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SPEAKERS

RC: Ross Cochran

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0:00:00.0 DK: I think what is really important to let families know is that, well, it is their responsibility to be the primary faith nurture of their children that can feel heavy and that can feel... And the whaling... But they don't have to do it alone. Yeah, there is this whole group of people at the church who loves their kids, who wants to pour into their kids, who have resources available for their kids who are probably trained and experienced in working with children this age and who are eager and waiting for them to come back. And so it's been a little surprising to me that families didn't just run back to church because they were alone for good season and only have the digital connection or phone calls or texts or emails or door drops, those kind of things. And it's been a little surprising to me that families, they, when given the opportunity, they ran back to school, it was like, Oh, thank you so much, teachers, we realize now how important you are, and I would invite families to think about that for the children's ministry team at their church as well, like you realize now how important this is and how significant it is for you to partner well with those in church who are called to serve your children when you appear.

0:01:18.3 RC: Yeah, that's an interesting... I didn't thought about that distinction because I think that one, there's a reflection there in the church, there's a reflection there on when you're the ministries that were centered around discipleship, did that sort of running back that was already there, and if you fell the gap for that person who's listening to this in your own ministry, there's work for you to do as a church leader, but I'm starting this conversation. As a dad of a 50 and 340 old girl and a two-year-old boy. And one of the things that I'm so grateful for when I'm taking my kids to church is not only the training, the expertise that they have, but just simply the fact that they reflect a different part of the Imago day that I do, that they are able to... Come from a different background or a different experience, or... Correct me when I'm wrong. That type of community feel so obvious to me, and I'm wondering, for folks who are resistant to that or like, No, I have to be the primary disciple-maker. Is it from a place of insecurity? Is from a place of their own discipleship where there's some tension there on the family side, or is there something else going on?

0:02:32.2 DK: That's a very good question.

0:02:34.4 RC: And obviously, you're not speaking for everyone...

0:02:36.6 DK: Right, right, right. I don't know if it's so much resistance... Okay, it may be more... And that I need to be the one in charge of my child's spiritual formation. I think it may be more that they've been lulled into this new reality where they're a little more individualistic in their faith journey, and so to embrace community once again for themselves and for their children may take a relational prompt... Sure, so someone in the church needs to build the bridge. Yeah, and then people in the home needs to be ready to step, hold hands and walk across that ice with their children and to so that together we can truly partner to bring the best of what God would have for child discipleship.

0:03:36.9 RC: That makes me think of immediately while you were showing that is... So you and I are talking to the Child Discipleship Forum in September. People are gonna be hearing this

conversation later in the year, but my daughter just started kindergarten. And I had several people come up and ask me like, "Hey, are you okay to... How did that go?" And it was not emotional for me in slightest, other than just celebrating the joy, because one, it was, "Okay, this is the thing my daughter's supposed to do", I see how he thrives in it, she loves school, she's so much like a mom, thank the Lord. But it felt like she was going home, it felt like a really valuable place for her, and when I think about that joy that I saw, I find it convicting to realize that I myself as a guy who works for Awana and talk about children, him every single week was lulled into a piece of comfort and that I had to do it alone because of the context of the pandemic, and I think what I hope her folks to hear is, you've already done this, you've already experienced what it's like to send your kid back to some community, the most fruitful place you can send your kid back notes though, is in the context of the church. One of the things that I think you are particularly able to speak to is in this area of families, but in the areas of families who are being introduced to the church via their kids, this community... A lot of folks who are connected to a war stories, time after time after time of their kid got in better on it and bring a Friend Night and the whole family came to know the Lord through the discipleship, but that child we do... We love stories like that. When you look at what the church is coming into, what families are coming into in the sort of post-covid world, neither you or I epidemiologist, but we'll call it a post-coming world for sake of conversation, how would you articulate the opportunity for families in this environment to, as you said, step across that bridge?

0:05:41.0 DK: Yeah, well, I think there's an invitation for families to reset as they begin to re-enter the various areas to think it through, well, and just decide, where do we wanna spend our time and energy? Because if we don't do it intentionally, pretty soon, our schedules will be completely full up and we will say, there's no more energy and no more time. Yeah, so to take a thoughtful pause and ask the question, Where do we want to invest, where is the most fruitful place for us to invest, what kinds of limits do we want to put on the activities we're involved in so that we don't pursue the good, but miss the best. And I think that can happen so often, we pursue the good, it's not as if all these other things aren't good, it's just we're missing the best, if we simply fill our calendars with the goods, so I would encourage families to pause, think through, talk with the other adults in the home or the grandparents, or those who are wise counsel for you, talk with your children and determine together where you're going to invest in this next season as you re-enter 'cause we're giving a reset right now... Yeah, and pretty soon, it's just gonna all be snowballing unless we take a thoughtful reset and then enter and put limits and parameters on what we will and won't do so that we can pursue the best... Yeah.

0:07:07.9 RC: Something that makes me think of... So folks who listen to podcast now, I'll pick up a fan of yours, I am, but I first became introduced to your work because I saw you in the resilient documentary, which I'll just go ahead and link to in the show notes of wherever you're listening, and you said something that it resonated so much, but you put words to this feeling of part of the reason why child is opposed can sometimes get overlooked is because we have this misconception of sort of treating kids like they have a junior version of the Holy Spirit, and I've used that language so much, Deb, I love to talk about how kids don't have a junior, how anti-biblical that idea is, and yet we live it out so much... When I'm thinking about with my 50 hearer old daughter, but for any job, how do parents bring their kids to the table for that conversation because there's this temptation to be like, No, we go to church or not. You're gonna be a football player. And everything in between, what does it look like to honor them... With the full embodiment of the Holy Spirit that's within them.

0:08:12.8 DK: Well, I think it looks like having a conversation with them rather than making pronouncements, I think it involves listening rather than telling, and I think it involves agreeing together about what is important in the life of that child, and it's appropriate for the parents in the

home or the grandparents, the guardians, faith friends, whoever is leading that child spiritually, to have a conversation and say, this is the most important thing in our life. Our faith journey is the most important thing, so how can our schedule then reflect that, and what would you like to be involved in that would allow you to express some of your interest in your joys, and also allow you hopefully to experience the joy of growing in your faith journey as well. Yeah, so I think it's listening, it's having conversations, it's taken a breath. I'm not signing up for everything that comes across the table, but really maybe one thing, season and determining what that is, and then the pressures are so strong to pack our children schedule so full, and unless we're intentional about saying, we really think it's important for our children to be engaged in the children's ministry of the church or in a mid-week program, if that's a part of your church or in serving in our community, we have to make space for those things, and that really lands on the parents to help the children do that.

0:09:41.6 RC: Yeah, and taking a bet to do that and taking a beat before there's so much conversation or our... Like, can we get back to normal? And the thing I always wanted to say that that is, I don't feel like normal was that good?

0:09:52.0 DK: Yeah, yeah, I hope we never returned to that normal, that was a frenetic pace that exhausted people... Yeah, but I would hope and pray that instead the new normal invites a more sustainable rhythm, a more priority-centered decision-making process, a more child-friendly and child-focused in a healthy wage-focused process that allows the child to her to speak to influence at the age appropriate level, of course, I mean, you're not asking two-year-olds the same things you're asking 12-year-olds... Right, it's age level appropriate.

0:10:36.2 RC: But there's a mean... For example, my son, who's two right now, asks me to pray like every 45 seconds, and it brings such a joy in my wife and I, because clearly he has latched on to something about this moment matters from even before I used to... Whenever he heard someone say the name of Jesus, he would hold his hands out on... It was a sensitive spiritual sensitivity, but what I loved about that was it allowed me to meet him where is that I actually do the thing with him, keep my part shorter than if I was praying with my daughter or my wife, but the ability to already engage in at work feels so enriching. And the thing that I think about for you is the folks who didn't get the chance to see you at the child assets form, one is great presentation, but also you talked a lot about your own family and the sort of the non-delicate way to phrase this is you've done the thing? You were disciplined, you are resilient disciple, you've raised Brazilian disciples who are now raising resilient disciples. Can you speak to... 'cause I'm thinking about that younger age group, particularly with grandparents or the legacy of faith conversation, I feel like is there's a conversation to how important that is, and not necessarily a conversation about how that actually happens as personal... You wanna get, how did you and your husband navigate that with your own kids, your grandkids, because I think folks need to understand that just because your child's grown up doesn't mean that your work there is done in discipleship and the tremendous, an unique opportunity that grandparents have to speak into the life of their grandchildren.

0:12:27.8 DK: Yeah, absolutely, I think grand parenting ministry is the new frontier and Family Ministry, and Fowler and his group of legacy coalition are doing amazing things. They are inviting people to be intentional Christian grandparents and talking through what that looks like on a regular basis. So I would highly recommend that people check out Larry Fellers, legacy coalition, you're doing great stuff, like Larry was a part of Alana for 30 years or more in that, and now it's really investing the rest of his life in developing intentional Christian grandparents, so grand parenting is a place of great joy. And I think there's a different kind of space in rhythm to invest in the lives of the child, the grandchild, then there was when we were raising our children. And it's just a different

stage of life. And so I would call on grandparents to step forward and to be present in the lives of their grandchildren and to invite them not just into the fun of grand-parenting, but into the real faith formation of grand-parenting, and part of that means being present to them in whatever way you can, some grandparents live at a distance, and so it might be Zoom calls or traveling to meet them or getting them to come to you, but if you live nearby, there are great opportunities just to simply share life and to share faith with your grandchildren in ways that carry on that legacy of faith formation in the lives of the children as well as the grandchildren, have conversations with our kids about raising their kids, and being able to speak into that and to learn from them, and for them to learn from us still, that's a beautiful part of the stage of life as we interact with our children as well as our grandchildren.

0:14:17.9 RC: Well, and I think too, what I respect so much about how you and your husband have approached this is... It doesn't make it weird. I think sometimes you're talking about where folks can Semite pro-claimant rather than listening, the accessibility, however you can get that accessibility as a grandparent allows for that... The passion that you have for Jesus, with the fruits of your own discipleship to be poured out into such a critical relationship associated with your grandkids. So the thing I wanted to land the plane on is there is... When you use the word we set, I think there is this urgency that I want people to feel, and at the same time, I don't want them to be overwhelmed because... I want to say things like, if not now, when? If not now, what is this gonna look like for you? And I think for the overall mom or the overwhelmed dad or the overwhelmed grandparent who's listening to this, who's scared about the future of the faith, I always feel so encouraged when I hear from you, what encouragement can we offer those who feel... And they're not ready to say that they've lost, but if they're being really honest, they feel like the future is lost, how can we encourage those folks to stay in the fight?

0:15:44.3 DK: Well, I think your grandchildren, your children are depending on you. This is no small task. We can't step away. We need to enter in, and even if it's difficult, and even if it's hard, and even if it's overwhelming, just take a baby step, pray, ask God to give you opportunities, gathered together with other parents or grandparents or those who are investing in child discipleship and share your joys and your struggles partner well with the people at church who love you... And volunteer in the children's ministry, so you can see what your kids and grandkids are doing and you can bring that home with you in a whole different way if you're present with them, children love to have their parents and grandparents engaged in the children's ministry of the church, so volunteer, get involved and know that what you are doing is making an eternal difference... It's making an eternal difference. So don't give up, don't give up. Keep going and know that God is with you and you are not alone.

0:16:48.2 RC: Ame to that, and I think I say it all the time on this podcast, but the person who's listening to this already knows how to do that, I think we sometimes make discipleship to intimidating or too complicated. You know how to be in an environment with your kids, you know how to have a conversation with your grandkids, those are things that God has already gifted in you, and trusting that he is gonna ultimately do the work, free you up to not make this so complicated, and hopefully, for folks who are living to this, who are trying to share with their teams or the families in their community, makes it feel more invitational, makes it feel more accessible. In this sort of conversation around family discipleship, last thing I'm gonna ask you is just where can people stay connected? Do you learn more about your ministry? I know you're a professor at Bethel...

0:17:38.6 DK: Yep, I'm at Bethel seminary. So you can go to www.bethel.edu and find me on there. Send me an email. Connect with me in that way, and I'd love to keep the conversation going.