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Fearless – Ep 105 – Faith, Family, and Football with Corey Lynch
Final Transcript

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 OK, let me ask a few other questions. Ooh, this one [laugh] tips for doing marriage well. Let's see your tip. [laugh]

Corey Lynch:

00:00:10 Hmm. I'm still trying to do marriage well, so, taking the trash out ...

Cissie:

00:00:17 Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's the best tip you got?

Corey:

00:00:20 Yeah. I'm trying to—

Cissie:

00:00:22 You're struggling. We're moving on. I don't know who submitted that question.

MUSIC STARTS

Corey:

00:00:28 Hey, I'm Corey Lynch. I'm joining my wife, Cissie, on this episode of *Fearless*.

Cissie:

00:00:33 College football just got kicked off, so we're going to talk about faith, family, and sports, and what God did through Corey's life with football.

MUSIC

00:00:42 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:01:02 Welcome back to a new and fresh episode of *Fearless*. I hope everybody had a wonderful summer and thanks for those who might have re-listened or shared those episodes that we re-shared over the summer, but I am back here with a very special guest. I say that a lot about my guests when I bring 'em on, but this one *might* be my most special one because I talked my husband Corey into coming back into the studio—actually say 'back,' he's never even been in the office and recorded. The last time I had him on *Fearless* is when *Fearless* just started. I think it was like maybe my fifth episode. And I had a little recorder that went into my phone and we recorded it around our kitchen table. So this is quite different 'cause when he showed up today, he goes, "Wow, you got cameras this time." And we got real microphones. So I have Corey with me. Thanks for joining me.

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Corey:

00:01:50 Well, thank you for having me on your podcast.

Cissie:

00:01:52 I wanted him here 'cause college football just kicked off. And for many people it is like, this is our favorite time of year. Mm-hmm. [affirmative]. We're excited. The air's beginning to change. It's beginning to cool off a little bit. Leaves will be able to start changing—for us in Florida, none of that happens, but it is college football. And for those that don't know, if you're new to *Fearless*, maybe you haven't followed me that long on social media, once upon a time, you did play football. Mm-hmm. [affirmative]. It's been a while. College football, and then you went on to play in the NFL.

Corey:

00:02:23 That's right.

Cissie:

00:02:24 So we're going to talk life, football, college football, NFL, family, and sports. Now that we're kind of navigating that with our kids and what that looks like 'cause I have people all the time asking me questions, especially about you. You're kind of like a mystery man. People want to know more about you. It's funny 'cause when I started dating Corey, I didn't really know he was kind of a big deal at the time. I didn't know much about—he was playing football at Appalachian State. That's where I grew up. I was at Liberty at the time and didn't follow App State football. And we kind of started—we had met, we didn't fall in love right away. It was not love at first sight. We've kind of shared that story before here on *Fearless*. Was it love at first sight for you?

Corey:

00:03:08 It was, but not for you.

Cissie:

00:03:09 I'm not sure if that's true, but it was not love at first sight. I was a little on the shallow side. I didn't like what he was wearing. I thought he was very quiet. He wasn't very outgoing and I guess he just didn't flirt with me enough. But anyways, time went on. We started dating and I remember goin' to your first football game and I drove with a friend. It was like hours away. It was at Eastern Kentucky.

Corey:

00:03:31 That's right.

Cissie:

00:03:33 And it was your first game back. You had had an injury the year before. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I remember showing up in Boone and your football—you were on the football poster and it was all around town. And, I went to your game and I can't

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remember, you'll remember everything about it. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You had a ... interception ...

Corey:
00:03:50 Two.

Cissie:
00:03:51 Oh sorry. Two interceptions. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And a touchdown, right?

Corey:
00:03:55 No, I saved a touchdown before halftime. I ran someone down at the 1-yard line.

Cissie:
00:03:59 Yeah. And Coach Jerry Moore—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—those might not know him, but he's a famous football, college football coach. He was Corey's coach. Anyways, he tells that story being the pivotal moment that changed that team. But anyways, I didn't know it was a pivotal moment at the time. I was just a young girl.

Corey:
00:04:16 You were just in love.

Cissie:
00:04:17 I was so in love. I remember you being on the football field and I walked up, and you know, I don't want to make eye contact with you. That's kind of nerve-wracking. I didn't want to embarrass you and you're down on the football field, big star waving to me. I thought like, Wow [laugh]. But I remember leaving this game thinking, I think he might be a big deal. I just said that into my heart 'cause I knew nothing about football. So, fast forward, App State, most people know Appalachian State for one play. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And that weekend, or this past weekend being the opening college football weekend, that one play's all over ESPN 'cause it is historically one of the top college football plays. Take us back to that moment for those that don't know. What was it like for you playing Michigan that day?

Corey:
00:05:00 Mm-hmm. [affirmative]. So, a couple of months previous to that, we had, we were supposed to play LSU and Coach Moore said, Sorry guys we're—the game got canceled, but we're trying to find a new game. And so, you know, a month goes by, we're like, I wonder who we're playing. And then Coach Moore said, Hey, we're going to play Michigan. So everyone was very excited. It's a huge stadium. We had previously played LSU. So Coach Moore got us all excited and we knew we'd play in one of the biggest stadiums in the country. So going, you know, fast forwarding to September 1st, it was 2007, that's the *first* game of the year. So that's the game that all the big guys, they beat up on the little guys, right? It's the David and Goliath.

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Cissie:

00:05:43 And actually that year is when Adam Sandler's movie came out.

Corey:

00:05:46 Yes.

Cissie:

00:05:46 Right? *The Longest Yard*.

Corey:

00:05:48 *The Longest Yard*.

Cissie:

00:05:48 And they mocked App State.

Corey:

00:05:49 That's right. So, it was apropos, that movie just coming out and saying, Yeah, we usually play a small team so we can beat 'em up, just like Appalachian State. And so yeah, we went into Michigan and we played a very hard game. It was very hot that day. So the last play is the iconic play that they play for every, you know, September 1st, or the first weekend of September, for college football. I guess just to remind the big guys that they could still lose to a little guy. So yeah, it was 34-32 and there were 6 seconds left in the game and they had to kick a field goal to win it. And so we blocked the field goal and we made history that day.

Cissie:

00:06:27 Now, when y'all went in there, what people don't realize is—some people think, Oh, it was just luck. It was just a good game that day. Appalachian State was in the middle of a football dynasty—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and building a football dynasty.

Corey:

00:06:40 That's right.

Cissie:

00:06:41 You had already won two national championships.

Corey:

00:06:45 That's right.

Cissie:

00:06:46 Did y'all walk in that day thinking you were going to win?

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Corey:

00:06:49 Maybe some people did, but I didn't. I mean, you got 109,000 people cheering against you. I think we had 45 fans. Maybe you were one of them. So you just—that's the power. That's the, you know, the pinnacle of college football. And just blessed to be there, you know, you, I would never would've thought we would've won. I thought we were going to play well. We were on like a 20-game win streak. We had just went to national championships and we had a lot of good talent on the team. So, but as far as winning the game, I think it, generally speaking, was an impossibility. It was mission impossible.

Cissie:

00:07:23 I've actually never asked you this question: What was said to y'all, or do you remember, at halftime in the locker room?

Corey:

00:07:30 I remember a lot of the younger guys on the team being so excited 'cause we were winning by two touchdowns and you know, me and a couple of the older guys, and *especially* Coach Moore, was like, Hey, please stop being excited 'cause you're going to get the wrath of Michigan football in the second half. And we did. But we had just a little bit of a lead. But it, you know, they got plenty of players and backups. We don't have any backups, you know, whoever starts, you better not get hurt because the backup is going to get tossed around like a ragdoll. So we had just enough starters to compete with them.

Cissie:

00:08:10 Take us to the moment right before you blocked the kick. At that moment—'cause people don't realize, once again, this wasn't one kick that you blocked. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You were very well-known for this. You did it through your college career, and even in the NFL, you know, we're good with, very good friends with two punters in the NFL—if they happen to listen [laugh]—and you happened to block one of theirs.

Corey:

00:08:36 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:08:36 Again, when they wasn't your teammate. However, you're very good at it. You went on to the NFL. Teams would say they would study *you* on special games. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So take us back to that moment. Did you think, I have this now?

Corey:

00:08:49 No, I think you—so the previous year I had blocked the same exact kick. You can look it up on video. It's the same exact kick. It's actually from the other side though, the left side, not the right side. And I, the ball bounced up to me and I scored a touchdown. So against Michigan, the ball bounced up to me and I, but I didn't score.

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Cissie:

00:09:07 Yes, my brothers remind you that—

Corey:

00:09:09 Yes.

Cissie:

00:09:09 —all the time, that you got ran down by the kicker. [laugh]

Corey:

00:09:12 [laugh] I did. He was a fast kicker. But, one day hopefully, we can just do some AI to the film and I can score [chuckle] and spike the ball or something.

Cissie:

00:09:22 People didn't realize your legs were so tired. Once again, they didn't have subs.

Corey:

00:09:25 Yeah, we didn't have subs. That was the most tired I had ever been in all of my football career, was that play. So, but what was the question before?

Cissie:

00:09:37 I think at that moment when you're on that line, did you think, I have this? Because you've practiced it over and over. And I look at life and I—but you'd practiced it over and over—and when we've done that, like when we read Scripture—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—over and over, when something comes up, we can have confidence in that moment because we know the playbook.

Corey:

00:09:54 Yeah. So yeah, that moment wasn't an accident. A lot of people think it was just because block kicks are—sometimes they're generally considered accidents, but it wasn't an accident. And we had practiced that play hundreds of times. And that was—thanks to Coach Moore during the summertime, you know, we would practice field-goal blocking at 100% and *no* college team does that. It's pretty dangerous for the kickers. They could get hurt, but Coach Moore just had a premonition that, you know, if we practice that this at 100%, something in our future is going to change. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And it was meant for that day, and, you know, I blocked a couple more kicks throughout that year. But I was just very good at it. I had been good since high school, blocking kicks. I was able to get off the ball. I was able to move at the right time, slap people's hands down, whatever the—you only get like 1.2 seconds to block the kick, so during those 1.2 seconds, I was very good.

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Cissie:

00:10:49 Hmm. I think of just those habits, and I'm going to mess up this quote, but, Tammie Jo Shults always says—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—like our habits on a good day become our instincts on like a bad day. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Not that you were having a bad day, but in that moment—

Corey:

00:11:06 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:11:06 —those had been your habits. Those are what you had practiced in life. And—

Corey:

00:11:09 Yeah, I remember hearing a sermon actually from a pastor that was preaching to us before a game. And he just said how legends are made and how the greats are made. You see like people catching a touchdown pass in a Super Bowl, he's like they'd been catching that same football since they were a child, but they had made it a point to do it over and over and over and create habits, and it was a great catch, but no better than any other catch that they had ever been. But, if you're not prepared when the moment comes, when it's your time to shine, when it's your moment, you know, just like—I think about David and Goliath when he picked up those stones, I don't think that was the first time he ever slung a stone before. It was his moment and he had slung millions and millions of stones well—as a child, and that was his confidence.

Cissie:

00:12:01 Every time I see that play, which we just saw it this past weekend, over and over, and it's neat now that you have a son that's beginning to care about football and love it—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and see this place for Dad. I'm just always reminded—I get very emotional still 'cause it's God's goodness—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—throughout your career. And when I remember being interviewed, maybe a few years ago—it's kind of going to show our age of how old this play is now—but somebody was doing an interview and they were interviewing these former players on your team, and he said, Wow, every person I've interviewed has all said something very similar or common. There was something different about this team—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—that God was in the center of it. And a lot of people are like, Do you pray for wins? Do you pray for your kids' teams to win? And during that time period—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—if it ever becomes a movie or a miniseries of App State football, because it was pretty incredible. There were a lot of games y'all weren't supposed to win.

Corey:

00:12:59 Yeah.

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Cissie:

00:13:01 But God was just so evident on that team—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and players' lives.

Corey:

00:13:07 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:13:08 Take us back to what God was in that team, y'all's Bible study, how important it was.

Corey:

00:13:13 Yeah, we had a spirituality, or spirituality-wise, we had a—first of all great, leader, Coach Moore. He's a Christian. He's unashamed of being a Christian. He always encouraged people to go to Bible study on Wednesday nights. We would hold a player's Bible study. He would always encourage pastors to come in and speak to us or different evangelists or speakers to come in and speak to us, so he was always pursuing spirituality with the team. But, as far as the players go, you know, there was on a Friday night, you're getting ready for your Saturday afternoon game, so we would always make sure everyone was together on a Friday night. We would talk about the game. We would always watch a movie, just kind of hang out, not get in trouble. And, but after that, you know, it was time to go home. You know, say 10:00 p.m., or 9:00 p.m., time to go home and sleep and rest for the game. But we would, you know—it started out with like 10 players—we would go on the field and pray for the game the next day. And so, you know, it ended up, you know, my senior year it was probably 60 guys out there on the field, you know, in the pitch black dark, praying for the game. And so, years later we found out that Coach Moore would actually, he would sneak up to the top of the bleachers and he would watch us do that. So that was pretty cool finding that out years later. But, yeah, I don't know if you pray for wins or not—

Cissie:

00:14:36 I do. The Lord says you have not 'cause you ask not. [laugh] So I prayed for—

Corey:

00:14:39 —or if—

Cissie:

00:14:40 —but this didn't work when you got to the NFL—you didn't win as much.

Corey:

00:14:42 No, we didn't win quite as much, but surely some of those games, you just sit back and think about them. You know, I think about that same Michigan year, we're going to national championship, James Madison, they're on the 3-yard line. And, all they have to do is score a touchdown—there's 10 seconds left in the game—or kick a field

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goal, they win, and they go to the national championship, and they fumbled, like it's, it's, it, those—my last three years were storybooks.

Cissie:

00:15:11 They were, they're very special. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I say that 'cause God will use victory for His glory, and He did during those times. Coach Moore would give God the glory—

Corey:

00:15:20 That's right.

Cissie:

00:15:20 —to you and so many others, that when we're praying for our children now, or for your children to win, He'll also use those losses too. But in that time—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—He was definitely using those victories for His glory. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

But, on a different note, one topic that I wanted to bring up on today's podcast that has been in the news the past two years is college football, NIL—and for those that don't know, that's the ability to profit off their name, image, and likeness. And what that boils down to is college athletes can now get endorsements. They can get paid. They can get contracts, while also receiving their school scholarship and their sports scholarship. So what are your thoughts on the NCAA and the schools allowing these NIL?

Corey:

00:16:03 Well, first of all, I wish it was around when I was around [laugh] because I probably would've made a few more dollars from Michigan ...

Cissie:

00:16:08 I do too. You could've taken me on more dates. By the way, he teased me on our first date that I needed to pay. [laugh] I think he was also driving my mom's car—

Corey:

00:16:14 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:16:14 —to take me on my first date.

Corey:

00:16:17 The NIL I think, I understand it from a few perspectives, but I think in the end, it's going to be a debacle in the end. I see people, you know—and this comes from experience. So when I went into the NFL, you see rookies get in and they get big contracts, and you can see their life unravel, sometimes. Some guys can handle the money, some guys can't. But can you imagine an 18-year-old kid driving a Ferrari

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around the campus? I mean, it's, and it's happening. So I think it's not healthy for a team environment, you know, like I said, I understand the premise that someone is profiting off of these kids playing football—mainly football—and so they want the kids to profit, but I do, I see, you know, the Bible talks about the love of money is the root of all evil. And so when you get to the NFL and you see that love, you see many signs of evil. And so yeah, it's, there's a lot to unravel in the NIL, but when you're getting paid for a performance-based sport and say you're 19 years old and you're not doing as well as you did as a freshman, I think the negatives far outweigh the positives. You start, you—maybe your sponsor says, I need that Ferrari back. And then your teammate says, Well, what happened to your Ferrari? Well, you know, I dropped the touchdown pass last week, and they took away my car. You know, or, you know—the snowball effect can be great all the way down into their personal lives. So, you know, you're still developing at 18, 19 years old. I don't think anybody should be driving around a Ferrari at 18 or 19 years old.

Cissie:

00:17:55 And I think it's a reflection of what we value in our culture, in our society, because—and the reality is they are getting paid. They're getting paid and housing—

Corey:

00:16:03 And scholarships.

Cissie:

00:16:03 —and food and scholarship. They're getting an education that will further them later in life. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But for some reason that's not valued as a payment. Their value comes—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—cars or money in other contracts.

Corey:

00:18:15 Yeah. And if you want to pay someone contracts, like, let's look at a futures contract. Let's look at what happens when you turn 30 or 35, you know, put money away for the future. I can understand that stuff, but just to give people, to give young, immature, testosterone-filled young men lots of money is, it's a disaster waiting to happen.

Cissie:

00:18:38 Well, it's like then NCAA had such strict rules and then they just went—

Corey:

00:18:41 Oh, so strict.

Cissie:

00:18:42 —to the far opposite—

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Corey:
00:18:42 Yeah.

Cissie:
00:18:43 —direction to where one time Corey got charged after he had surgery.

Corey:
00:18:46 Yeah.

Cissie:
00:18:47 Somebody went down and picked up his mother at the—

Corey:
00:18:48 That's right.

Cissie:
00:18:49 —airport and he got charged.

Corey:
00:18:50 I got fined for my—someone picking my mom up at the airport while I—

Cissie:
00:18:53 —while you were in the hospital—

Corey:
00:18:54 —was in the hospital undergoing surgery from a broken bone, playing football for the college. You know, it's like, so you go from—

Cissie:
00:19:00 So now they've gone to one extreme to the other.

Corey:
00:19:01 Yeah. It's, yeah.

Cissie:
00:19:04 Let's talk NFL because you were blessed for many seasons, way beyond the average. There were some good days; there were some hard challenges in the NFL, and it definitely didn't end on the terms we would've liked to, when things don't end on your own terms it can be a painful transition at times. But, you were drafted to the Cincinnati—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—three years in Tampa here, in San Diego, and then, our last year were the Titans and Colts. Of all those teams—that was a lot. Whew. What was your favorite team to play for in the NFL?

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Corey:

00:19:35 I really enjoyed my last year playing for the Colts. They had such a family atmosphere there. Whatever their concoction was inside of their, you know, their front office, they just, whatever it was, they had it, you know, it's like the difference between going to Taco Bell versus going to Chick-fil-A, you know, you just—it's a different feeling, right. So, there's that front office, they had a family-like atmosphere and it's still cutthroat, you know, if you don't perform, you get fired. But, really enjoyed the Colts. The great guys on the team. They had quality leadership, all the way up the ladder. So really, really liked them.

Cissie:

00:20:10 It was even that for us wives. A lot of times the NFL's not glamorous for the family. [laugh] If the, you got the top like 2% of big players that are paid a lot, a lot of money, but a lot of us get bounced around, it's like week to week. You—a lot of people don't know this little fact—were *fired* on an HBO reality show ...

Corey:

00:20:29 That's right. *Hard Knocks*.

Cissie:

00:20:30 ... from the Bengals. You were fired right there on television. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It seems like another lifetime ago, but—so when your last year we had just had a baby, you got picked up and left, like right ... you got cut right before she was born, and then right after she was born, you got picked up and left and I got in a car and drove all those miles by myself. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You got cut again. We had to move out. It's like I was in and out of eight different homes and hotels those first two months of her life.

Corey:

00:20:54 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:20:55 But when we got to the Colts, it was, there was a just a sweet, sweet spirit—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—of just godly, just women, and even those that didn't know Christ, our Bible study was sweet.

Corey:

00:21:04 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:21:05 A lot of girls came to know Christ. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It was a sweet time.

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Corey:

00:21:08 Yeah. They had quality coaches and yeah, just throughout the whole organization.

Cissie:

00:21:13 Some people may and some people might not realize, like the NFL is a really dark world. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I mean, that locker room is a tough place, and you kinda alluded that when you're talking about just the love of money. But talk about some of the things that you might've heard that would've been like shocking for people, [laugh] just to kind of set the atmosphere for them, but how you—and there are some just godly men in the NFL. The NFL, of course, has been very divisive in the last few years, kneeling of the flag and just a lot of the controversy going on, but, there's a lot of good players out there, godly coaches, and godly players—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—but how would you all in that dark world, so kind of set the scene of what maybe a day would be like for you. Tampa might've been the darkest days—

Corey:

00:21:55 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:21:55 —but how y'all stayed true to your faith.

Corey:

00:21:58 I mean, I don't think I can share with you the darkness of the locker room on this show. [laugh] I don't think your listeners would want to hear that.

Cissie:

00:22:04 That's why I always baffled, you know, in the last couple years and just the world's so stunned of how one man would talk and it got caught on camera—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—which is awful and it's unexcusable. The sad thing is—

Corey:

00:22:16 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:22:16 —that's the majority of the world. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And because that's the lack of Christ in somebody's life.

Corey:

00:22:21 That's right, yeah.

Cissie:

00:22:22 I look at that, that was your everyday life. And then I felt you were mocked one day for not looking at the pornography that they were showing to start a meeting.

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Corey:

00:22:29 Yeah. So, I mean, if you didn't say an F-word in every sentence, then you were kind of like a weirdo, you know? It's just, that's just how you speak and when you're in that society. So, as far as you want to go into debauchery is, it's whatever your mind can think of, that's what the NFL has to offer. So, but I don't think it's so much different than the world. I don't think that it's different because there's a lot more money. But as far as the world and how the world acts, it's not a lot different, but you can find what you want to find. You can find what you want to find in a Christian college. If you want to go party or do bad things in a Christian college, you can find that and do that. But, I've always said this, I think that in those atmospheres, when people realize who you are, what you stand for, if you are true to yourself, and you are walking a straight road, they might not like you. They probably won't like you, but they will respect you. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I've always felt the respect at the end of the day. I've—and yeah, I've felt plenty of not liking me for what I stood for. I felt plenty of that. But there was always respect. You could sense it always. So now if you're wavering in those situations and people know that you're wavering, now that's a whole different, that's a whole different world you're going to live in 'cause now people are going to, they're going to make fun of you or they're going to say that, you know, you're a hypocrite and all that stuff, so ...

Cissie:

00:23:58 I think it's important when we as Christians and we claim to be Christians, it has to be an unwavering walk. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And that's getting harder and harder in the current culture we're in because the world is watching us.

Corey:

00:24:10 That's right. They do watch.

Cissie:

00:24:11 And I grew up like that as a Graham. With the last name 'Graham,' people were always watching me. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. One story—I don't know if I've ever shared it here—one time, it was right after the Michigan game. We're going to go back to college and fans were going nuts. So your first home game after Michigan, I mean, fans, App State fans, they're not the best in the world, but a lot of college students aren't the best fans. I mean, they were tearing down the fences to get into the stadium and they were sitting—we were pass holders—and there were some drunk college students sitting in our seat and we've politely would ask them to move. They would not move. They said they're 'blankety-blank' students, they're allowed to sit wherever they want. I mean, it went on. OK. So I went and got a security guard and asked, Security guard, these are our seats that we've paid for. Can you ask the students to move? And the security guard goes, Well, that's not my job. I don't have the authority to do that. [chuckle] And, so later went back and the girl was so drunk that she fell on top of me and while she was falling down, pulled my shirt down for all to see. And, my natural reaction is I swung at her. [laugh] Because nobody would move the drunk girl and that

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girl's pulling my shirt down. So I remember they finally, security got her out of there, and they tried to take *me* out of there. And I said, I'm not going anywhere. Y'all should have done your job and had control of this situation where the girl's pulling *my* clothes off and I had a girl, a lady come up to me and whisper in my ear from my back and says, "I know exactly who you are." And, "You're a horrible example to my little girl." To be honest, I had to sit on my hands so I didn't whack her one. [laughter] But the point of that is the world's always watching.

Corey:

00:25:49 They are. Yeah.

Cissie:

00:25:50 And it's a good reminder—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—even in those moments, whether that person was right or wrong to judge me and didn't know the whole story. It's a good reminder, the world's watching. And I remember when you were fired from the Bengals—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and we had claimed, you know, just the Christians in that. They said, The world's going to watch you and how you react.

Corey:

00:26:07 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:26:07 They're watching your language, they're watching your temperament, your anger. And there were some hard days after that. We had to be very graceful—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—not to share the whole story, but comes down to our language. There was a time on the field—'cause you never curse—they thought you had said a bad word ...

Corey:

00:26:24 Yeah. I got hurt pretty bad, and I said, Oh, shoot. And I got a thigh bruise and it hurt extremely bad. And it was like, you know, here are all these guys that say the F-word every three seconds, and it was like the whole world stopped spinning. And the head coach even came up to me while I'm laying on the ground in agony, and he didn't check on me to see what was like wrong with my leg, he just wanted to know if I cursed or not. And it is ...

Cissie:

00:26:53 But in that moment, if you had, I think it would've changed everything, that respect all of a sudden would've been gone 'cause you would've been just like them.

Corey:

00:27:01 Yeah, like you were saying everyone, the world watches.

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Cissie:

00:27:05 Yeah. And we have to be living our life separate, whether it's our language and our actions and how we live our life, because we talk about that—one thing—this is on a lighter note. I don't know why I'm going to bring this up, but I'm going to. Corey is quite the inventor. He likes to invent things. He was a physics major in college. He's very smart. Mathematics minor—not the typical football athlete. Physics department was very proud that they had had a football star in their department. So he is always problem-solving. Even to this day, some of our biggest fights can be if we're walking and he's looking at something of how it's made and we're late to something, and he's trying to explain it to me, which goes in one ear and out the other, but he is a problem-solver. So, right after we got married, he lost his wedding ring twice on the football field—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—at the Bengals. But he wanted to wear his ring 'cause a lot of men don't wear their rings for many different reasons. Of course, they don't want to get it jammed on their finger, but they might have mistresses on the side and girlfriends on the side and not commit to their significant other. So you started wearing, years ago ... 'cause—when did you start in the NFL?

Corey:

00:28:08 '08

Cissie:

00:28:09 '08. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's a long time ago. Way before QALO rings route, you started wearing a rubber—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—plumber's O-ring.

Corey:

00:28:16 Yes.

Cissie:

00:28:16 And everywhere you went that created—Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Corey:

00:28:20 People would be, "What is that on your hand?" I said, Oh, that's my fake wedding ring. You know, I'm wearing a 20-cent O-ring. So ...

Cissie:

00:28:27 Everybody, even like Ronde Barber—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—you bought him one. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He started wearing one.

Corey:

00:28:31 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:28:31 It created conversations everywhere we went. So I just want to know, I just telling people, what do you think now when people, you see people wearing these

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QALO rings and other rings? Which by the way, former teammates of yours started these—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—companies or family members of old teammates started these companies. What do you think, Man, I invented that. I could've, man—

Corey:

00:28:55 I could've been something—

Cissie:

00:28:55 —set Cissie up for life. If—

Corey:

00:28:56 —I could've been something, if I would've come up with rubber wedding rings.

Cissie:

00:29:01 I would be set for life if we had those monies now. But, now that we are switching gears here, let's talk about family, 'cause you and I, different stage of life. We have a son who's just now starting football—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and to be honest, you and I are terrible sports parents. For somebody that's been in the NFL, you don't watch sports. We don't watch ESPN. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. We're not always involved. [chuckle] We're selfish with our weekend times. So the thought of spending all day at the football field or something is like, ugh. I'm not sure if I like it. But like it or not, our son's there. He came up to me last year, very upset, and goes, Mom, my neighbors know a lot about football. My cousins know a lot about football and I know nothing and my dad played football. So you and I, we're trying to do better with that. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But, a lot of conversations with the concussions now is just more part of the conversation than it was when you grew up—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—because of the science and the effects that have come out over the years. What do you think about—I get a lot of questions on my social media asking, Are you going to allow Austin to play football?

Corey:

00:30:04 My stance has always been no, I will not allow my children to play football.

Cissie:

00:30:10 Why?

Corey:

00:30:11 Because of the damage that I've seen happen to my body. But, I've changed that stance because I think I would've regretted my—if my father would've said that to me, I would've regretted his decision. I would have held that against him. Ultimately, you know, once you become, you know, you go to high school and when you're 18, you go to college, you're becoming an adult. You have the ability to make those decisions. So, I think if he wants to play, then I will let him play. But would I rather him play or not? I would rather him not play—not because it's not a great game, 'cause it is. It's the, it's—I

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think it's the greatest game man has ever put on the face of the Earth. It teaches you discipline, it teaches you toughness, it teaches you grittiness. It teaches you how to be an athlete. It teaches you how to work out. I mean, it teaches you strength and power and discipline and you can go on and on. It teaches you how to become a man in society. But the repercussions are pretty great as the weights and the speeds are going up and up every year. The athletes are getting bigger and stronger and faster every single year, and you're going to—I predict, I've been predicting this for many years—that someone dies on the NFL football field in the next 10 years because it is such a violent game.

Cissie:

00:31:33 Well, players are getting stronger and faster and hitting harder than they—

Corey:

00:31:37 And it almost happened this last year with Damar Hamlin. It was minutes from happening. I've been predicting that for years. So, will I let my son play football? That's a, it's a hard question, but I think by the time he becomes an adult, it's his decision. But, yeah, it's a very tough one. And I understand, and I'm speaking from experience. I played 25 years, just solid football.

Cissie:

00:32:04 And you tell me all the time your body hurts.

Corey:

00:32:06 My body hurts. [laugh]

Cissie:

00:32:08 Recently I saw a video of former baseball player and Hall of Famer, Chipper Jones, and in an interview it, he, they were asking about his family and raising his children. And he was basically saying, you know, the sports today are way more demanding than when he was growing up, and then when you were growing up as well—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—that now it is 12 months out of the year—

Corey:

00:32:31 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:32:32 —seven days a week. And he just was saying, you know, my family time's going to be my family time. We're going to take summer vacations and we're going to go on vacation and spend time as a family. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And I'm not going to let the sports control that. What do you think our family should do or those listening, you know, it's just different times—you can say that, but it is going to affect your child—

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Corey:

00:32:52 That's right.

Cissie:

00:32:52 —and their performance.

Corey:

00:32:53 Yeah, there's been a paradigm shift, especially in the game of football since about 2010 and—maybe 2008, 2007—where it became a 12-month sport.

Even in college it's way different. You know, some summers I would just be at home for maybe seven weeks, eight weeks, relaxing and training. Now you can't do that in pretty much every college system. You can only have one week off for your summer and then you have to come back to school. So, I don't believe in football as a 12-month sport. I think it is a five-month sport, and then you sprinkle it in through the other months because it's so demanding—your body can only handle so much, and so it's tough right now.

Cissie:

00:33:37 But that's with all sports now, like—

Corey:

00:33:39 Yes.

Cissie:

00:33:40 —in baseball and Little League—

Corey:

00:33:41 And baseball's always been the worst.

Cissie:

00:33:42 —summer. It's through the summers. And our son loves baseball and I'm having a hard time with that one—

Corey:

00:33:46 Yeah. I grew up—

Cissie:

00:33:46 —because the schedule's so demanding. Maybe we can go into pickleball. [laugh] But I think that's a really hard decision for parents.

Corey:

00:33:53 It is.

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Cissie:

00:33:54 And I would just encourage: Don't sacrifice that family time.

Corey:

00:33:58 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:33:59 And one thing I've learned just from other parents that have gone before me—'cause you and I are just at the beginning of all this stage—and I had a co-worker ask like, how do we—we have one kid that's really into sports, one kid that's not—and how do we balance that excitement and not overshadow, you know, our excitement for the achievements of one in sports? Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Not overshadow the child that's not into sports, but also make them feel excited and cherished— Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and valued—because I do, I value our family time and I don't want them to sacrifice their sports 'cause I know it will hurt them.

Corey:

00:34:34 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:34:35 If you don't show up on practice on Sunday, it's going to hurt them. But I also want them to know that we're a family. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. We do things as a family. We're going to go on vacations with families, your siblings—if one has a baseball game, we're going to go to that baseball game together. If one has a band concert, we're going to go to that band concert together and value each other in that time, but it's getting harder and harder to do that.

Corey:

00:34:58 It is. But I mean, I think the divisiveness would come from the excitement of two kids, maybe one's an athlete and one's not too good of an athlete. And so that, but as far as, I just remember, a couple months ago, one of our friends, her son won the spelling bee and she was so excited for her son. Like it was like he had won the Super Bowl, you know? And so whatever your son does, whatever your daughter does, just get excited over it. Sports is not the end all be all. It's just one part of our society. There's music and there's the arts and there's dancing and so in these youthful pursuits—so if you're a dad that had three girls, I mean cheer for the ballet recital, you know, I mean, sorry you didn't have a boy and you know, he doesn't play football, but your girls want your excitement too.

Cissie:

00:35:51 Yeah. I think one thing that's interesting, as we've talked, sports can be just a completely different world on that field. And our kids can be exposed to a lot with families that might not share, have shared beliefs and shared lifestyles. How do we protect our kids? And for some reason, as Christian parents, we seem to kind of throw

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in the towel when it comes to sports and kind of excuse it, like the foul language that coaches use, for some reason we think it's OK, like even there's a Christian school where we live that was allowing the baseball coach to use very foul language like GD and the F-word, and I didn't understand that. I'm like, why are we giving an excuse? Because—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—they're a coach. If a teacher said that, they would've been out of there at the Christian school, but for some reason—and then I just hear that more and more, like you went to a Little League and you can explain that, just practice to show Austin and the language was horrific. So how do we protect our children—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—where they can still play the sports, but to live their life differently and not—how do we do that?

Corey:

00:36:54 Yeah. I mean, I think mostly you protect them at home. You—they see who you are at home. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You can't just put on a facade when you get to the football field. But, you, our children are going to see things we don't want them to see in society, and how do we mitigate that? Do we not let them play sports because Joe's, you know, dad curses, you know, it's a tough mitigation plan. How do you figure out how to protect them but also allow them to be part of our society? And I don't know that. I haven't walked through those waters yet, but like you said, when I was at that youth football game, I brought Austin over 'cause he really hasn't been around football too much, and I just couldn't believe that the coaches were just F-bombing these 9-year-olds and telling them, you know, they weren't going to let them play unless they like, you know, smashed the other kids. And like, man, these kids are 9 years old. Like, do you want to give them swords and spears and like, it's like a—it was a barbaric atmosphere that I didn't appreciate. So, we talked about this the other day and the—I think it falls upon the coaches to realize that there is, there should still be chivalry in sports. Sports is meant for, to shape a young man or a young woman. It's meant to give them discipline and drive and desire and all these things that shape you into a disciplined young adult. So, the respect for your opponent, you see that dwindling fast in our society. So yeah, that's a really—I don't know the answer to that. How do you mitigate your child going into youth sports?

Cissie:

00:38:43 I think it comes with just being actively engaged in our children and having those conversations, like you said, we're—those days have yet to come and we're going to learn as we go. And I might have more podcasts in the years to come about sharing what I've learned, but having conversations with our kids, recognizing what the—how the world might speak or what they accept, but in this household, this is why we don't—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and this is what Scripture says about the power of the tongue and just being so active. And it's like you said, our kids have to see that at home and be able to model that. One of the things I mentioned this in an episode back in the spring, 'cause talking about Sundays and the Sabbath, but when it comes to sports, more and more sports are playing on Sundays now. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And just last week I was looking up a flag football league for Austin and they only practiced and played on

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Sundays. So it's obviously not a league we could be a part of. What would you say to parents trying to make that decision—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—'cause once again, culture is shaping just quite differently, making it difficult for us to raise our kids in that.

Corey:

00:39:45 Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I mean, if you want to look at a historical cultural background, you look at the Israelites and God said, Hey, I don't want you to do anything on Sundays or on the Sabbath. Right? And so, but the rest of the world, they worked on Sundays and they were actually punished for not following that directive from God. Right? And so, the Sabbath *is* a holy day. You can argue about how holy should you, you know, should you not even walk outside your house on a Sabbath. You can argue all those, but, I do think that when—hey, and I'm guilty of it too, right—and your listeners that are astute enough, I played in the NFL, right? [laugh] So my job was required of me on Sundays. Now, we always had a church service on Saturday night. So I do think that that one, two-hour timeframe, whether it's Saturday or Sunday of you and your family and your children, just like you talk about around the dinner table, that timeframe that you can get together, the timeframe that you can be in church, whether it—maybe it is Saturday night because you're really involved in a Sunday sport, but, more than just Sunday, setting apart time to focus on God is very important. And, I think in the end, your children will respect you for that, you know, they probably will be mad at you, you know, during the time, like, you know, Johnny's playing on Sunday and I can't, or Johnny's doing this and I can't. When they get around to being adults, I think they will respect you for that decision.

Cissie:

00:41:22 We're going to shift gears a little bit here. Maybe ask you a few questions that some listeners or some people submitted on Facebook. But one question I get all the time on social media is, "What does Corey do now?" Or, What's our lifestyle? You and I live a very unique lifestyle. We live in Florida—a lot of people don't know that—that's where you were born and raised. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. We moved to Tampa for the Bucks, we ended up just making Florida home. But you worked for Samaritan's Purse—

Corey:

00:41:50 That's right.

Cissie:

00:41:50 —part-time in the summers. You can explain what you do. But we just live a very different lifestyle. So let's give a life update of our crazy life.

Corey:

00:41:58 So I've been working the past couple years for Samaritan's Purse. I've been building churches in very remote places in Alaska. Your father has an initiative to build a church in many—build one church every summer—in many villages in Alaska. They're very dark, depressed. They're almost like Third World countries.

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Cissie:

00:42:19 Yeah. There's high suicide rate.

Corey:

00:42:21 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:42:22 Drugs, sexual—

Corey:

00:42:23 Abuse, suicide rate.

Cissie:

00:42:24 Most girls and boys sexually abused by a family member—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—by a young age.

Corey:

00:42:30 Yeah. I actually just met a gentleman that was 65 and just broke down in front of us because he was sexually abused when he was 6 years old. And, so you see that it's very thick in the atmosphere there—and the only hope is the Gospel. And so it's the only medicine. It's the only vaccine to that culture.

Cissie:

00:42:52 So what are y'all doing in that place?

Corey:

00:42:54 And so we're building a church, an evangelical church, with different organizations in Alaska. And so most of these churches are falling down. It's extreme temperatures, the ground is always freezing and thawing and moving up and down and it's very difficult to figure out how to build up there. So, the team up there has really figured out the right materials to use. And so—and this year, in 15 weeks, we'll build a 2,400-square-foot church in 15 weeks. It's pretty remarkable.

Cissie:

00:43:24 It is remarkable. And it's also very, very difficult to, you know, most of Alaska, you can only get to by plane or a barge can bring in. So all your supplies came in on a barge.

Corey:

00:43:34 That's right.

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Cissie:

00:43:34 They got on that barge in Seattle in April. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It was a cold, cold spring and summer, so it was late even getting to you. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then it couldn't even, the barge couldn't even get into town. Had to land ...

Corey:

00:43:45 Yeah. About 1 mile out town. And, but the road had been washed away from a previous storm, so then we had to build a road to get to the barge, and then we had to figure out how to get all ...

Cissie:

00:43:52 It's like one of these Discovery Channel—

Corey:

00:43:54 Yeah. It's—

Cissie:

00:43:54 —shows.

Corey:

00:43:55 —it's, yeah, it's like ice-road truckers. I mean, it's like sheesh. It's—you have problems and you have solutions and that's all you do all day is figure out solutions to problems.

Cissie:

00:44:06 So Corey does that about five months—more than that 'cause it takes a lot of prep work throughout the summer and built with volunteers, Samaritan's Purse volunteers, but then we live in Florida. People want to know what you do in Florida.

Corey:

00:44:17 I like to invest in real estate. So we have a couple rental homes, Airbnbs ...

Cissie:

00:44:23 Like, because I think my family still wants to know: What do you do?

Corey:

00:44:26 Yeah. Well, I—

Cissie:

00:44:28 We're the millennials that have jobs on YouTube and YouTube—Corey's YouTube certified.

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Corey:

00:44:33 I'm YouTube certified. YouTube certified electrician, YouTube certified plumber. Go on and on.

Cissie:

00:44:38 OK, let me ask a few other questions. Ooh, this one [laugh] tips for doing marriage well. Let's see your tip. [laugh]

Corey:

00:44:48 Hmm. I'm still trying to do marriage well, so, taking the trash out ...

Cissie:

00:44:55 Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's the best tip you got?

Corey:

00:44:59 Yeah. I'm trying to—

Cissie:

00:45:01 You're struggling. We're moving on. I don't know who submitted that question. Corey and I—

Corey:

00:45:05 We're still, we're still trying to do marriage well.

Cissie:

00:45:06 We do not do marriage conferences. We don't speak marriage things.

Corey:

00:45:09 People ask us, Hey, you need to like, tell us how to be better married 'cause you is the perfect married couple.

Cissie:

00:45:15 They say that? Oh, OK.

Corey:

00:45:16 We're like, uh ... we're not.

Cissie:

00:45:18 Let's ask, we're moving on. That one's making me nervous. How much is football driven by money and fame versus the love of the game?

Corey:

00:45:26 I mean, personally, when you get to the NFL, it's definitely, you know, I wouldn't say that I wanted fame, but I, you know, looked at it as a job and an

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opportunity to, you know, make a good living while I was young to invest later in life. So, but the game that as far as the profiting from ownership and the NFL, it's—that's really the whole reason of it is, is money. The game is money.

Cissie:

00:45:55 I think people need to realize it's a job.

Corey:

00:45:58 Yeah. Once you get it's a job. That's right. And so, some people make it out very well and some people don't make it out so well.

Cissie:

00:46:06 Here's one about me again. Love talking about me. What was it for each of you that made you decide this is the one? You're looking at me.

Corey:

00:46:17 [chuckle] I remember when I was young, I really didn't want to have many girlfriends. I wanted to focus more on who I would be married to rather than just frivolously dating around. So when I met you and saw your heart, and especially your heart for the Lord, and also your beauty, which you decline most days—well, that's a good tip for marriage: If your husband tells you you're beautiful, just say, "OK, thank you, sweetie."

Cissie:

00:46:49 Right. OK. Thank you, sweetie.

Corey:

00:46:50 There you go. [laugh]. But yeah, your beauty and I just, I don't know, you sometimes in life you just know. You just know who it is. Well, you know, you're the one.

Cissie:

00:47:02 Let me answer from my side 'cause it said for both of us. Like I said earlier, it was not love at first sight. I didn't even think he was very cute. And if you're watching the video, he's *very* good looking. So I was—

Corey:

00:47:15 Thank you, honey.

Cissie:

00:47:17 [laugh] I was crazy. But I think God wanted me to fall in love with his heart first, which I truly did because at App State, like one story we didn't share, because I think we've shared it before when I had him on *Fearless*, was like they were doing this chant and in the huddle and it had some curse words in it.

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Corey:

00:47:35 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:47:35 And we saw that all the time in the NFL—people that would be at Bible study one moment and then doing these cursing chants in the locker room the next. It didn't make sense, but you stood up and said, We're not going to do this chant anymore 'cause not all of us agree with it. And I just remember that being like, Wow, he, like my dad—and they say—that's the scary thing—you're going to marry somebody like your father. I did and he is getting more and more like my dad as we get older. [laugh] But I remember like you weren't going to compromise that and you were willing to take the stand and you didn't care. But with that—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—you were able to do that because of the respect you had gained, and with the position you had on the team being so good, people respected you for that. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And so I remember that because then once I fell in love with your heart, whew, you are so good looking.

Corey:

00:48:18 Thank you, honey.

Cissie:

00:48:18 I tell you all the time, I don't know if this is good or bad or if I should share this, but like if I'm in a store or somewhere, I'll kind of go from man to man. Are they as good looking as Corey? Nope. [laugh] Are they good at looking as Corey? Nope. Like I hit the—

Corey:

00:48:31 You made me blush.

Cissie:

00:48:32 —jackpot. I know—

Corey:

00:48:33 You did.

Cissie:

00:48:33 —I really did. OK. But we made such special bonds in the NFL and for that, I'm so thankful. I remember it was like winter, it was like 2 degrees outside in Indianapolis and we'd all go to each other's homes. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Some of us would spend the night together and hang out. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But those bonds like the NFL give such special relationships and friendships, and they kind of come and go because you're cut and you're hired and—

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Corey:
00:48:55 Yeah.

Cissie:
00:48:56 —cut and hired, but that’s something I’m forever thankful for.

You know, as we’re getting ready to close and we have one last question, and say there’s a boy or girl in high school, loves sports, wants to go and play in college, or even farther after that, and their parents are listening, what would you tell them, how to balance that faith? How to go after that dream? ’Cause you lived a dream. I remember dropping you off at Raymond James Stadium—only because we only had one parking pass, so I had to drop you off—and I remember praying with you every Sunday morning—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—thanking God that you got to live out a dream. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Because the reality is, most kids are not going to live out that sports dream or that other dream that they might have. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You did. You got to be on the other side of it, and you’ve also had heartache when it came to that dream. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Where it was taken away like that, overnight, and you never got to play the sport you loved again.

Corey:
00:49:45 Yeah.

Cissie:
00:49:46 That’s a painful reality, but what would you tell those kids?

Corey:
00:49:49 As far as sports goes, you only have a certain amount of time allotted to you. Right? Because when you hit 30, or if, say you’re in the NFL, you hit 30 or 28, you’re like an old guy around. So the Bible talks about, you know, the flowers to the field, they soon, they sprout very soon, but they soon wither. And so I always think about like a flower that’s on, you know, say I give you a flower and it’s on our countertop. That flower only has like two or three days to bask in its glory and then the petals start falling off. And so you have this time allotted to you by God; your heart’s beating, your breathing air in your lungs, and you have a youthful body. So the Bible says that whatever we do, do it all to the glory of God.

And whether that’s, you know, dancing or ballet, whether that’s playing the guitar, whether that’s football and like hitting people really hard and tackling people well, just do that not for your own glory, but for the glory of God. Remember a verse that stuck out to me when I was in high school and it said, I dunno if I’ll get this right, but let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the rich man boast of his riches nor the strong man boast of his strength, but if you wish to boast, boast in this, that you know your Lord.

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Cissie:

00:51:04 Hmm.

Corey:

00:51:04 And so, you know, that really stuck with me through the years that I would boast as—I had strength, I had speed, I had agility, I had all these things, but that *that* wouldn't be the overarching boastfulness, the overarching boastfulness would be that I knew my Lord.

Cissie:

00:51:21 You know, you did get to live out your dream. However, I can remember the day you got—I got a phone call from you. I remember exactly where I was, what store I was, where I was standing when you said, Cissie, I got injured and I'm coming home. And it was in training camp or, not training camp, spring training—

Corey:

00:51:36 —right before Yeah.

Cissie:

00:51:37 —with the Colts. And I remember that moment. A lot of times when players get hurt or injured, they don't, they're just not out of the NFL unless it's a really bad injury. They kind of like phase out and they might come back for another three months—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—and then maybe two months they get picked up and later in the seasons, and you kind of fade out. But right then I knew, it's over. Although you would continue to train for another year and a half trying to get back and you went for some tryouts, but I knew in my heart then, and when you don't end something on your own terms—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—when something is just taken away ...

Corey:

00:52:09 Yeah.

Cissie:

00:52:10 ... something you knew, for many players, that's their identity. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Thankfully it wasn't your identity. You had more, but still, you wore a uniform for 20 years. It's a sport you loved. And sadly, with football, when it's over, it's over. It's not like you get to go play a, you know, a pickup game of pickleball or something like that. It's over. You never play again. We never saw our friends again. We never went back. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. How do you tell people like that when a dream's taken away? I don't want to take you get to live it, but when it comes to a halt and taken—

Corey:

00:52:43 Yeah.

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Cissie:

00:52:44 —when it comes to a stop and it's taken away, what was that like for you and what would you tell people in that moment?

Corey:

00:52:50 It was very difficult because you're, for me, because, I don't think football was my identity, but I was an NFL football player and that's what I walked every day. And, an injury stopped that. And so they said, Hey, you can't be here anymore. You're not part of the team. So, you know, you pack your bags and you leave and you're, you never go back. So you're walking into your job for years and then, you know, you're not allowed to come back. So, yeah, it was, it's difficult to have a sever like that, but if your identity is truly focused and engulfed in one thing like sports or—you can get into a downward spiral easily. That's just who we are as human beings.

But when your identity is focused in Christ, it's still hard. It's not like it's frolicking in the flowers. It's still difficult, but you have something to hold on to. You have a life preserver. You're not just drowning in your own, you know, despondency. You have something to lean on and something to understand. And also just on a real scale, I think the, you know, we don't have enough things that we are aspiring to, you know, just 'cause I'm in the NFL, like, you know, I wanted to build a house or—

Cissie:

00:54:18 —build a boat—

Corey:

00:54:18 —I wanted to build boat.

Cissie:

00:54:20 Hey, right now he has started his own boat company.

Corey:

00:54:22 But don't be engulfed in your job so much that you don't have desires for other things. You know, what's your hobby? What do you do on the weekends? Have other interests, you know? But ultimately, when it's severed, you have to have Christ to lean on, otherwise you're going to be drowning.

Cissie:

00:54:44 And those are conversations we're beginning to have with our kids now. You know, just no matter where—they can do anything that God puts that desire in their hearts. They can do anything that they desire and wish, but whatever they do, they have to do it to glorify the Lord. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And those are my prayers for my kids. No matter if it's in sports, in medicine becoming a doctor, or a lawyer, or our little girl thinks she's going to be a—create movies—Mm-hmm [affirmative]—which I don't know where she gets that creativity from—not from us, but whatever she does, she can do as

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long as she gives glory to the Lord. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So thank you for joining me on another episode of *Fearless*. You survived the cameras and the microphones.

Corey:

00:55:19 Thank you for inviting me.

Cissie:

00:55:20 I'm just very proud, proud to be your wife, and you're so good looking.

MUSIC STARTS

Corey:

00:55:24 You're beautiful.

Cissie:

00:55:25 Thank you, honey.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:55:31 Thank you for joining Corey and I on today's episode of *Fearless*. It's awesome to be back with new episodes, but if there's some that you have missed, I encourage you to check out my website, CissieGrahamLynch.com, and follow me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

CLOSING MUSIC

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