wrap up here, Mindi, would you say a prayer for the parents about this topic that we've talked about today?

**MINDI:**

Yes, dear Lord. Thank you so much for giving us the blessing of being parents. And we just want to ask for those who are listening, that you will encourage them through the power of your holy spirit and give them your insight and discernment of what your heart is in each situation with their children and give them wisdom to know how to train their children. I pray that you will give them hope and that you will help them define encouragement in your word and that you will give their children open hearts and obedient hearts to listen to their parents in Jesus' name. Amen.

**CAREY:**

Amen. Well, thanks for being with us folks. We will talk to you again on the next episode.