



014: Teach your kids to know God every day of their lives

INTRO AUDIO:

Take a moment and think about the course of your life and answer this question. What has been your single most greatest ambition in life? Is it related to your career? Is it related to your family or the legacy you might leave today? We're going to be talking about the most important thing you could be teaching your kids. This is God Fearing Kids and the Parents Who Raise Them.

MINDI:

Welcome back. This is Mindi

CAREY:

Green and I'm Carey, how you doing today? We're glad you're with us. Today's episode. We want to talk to you about the very vital and practical thing of teaching your kids to know God, you want this to be a lifelong pursuit for your kids. And it has to do with knowing his character, knowing his heart, knowing who he is, but also it has to do with the practical things we do. And we teach our kids to do, to put themselves in a place where that can happen. Let's just start off by getting the obvious out of the way. You know, when you're growing up as a child, or maybe when your children are expressing their desires for their life, even now they talk about their goals and what they want to be when they grow up, you know, maybe they say a hockey player or a doctor or a garbage truck driver. I don't know what your kid might want to be, but those really are inferior goals for a Christ follower. Our greatest ambition should be to know our God, that's the greatest aspiration. Any human being can have Mindi, would you read Jeremiah 9 23 through 24 for us

MINDI:

Thus says the Lord let, not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let, not the mighty man boast in his might let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts, boast in this that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord who practices steadfast, love justice and righteousness in the earth for in these things. I delight declares the Lord. Something I really love about what these verses say is that what we are supposed to be excited about knowing about God is that he practices steadfast love and justice and righteousness. And it says that God delights in that. I mean it, I mean, it can't be better than that. I mean, here we are human beings on this earth who struggle with feeling loved and hear God is saying, I want you to know me. I want you to know that I love you. It's steadfast love that blows my mind

CAREY:

And all those other qualities as well. I mean, we live in a world where so much injustice is being done and we can start to feel hopeless and discouraged, but God says he delights in bringing about justice. So

there's hope for us there when we know that about our God and on and on, we can talk about all the characteristics mentioned there, but the point is, this is the highest ambition folks is to know our God. And naturally we want that for our children as well. So this episode, we're going to be talking about how we can practically move our children in that direction. And the first point that I think that we need to unpack here is as parents, we can tend to think our kids can't comprehend big spiritual concepts, especially when they're really young. And, and I've seen parents even with grade school kids and middle school, aged kids kind of dumb things down on a spiritual level because they think their kids and they just, they don't understand that stuff yet.

MINDI:

I think that if we have that attitude or that concern or fear, we are not going to raise very mature children in the Lord because we don't have high expectations for them. I'm sure we talk to our children at young ages. I mean, I, I know this as a fact actually about things that other parents are thinking, why in the world are you bringing that up? That's way too deep. That's way too theological, you know, whatever. But because we desired for them to know those deep things about the Lord at such a young age, we started the dialogue and then the next day, God gave us a better idea of how to reword it. And then the next day we repeated it. And so as time goes on, they start asking questions because their mind is growing and developing their mind is reaching for a high standard. And as a result, our children were seen as more mature than their age through every stage than living at home. We had comments about that over and over again, from friends, other parents, teachers, they appear to be more mature. They're even in that stage. Now they always have been that way. And I think it's because we had that kind of a mindset. We're not going to dumb things down. We're going to try to help bring them up to a level of understanding that we hope they can become.

CAREY:

Yeah. In a very cute example of this that I think will drive this point home that your kids can grasp deep and vibrant spiritual truths. Even at a very young age is our oldest son. When he was five years old, I had decided I was going to help in his Sunday school class. And so I wasn't the teacher, I was just the helper. And so I was just there as a part of the big group of kids at the beginning, they would have songs and they would have skits and all the big group things. And then they would break up into their classes. So I was sitting next to him on the little bench in the Sunday school. And the teacher was getting all the kids involved and she was saying, what are things that God can't do? And they would say he can't lie. And she would say yes. Right. He can't lie. And he can't sin. Yes. He can't sin. That's right. And then some kid yelled out. He can't die. And the teacher said, yes, that's right. He can't die. And my little son, Aaron, he turned to me shaking his head. And I was kind of confused. I didn't know what he was, what he was thinking. And so I leaned over and said, what are you thinking? He said he did die for my sins.

CAREY:

And I'm choking up here because it's such a precious thing to know that our five year old could understand such a transformative truth that his God who created the universe died for a sense at five years old.

MINDI:

And I really believe our children became Christians came to know Jesus at three summit two because we did not shy away from speaking deep truth to them from as early as they could start, remembering God is so faithful to work in our child's heart. It's at the youngest of ages.

CAREY:

Yeah. He is faithful to himself. He's faithful to his word. And it does not go out without coming back with a harvest of the purpose. He intended it for the book of Isaiahs. So don't allow yourself to believe the lie that your children can't get deep things. They can. They really can't. The next thing. Let's talk about how to engage in this mission of introducing your children to God and helping them understand his heart and who he is. Imagine your child at 15 years old at 25 years old at 35 years old and even beyond what would it look like for them to know and follow hard after Jesus at those ages, if you can get a clear picture in your mind of those things, that is your target. That is what you're aiming for. So what can you do now to facilitate that kind of a thing? Well, first you as a parent have to accept a responsibility. You have to realize this is on my plate. This is my job description. I am not going to fail at this by the grace of God. I am going to have the holy spirit help me. I am going to teach my kids Deuteronomy six, four through nine, makes that very clear.

MINDI:

It says, hero Israel, the Lord or God. The Lord is one. You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house. And when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as front lips between your eyes, you shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates.

CAREY:

That's a pretty clear passage of what God commanded Israel to do. And it applies to us today. We are to teach God's statutes diligently to our children. That's our responsibility. So parents accept that responsibility, understand that's what you will be held accountable for. And let's get busy moving our children in that direction.

MINDI:

An encouragement to the moms here, being the homemaker in my quiet time, once again, I would find verses that I thought that would be really good for my children to know at this stage in their life. It could be they're young and it's a simple little verse and they're just starting to read or they're in their teens and they're struggling with anxiety. I would make 'em on a nice card and I would do it with markers and I'd put on the refrigerator. So every time they came into the kitchen, they would see those verses or I'd even put the little three by five cards on their mirror, in their bathroom. Later on, our kids got the idea to use dry erase markers and they would write verses on the mirror that were important to them. And that always did my heart so good. My children actually still do that. I, I see sometimes in their bathrooms.

CAREY:

And can I interject there? I remember too, you didn't just like make up the index card and stick it on the fridge and hope it was a covert thing that sunk in. You would say, Hey kids, did you see the verse I put on the fridge? Here's why I did it. Here's what the Lord showed me. Here's where I think it applies to your life. I mean, you would instruct

MINDI:

Them. Right. And I would encourage them. And I would tell them I'm praying for them. Or I would say, I think God wants us to think about this this week, you know? Yes. There was nothing covert. There was nothing behind the scenes regarding that.

CAREY:

Yeah. And that's an example of the next point. We need to make this practical every day of our kids' lives. We don't want it to be a covert thing. We hope sinks in. We don't want it to be this kind of ambiguous nebulous thing that, yes, we love God. But what does that really mean? We're going to be fleshing this out day by day by day, Deuteronomy six gave a lot of practical things. Talk about it here. Talk about it there. We talked about the, in the previous episode, actually of ways to communicate with your kids about the truth of God. So go back and listen to the previous episode. If you didn't hear that, but we also want to teach our kids how to have their own devotional time. How to have a quiet time. If that's the phrase you used for it, mind, you were really good at this, helping our kids understand what this was and why it was important. Fill us in on how you dealt with that. When our kids were young,

MINDI:

We're talking about wanting to teach our children to know God and to know him every day and to be aware of him every day. The very simple question that comes to my mind is, well, how do I know God, I know him through his word and through prayer, then getting inhabit of hearing the holy spirit, speak to me. And so it was a heavy burden on my heart for our children to learn how to have their own quiet times. That's what we call it. A part of what I did as a mom is as they got older, I would have a job chart on the refrigerator for all of their jobs, all of their normal responsibilities throughout the day. And one of it was a quiet time when they were young, I would draw pictures and I would draw a picture of a Bible. And they would know that means they need to go look at their Bible.

MINDI:

When they're a kid, they just looked at their Bible story book. And that was a cute little thing as they got older and we learned how to read, we got them Bibles that were fitting and appropriate for their age. And so our children grew up seeing Carey and I have our quiet times and hearing things that we would learn, because we would just share it naturally. And they were asked to have their quiet times. That was a part of their daily routine. It was something that they needed to do. It was something that they had to do, but the key in helping them to not become bitter about that is we, as parents had to be very discerning. And since that, to the Lord about seeing if there's rebellion and bitterness surrounding our kids, having to have quiet time, I remember asking God to show us, is this something that our kids are having a hard time with or they becoming bitter, make us aware of how we need to talk to them about that.

MINDI:

And I remember here and there asking, do you like having your quiet time or do you dread it or do you hate it? But we did try to bring balance. Our kids had a day off when we learned to implement days off in our family, we gave them a day off and it was Saturdays. And we told 'em, you don't even have to have your quiet time on that day. And when they were little, that was like, wow, really? I don't have to have my quiet time. We just wanted to help them to know that having time with the Lord and knowing the Lord every single day is the most important thing, but it doesn't have to be a rigid every single day of your life. But the beautiful thing of it is now that our children are all grown. They are all having their quiet times regularly.

MINDI:

And of course we all go through those stages of fighting to have it as regularly as we want and life happens. And we've gone through that. Our kids have gone through that. Our oldest son just told us that I don't know, maybe a few weeks back that the Lord was convicting him. You need to get back to having your regular quiet time because you're the man of the house and you need to train your four boys. And he was really convicted and, and he never has walked away from the Lord in his life, but he was just letting busyness get into his life. Yeah. So it's just a beautiful thing. Like our middle daughter. I remember when she was in her teens, memorizing scripture was, became a big deal to her and she was quoting scripture all the time and she's still not married. But when she talks to us about who she wants to marry, she says, I want him to love Jesus more than anything. And I think of our oldest daughter, how she would sit out on our front porch and she loves to talk and she would just sit there and look at the beautiful mountains and just talk and talk to the Lord and listen to him and pray. And many times she would probably cry. She's our crier. It's a very sweet thing. But so we see fruit from our children because we made them have a quiet time and it was a positive thing because we made sure it, it wasn't a negative thing.

CAREY:

Yeah. We equipped them. We taught them what this is supposed to be, what your, your attitude should be. As you have your quiet time, you know, you get to listen to the words of God, you get to hear his wisdom. You get to learn of his love for you. You know, it's so exciting and, and communicating it that way is very helpful. And just with some nitty gritty detail here, when they're really young and they're not reading yet, maybe you just have them come sit with you and you do your quiet time and you read the scripture aloud and you talk to them about it and you help them understand. And then you have them pray with you and you, you just walk through the motions with them and you might do that for weeks with a little one, just so they're getting acclimated and accustomed to it. And then as they begin, reading mind mentioned the Bible story books and things like that, where they can read the abbreviated version of the story and just have the concepts and the characters in their mind and see from the stories who God is and how he acts with his people and those sorts of things. And then as they're becoming better readers, we got them a Bible that was geared toward them as children and, and was more of a word for word verse by verse kind of a Bible rather than a story book.

MINDI:

And we would tell them practically how to have a quiet time, start out, praying, asking Jesus to the holy spirit, to help you to understand we'd even instruct them. Why don't you read the book of John or maybe we would find a Bible study that would help them walk through something. There's just so many different ways, specific things we would have them ask for wisdom today, ask God Jesus to live through you and control you. So you will be loving to your friends and your sisters and you know, things like that. We would just make it very practical and simple. It started out just a few minutes and now our kids are having their own, you know, 30 to 45 minute quiet times every day. We would also have quiet time with them periodically in grade school as a teenager, just to see how it is.

MINDI:

We want to hear what God is doing in their life. But we also kind of want to if given opportunity, if there's any instruction we need to give, I still have this note that our son left me on the counter one morning. He was in eighth grade and, and he left it and I woke up that morning. I, he said, mom, I want

to have quiet time with you today. Is that all right? If I have my quiet time with you. And, and that was just the most precious thing to me. And I thought, absolutely, you can have your quiet time with me.

CAREY:

So yeah. Yeah. That's wonderful. And of course there's a lot of detail and practical things you can do in this realm. But the gist of it is don't be afraid to teach your children, the disciplines that you need. They need in order to draw near to God, we need his word. We need prayer. We need time alone with the holy spirit, teaching us the same is true for your kids as is true for you. So don't shy away from that or think it's impossible. It's not impossible at all. All right, let's go on and talk about some of the things on the parent's side of things besides teaching your children. How to have a quiet time. You need to also realize that if you're going to teach your kids what God is like every day, your character and your lifestyle are going to play a huge part in that they will comprehend God in large part the way they see you. I remember thinking of God as a child and he strangely resembled my dad's attitude and my dad's character. I just think that's a natural thing for human beings to do. We see our heavenly Father, the way we see our earthly father a lot of times. So if you're a dad take that seriously, your character matters in the way you talk matters. And the way you treat your kids matters because they're going to be shaping opinions and, and a formation in their mind of what God is like from that behavior.

MINDI:

And if that reality doesn't make you feel a heavy weight, it should, and it should feel so heavy that we feel like this is impossible. Hmm. And then that should drive us to complete dependence on the Lord where we're saying, I need my quiet time today. I cannot be a parent today without my quiet time. It's a great place to be because we cannot show Christ to our children. If we are not surrendered to ourselves,

CAREY:

That dependence on the Lord to help us every step of the way of a parent is huge. Another aspect of your life as a parent is kind of subtle compared to what we just talked about. But it's how you talk about God. What are the things coming out of your mouth that represent him? Are you expressing trust when difficult times come or are you expressing anxiety and fear and doubt your kids are going to pick up on that. If you don't walk the talk, they won't learn to walk the talk. That doesn't mean you want to be a hypocrite. Doesn't mean you want to hide the things, but just like this, almost if you do express, I'm feeling afraid or I'm feeling anxious, which you should, if you're feeling it turn right around and say, but nevertheless, God is faithful. I will trust the Lord. I'm deciding to trust him just like this. Almost do. You can do that as a parent and be as genuine as you want, but turn it back to the Lord and strengthen both your faith and your kids' faith at the same time.

MINDI:

That's so good. Being a parent really is a great accountability for us. Yeah. To live a Christ-centered life, because we're going to go through all those hard times and temptations that life brings. But our child is right there watching this and like, oh no, I got to find out the right way to respond to this so that I could speak it rightly to my child, because I want them to have success as they become an adult.

CAREY:

Yeah. And another aspect of our words is are we thankful? People are expressing gratitude to God for the things from sunsets to delicious dinners, to, you know, uh, raise at work. Are we being people who praise our God for the things that he's doing in our life and do our kids see that?

MINDI:

Yes. I, I think it's so very important to bring God into everything of life. He is the creator of life. It needs to be in everything from the most insignificant to the very obvious.

CAREY:

Yeah. Because he does fill all and is in all the scripture says, so we need to live that way. We need to talk that way. We need to point out things. Our kids probably missed as they were walking through the park, did you see the color? And that trees leaves. Let's look at that. Isn't that amazing? Look what God did. You know, simple things like that, that, and of course you don't have to notice every single thing and point out every single thing. But you get the point, you want to be observant of what God's done in the world. So you can point it out to your kids and they can develop that wonder and that amazement at what he's done.

MINDI:

And an important point in this is to think of the areas that are really important to them at the different stages. Like when they first start doing video games, they could be so consumed with it. And if you're a wise parent, you're going to limit their time. So they're not always doing it, but bring God into those video games. It's a blessing from the Lord. Isn't it great that you can play like this, that God's given you the capacity in your mind to play those games that I can't even play. Yeah. I mess up all the time, but teach them to be thankful that that's something where Jesus is with them. Did you know Jesus is sitting right next to you when you're sitting there playing Minecraft, ask them to help you to do a good job on the game, teach them how to bring God into their life. If they're your child's really into sports, sports can easily become a God. Yeah. Sports is a God to many grown men <laugh> and maybe women, but help your junior high teenage boy, who's really into sports to bring God into it, to ask God, to help them to play their best, to, to have the right behavior when he gets upset or angry at, you know, at his performance or, you know, there's so much that you can do, but bringing into the areas of their life that they find themselves consumed in.

CAREY:

Yeah. And the next thing that we wanted to talk about was staying engaged in your child's life, through drawing attention, to things that are happening around them. In the last episode, we talked a lot about circumstances that happen to them, but we're talking here about circumstances happening around them. Like if they were to come and say their friends' parents are getting divorced once a great opportunity for you to talk to your kids about what God thinks about divorce and how sad it is that they're experiencing this. And let's pray for them that God will bring repentance and healing and whatever's needed. I mean, that's just one example, but your kids are seeing things around them every day that God is involved in. And as John Piper says, God is doing thousands of things in anyone's life at any given time. And we may see three of them <laugh> we need to draw our kids attention to more than just three things. We need them to see who God is and that he's involved in everything.

MINDI:

Right? And whether you homeschool your children or whether they go to a school outside of your home, they can learn about the world. They don't have to be the typical homeschooler that is too sheltered, for example, because life happens. And if you bring it into the home and teach your child about what God thinks about it and how they should think about it, then they're going to leave the home, not feeling shocked and stunned by all the sin that's around them. Same thing. If they're going to a public school

and a lot is going on, well, you're going to have a lot more conversations and you need to be very diligent in that situation. But isn't it great that you can talk about the situations that's happening outside of them and it doesn't have to happen to them that they can gain wisdom and know God's heart about those things that are going on and hopefully never experience it themselves.

CAREY:

Yeah. That's a wonderful, wonderful point. The next thing that we want to talk about is that you want to approach all this with a reliance on scripture. Now we have two passages here. Mind, why don't you read the first one? And I will read the second

MINDI:

Hebrews four 12 for the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edge sword piercing to the division of soul and of spirit of joints and tomorrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

CAREY:

And then I've got second Timothy three 16 through 17. It says all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness that the man or could we say, child of God may be complete equipped for every good work. These passages just point out what an incredible resource we have at our disposal in the scriptures. God has revealed his wisdom to us. I mean, stop for a moment and let that land on you. The creator of the universe has made available in written form his wisdom for you to use in your own life and in the life of your children. We would be fools not to take full advantage of that.

MINDI:

It would be a crime if we did not train our children, how to read their Bible daily.

CAREY:

Yeah. How to interpret it, rightly how to understand God's heart and his desire for them in the show notes for this episode, which you'll find @godfearingkids.com slash 0 1 4, for episode 14, you will find some links to some resources related to this. These are scripture memory resources that I've come across that I just love. One of them is called fighter verses, which the desiring God ministry is put together. And there's a version fighter verses for parents. So look that over there will be a link in the resources. There's another, that's the Bible memory goal. This guy is really pushing to have people memorize lengthy passages of scripture, like chapters and books of scripture and is having great success with it. So check that one out. And then there's a couple of musical resources that I'm going to include. Pop scripture songs and scripture memory songs. I've got some Spotify playlists that I've got links to in the descriptions for this episode.

CAREY:

These are just incredible ways that you can practically get scripture working for you in your home, in the lives of your kids. These are wonderful things. Okay. Moving on from the scripture memory stuff, I want to bring up something that we didn't formally use in our home, but if we had it all to do over again, we might very well use. And that's an old churchy word called catechisms. And it may sound like something that, you know, that just sounds too liturgical. I don't know if I want to go there, but what it is real simply. And, and I'm going to leave a link for a resource to it, catechism for children. But what it is simply

is very important questions with very simple answers and you teach your children the proper answers. So who is God? And they would reply with a very scripted, certain answer. God is creativity, heavens, and earth, this, this, this, you know, and they memorize it. They're just learning. And as you go through it, you talk about it as a family. It's not like a, a rote repetition sort of thing. And you leave it at that. You want to walk through these things together. I think catechisms are a great thing. And I think it would be a wonderful thing to use with your children as they are growing up.

MINDI:

Now here's a warning. Something you need to be aware of throughout the time of training your children, scripture, memory and scripture reading without connection to the heart and mind of God can be disastrous.

CAREY:

What do you mean by that? Disastrous? How

MINDI:

It could turn to legalism. It could turn to bitterness rebellion. If they're not connected to the heart of God, most likely when they leave the home, they're going to say, I don't want to have anything to do with it, because they will not have had a relationship with the Lord. They will just have had to go through these motions.

CAREY:

Yeah. So they've not taken ownership of the truth in a way that has connected them to God. They've just regurgitated content that didn't really touch their heart anyway.

MINDI:

Right? So along the way, you're wanting to help your children understand what they're memorizing, what they're reading. This has got to be regular daily conversations.

CAREY:

Yeah. And so if you get to a memory verse that uses the word propitiation, take the time to talk about what is propitiation. Don't just celebrate because they say the verse without an error, get into the meaning of the verse. They need to understand what it is they're learning and why it's important. Those are the things that will draw them to the heart of God. Because in understanding they are understanding what God has done for them

MINDI:

And regularly ask what they're learning in their quiet time. What did they read today? What is God teaching them? And then you can encourage them in that. Or if they say they haven't learned anything, then you can help them to know how to learn something. How to draw truths out of the Bible. A lot of times our boys would do this when they were younger and they're like, oh, I just read this passage, but I really didn't get anything out of it. And then you can help them learn how to get something out of it.

CAREY:

Yeah. You go back and revisit and with the wisdom God's given you, you just pull out a truth real quickly and say, well, what about this? It says this, what do you think that means? And you're teaching them how to ask questions and how to, how to dig into it. And the last thing I think I would want to leave you with is something I'm relearning now here at 55 years old. And that is to draw out the wonder of what it is you're seeing in the scripture. Draw it out for your kids to see. I mean, a very simple example, John three 16, God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. That's a staggering statement. God who created the heavens in the earth. Who's almighty, who has no flaws, who has no error, who never sin. He so loved people that he gave his only son as a father that just touches my heart to know that God cares for people that much and help your kids see that, make it personal for them. Put their name in there instead of the world, draw out the wonder. So your kids can just Marvel at the grace and majesty of our God.

MINDI:

So as we wrap up, we thank you so much for listening. And we are looking forward to hearing from you and hearing some of the things that God might be already doing in your parenting.

CAREY:

Yeah. And you can always reach us at feedback at God, fearing kids.com. And before we wrap up, let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for teaching us as your children, how to know you through your scriptures and through prayer and through the leading and teaching of your holy spirit. And we as parents want to be a parent like you, we want to be able to guide our kids to know you and to follow hard after you where it's coming from their heart, not just through a bunch of motions and, and mechanics that they learn so that when they leave the home, they will be godly men and women. They will shine as lights in the darkness as the scripture says. And so Lord guide us in the steps we take with our children, whether they're adults or whether they're still in the home guide, these listeners, Lord anoint them with your power and by your holy spirit to do these things well. So their children, even while they're still in the home are making an impact for the kingdom of God in their world. Lord, we pray. You would encourage their hearts. You would strengthen them for the task of parenting and that you would give them hope that you are with them in this journey. We thank you Lord, in Jesus name, amen.

CAREY:

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MINDI:

Welcome back. This is Mindi green

CAREY:

And I'm Carey, how you doing today? We're glad you're with us. I thought you were going to say something more, but <laugh> no real reason for you to say anything more. So

MINDI:

Scripture memory and scripture reading without connection to the heart of God and mind of God can be this disastrous.

CAREY:

You going to say all that again? It was kind of stilted. You want to say anything else?

MINDI:

Thank you so much for listening. We're

CAREY:

Not done. You saw

MINDI:

Anymore. Okay, go ahead.

CAREY:

I think catechisms are a great thing and I think it would be a wonderful thing to use with your children as you're growing up as they are growing up.