

BCL ep310 Stop Searching for Advice: Keith McCurdy's Simple Truths That Actually Work

Years ago, if you were searching for trusted parenting advice, you'd likely reach for a book by James Dobson from Focus on the Family or John Roseman. But today, those once prominent voices are harder to find amidst the overwhelming flood of online experts and self-proclaimed parenting gurus. So how do we sift through the noise and uncover the best biblical parenting wisdom? Keith McCurdy is here to help us navigate the options and make thoughtful, informed choices, no matter the age of your children.

Join us for this episode of Basecamp Live. Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation. Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings.

We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Basecamp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens.

Welcome to another episode of Basecamp Live. Davies Owens here with you. We are on a journey raising the next generation, and it's amazing how fast it goes past us.

I still quote that often known statistic that by the age of 12, 75% of the time we will spend in our entire lives with our children is come and gone, because when they hit 13, as God designed it, they get more independent. They're still very much in need of our guidance, but we are increasingly watching them move out into independence and adulthood, off to life there at 18 and beyond. It's important.

Every minute counts. We want to be intentional as we partner well together as homes and schools and churches. Keith McCurdy is back for another conversation with us.

Keith is here very frequently. Again, at some point, I'm going to deem him a co-host, but Keith, of course, has such a wonderful perspective because he travels around the country. He's been to many of your schools.

He speaks 8 to 10 times a month. It's unbelievable. He has a really helpful perspective on what's happening broadly across the culture and the lives of many of our families and our children.

He's often just helpful in giving what I always say, Keith, really, you're just the voice of what Grandma would have said 50 years ago, kind of common sense living, biblical living. Today is a very, I think, just overwhelmingly helpful topic, which is how do we sort through all of the many voices that are out there? Keith is going to give us some great practical principles in this conversation. Keith, as many of you know, has worked with families and children and parents for over 30 years in the field of mental health, working with thousands upon thousands of people.

He has a Master of Arts in Educational Specials from James Madison University. He's the President and CEO of Total Life Counseling. He keeps a very full counseling load on top of all of his and connecting.

I look forward to continuing this conversation with Keith talking about this particular topic of helping us make wise decisions as to the sources of parenting wisdom. Before we get to the interview, just a quick shout out and thank you to the organizations that partner with us as sponsors for this particular episode, Gordon College, Classical Academic Press, Wilson Hill Academy, and the folks at The Light Phone. Without further ado, here is our conversation with Keith McCurdy.

Keith, welcome back to Base Camp Live. I'm glad to be here. Thanks for having me again.

It's so great to be doing this series. Folks, not aware, it's called Live Sturdy Series. On our website for the podcast, we're reworking it, refreshing it.

We're going to have an easy way for folks to go in and look up all these great Live Sturdy talks and just continue conversation with you. I thought today we would back up a step and address an issue that in some ways is the most basic question, which is really, how do you know where to go for parenting wisdom? What are the sources out there? I'm sure that folks come see you all the time with a range of very specific questions. I know as I travel around the country and as I meet with young families, when I'm speaking, I'll often ask the head of school, hey, can I just sit down with some of your grammar school families and do an informal focus group? One of the things I'll ask them is how many of you have family nearby? How do you know how to parent? It's unfortunate how many don't really have clear sources as to where to go for parenting wisdom.

What are you seeing? Yeah, no, I mean, I see that quite a bit. It's interesting to me that, you know, goodness, 15, 20 years ago, coming into my office when I dealt with parents, there was a higher level of confidence. Like, hey, we kind of know what we're doing and we're here.

Unfortunately, sometimes it was, we're here because our child's the problem. How do we fix that child? But really what I see today, more than anything, is parents that feel a little more, you know, just out of their league. Parents acknowledging more openly to me that we feel more overwhelmed.

We're unsure of, at times, not only what to do, but how to approach it. And I had a parent just the other day tell me, he said, I don't even know what the goal is that I have in mind for my child. Outside of them surviving childhood, which he laughed, I laughed, but he said, you know, he said, that's how polluted I think language and culture is speaking into parenting today.

And I thought, wow, what a great observation. Well, you know, you've seen these stats just a couple of months ago. The surgeon general came out and said that, you know, parents today are under a lot of pressure.

33% of parents say they are stressed most days versus 20% of non-parents. And then even more disturbing is that 50% of parents report that, quote, most days their stress is completely overwhelming and they can't bring themselves to do anything compared to 26% of other adults. So, it's no wonder a lot of people are thinking, well, I'm not going to have kids.

It's too stressful. But the reality is today, there's such sense of being overwhelmed, which I would think would include, like, I don't even know where to go. I don't even know what the questions are to your point.

Well, not only even being overwhelmed, I'll throw another stat at you during COVID. You know, one of the biggest studies that was done looked at, you know, not like 500,000 folks, which would be a massive study, looked at 27 million behavioral claims during 2020. I think it was Beacon Health.

And we found out some really interesting things. And we found out that actually, which matches everything I saw in my office and matches what we've seen nationally, even though it's different than what we often hear in media, we diagnosed severe conditions in children 10% less during 2020. And in teenagers, 5% less, which also matches clinically what I saw over that year.

Children got better in many ways. Now, we know chunks of that relate to family was recovered. A lot of other crazy activities slowed down a bit.

So, a lot of interesting things happened that play into that. But a really interesting stat that came out of that also, I believe it was over half of parents, even though we had the stat that we were seeing fewer severe symptoms, over half of parents in those 27 million claims reported their child was worse. So, it's not only that parents are overwhelmed, but it distorts their ability to see their child accurately.

Which is, that adds to the struggle. It's just, yeah, it's a kind of a snowball of stress. But, you know, if you, part of what, you know, I hear often and kind of to the point of really what we're trying to talk about is where does one go for wisdom? I remember, you know, Jonathan Edwards said years ago that he stood on the shoulder of his father who stood on the shoulder of his grandfather.

And I thought, what a, that's a beautiful image of like generational blessing and wisdom. And so many today, I didn't grow, I grew up in a broken home, an alcoholic father. I didn't stand on his shoulders.

Like I've figured out how to kind of crawl my way along and people came along and like, where do you go? I was fortunate to have mentors back in the day, James Dobson, you know, was out there on the radio. And, you know, you had a lot of these voices. I don't think they're there like they were in the past.

No, I don't think so. And I wouldn't even, even before we start listening or talking about other

voices like Dobson, which I think in many ways was a good voice. If you think about how we used to teach parenting, it was generationally, you know, we up until probably about the fifties had three key sources of generational wisdom for, for centuries.

And it was those who had gone before us and raised kids, our parents, our grandparents. So we had demonstrated wisdom right in front of us. We saw their kids.

We saw how they turned out. Wow. They must know something about this.

The second was the church. You know, the idea that God holds some truth in this and the church would speak into parenting on a regular basis. And then the third, funny enough, as a worker in the country, many schools, it was teachers.

The hundreds upon hundreds of stories I have from teachers, especially historically about how parents, when they were stressed about things with their child, it was the teacher that could speak into that because the teacher had seen thousands of kids where the parent had seen three. And those were key sources of wisdom. But I would argue, we have lost all those.

Actually, I put it this way, those have been killed off. And now primarily they were killed off by Sigmund Freud in my profession, because we created this void that said, you know, transcendent truth doesn't exist. It's all now subjective.

And if it's all subjective, it's a very progressive mindset, meaning it's all what I think is good now, then no one that goes before us has anything to offer. And so it created this massive void. And unfortunately, in the world today, we see when parents struggle, where do they turn first? It's rarely to their families.

Often their families live somewhere else in the country. You know, we're not as connected as we used to be. They rarely turn to the church and they're not talking to teachers.

They Google people with my credentials. They Google self-help gurus. They Google all this stuff, looking for the next best thing.

Well, and that's what I'm, you know, there's a stat I've mentioned, we do a lot of stats on this episode, which is, I guess, the sociologist is coming out of me. But, you know, Pew did a study not too long ago that said only 30% of millennial Gen Zers live within a 100 mile radius of their extended family. That is exactly the percentage I get.

I put 10 parents in a room, three of them will say, yeah, we've got extended family around. So you really do have a massive void of generational wisdom. And, you know, additionally, I think, and, you know, to your comment about just where those clarion voices of old, you also, I think, have this new kind of cultural moment that really says, you got to be really careful judging anything or offering any opinions.

So I think you've got a lot of people that historically would have said something, they're scared.

Because when I grew up in the neighborhood, I mean, we all probably of our generation remember this, you know, the mom down the street had just as much authority as my mom did. If I did something stupid, I got just as much trouble with her as I would have with my own mom.

Oh, absolutely. But in today's world, the fear, and unfortunately, culture often supports this fear. You know, if a neighbor has to grab a kid by the ear and drag them home because they were cussing out their kid or something, when they get to the home of the parent, they get sued because they did emotional damage on the child.

This is stupid. It's so tragic. It is.

It's this you do you thing is probably the most, is the biggest lie that has ever happened. But it's absolutely kind of neutering the modern parent to where they're thinking, I can't, I don't feel like I can say anything to anybody else, much less even my own child. I'm afraid of stepping up.

Well, and it goes back to the whole notion of if we're broken people and we're trying to raise and shape and train other young broken people, they're going to be uncomfortable in the process. But we're told by culture today, we should never make a child uncomfortable. I mean, it's just amazing.

It's so upside down. Yeah. And I think that's an important point because even if you find somebody that you respect that's kind of this clarion voice to guide you, I think there's just that sense of, yeah, but I mean, maybe I'll do that in my home, but I sure can't suggest that to anybody else because that would be offensive to them.

And so we don't have, I was thinking about, I've got the, this analogy came to my mind, but it's like the ring security systems, people have those where they can get on their phone and see the camera. And the new thing is like the ring network. So you can like link them up in the neighborhood.

I'm like, that's kind of the idea is like, could you get multiple eyes and a voice around your family, which of course is one of the reasons I think that our schools are so critical because we're locking arms around shared rules. Yeah. Like how we're going to, you know, are we all going to give our cell phone when they're in fifth grade? Well, no, we're going to commit together not to do that.

And we're going to work collaboratively, but anyway, we're going to get into more of the solution. But going back to just this basic question of where do families go for guidance and wisdom these days. And so you're saying that, you know, in days, not that long ago would have been the church.

It would have been the teacher. You know, what else do you think is leading to this breakdown? Well, let me frame the question differently. I get asked this when I, you know, you and I both go to summer conferences for several groups and we speak.

And it's so funny, some key people almost every year ask me the same thing. When I come in, they say, Hey, what do you got new this year? And my answer is always nothing. I mean, I might have a new statistic or new story that demonstrates a principle, but that's part of the problem.

Transcendent truth is not new. And I think we've got to, instead of looking for the next new thing, which we often do, especially in my profession, my profession is always cranking out the next new therapy, the next new perspective, all that nonsense. I would argue that we're not dealing with things that are new.

We need to get back to core principles of truth. And the interesting thing about those three sources of generational wisdom, historically, they were actually grounded in transcendent truth. You know, our parents and our grandparents, really my parents and grandparents, now this generation's grandparents and great-grandparents, a lot of how they raised kids in many ways was a cultural shift, not shift, but a position culture was in prior to the current shift that just said there is truth.

There is a right way to raise kids. And a majority of us really tried to pursue it that way. It doesn't mean we all did it well.

There was a commonality in the church. There was a commonality in education as well, that there was a connection with truth, biblical truth, and we have lost that significantly. But I think this is a really important point because there is more of a negative effect on us.

I think we realize that while we would say as believers that there's nothing new under the sun and there is truth, goodness, and beauty that transcends all of that, there is, I think, just such a deep set cultural suspicion of things that are older. I mean, I got this book from James Dobson from the 1980s, and of course, he's, you know, on the cover, he's wearing bell-bottoms and you immediately go- He's looking, bell-bottoms are coming back. Well, see, so the book will come back.

But right now you look at that, and I think people listening would probably agree with me that there is somewhere deep inside the sense of like, yeah, there's probably some really good biblically grounded things there, but there's probably a lot of things that he wouldn't get about today. And so we immediately just throw him out or any of these sort of historic voices of wisdom. And that leaves us, I think, even more vulnerable.

And I understand that. I mean, when Holly and I were raising our three kids, very trendy back then was Baby Einstein. I remember it was like, you know, we'd go in our small group and everybody's like, and Baby Einstein, you got to have little black and white things, cubes, and you had to listen to the music thing.

And then a few years later, it was like, well, actually that didn't really help your child. Like, oh, for crying out loud, I don't trust anybody. It wasn't based on any truth.

It was a gimmick that came up from somebody that wanted to make money on it. Yeah. Well,

and they probably did.

And then- Baby Einstein, Baby Mozart, black and white toys, all that kind of stuff that fills the niche of the next new thing. Right. Because it's trendy, it's new, but it is not grounded and based in truth.

Now think about this. So I run a practice, I run a clinic over the years, supervised residents. And one of the things we talk about when people come to work for us is two kind of pots of knowledge in a sense.

One is psychology and one is scripture. And many folks in my profession, if they're a believer, it's a very small percentage, they'll take scripture and shove it through psychology. So they'll have a good verse for something or they'll have a good, something, some little homily they'll tell that connects to scripture about a psychological principle.

But in essence, what they're saying is psychology holds truth, transcendent truth. Well, that's false. Psychology is theoretical.

If we held transcendent truth, we wouldn't keep coming up with all these brand new ideas every year. We do the opposite. We take psychology and shove it through the sieve of scripture, because scripture is what holds transcendent truth.

Now there are psychological principles that I believe will line up with biblical truth. I would argue there are many that do not. And so you've really got to say, when you go to that question, who are you going to? Where are you going to? My recommendation as always, you have to go to a source that's grounded in transcendent biblical truth.

And that's where it has to be. Whether I'm speaking publicly all over the country or even in my office, I tell patients on a regular basis, anytime I ask you to do anything and you're wondering where it comes from, please ask me. Because if I can't tell you and defend it grounded in truth, I shouldn't be telling you to do it.

It isn't that it should be grounded in psychology. Well, and that's, again, I think we're just so prone to want to find a quick answer. We're going to take a break and come back.

Because I think as you get into those real kind of crisis moments, what do you do? Where do you go? And I think most families today, when I've asked that question in these focus groups, the most common answer, other than you Google it, is you phone a friend, which I understand. Let's go find a slightly older family who has a fifth grader and ask them how they got through that thing. But there's a lot of factors, like children are different.

So why don't we take a quick break and come back? Because this is a really challenging question, is how do we find good sources of truth for parenting wisdom? So we'll be right back after the break. I want to take just a moment during our break and let you know about the great work that's being done by Wilson Hill Academy. They offer a vibrant, rich and accredited

classical Christian education available to families and schools almost anywhere.

With a click of a button, students join master teachers and friends live online from all over the world to engage in deep and lively discussion, solve math problems, conduct science experiments, translate Latin, deliver thesis presentations, and so much more. At Wilson Hill, students make lifelong friends and graduate well-prepared for college and beyond. Discover what's possible for your family or school at wilsonhillacademy.com. Keith, we were saying right before break that the more common approach to finding parenting wisdom, since again, most people either live geographically far away from extended family or often I hear, you know, I don't live that far from them, but I don't want to parent the way they parent.

In fact, I parent everything opposite the way they parent. And so you really, there's a lot of parenting on an island going on out there and a lot of it becomes, okay, now I've got a real crisis. What am I going to do about it? And so we were talking about before the break, I mean, it's pretty common.

I've seen the stats. We all go to our friend Google, or I guess soon before too long, we'll go to our friend AI and say, Hey, what do I do about this particular problem, this particular challenge? And it sounds sometimes pretty reasonable, but give us some wisdom on this. Like what, if that, if you're going to Google or you're asking your AI friend to solve the problem of your particular issue with your child, how do we, how do we separate good wisdom from bad ideas? Well, I typically don't ever recommend Google or AI.

I'll just start with that. Go call your grandmother. Yeah.

Right. I mean, can I, but, but let's use that one as an example, because let's say, let's say that's your resource. Let's say your resource is Google and you type in, how do I deal with a sassy 15 year old girl? Uh, and you get 350 responses.

Oprah says this is right. And I think the key is you've got to be able to have a filter for discernment with what you look at and whether, whether it's going to Google, whether it is calling a friend, whether it is calling grandma, we don't want to take anything at face value. You know, I go back to what I said in my office, when folks ask, or when I'm talking to folks about things I work with them on, I want them asking me where things come from because the goal is to steer them back to what they will then use in the future.

In other words, the goal isn't for me to be unnecessary in their life as they raise the kids. I want to, I want to jump in, work with them for a short amount of time. And instead of answering all their questions, I want to steer them to the right principles and the right source of information that they can rely on longterm.

And so whether it's Google, whether it's phone, a friend, whether it's grandma, we've got to say, can we take this back to something that is truth in Scripture, something transcendent? And I tell folks a lot of time, you know, we need to get back to seeing what does Scripture actually

say about raising our kids? And I'll tell you a really interesting way that I've seen some folks do that. I, you know, I travel around, you and I both do speak to schools. And I'm often at the end of an evening, I've asked, I'm asked by someone, they say, you know, we know this sounds good.

And we think, we think we agree with this, but you're telling us to be the redheaded ostrich in the neighborhood. I say, I am and be proud of it. And then what I tell them is one of the ways you can do that and be proud of it is find the other redheaded ostriches.

Yeah. And I usually, yeah. And I say, look around in this room, usually it's a couple hundred people right there.

And I say, you got an ostrich farm right here. Yeah. And, and the key is this.

I say, you take a group of third grade moms. They could, when they get together, they could burn your school to the ground or make it live a hundred years into the future. So you want to take that power and you get a bunch of third grade moms together to start having conversations about parenting.

And what I've seen, I've seen so many groups all over the country, cause they reach out to me for resource or different things. And they get together and they start looking at what really is healthy. They look at scripture, they look at commentaries, they look at other voices that they have gleaned some truth from before that have lined up with scripture.

And they begin the deep dive into parenting based on truth that they're discerning. That's what's powerful. And in many ways, they're reclaiming what we used to do culturally through generational wisdom by these groups getting together, say, we are going to pursue this together.

Well, and I think that's, that is such a significant point is, you know, doing, you got to lock arms. I mean, you know, the old, it takes a village. There's actually a lot of truth in that.

And it's not only because it gives you, you know, some backup because it's not, you're not the only family in the fifth grade whose kid doesn't have a phone. You're actually, you're part of the funny farm. You're all doing this together.

It's very countercultural. You have a, you, but you have some shared and agreed upon standards and norms. Yeah.

Yeah. I had, I was, I worked with a group while I was in Oklahoma a couple months ago. And, um, uh, a group of moms talked to me during, well, before and after a prison or workshop.

And they said, yeah, we had the meeting last night, all these fifth grade moms. And they said, yeah, we, we didn't say we all have to have same rules. We just got together, talked about the principles that we're going to operate with and then started sharing the ground we believe

we're going to stand on.

And they echoed, they said, it's amazing. Once one or two started agreeing, they're going to take firm stances on things based on certain principles. The others like, yeah, we're going to do that too.

Yeah. And it wasn't like you're telling the others what to do. You're sharing.

This is what we do and why. And it's amazing to me when people are open to both share and hear where other people are and be really very open about it and seeking it grounded in truth. It's amazing how truth comes to the surface.

And it's not so hard to figure out the healthy ground to stand on. And it's no longer that dangerous because you've got 12 other moms or dads sitting there with you going, we're going to do the same thing. Right.

And I think again, more and more what I see happening are schools, you know, in collaboration with their churches, but often schools just saying, hey, we're going to, we're going to put a stake in the ground. We're going to gather, we're going to have conversations and we're going to just, you know, it's so overused to do life together. But I think you have to have that level of coordination.

And, you know, and I wonder too, Keith, just as you're, we started talking about just the general fatigue. I mean, I think for a lot of families, the idea of what's the right answer really comes down to what's, what's going to make this go away as fast as it can. And what you're describing is actually a lot of work because now wait, one more thing, you got to go back down to the school for another meeting to talk about the thing.

Like, could I just, you know, give them another, whatever game system and send them off to their bedroom. I mean, I get where parents just want to throw their hands up, but what I'm hearing you say is you got to, it's back to being intentional and not going the path of least resistance. Yeah.

I tell parents all the time, it's a marathon, not a sprint. Now, on the one hand, they accept that as really good news when they think they've totally messed something up. And I said, no, no, no, it's a marathon.

You got plenty of time to correct and all that kind of stuff. One thing typically doesn't sink your parenting journey, but the flip side, that's painful because they're like, oh wow, we have to be in this for a whole marathon. It's like, yeah, you do.

And it is a process. And if we don't take the reins, we end up getting run over by it. Right.

Well, and they add more complexity. Unfortunately, we're not dealing with little widgets and widget one came through and it worked great. And widget two's not, I mean, they're all

different.

Now there's boys are different, girls are different, personalities of our children are different. So that's, speak to that because again, we're looking for sources of parenting wisdom. I think a lot of times like, oh, I know exactly what to do.

And I do try it again on the second child. Like, uh, that didn't work, you know? So where's the fault? What's the problem? Well, I think a lot of times we parent backwards. We, and we're even told a lot by culture.

And even a lot of folks in my profession, they say, you know, you've got to figure out the uniqueness of your child and parent based on their uniqueness and accept that they're all different and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Now there's truth in that. But before we get there, we have to first understand what are the commonalities and the foundational principles of parenting all children.

And in my experience, when we do that well first, we both recognize their uniqueness better when it begins showing up. And we've already put a common foundation in place that we can build on to then also capture and navigate the uniqueness that shows up in our kids. But this idea that there's a different truth for every unique child, which has been big in the last 20, 30 years.

I mean, read all the different titles of the books, you know, the slow to warm child, the depressed child, the anxious child, this child, that child. And so you have parents constantly coming and going, I think this is my child. I think that's my child.

So they have totally lost what are common foundational principles for all children first. Again, I just want to focus on this because I think it's really, obvious things aren't so obvious anymore, but we do live in a world biblically where there are universal, unchanging truths that fit all children as opposed to, because if you don't believe that, and maybe somebody's listening going, well, I kind of believe that, but to Keith, your point, like everybody's kind of different. So I don't want to be too heavy handed with my second child because they're just different.

Like, no, they're not. They're in a state of rebellion and you need to lovingly guide them back. I mean, so how do you know when it's universal and how do you know when it's specific? Well, and I think just as all children need food to survive, all children need water to survive.

I mean, it's amazing. We are built, there are commonalities that we all share that first have to be addressed well at a foundational level. And so I think what we have to do with that is really go back and look at, I mean, I walk parents through when they come into my office, you know, just this idea of what are the key things, relationships that God puts in place in Genesis? And are we respecting those initially when we begin building our family, as it relates to marriage, as it relates to children, as it relates to the process of raising them? You know, we've got to say, can we identify those core principles and do we have those in place early? Because the funny

thing is this, and I know you and I are going to dig into this a little more, but most parents don't think about parenting as much until they have children that are, you know, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

And yet the most core common principles really begin around the age of two. And it's amazing when we get those well, wow, the stuff a little later seems to make a little more sense. Right.

And I think that's, you know, actually the comment we were making before, I mean, we tend to, in our human nature, we don't tend to take things seriously until it's a problem. I mean, it's like a lot of folks know they should go work out every day, but it's when you pull your back, now you need to really take that seriously. And so I think there's that sense in which, well, it was easy parenting them at this stage.

So I'll just kind of do it more casually, less intentionally. And you're saying, no, don't, you can't let up. Yeah, right.

We need to be intentional and intentional doesn't mean harsh, doesn't mean mean, doesn't mean severe, but have an understanding of what's our end goal. Well, it's really three things. What's the problem we're trying to deal with, with all children? What's the healthy process? What's the goal that we're shooting for? And then what's the basic process to help us get there? Now there will be unique things through that with different children, but those core things are the recipe that we see laid out very clearly in scripture, I would argue.

Yeah. Well, that's absolutely, I mean, to the point earlier, like if you don't know where you're going, you're going to get there every time. Like you kind of need to, I'm a perfect parent.

Yeah. Well, you didn't really have a plan there, did you? And I say that as a, as a parent who's still on the journey, even though my kids are all grown, we never, we never kind of were done with that process. I want to, you know, again, for time, this, this could be a part two and a part three to keep going on this, but it, the core issue of how do we know where to find sources of good parenting wisdom? And what does that look like with so much coming at us and so many day-to-day changes and just trying to honestly survive and be wise in this limited moment? There's a lot there.

Why don't we take another break and come back? Cause I want to hear from you. I mean, obviously you've been at this for three decades, you have a ton to offer, but there are also a lot of voices out there in terms of, you know, a lot of smart folks kind of your thoughts on who they are and maybe how do we again discern once we hear that because there is a, there's a lot to sort through. So we'll be right back and continue our conversation.

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Visit classicalacademicpress.com and use the discount code BASECAMP space live to save 20% off your next purchase. Keith, at the most basic level, there are more voices than there have ever been in the world today. Podcast, Google things, and a lot of them have a lot of wisdom.

A lot of them are newer. A lot of them are older. Others, just general directions you might point people into for wisdom when it comes to parenting.

How do we know who are, who else might be a good source to look at? Yeah, I think that's a great question. It's similar, it's a similar question I get about how do I find a good therapist? So let's first talk, let's talk about the first part, you know, some of the other voices. I would argue that some of the best voices are folks that actually have been around a little while rather than just highly educated without a lot of life experience.

It's amazing to me how many people are out speaking on parenting that have no children or not married. I'm not saying they can't have wisdom. I'm saying I think it's harder to find it there.

And I haven't run into many folks in that category even though I would argue they're the majority that are online. Very young parents or folks highly educated without children. And that concerns me because I think you need a mix of some education, a mix of a lot of experience, humility with that as well.

And I think there have been historical really good voices. You mentioned one earlier, James Dobson. I still think you go back and look at a lot of things that Dobson wrote, there's a lot of great material, insight, grounding in what Dobson wrote.

You know, another one I think of is John Rosemond, who I know very well. John is for the notion of parental authority. John does a great job.

You know, I'll tell a story, I don't think John will mind I tell it. I asked him, he and I first met a friend introduced us to each other that knew both of us. And it was funny because we're like, wow, we're looking in a mirror, we say the same things.

And I found out that John became a believer later in life after he'd been writing a ton of stuff he'd been writing. And I said, what changed? And he said, well, now I knew where it all came from. He said, it's amazing.

He said, I knew it was true, I could see it. He said, but now I know where it comes from. And his point is perfect.

That's where we have to seek is in the voices, are they taking their source back to truth? Or are they hanging their hat on a psychological principle? And I think that's a really important, just as a general first filter, if you will, like ask that question. I worry sometimes when I talk to folks,

because again, the cancel culture kind of bleeds into the Christian world sometimes where it's like, oh yeah, I mean, I had somebody came up to me until I go and just say, well, Paul Tripp, I wouldn't touch that guy with the 10-foot pole. Everything he says is absolutely crazy.

I went, really, everything? And I was like, well, it was really one thing he said, but all of a sudden everything that Paul Tripp ever said is horrible. So I think that's part of the problem too, is that you might disagree with something that James Dobson said, but it doesn't mean everything James Dobson said is unhelpful. I can find something that Dobson says that I would disagree with and I would argue vehemently about.

Same thing with Tripp, same thing with John Rosemont, but they would also find something with me they would argue about. Because we're imperfect people. You might as well just stay in your house and never come out.

You can't go to church, they're going to say something that's imperfect. I just want to call that out because I think that we shoot ourselves in the foot because we just get so anti-whatever that person was, because they promoted spanking and clearly everything is authoritarian and horrible. I go, hold on a minute, maybe there's something.

So I think what I'm hearing you say is like, let's take every thought captive to Christ, put it all back under Scripture and let's make sure of that. And even if we disagree with them, don't throw the baby out of the bathwater. Yeah.

I mean, that's, and I think what you just said is key. It's don't follow and believe it based on the person. Right.

Because we're always going to find some fault with that person and how they view some things. We need to seek the source, it's not the person, it's the truth they're relying on as they are sharing what they share, but being imperfect people, we're not going to get it all correct. And I think that's key.

But I think the second part, when you ask that question is, when I relate it to a question I get all over the country, last year, I think I was at 40 schools this year. Gosh, I said last year, the year's almost over. 2024, I was at about 40 schools and probably at 30 of those schools, I was asked, do you know any good counselors or therapists in our area? And unfortunately, I don't, although I've thought about doing the whole Dave Ramsey thing and create a network.

But they said, well, how do you find one? And I think that's a great question. And let me tell you the answer I've given for years, and I've had good feedback come back to me over years about this as well. I say, identify five, six, eight, whatever large churches in your area that you agree with doctrinally.

You call them the pastor, youth pastor, and you say, who have you referred people to that you've continued to get good feedback that they helped the people? I said, if you do that, you call a half a dozen, a dozen churches, you're going to hear one or two names repeated. Guess

what? Those are the people you go see. Because the only way across that body that you're going to get a name or two repeated is they are going to be folks that are able to give practical application skill, in a sense, to those patients, grounded in truth.

Because other than that, it will not stand up to the test of time and recommendation. And I think, again, that's a way to find out who may be grounded by going through another source, and often it's a church. Yeah.

Absolutely. And I think maybe just as we kind of wind this down, the idea is, I think, very important to state that none of us are perfect at this. We know that.

And I think that there's a lot of shame. You talk about that a lot, mom guilt, a sense of, you know, and to have to go and disclose to other families or to church or to others that you don't have it all figured out. I think it's just one more reason that does throw people back.

I'm going to go shut the door and get on Google and figure this out. And like, no, no, no, you actually need to have the confidence that you can, we're all broken and we're all doing this as a community. And that's where... And I'll even add to that for folks that are in the helping side of this, whether they're a therapist or a counselor or a coach or someone working in the church or whatever, we need to be honest with folks as well and say, well, here's what I've seen.

Here's what my experience has been. We don't have the answer to everything. I tell parents in my office all the time, here's what we're going to try.

Here's what I've seen be beneficial. We're going to try, we're going to evaluate it. We may change because we don't have a corner in the market of knowing everything about this.

And we have to acknowledge that on both sides of that. Yeah, it's a really good word because it is. It's so counter the modern frame of us as humans where we want things done instantly.

And we always say, Keith, my child should be perfectly fine by tomorrow. And you're like, well, hold on. We're on a journey and God is faithful in that process.

Well, this is really helpful, Keith. I hope folks will both be encouraged that when it comes time to figure out where do I go for wisdom, we have community around us and we have connection. And how do we discern wisely these resources? Thank you for your insights on that.

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Well, I know as we continue the Live Sturdy series, we've got some thoughts on maybe future podcasts.

So we'd love to hear from people, info at Base Camp Live on just thoughts or reactions to our conversation here. And then I know we're going to be thinking going forward next time, just looking at kind of more of these basic questions, like what are just basic principles to all the parenting? Because sometimes the simple things, the basic things we need to focus on, too. We tease that enough in this.

I think we do need to come back and say, all right, now what are those core foundational beginning points for all children? That's right. Yeah. All right.

Well, Keith, thanks so much as always. We're all here because we love classical Christian education, and we chose it for well-thought-out reasons. But have you ever thought much about where you bank? Wouldn't it be awesome to work with a bank that shares your love of goodness and truth and beauty? The folks over at America's Christian Credit Union are proud supporters of classical Christian education and this podcast, and they have been serving the financial needs of Christian ministries and schools and families for over 65 years.

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