

**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Communications – Cissie Graham Lynch
Fearless – Ep 115 – Parenting
Final Transcript**

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 There are days, as a parent, when I put my head on the pillow, I feel like I've gotten it all wrong, and I know I'm not alone in that feeling. We as parents can feel that pressure of doing it all for our kids and carrying that burden. How do we navigate our children's curiosities and all the questions they have in this world that's forever-changing and compromising? And honestly, there's some days as parents, we don't get it right. But on today's episode of *Fearless*, I want to encourage you of ways that we can navigate through that and that we do not need to panic 'cause God's going to help us through that.

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie:

00:00:36 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:56 One time I was at a moms conference and I was eager to hear the main speaker. He's not someone I typically agree with, but nonetheless, I was eager to hear what he would speak about that night. And he asked, 'Moms, what is your end goal with your kids? Like when you and your spouse are sitting on your back porch, your kids are grown, what would you think that threshold is that "we did it"?' And he said for he and his wife, their goal would be to have relationships with their children. And I said, Hmm, I didn't believe that to be very Biblical. Yes, I pray for *strong* and wonderful relationships with my children and that would be a blessing from the Lord, but our goal should be to raise our children to love the Lord God with all their heart, their mind, and their soul—and, of course, then the *relationship* would be a *result*, God willing.

Right before he had gotten on stage, I had spoken, promoting Operation Christmas Child, on Deuteronomy 6, of how our primary responsibility as parents is the spiritual formation of our children. And that Deuteronomy 6 teaches us, "*These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. [Impress] them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, [and] when you lie down and when you get up.*" So, what this teacher and this pastor was now asserting didn't seem to align with what I had just read from God's Word.

And I would see so often parents compromise truth and God's standards because they want to keep a relationship with their children, especially in the world that we live in right now and in the culture that we're in. And, we begin laying that groundwork for those conversations with our adult children while our kids are still young. Those are the tough conversations that I'm having now with my kids, when they come to me with these questions and curiosities—and our kids are going to have questions and be curious

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about what they see in our culture because they are seeing some crazy things that can be very confusing. And I can remember one time Margaret was *very*, very little and we were at a swimming pool and it was the first time she saw a little boy with two dads. And, I could just see her at this young age, just the wheels in her head were starting to spin and I knew the questions that were going to come. I can remember driving down a road at a church near our house—and it's still there today—with the rainbow flag that's flying outside this church. And my little girl, of course, wanted to go to the church with a beautiful rainbow flag. Then, as she's getting older and those questions are getting more difficult and, kids in her school, you know, have same-sex parents, that I'm having to teach her and navigate these questions, but on levels that she can understand. And, of course, as she gets older—I'm just in the beginning stages of this—as she gets older, we have to navigate those waters.

But it's hard for us to have these conversations because even the people around us, like even inside the church, we might not always agree now on what's right and what's wrong because we're seeing a rapid change inside the church with Biblical illiteracy and not knowing God's truth. And the sad reality is, although we do pray for our children and we pray to have relationships with them one day—that is my heart's desire as a mom, of course—but we're not promised that. We will likely have times when we have to stand on the side of God and not with the opinions and positions that are brought to us by our children. Because Jesus said, speaking of in the end times, "*They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.*" And that is a Scripture that I've really have wrestled with over the last few months, and I've talked about it with just some older friends who have been there and done that and have raised their children. Because for *me* right now with my children at 10, 7 and 1, I can't even fathom one day that we would be divided like that. But that is just a relationship that I'm not promised, that this teacher and pastor was trying to teach all these women that night, but that our greatest goal is that to love God with all their heart, mind, and soul.

And it's hard, it's hard when we think that those relationships can be broken. I know I have some friends who have grown children and their grown children have walked away from the Lord and then their grandchildren have been identifying with the LGBT community. And so these grandparents had to make a decision: Are we going to keep the relationship with our children, so we can be with our grandchildren and compromise our standards? Because their children were asking them to affirm them and, although they loved them, they said they would still go on vacations with them, they'd still love to come visit them and spend them, but they were never going to affirm what they knew was not right. And so they've been shut off; their children and grandchildren want nothing to do with them.

But on the opposite side of it, the other set of grandparents didn't want to lose that relationship. They were terrified at losing that relationship with their family that they did

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affirm it. They compromised; they compromised God's standards. And that's a hard reality for I think for a lot of us parents to think about. And I pray that one day if I have to come to that decision and that choice when my kids are adults that I would never compromise God's standards, that I would stand for His truth, but always do it in a loving way with my kids. And of course a relationship is not a terrible thing. That's what we hope for and pray for, but we can't lose our focus on the ultimate goal, that our goal cannot be the relationship. The goal is that they would love God with all their heart, mind, and soul, and the *result* of that would be the relationship we will have in the later years.

But, of course, we want to lay that foundation now when it starts with our kids and starting with those relationships and those conversations, so we *can* help cultivate a relationship with the Lord. And just a co-worker recently was telling me a story that his son's on a soccer team, and his friend's dad showed up dressed as a woman. And, of course, the children recognize that something's different. And his son asked, you know, What's going on? And so when my co-worker told him, on a way and a level that his son would understand, his son's reaction was beautiful. His son wanted to invite his friend into *his* home so he could see how his family lived and to show him God's love. And this story represents beautifully what our compassionate response *with* truth should look like. And this kid modeled that perfectly because we are to teach our kids to have courage, but we're also to teach 'em to have compassion in this world. And it took courage for that little boy to want invite another little boy who comes from kind of a different background into his home. But it also took compassion for him to want that little boy to be around *his* family and to hear about Jesus and to see what his family was like. Because our relationship with our kids is one of the *best* ways that we have to help them, that we are the influential guides. We as parents to help guiding them and navigating through this difficult world. And we as parents are modeling for them how to both work with hard questions and situations with compassion and grace, and to love while also holding God's standards in place and holding those standards high. Because the world likes to make us think that we can't do both, but we can, just like Jesus did—and just like we talk about here on *Fearless* often: to be 100% truth and 100% grace.

But the question kind of arose over this time of: With the current cultural climate, how do we steer our children's questions and curiosity when life is so intense around us? And when even we as parents sometimes don't even know how to navigate? Because, like I said, this can even be hard to navigate, even in our church or around our friends and our family, when we might not all agree of what truth is because we've dropped those standards. And the rapid pace that our culture is changing leaves many of us just ill-equipped and unprepared to have these conversations, starting with our kids at a younger and younger age, starting, you know, around 4 or 5—like when my daughter started asking some of these tough questions—all the way up till they're 18 because these conversations don't end. They're just a continual conversation as they get older and older.

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But a few things I would like parents knowing; number one is, during these times, do not panic. A word I've been clinging to is 'assurance,' 'cause Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*" And we as parents, we don't operate in fear, but we are to parent in assurance; assurance of who God is, what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross, His love for us, and His Word that helps us navigate through *every* situation in life. This summer my little girl was watching the series called [*The*] *Small Light* and it's the story of Anne Frank and I wouldn't—there are a few scenes, so if you want to go watch that with your children, be prepared, there are a couple scenes I had to fast forward with my child. But it just had me thinking that if I had been a Jewish parent or a grandparent and raising my children in the evil of those days, would I have been a parent that was fearful? Would I have been fearless? Would I have been able to stand in assurance of what truth is? And those are just questions that I was asking myself as I was watching these parents through these just evil days.

And I think back in 2020 with COVID, you know, it was fearful in the beginning 'cause none of us knew the answers. It was a fearful time. But as time went on and we were able to gain the facts and the truth, we could operate in less fear. And I will say in those days that I never wanted my kids to see fear in me. We had the facts; we would do what we could to protect ourselves and that we would live our lives. And so I think that that's just an example of how we've seen our culture operate in fear, that would be passed down to a generation.

The second is: have a foundation. Always laying a foundation of assurance for my kids is one of my goals. And a major part of the moral decline we have is because the church has undermined its foundation. We as individual families have to have a true foundation of God's Word and His design—because if we don't have a foundation, we don't have that assurance. Christians who say they read the Bible once a week apart from church is at a historical low of 24%. Twenty-four percent of Americans say they read the Bible at least once a week. And I think that for us to be able to stand in strength, for us to be able to take action in our communities and in our schools and in our businesses, that we have to know God's Word. And one of my favorite Bible verses that I often talk here is Daniel 11. Those "*who know their God [will be able to stand in] strength and take action.*" Those who have that foundation of the knowledge of God *will* be able to stand in strength when culture comes. They *will* be able to stand in strength when those relationships with their adult children might be threatened, but they also will be able to take action—action with love for their families, action for love in their communities. So it starts with having that foundation of the knowledge of God.

But the third is create dialogue, conversations, and have that open communication. I'm at that important stage with my children 'cause I'm early on in these stages with them. My little girl is 10 years old and I'm trying to be very intent of having these conversations with her, asking her some tough questions, so that she feels comfortable coming to me with that dialogue. And, it's like I said, I can—since she was 4 years old, she has seen culture around her, things that are different than what we are taught in our home. And

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so, I *want* her to be able to come with those when her Biblical worldview is being questioned in school or she's having challenges, that I want to be the expert in that and I want to keep those conversations, so that when she goes back to college and is an adult, that I pray that that relationship *is* strong enough that—where she comes to me.

The fourth is: model humility and admit wrongdoings. And I'm so thankful I can have memories of my mother coming to me and saying, 'Hey Cissie, I was wrong,' or, 'I got that wrong.' And I've had to show that to my children. My children have seen a lot of rawness when it comes to me this past year. I've been honest with the struggles that I had with my pregnancy and the struggles I had wrestling with God. And sadly my kids saw some of that. And so, I had to be honest with them and apologetic to them and model humility and admit our wrongdoings. I think that is so important that as parents, especially in a Christian home, that we teach our kids just because we're Christians doesn't mean we're perfect because I see adult children grow up and say, 'Oh, our families were hypocritical.'

Just recently, Austin and I, on our way to school, got in this big argument and I said, "Austin, we got to stop." I said, "First off, Mom was wrong. I should not have responded to you that way." And the conversation grew, and where it ended is the point that I want to prove is that I just say, you know what, Mom goes off and I do a podcast. I speak at churches, I tell people about Jesus, but that doesn't mean I always get it right as a parent. And it says, what it means is that I need Jesus more. I *know* that I'm sinner. I know that I've failed. And that we as Christians recognize that we need Jesus more to help us in that, help us as a family to love one another, to serve one another, to be quick forgivers in those mistakes. So I think it's important as parents to admit wrongdoings and show that humility to our children.

And the fifth is, it's OK not to have all the answers as parents. I think we as parents think we have to have 'em all, but it's OK to tell our kids, You know what? I don't have the answer to that, but let's find it out together. Let's look at God's Word and what He has to say or other Biblical resources to help you out with that. But also, don't forget that God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will give us the words that we need when we need it—but don't forget that the Holy Spirit is working in your child's life just like He's working in yours.

So as parents, what is our end goal? It's back to the story we started with. Yes, we want relationships with our children. I pray for that with my own children, but that shouldn't be our goal. Having a relationship is one of the tools to get us there. Our goal is that they would grow up having their *own* faith, their own relationship and trust in Jesus Christ. And that we as parents are helping them navigate through that, *especially* in the culture that we are in, and it seems very difficult, but I also encourage you to have other people in your life that you can look up to. Me, I'm always asking parents who have been there, who have done that, asking them questions. 'What do you think you did right?' And, 'What are some changes you would've made raising your children?' Or, 'How did you

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Final Transcript**

cultivate those conversations and those relationships inside your family?’ Because we *are* in a cultural storm, but we have to be assured and remember that we have a God who controls the waves and the rains and who promises that “*when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.*” And that’s a reminder that when we’re in those difficult times, those difficult times when our relationships might be rough with our kids in different stages, that those rivers, they will not sweep over you if you stay faithful to the Lord.

And parents, I want you to remember—just something my grandmother used to say—to those of you who have maybe not had a loving Christian heritage, did not grow up in a Christian home, you can make sure your children have one, even if you feel like it’s too late. Commit those wasted years and those lost opportunities to God—you can’t change those—but commit ’em to God. And, for these years to come, commit those to having a godly heritage into your home.

And that we don’t have to do this alone. Remember that God provides us grace, patience, and wisdom. And another thing that my grandmother taught me is that parents, we’re not miracle workers. We’re not in the miracle business and salvation is a miracle of the heart and that’s only God can do.

But I do think in these difficult times that God gives us what I call the little God glimmers. There’s signals that parents should look for to know that we are on the right track. It’s like my co-worker’s son that, you know, *man*, what a tough situation, what a tough conversation do we have, and not knowing how the son would react, but the son’s response of wanting to have that child come into his home so that they could show the love of Jesus. It kind of just is God’s way of saying, Hey, I know these days are long. I know they’re difficult for parents, but Mom, Dad, you’re on the right track. So when God does give you those little bits of glimmers that you’re kind of on the right track in these frustrating days, take it and say, Thank You, Lord. Still give me the strength I need to face the days to come. And that we as parents—our job is to teach them Scripture, read Scripture with them, help them navigate, give them a healthy home—the food, the laundry. But it’s *God’s* job for salvation and to lead them to that, and that’s something we can’t do. So our end goal, our end goal is that one day that our children will have a relationship with God, which will prayerfully result in having a relationship with us.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:18:49 Thank you for joining me here on *Fearless*. As always, I encourage you to follow me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). Also, if you’ve missed any old episodes and would like to get caught up, you can check them out on CissieGrahamLynch.com.

CLOSING MUSIC

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