

HEART CHECK: Humble dependence required (Bonus Episode)

INTRO AUDIO:

Hey friends. Do you have things in your life that you regularly assess? If you have a financial planner, you probably have an annual checkup on your finances. If you have a mechanic that you trust, you might take your car in for an annual inspection today, we're going to be talking about a heart check, a new set of episodes we're going to do periodically while God-fearing kids and the parents who raise them. Welcome back friends. We're glad that you're with us. I'm Carey

MINDI:

And I'm Mindi.

CAREY:

And there she is right across the table from me. Once again, I love doing this with you, babe. Hey, we are doing something different today. And to introduce it, I want to ask you to think about when was the last time you had a physical, you know, you went to the doctor, you had a physical, they check your heart, they check your pulse. They have you breathe real deeply while they do so, you know, all that sort of stuff. Why do we do that? Think about it for a moment. Well, we do it to assess our health. We do it to discover any concerns that may exist and to identify some action steps we can take to correct things if needed. That's kind of the heart behind what we're doing with these bonus episodes. We're going to call them heart check. And it's an opportunity for us to just get in mind.

CAREY:

Some of the things that are kind of behind the scenes, in the parenting realm that we would do well to keep in mind. So as we dive in, we're just going to bring up a couple of concerns that we've noticed in our hearts and in our parenting experience that we just want to put on your radar. And have you think about concern? Number one is be careful not to exchange your personal vibrant relationship with God, for formulas, formula, parenting tricks that are based on his truth. Now we're going to have to unpack this a little bit to help you understand what we mean. First off, this scriptural principles and truths that we share on this podcast are indeed true. There's no way in which we should look at the word of God and say, well, it's not true. We're not telling you to do that. But at the same time, we have to recognize that God himself does not intend us to take his truth and make formulaic steps out of it to provide a security or peace of mind. He wants to be our security. He is our peace of mind and our hope and everything good we hope for in life is him. And so we've got to keep that little nuance separated out in our minds that we're focusing on him, not on the formulaic things that we're doing.

MINDI:

I think it would also be helpful to say that the formulas quote, unquote, that we do come up with are actually steps towards obedience. So it's good to plan out steps towards obedience in the things that we learn, the truths that we learn in God's word, but we are wanting to get to the heart of the parent, a heart that is completely dependent on the Lord, even though they're going through those steps.

CAREY:

Yeah. That's a great distinction to make. I think it's easy to become hopeful because we're doing the right steps when the reality is our hope needs to be in God, himself in his character, in his person. It's really kind of a twisted way of thinking to believe that our diligent performance, even when his performance of what God has said is going to bring about his blessing. Because that self-effort, that is a form of idolatry, just in a self-serving way, it's where we are putting our hope in something that isn't God. So our focus has got to be on God's faithfulness to us. God's character, his promises, his goodness, not on our performance again, even if that performance is based on godly things.

MINDI:

So how do you think we would have our hearts and minds focused on finding security in God, not in our formulas.

CAREY:

So you're asking how can we do that?

MINDI:

Yeah. How does that look practically?

CAREY:

Yeah. Well, I think practically it takes hard work to know your own heart and to know your own motives in things. I think for those of us who are wired to operate according to step by step, it's going to be even harder because we we're, we're kind of geared that way. And we want to see a plus B equals C two plus three equals five. We, we want to see that and we feel like life works that way, but in spiritual things, life doesn't always work that way because God is sovereign and he can interject both the miraculous and the difficult at various points along the journey for our good that we wouldn't have put into the formula. And so that's why our hope has to be on him. And we have to keep our minds in that place. What about you? What are some things you think would make it more practical?

MINDI:

I think that if our hope isn't him, like you're saying then let's say for example, we are training our child in a certain area, a teenage daughter, we're concerned about her attitude about herself. So we are training her with different things that we're speaking to her about, different practical things that we're going through with her

CAREY:

Even giving her special Bible verses to memorize or think

MINDI:

About. Right, right. Yeah. Certain things that we are giving her certain quote, unquote actions or formulas that she needs to be obeying. But my heart would be in the morning. I wake up praying for her, asking that the Lord would work in her heart and use the things that we are requiring her to do to bring her to the attitude she needs to have throughout the day. When it comes to my mind again, I'll ask the Lord again, please soften her heart. Please humble her heart. Please help her to obey. So I think practically speaking the way it looks like for a parent to be dependent on the Lord and to find their

security on the Lord is they're praying without ceasing. That's a practical step in finding your security in the Lord. Not in the formula.

CAREY:

I believe that that's one of the foundational things. It really does have to do with him being your focus, him being the one who is the, the one doing the action. Not you. It's not your formula. It's not your wise instruction. It's not all those things though. Those are means God may use and undoubtedly will use, we wouldn't be doing this podcast if we didn't believe that was true, but yet it's him. That's doing the work. It's him. Who is the, the be all end, all of this parenting thing. Let's look at a passage scripture here. It's a little bit of an extended passage, but I think it highlights this principle. And what's most interesting to me about this passage is this is God speaking directly to Israel about their forms of obedience that they relied on. This is Psalm 50 versus seven through 15.

CAREY:

And God says here, oh my people, and I will speak. Now, if God said that to you, you know, and kind of shake you out of your, your lethargy and you, you know, whoa, God is talking to me. I, I want to listen up and listen to what he says, oh, Israel, I will testify against you. Uh, oh, not good news. I am God, your God. Now notice how God's making it personal. He's bringing it to the relationship between him and Israel. Not for your sacrifices. Do I rebuke you? Your burn offerings are continually before me. So he's saying, in other words, I'm not rebuking you because you're not giving me enough sacrifices. You're always giving sacrifices going on. He says, I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine. The cattle on a thousand Hills, I know all the birds of the Hills and all that moves in the field is mine.

CAREY:

If I were hungry, I would not tell you for the world. And it's fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats, offer to God, a sacrifice of Thanksgiving and perform your vows to the most high and call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you shall glorify me. So keep in mind, all these sacrifices that God is kind of miffed about, that they keep giving are things he told them to do. It's like the principles, the formulas, the things we might come up with from God's word, what God is saying. When you're doing those things without a personal connection to me, you're missing the boat.

MINDI:

Exactly. He wants us to remember that his son Christ died for us so that he can live through us. So we, as parents need to remember every day that Christ is living through us and the holy spirit is empowering us. And I see how in these passages, these verses God says call upon me in the day of trouble. So he's saying, turn to me, call upon me, ask for help. I will deliver you. And you will glorify me. He's wanting himself to be glorified. He's wanting all of the credit. So we might say we trained our child in the way that he should go in this area, but our mindset needs to be, God did it through me. Jesus did it through me and I give him all the glory and I will offer my Thanksgiving to him on a regular basis. God is constantly moving us to personal relationship with him. And he doesn't like it when we don't turn around and thank him. There's so much there. He's wanting us to grow in our dependence. That's going to help us as we grow in our dependence to teach our children to do the same. But this is the underlying attitude that we're wanting to encourage you with parents who are listening its dependence on the Lord, 24 7.

CAREY:

Yeah. And I just had this very convicting thought. Come to me. As you were describing that in a practical scenario, I mean, say you've got a kid who is a teenager and they've been bucking your guidelines and they've been resisting and, and kicking back against the things that you're instructing them. God just said in this passage, call upon me in the day of trouble. See we as parents put our focus back on the Lord is what we're supposed to do, but many of us, and I think I would be included in this. Our tendency would be to grit our teeth and clamp down on the rules harder and come down on that kid. When God's saying that's reliance on the rule, that's reliance on the, the principle. You need to call on me in that day of trouble. You see it's that personal relationship we've got to keep in focus.

CAREY:

All right. So to recap, this first concern is don't exchange that vibrant personal relationship with God, for formulas that are based on his truth. Now concern number two is very similar, but it's got a difference, a nuance that I want you to pay really close attention to. And this one is don't focus on the outcomes that you're hoping for in your parenting. More than you're focusing on the God who rules over those outcomes. The first one we were talking about your methods, this one, we're talking about the outcome. Don't focus on the outcome, focus on God. It's natural and is very good for us as parents to have hopes for certain outcomes in our kids, behavior and character. I mean the very name of this podcast expresses that God fearing kids. I mean, we're hoping for God-fearing kids and we're trusting God to help us with that. But those desires and hopes can become idols. When we allow them to become more important than our submission to God and our desire to follow his lead in this parenting thing.

MINDI:

I think that this is a really important point because for example, you and I, who God has led us in our parenting. And we have seen all five of our children grow in fearing the Lord. And we would say, we, we believe they fear the Lord. Yeah, but they're still in their twenties. Our oldest is in his thirties. We don't know the complete outcome of

CAREY:

Their lives. That's right. The story's still being written. Right?

MINDI:

So we can't find ourselves becoming anxious and all tied up in the outcomes, got to be this way, especially because we're trying to encourage other parents how to raise their kids like this. The outcome has to be on God and his character. That's got to be where our strength is. And our focus is, and our dependence is period. Yeah. And we can't say, but God gimme some kind of security, some kind of sign. The outcome's going to be what we want it to be. We've just got to say Lord, okay, today, I'm going to follow you in raising my child and loving them in the way you want me to and training them in the way you want me to. And I'm going to trust you. Please have the outcome be this way. This is what I'm asking for. If God in his sovereignty chooses it to be something different. When that happens, we'll cry out to him in the day of trouble. And we'll trust him again, continually, there's not a whole lot of guaranteed comfort there in those words. But it's our reality as those who trust in the Lord, just like job.

CAREY:

Yeah. That reminds me of when God was taking the Israelites into the promised land and he said, I am your portion. I am your treasure. That's really what we're talking about here though. We have grand hopes like they did of a promised land with flowing in milk and honey, they had these great hopes. They couldn't be allowed to be bigger than God being their portion. God being their hope. And as parents, man, we can get in that. And this is front burner stuff for us just to be transparent with you who are listening. I mean, Mindi mentioned our kids in their in their twenties. I mean, if you think back to your twenties, twenties are one of the messiest times of life and you're figuring things out and you, you make decisions that you regret. Sometimes you make other decisions that are wise. And here we are parents who have raised our kids to fear the Lord. And as many said, we do think they're fearing the Lord, but we see decisions here and there that we're going, what is that about her? Where does that come from? And, and maybe we should have a talk about that. And, and you know, you can have all these anxieties rise up because the outcome isn't happening the way you ideally thought it would be.

MINDI:

Yeah. I remember loving the twenties. Twenties were great. We got married at 21, but now on the other side, being a parent to children in their twenties, I'm like, this is the worst <laugh> this is so hard Lord. And, and so what we're talking to you about today is what the Lord is actually literally teaching me today. Yesterday the days just last week where I have been pouring out my heart, Tim in prayer for my children to stay on course of fearing him.

CAREY:

You might be thinking, okay, I get the point. I want to stay focused on God and not on the outcome, but how can I, how can I assess where I'm at in this? And I've been helped time and time again by this kind of a self-check, not just about parenting, but about other things as well. And here's a little hypothetical scenario. Were we to follow the truths from the scripture about parenting that we, that we glean from the scripture were we to follow them well and apply them wisely and diligently go after this thing, we're calling Christian parenting yet our children went off the deep end spiritually. At some point in that journey, what would our response be? We have to be able to honestly answer that question. Would we feel resentful? Would we get angry? Would we despair? Would we conclude that the advice we received maybe from a podcast like this wasn't biblical or there was something wrong in the way we applied it?

CAREY:

What would our conclusion be? You see, we want to be careful that we're not being what I would refer to as fair weather parents, fair weather, Christians who worship and trust God when he does things, according to our wishes, but turn our backs on him when he doesn't, we need to be able to pray and sincerely mean a, a parenting version of what job said in job 13, 15. He said, though, he slay me. I will hope in him. Mm-hmm <affirmative> you see where his focus was, was on God, himself. Not on any outcome that he hoped for. And you can be sure. Joe had hopes. He's sitting in Dustin ashes, because his kids have died. His property's all been destroyed. He's got sores all over his body. You can be sure he had hopes. He wanted this to be over. And he wanted something new and fresh to happen in his life. And in the midst of that, he says, though, he slay me yet. Well, I trust him.

MINDI:

I love that because that, that is the raw bottom line, heart of fearing the Lord. And so we, as parents have got to do this, this heart check on a regular basis because we're going to be having disappointments here and there in our journey as a parent. And we need to remind ourselves, we need

to come to that again. If you slay me in my hopes and dreams, Lord, am I still going to trust you? Are you still, God? Are you still worthy?

CAREY:

We're pausing right here. Because Mindi's crying. <laugh> this is a, a very important thing to her. We've TA had these conversations, our whole married life

MINDI:

And we know he's worthy. We do feel for those parents out there who this has happened with their kids and their hearts are break because their children are not walking with the Lord anymore. But at the end of the day, the only thing that matters is that we are fearing the Lord and we are on our knees before him seeking him and trusting him. And hopefully in doing that, our children will see that and learn to do the same.

CAREY:

Yeah. And might I add that some of those families that we know have experienced that sort of a disappointment are still walking faithfully with the Lord. They are still clinging to him and trusting him. And that's just so encouraging to see. I think this is similar to the kind of hopelessness we might feel when we see someone in our family who doesn't know Christ and we so desperately want them to be saved. We so desperately want God to intervene and our prayers over time become God, God changed them. God grips their soul. God transformed them because we know he's the only hope and folks in our parenting. That's our answer. He is our only hope we've got to keep our eyes on him. So to wrap up this second concern, don't focus on the outcome. You hope for more than you focus on the God who rules over that outcome. Keep your sight set on him.

MINDI:

Yes. And let me close and prayer for us father, thank you so much for your abounding grace, that we all need to be able to fear you and live a life worthy of you and your glory. And I pray father that you will help the parents listening to do self-checks, to do heart checks on a regular basis, to make sure that they are dependent on you wholeheartedly and regularly and daily in their parenting and their loving of their children and disciplining them and training them in the way they should go. Lord, I ask that you will train our hearts and our minds to keep our eyes on you and not on the, the outcome and not on the formulas, but to keep our eyes on you. And, and that you will give us discernment on how to live daily. As we parent her children in Jesus name, amen you and your glory.

MINDI:

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CAREY:

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