



027: Social skills: Help your child develop them

INTRO AUDIO:

I think all of us have been around a kid who's socially awkward. They may be shy, they may just not have good social skills. They may even be a little too overbearing and aggressive. As a parent, what can you do to help your children love others instead of being so insecurely? Well awkward. This is God kids and the parents who raise them,

CAREY:

Hey friends, Carey Green here. Mindi and I are glad to be back with you once again.

MINDI:

Hello.

CAREY:

And we want to talk to you today about how to help your kids develop healthy social skills. And when we say social skills, let me say, first of all, we're talking about the ability your children need to love others the way God would have them love others. That's really what we mean when we say social skills. So let's think this through from a just an everyday standpoint. Eventually all of us parents are going to deal with this issue. In one way or another. We're going to have one of our kids who we feel is too shy and reserved. Or we might have a kid who we feel is dominant and overbearing. We might have one which we did, who we feel is over talking. They just talk way too much. They're not very considerate of the kids around them. So behaviors like these are often excused, wouldn't you? You say Mindi? Yes. Yeah, gimme an example of how a parent might excuse one of these behaviors.

MINDI:

I think an example that you as parents might relate to is say a 10 year old boy who is kind of a bully, picks on the little kids, or he's a little bit too aggressive and he hurts the younger siblings or the younger kids in the nursery or the Sunday school and you just think he's outgoing. He's aggressive and you don't want to dampen his confidence. And so you as a parent might excuse that and think he'll grow out

CAREY:

Of it. The problem with behaviors like these when they're excused is that habits are formed and personality traits that are not becoming and not godly becoming ingrained,

MINDI:

Right? And then another thing that many times we don't think about is wisdom and discernment is not learned, is not gained. So for that 10 year old boy, he has no idea how he's coming across to his friends or siblings because the parent's not telling them. So it might be true, he's going to be a more outgoing leadership type personality, which is wonderful, but it's going to be harder and harder for him to learn discernment in consideration when he is 15 if he's been allowed to be that way.

CAREY:

So today we want to help you think through this job that you have as a parent to always be aware of how or if your child is loving others as Jesus would have them do, you are to train them how to do that if they're not. So first, let's start at the beginning where we seem to always start. We have to depend on the Lord for wisdom and for insight. Mindi, we have Isaiah 41 10 picked out here. Would you read that for us?

MINDI:

Yes. It says, fear not for I am with you. Be not dismayed. For I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. So from this verse, we can gather that the Lord will help us as we rely on him. He will grant us insight as we need it. So as God's people, we need to rely on his truth. The things that we read in His word, his promises. We need to by faith believe they will happen.

CAREY:

We need to put this into a very relational context when we think about it. Because when you were a kid and your dad promised you something, I mean you were banking on that and you were just very enthused about the good thing your dad said he's going to do. Because you get, you get your hope set on it, you get excited, you get enthused. And here we have the God of the universe who's giving us promises that he will be with us. He will help us, he will strengthen us. I mean parents, we got to rely on that. We got to trust that.

MINDI:

And we as parents have seen that happen many times in this area of our kids being social and relating. We've had kids who have been shy, we have kids who have talked too much. We have kids who've been kind of inconsiderate and unkind. And our kids are at the stage now where what we've taught them is starting to be applied. And it's really actually been a delight to us. For example, I'm thinking of one of our children who really struggled with being shy and they are just coming out and flourishing and they're having an example after example where people are coming to them saying how friendly they are, how loving they are. And this daughter of ours is really overwhelmed because she still doesn't see herself that way. But we have trained her in the tools and in how to consider and love one another. And she's worked really hard at applying it and she's doing it in the Lord's strength. Jesus is doing it through her and it's kind of funny she doesn't feel like she's doing it. Yeah.

CAREY:

But

MINDI:

It's a blessing.

CAREY:

Yeah, it's absolutely a blessing. And that story is just to give you hope that these things, if you address them well can be changed. Your child doesn't have to be destined to be the bully or to be the quiet one or to be, you know, overwhelmed by social circumstances. You can equip them with the wisdom of God.

MINDI:

Think about this. Is it okay for our children to be more quiet or is it okay for them to be more of the talker? Yes, those things are all right. But that is why you need to be dependent on the Lord. How do you want me to encourage this child of mine to love others even though they might be more of an introvert and more quiet? And God will give you that wisdom. He will lead you in that. And you want them as your child to have the right perspective in how to depend on the Lord so that they're not either feeling criticized or thinking it's okay to be unfriendly.

CAREY:

That's right. Absolutely. Well let's take a very practical tack on this issue. Proverb 22 6 says, train up a child in the way he should go. Now we often refer to this verse looking toward wavered kids and say, when he's old, he will not depart from you know that it, that it's hope that they will come back. And that's absolutely true. But I want to focus on what it says, the beginning of the verse. Train up a child in the way he should go. So every child has a way they should go. God has designed them as they are, he has a purpose for their life. And you as their parent are to train them up in that way. And so what does that look like practically for us, Mindi? How do we do that?

MINDI:

Well, we need to be a student of our child. We, we need to understand the heart of all of our children in terms of their personality, their likes, dislikes, their gifting so that we can encourage them in how they should be towards one another and how they should relate. We don't want to cause our more shy child to feel like they have to be like their more outgoing older brother because that's not how God made them to be. We want them all to feel loved and accepted the way they are. But they need to know that they need to be loving towards others as Christ wants them to be.

CAREY:

Yeah. Which in a real practical sense means we have to purposefully observe our children's actions and make assessments. Right, right,

MINDI:

Right. But another important aspect in training your child to be socially loving, socially Christ-like is knowing that at times it's going to be sacrifice. Knowing at times they're going to have to love their friends or give into something that their friend might want sacrificially. Because just out of love, just out of love. They might have a friend who's overbearing, who's very needy and clingy and you want to teach them how to have healthy boundaries. But to allow your child to know that sometimes they need to sacrifice. I mean Christ sacrifice on this earth when he was ministering to the people. But he also went away to be with the Father <laugh> where they couldn't find him. I mean he, he had a balance of, of filling himself back up again. So learning how to love one another is always going to include sacrifice. So having a conversation with your children about that at different times in different stages of their life would be very helpful.

CAREY:

Yeah. And sometimes those sacrifices, just by the very nature of the word mean, they're going to have to step into a situation that because of their personality they may not be totally comfortable with. So the introvert may need to step into a situation here and there where they have to be overtly encouraging to someone even though it's uncomfortable, even though they feel like that's not me. Jesus calls us to sacrifice for the sake of others. And we have to be open to that. And I love what you're saying about kind of clueing your kids in on that, giving them the heads up that this is part of what loving people is going to look like at times.

MINDI:

Right. Or your child who always takes the lead or tends to be the life of the party. And you're noticing that they're kind of ignoring, not necessarily ignoring, but they're leaving out other people in the crowd, other friends. So you want to teach them how to back away and maybe push other people to the forefront or ask questions. So those other people will be focused on for a while. I mean

CAREY:

There's, I've been drawn into the conversation. Yeah.

MINDI:

So there's just all different things. And the Lord will give you great creative ideas from age two to age 18 or 20, you know, <laugh> in terms of helping your child to become more mindful of loving their friends and family as they relate to them.

CAREY:

And so when a parent is talking with their child about an issue, say they've noticed something in the way they're relating with their eight year old friends or their 12 year old friends and they feel like that child needs to be made aware, we've talked about this before, they need to be very specific, need to not shy away because they feel like they don't want to crush the kids' spirit or they don't want to make them feel like they're only being criticized. They need to be specific. They need to help the kids see what it is, define it very clearly, and show biblically why this is not the best thing for them to be doing. What other thoughts do you have about that?

MINDI:

I think that that's very important, very helpful to be specific and to try to address things that you pick up on right away. I just thought of this that talking about sarcasm I think would be very important to bring up with your children when your kids get to junior high, high school age sarcasm is a big deal. It's, it's a pure thing. And to teach your child God's perspective about sarcasm, sarcasm can be fun sometimes and it could be innocent sometimes. And you can kind of in a backdoor way, actually build someone up <laugh> by joking around sar sarcastically. But that's an example of if your child is just having fun, but they're, they're constantly cutting down their friends because that's what kids do. They cut each other down sarcastically. Help them to see that the better thing would be to try to build up their friends. Because that's what God wants us to do. He wants us to build one another up.

CAREY:

Amen. I think that sarcasm is one of those things that very quickly can get out of control because everybody's laughing having a good time, except for the person who's the butt of the sarcasm. They typically are not. And we need to recognize that and help our kids to understand it as well. So when we are guiding our kids in these things, we've already referred to it, but we need to define what's going on from a scriptural basis. We need to be able to look at scripture's, instruction and help our children see how believers are to be loving in the world.

MINDI:

I have found reading through the proverbs on a regular basis while we were raising our young children and even through their teen years, that was so helpful to me because there were little small little proverbs that would make me realize, oh, this is something my son needs to work on, or this is something my daughter is having problems with and I had it right there to be able to encourage them to even write the verse and put it on their mirror and talk to them about it and maybe encourage them to memorize it.

CAREY:

Yeah. See, and I like what you're saying there, you talk to them about it and you encourage them to memorize it. There was an engagement around the verse. You didn't just like do verse bombs all over the house hoping they get the hint Right. You're being a very proactive

MINDI:

Mom. And I was telling them why I had a concern or what I was thinking of and I would give them examples of what they should say or do instead of what I saw them say and do so that they would know. I mean, okay, you think I'm going the wrong way? Well which way should I go? Yeah,

CAREY:

That's good. And I love also that you pointed out that you weren't afraid to use your personal daily quiet time as an opportunity to gain discernment from the Lord, for how to instruct your kids. You would see a verse or a principle in the scripture and it would just like a light going off in your head. This is for my son, this is what he needs. And parents, I hope you see that's a very personal gift to you from the Lord when he does that, don't take it as well. I need to focus on me. I need to stay focused on me and the Lord and my quiet time. Well that is part of you and the Lord because you're a parent, you know? So he's equipping you and he's giving you what you need in that moment.

MINDI:

So to summarize what we are saying, we as parents, you parents listening out there need to be mindful of your children and how they relate to one another, how they relate to you, how they relate to their friends, their grandparents. Be observant and notice their behavior. Notice how they are socially. And it needs to matter to you. And you need to bring your concerns to the Lord and seek him for guidance. And how to help and encourage your children because that's a huge part of your child's development is how they relate to the world.

CAREY:

And it's through that relating to the world that they're going to see the light of Christ in your child and experience God's love through your child. I mean, don't sell your kids short. They can have a huge impact. I mean, it's funny, we laugh sometimes. We're at the age now, people know us by our kids

rather than knowing our kids by us. You know, it used to be, oh you're carrying Mindi's kid, but now it's, oh, you're Caleb's mom, you know, <laugh> and that sort of thing. Yeah. And it's because they've become adept at this by God's grace. And it in large part is because we took the time to instruct. So parents, thanks for listening. We have another resource that we mentioned back on episode 25 that is a list of the one, another commands of the New Testament that you might find helpful in praying through how you need to talk to your kids regarding how they relate to others. We will put a link for that in the description and in the show notes for this episode, which you can find at God-fearing kids.com/ 27. Alright, Mindi, would you pray for us as we wrap up here?

MINDI:

Yes. Dear Lord, thank you so much for your wisdom and your guidance. Thank you for the hope that we have in you. And I just pray that you'll encourage parents listening by giving them your insight and your discernment about their children and in the areas that they should be praying for them and the specific areas they should be instructing them, especially in how they relate to others. I just ask, Lord, that you will bring hope into these families' homes, and that you will also open the hearts of the children to be humble and teachable and to listen to their parents. I just pray, father, that you'll spread your love through your wisdom as you help these parents in Jesus' name,

CAREY:

Amen.