



023: Preparatory parenting: What it is and the benefits it brings

AUDIO INTRO:

Hey parents, take a few moments to think through your growing up years. What were the different stages you went through and what were the markers in your life, those pivotal moments that you wish you had been better prepared for as parents? Do you think there are things you could do to help your kids be prepared for those same things and even more? This is God-fearing kids and the parents who raise them.

MINDI:

Hi again, friends. I'm Mindi.

CAREY:

I'm Carey. Welcome back.

MINDI:

We wanted to talk about preparatory parenting.

CAREY:

Boy, say that fast five times

MINDI:

<laugh>, what it is and how it helps. We'd like for you to think about what kinds of things you might prepare for, say the holidays or a birthday, special occasions, maybe a test that's coming up, a promotion at work, things like that. There's all different things that we prepare for in our life so that it will be a success.

CAREY:

Yeah. And what kind of things do you do when you're preparing? Well, you think about the circumstance. You think about what it's going to be like. You think about the knowledge you need to have in order to do that thing. If it's a holiday, you're thinking about decorations and menus and who's going to come and who needs what gift and all that sort of thing. So there's a lot of thought that goes into preparing

MINDI:

Or you might think of the hurdles and the obstacles that might come. Yeah. In whatever it is that you're preparing. And so you have to prepare so that things go smoothly in spite of those obstacles.

CAREY:

Yeah. And the important thing to think about in this context that lends to what we want to talk about today is why do we prepare what's the purpose?

MINDI:

So that our minds could be thinking as they should be. Our minds are on the right path to be able to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish in that scenario.

CAREY:

Yeah. Right. And so if we're willing to put in preparation for these kinds of things, shouldn't we be putting in at least that much effort in preparing our children for life? I mean that's really what parenting is. It's preparing our kids for life. We have a couple of Bible verses here to draw from for this point. Let's look at one Peter one 13. Mindi, could you read that for us?

MINDI:

Therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

CAREY:

That's very interesting. He just said exactly what you said was the reason for preparation. He says, preparing your mind for action. Okay. This is an exhortation Peter's giving to adult Christians. Prepare your minds for action in life. How to live as a Christian. This is exactly what we're doing in parenting, isn't it?

MINDI:

It is exactly

CAREY:

<laugh>. Yeah. In Proverbs chapter one, verses eight and nine, Solomon is writing, and this is part of why he's rotting the proverbs. He says here, my son, your father's instruction, and for sake, not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. So what he's saying is, we are instructing you so that when you obey what we've told you, good's going to come of it. We're trying to prepare you for these opportunities and situations so that your performance in those situations brings good. That's what the garland is about. That's what the pendant is about. And so Solomon understood this as well. Now, there's a lot of situations in our kids' lives where preparation is needed. Um, we talked about it a lot of times in terms of reality parenting. We would think about what's the reality our kids are going to face in this day or in this circumstance, and how should we prepare them for that? So let's walk through some examples and might I say here at the beginning, these are only examples. There's hundreds, thousands of other things that could be on this list. But we just have some basic categories. Let's talk first about daily life situations. What are some examples of that?

MINDI:

Maybe a long trip in the car or a trip to the grocery store.

CAREY:

So in those circumstances, how are you going to prepare your kids for those? Uh, it seems like they would just be in the car,

MINDI:

Right? Well, you know, your, your child will probably get bored. They'll get antsy. They want the trip to be done. They could get whiny. We're talking younger kids here.

CAREY:

Well, even older kids sometimes can be whiny in the car. Well,

MINDI:

If they've been trained when they're younger, then hopefully

CAREY:

They won't be.

MINDI:

Yeah. So you prepare them. It's going to take five hours. Let's get the things that you, you want to be doing, your toys, your drawing, your books, and let's have it, let's have it be a happy time. We could even listen to music. We can talk you. You kind of explain and describe what the time can be while you're in the car. And let's, let's let Jesus live through us. Let's let Jesus help us to be loving and not sad and whiny.

CAREY:

Yeah. I love what you did there. You did two different things. You pointed out the obstacles that might be faced is can seem a long time. You might get bored. You might. And I remember you even would say things like, you might be tempted to get fussy or grumpy, you know, but, and then you gave hope. That's the second thing you did. You gave a, an optimistic outlook on what this could be like. And you built vision into the kids for how fun this trip could

MINDI:

Be. And also knowing that if you have a child who really has struggled in this area in the last long road trip, let's say they, they fussed a lot. They were complaining a lot. You can remind them, remember when we, we drove to grandma's and it took us all day and remember how you cried a lot and you were fussy. Mom and dad don't want you to be that way. We want you to be happy. We want you to play the toys that you have. And we want you to do the things that you've brought to do. And if you are fussy, then you will get a spanking. Yeah. So you're preparing them for the whole scenario. Nothing's going to be a surprise. So then when they misbehave, you're not going to act out in wrong anger or irritation. You're just going to say, okay, we're going to pull off to this side because we told you if you got fussy, if you start throwing fits, you're getting a spanking.

CAREY:

Yeah. So you're following through.

MINDI:

Yeah. And you give them a spanking, then you go along <laugh> and they're appropriately humbled.

CAREY:

Yeah. Now let me just make a quick side note here. Parents pay attention to what benefits come out of this. Okay. Everybody has a better trip. There's lots less stress. You don't feel like the bad guy because you've already set the expectation and the kids need to comply. It's a win for everybody. If you approach this with a preparatory kind of a mindset,

MINDI:

Another area that is very common is going to the grocery store. Many times moms will bring their kids to the grocery store. And so many times that's when the fussiness comes. That's when the complaining comes. How many times have you been in the grocery store and you're hearing aisles over someone whining and crying. So I didn't want that to happen. I didn't want going to the grocery store to be a stress for me. Especially when it came to times when all five of my kids were going with me. Yeah. And so I would prepare them, I need to go to this store. It's going to take this long. It's or it's going to take a long time. There would be times because we lived in the mountains and we would drive two hours away to get a whole month's worth of groceries. And I would, I would prepare them, I need you to help me.

MINDI:

I need you to, my oldest would push another cart and we would just load it up and we were all prepared that it was going to be this job that needed to get done. And the attitudes that have happened in the past, I would bring them up and I would tell them, that's not a good attitude. You're not being loving to me and when you complain you're not being helpful to me, how do you think Jesus would want you to be? So I would just plan it out and prepare them and we would talk about it and then we would go and it would be wonderful times. Yeah. I remember a couple months ago, my oldest daughter telling me how she misses those grocery trips that we took. And she loved those times of us to being able to talk in the car and, and it's a lot because they became a positive thing. Yeah. Instead of a, a negative dread for the kids. You could do the same thing when you go out to eat at a restaurant preparing your, your children with how they need to behave and not to be too loud. And I think something also that might be important is to maybe not have them bring their devices to the restaurant and say, let's have a good family time. Let's talk at the table. Let's enjoy each other. We're going out to eat because we're celebrating.

CAREY:

So leave your phone at home

MINDI:

Or in the car or something. Yeah. And let's not bring your little tablet. I think that that might be a good thing for them to learn how to converse and socialize over a meal at a restaurant. You can be a good example of a family that loves one another.

CAREY:

Yeah. That's a great idea. Now let's talk about social settings like school, Sunday school, youth group, family situations. What are the kind of things that a parent could do to prepare their kids for those kind of things?

MINDI:

Well I'm thinking of a teenager, let's say a ninth grader going off to high school for the first time. How scary that would be.

CAREY:

Yeah.

MINDI:

And how important it is for the parent to sit them down and be able to ask them how they're feeling about it. What ki fears do they have? What are they excited about? And talking through some scenarios at what might happen and encourage them how to think and how to act. Right. Remind them Jesus is with them the whole day. I will be praying for them when they're gone. You know, things like that so that they as a teenager who's struggling with their insecurities will be more prepared. They're going to go to their first day of school with their mind already set. I would say things like, you might have friends that are not going to treat you well

CAREY:

Or if something happened and that's embarrassing, you know, what are you going to do? Right. Are you going to handle that? Yeah.

MINDI:

Or if you think someone's not being very kind, just smile at them and walk down the hall. I mean, you can give them options of how they can handle situations.

CAREY:

Yeah. And I think it's important too to remind them who they are in Christ. In the face of all those things. You're secure in Christ. You can do all things through him and strengthens you. You know, those kinds of things. You're helping your kids to apply the truth that they've been learning all these years as they go into a high school setting.

MINDI:

And even giving them Bible verses, maybe encouraging them to um, memorize them or put them on their mirror as they're getting ready for school to read

CAREY:

them. Yeah. And this is a good point too for us to say, as a discerning parent who's watching your kid's life and trying to prepare for things, be aware of those pivotal experiences like entering high school and don't just wait till the day right before be planning the weeks ahead talking about it, giving them notes of encouragement in light of high school starting soon. Taking them out for a special date to buy a new

set of clothes and talking about it. You know, things like that to make it more of a positive for them where they can build up their strength and their courage over time and be ready when they get there.

MINDI:

Yeah. That's such a good point. We need to be thinking ahead of what new scenarios our children are going to be in. Like when they first are starting to go to Sunday school, well you might put them in Sunday school and they're a baby, but when they're, they're older and they're with the toddlers, how to prepare them to think and mommy will be back soon and, and I want you just to be happy and have fun playing with the toys and mama will be back. You know, just with each stage that they're going through, maybe when they, um, first try out for their first soccer team or you know, whatever group activity that they're going to youth group or just preparing them and how to think and reminding them like you said, who they are in Christ and that he will give them the strength and he will help them.

CAREY:

Yeah. And be aware of not giving into the temptation to paint the Rosies to pictures. I mean the, the athletic tryout made me think of this, you know, prepare them for the possibility that they may not make the team. What's that going to be like? How are they to think in that circumstance? What if they make the team, how are they to think about it then you know, you want to help your kids face life as it is. And that's what preparatory parenting is about.

MINDI:

Yeah. Another area that's a big thing is going to visit family, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. Many times that's a, a happy occasion and the kids are looking forward to it. But sometimes it could be pretty negative. Maybe there's tension between you as the parents and your in-laws or even your own parents. So conversations to prepare about the time there. But you're wanting to encourage them to love their family just like Jesus would want. So having those talks of how it needs to happen or if your cousin mistreats you, this is what you would do. Things like that.

CAREY:

Yeah. And also conversations around, be considerate of the people whose home you're in. So like remember grandma has her curio cabinet full of all her knickknacks and she doesn't want you playing in it. She doesn't want you opening the door. You know, you're speaking from experience reminding the kids how to love their grandma best. Okay, let's go to some cultural situations. And these sadly are becoming more applicable to kids at a younger and younger age. We parents can't shy away from that. We got to address things. And by cultural situations, I mean the moral issues of the day as one example, you know, sexuality, the gender identity issues that are being pushed at a younger and younger age. We need to prepare our kids for these things. And parents don't shy away from talking about it. If you shy away out of your own insecurity and discomfort, you're going to handicap your kids and make them vulnerable to the enemy's attacks and you don't want to do that. You're going to give them the mind of Christ, help them know what it is and how to think about these things.

MINDI:

It's such a protection to them when you speak of something that they will come across in the future. And then when they come across it and they know how to think, mommy and daddy's told me that's not right and it's not right because of these reasons, they're prepared to know how to draw a conclusion

about it. That's right. Instead of the enemy and the power of sin. Being able to get a foothold in and tempt them away to even think it might be good.

CAREY:

Yeah. And also the influential and win some people in the environment. A teacher or a librarian, a school counselor, somebody they already respect on a certain level is telling them it is. Right. Well if you haven't prepared them, they're going to just assume that's true. Another thing that falls into the cultural situation is I think is world events. When something scary is happening in the world or something that's on the news all the time, we don't want to hide those things from our kids. We want to equip them through preparatory parenting, how to handle those things, how to think about those things. I remember when we were having a lot of our kids really young, I think we had three at the time. The whole Y2K thing happened. Now if you're a younger parent, you may not even know what Y2K was. It's back when the year 2000 came along.

CAREY:

There was this theory that all the computer systems in the world were going to break because the software wasn't designed in a way that it could handle. Going from 19 hundreds into two thousands and everybody was panicking, people were hoarding, food craziness was going on and you heard it everywhere. You heard it at school, the kids heard about it. There were TV shows about it on a kid's level, you know. And, and we talked to our kids about those things. We wanted them to be informed and not to fear. We wanted them to know God's in control of this. God's the one who's going to handle this. He'll take care of us and transmit that sort of a faith to our kids.

MINDI:

And we were definitely prayerful about it at that time ourselves. And so what we felt God was leading us in, we talked to our children about it and we told them why because there were some people who were stocking up food and we didn't feel led to do that. And so we would tell them why. But we would also tell them they weren't wrong in doing that. We're just helping them to see how we were following the Lord and seeking him and doing what we thought he was saying. Yeah. So our children didn't grow up having a judgmental attitude towards those who stored up food. They just knew, they just saw by our example that we sought the Lord about what to do about

CAREY:

It. Yeah. And another event that happened in our lifetime, just as an example, so you can think about this is the attacks at nine 11. In 2001 we were in Hawaii. I remember seeing it on tv, seeing the, the buildings coming down and it was like the only thing people talked about for the next month. And our kids were a part of that. They would hear it. And I mean think as a small child or even a middle school-aged child, the fear that could grow in their hearts as they see terrorists are attacking our country. How can we as parents help our kids in situations like that?

MINDI:

That's a very good opportunity to go to scripture, memorize verses together about it, about fearing man and not trusting the Lord, teaching them to walk by faith. Things like that. You might have a child that becomes afraid of things. Something that they might have heard at school regarding social issues or cultural issues. And so it to be able to prepare their mind of how to think when they hear those conversations again is very crucial. Very important.

CAREY:

Yeah. So there are some fundamental things that we as parents need if we're going to lead our kids well in this way, first of all, we need to ask for wisdom. We've talked about James chapter one and five through seven before on the podcast, but it's worth reading it again because this is an amazing promise from the God of creation.

MINDI:

It says, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith with no doubting for the one who doubts is like a way, but the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind for that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double minded man, unstable in all his ways.

CAREY:

So parents, first thing we should be doing is asking for wisdom day after day after day of how to guide our kids. How to prepare them for both the everyday situations and those life sized situations so that they are not caught off guard. So they're wise themselves and able to handle the circumstances of life.

MINDI:

Talking about wisdom, this whole idea preparing your children really is going to establish for them a wise mindset. When life comes across their path in all different forms, they're going to be in this mode of seeking wisdom. And I need to be prepared for this. What do I need to be doing? I just got a new job. How do I need to think? I'm going to be getting married next month. How do I need to prepare? So that kind of a mindset and so to speak, formula to live your life is, is so very important. So very helpful to be able to live a dependent life on the Lord because you're seeking him. You're realizing I need to go to him to know how to live this new thing's coming across my path. What do I need to do? Help me to be prepared, Lord.

CAREY:

Yeah, that's great. And I wish I had thought to look this up, but there's a proverb, I think it's in chapter 17 or 18 of Proverbs that says, A fool sees danger approaching and does nothing. So the opposite of that is true as well. The wise person sees danger coming and prepares. That's wisdom. That's why we need it so badly. The second thing we can do as parents is we need to know our Bibles. We need to have the wisdom of God available in the scriptures at hand so we can advise our kids with it. Second Timothy three, 16 and 17 tells us all about the benefits of scripture. Would you like to read that for us, Mindi?

MINDI:

Yes. It says All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for repro, for correction, and for training and righteousness.

CAREY:

Notice that training in righteousness. That's what we're doing with our kids. Continue

MINDI:

That the man, women, and child of God may be complete equipped for every good work. And isn't that our desire that our children leave our homes, graduate from high school, leave and get married equipped for every good work that the Lord has prepared for

CAREY:

Them. Yeah. And so that they are complete. Did you notice that word as well? That's another way to translate. That's mature. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So they are ready. That is what we're shooting for as parents. And the word of God is instrumental in that. I think the last thing I would encourage you to do is to seek out resources that can help you in this goal of, of preparing your kids. One ministry that I'm very familiar with have a relationship. And Mindi and I actually know the couple, Rob and Amy Reno over@visionaryfamily.com. It's actually vi visionary fam.com is their website. They have all kinds of resources, curriculum, books, sermons, videos, even family night resources. You can download a curriculum and use it in your family night. So go check out visionary fam.com if you need some help. And then also on our website, God Fearing Kids, we have a q and a button. You can click record your voice, tell us your question about your specific circumstance. And we would love to help you get better prepared to prepare your kids for the life that they're going to live.

MINDI:

Or if you just would like to write us an email with your questions, you could go to the website@godfearingkids.com. We would love to answer your questions that way too.

CAREY:

Yep. Use the contact form. All right. Let's pray about these issues. Our Lord and our God, we're grateful that you are God of wisdom and that you provide wisdom to those who ask. And we pray for our brothers and sisters right now who are listening to this episode and are so eager to see their children be complete and mature, equipped for every good work. And we ask you, Lord to pour out on them your wisdom. Pour out on them the power and discernment of your Holy Spirit so that they will be the kind of parents who wisely prepare their kids for the circumstances of life. And in so doing or teaching their kids how to develop wisdom themselves. We ask you Jesus to do this in your name. Amen.