

BCL ep315 Simple Change Strengthens Family- School Connection with Dr. Susan Crosier

I can remember being at summer camp as a kid out in a canoe for the very first time in the middle of the lake. My buddy and I kept zigzagging and going in circles because we could not figure out how to paddle together and make the canoe go in a straight direction. If you've ever been in that situation, you know what I'm talking about.

And of course, when everyone is paddling together, you get where you want to go a lot faster and in a straight direction with a lot less stress. Parenting and today's high pressure, always something to do world, makes it even more critical to paddle together with your school. So if you're ready for some great practical tips, some fresh perspectives, and some encouragement, stay tuned for this episode of Base Camp 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 Base Camp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens.

Welcome back to Base Camp Live. Davies Owens here. It is time for another amazing conversation, and you are along on the journey.

We're so grateful for that. I've mentioned before, and I'm going to mention again, in years past, we're now in our eighth year, and in years past, we had a number of segments. We called the Climber Series, and it was really just a chance to tell your story out there.

And I want to continue to encourage you. I know everybody's busy, but some of you have these remarkable stories of the impact of classical Christian education on you personally, on your family. Maybe you're a school administrator or teacher, and you were in a different environment, and just the benefits and the fruit you see every day is rich to you and meaningful.

Maybe you're an alumni, and you're living out classical education right now in the real world, and you can look back and say, boy, that really equipped me well. Or maybe you are a parent, and you are just watching every day in your home some of the real powerful and encouraging just implications of being able to raise up your child in the school, where truth, goodness, and beauty are part of everyday learning. And so all that to say, if you would take a moment and just shoot me a quick email, info at Base Camp Live, if you want to just even write a short paragraph, I'd love to hear it.

And I'd be glad to either keep it anonymous, and you'll just encourage my day, or if you're comfortable sharing it, I might read it. Or if you're really even more comfortable, I'd love to do a

little mini interview with you, as I did with many of the climbers. So anyhow, there's a lot of great, everybody loves a story, and I know I hear stories all the time.

I would love to just invite us and to share that with each other here at Base Camp Live. Info at BaseCampLive.com is the easiest way to reach out to me. This episode, as always, I'd like to shout out to a couple different schools and leaders, Darren Clumpier, he's the head of school at the Three Oaks Christian School in Decatur, Indiana, and Patsy Henson, headmaster at Covenant Classical Christian School in Columbia, South Carolina.

Thanks for the work that you do for your whole team, for all of your parents, your students. Thanks for being a part of the Base Camp Live and Zipcast community. We are so grateful for your partnership as we raise up the next generation.

I have the joy in this episode of sitting down with Dr. Susan Crozier. She is the head of school at Grace Preparatory Academy, a private school in Arlington, Texas, their university model school. She just recently completed her doctoral work from Baylor University on parent engagement, and just solidifying the importance of the healthy family school partnership for student success.

She and her husband, Scott, have two grown children, and she is well aware of the realities of both home life and school life. I got to meet her recently. We're both coaches for the Herzog Foundation, which is a great organization and the work that they do.

We've worked with Herzog to actually create a two-and-a-half-day training on parent partnerships between schools and homes. Definitely a lot of thinking going on here that Susan and I have had, and you'll hear it in our conversation on this episode. Before we jump right in, just as always, thanks to our partners that have been a part of really sponsoring this episode, Wilson Hill Academy, for the great work that they do providing online education in a classical format, which has been a blessing to so many life architects coaching.

Tammy Peterson and her team, they're great resources. She's often on the podcast and the Classic Learning Test. We're so thankful for your partnership with us.

And then finally, to Classical Academic Press, great resources for all of us on the journey of raising up the next generation with a classical education. Without further ado, here's my conversation with Dr. Susan Crozier. Thank you.

Thank you so much for having me today. My name is Susan Crozier, and I am a born educator. I have always wanted to be a teacher ever since the time I was in sixth grade, and here I am 25 years later in education after staying home with my kids for some time.

Don't do the math on that, because that would give it all away. But I love everything about education. I love it's really good work, and it's deep work, and it's life-giving work.

And so I have had the opportunity to serve in both public and private sectors. And I think that that's really helpful, because I've been able to see this parent engagement thing from just a

plethora of different situations and different... And you're a mom too, so you really are on both sides of the table. I am.

I am. And so I was one of those crazy moms whose children went to the school wherever I was. That's where my kids were.

And I think that that is one of the things that I'm so passionate about, parent engagement, because I just know for myself how much I deeply was invested. When we decided to have kids, I was all in, and so I deeply cared about what was happening in their education. It's such a critical... I mean, I can't think of... Everyone listening is obviously very committed to raising up their children, their own biological children and children in terms of being an educator and having children in your classroom.

And so it's such critical work, and yet it seems like so much has changed culturally. I mean, you and I are both kind of on the same 25-year mark here. 25 years ago, the world was very different in many, many ways, pre-technology and the way it is today and all these other disruptions.

But it does seem like today that just that kind of what I call who's on first, what are the roles that a parent is supposed to have? What's the role of the teacher? I always think of it like you're rowing a boat across this big lake, and you got one person on one side with an oar and one on the other. And we all know if one person's rowing really hard and the other one's rowing the opposite way, I mean, the thing just spins in the middle. And it seems like there's a lot of confusion.

You set out to do something very ambitious, which most people have not, which is do an entire doctoral research project on this topic, Susan. So talk about what problem, you've seen this rowing problem, you know, who's on first or whatever analogy you want to use, and you turn that into a research project. Talk a little bit about the problem you saw.

Sure. So my biggest kind of goal, you know, I thought when I first decided to do this dissertation on parent engagement, I was going to change the world with, for all students and how their parents were going to be engaged in their children's education. But the reality is, is that every single home looks different.

And so even at the schools that even at a Christian school that that I serve at, you know, with 344 families, they're all each one of their homes is different. So we bring that all together. And we have this unmet expectation, really, about what parent engagement really is.

And so I think it's changed so much over the landscape of 25 years, in that there are so many things that are vying for parents time. And I think that there is a misunderstanding of the role of parents in what does parent engagement look like? You know, back when I started teaching back in 1994, it was if you were serving, if a mom was serving in the, in the workroom, in the teacher workroom and making copies, or helping some way. I think it was mimeographs back

then, by the way.

Oh, yeah. It was those purple things. Don't age us anymore than we already are.

But when they were helping in that capacity in the teacher workroom, or volunteering their time up at school, it was like they were like, all in engaged parents. And so with technology and the distractions that come with where we are today, we also have, with this economy, we have more working parents, like both moms and dads working in the home, and their commitment to being engaged in their children's lives and in their education hasn't changed, even though the amount of time that they have has changed, that they're able to give to it. And so really, what I set out to do was to say, what does it look like to be engaged as parents in the home, as far as benefiting their children's education? Research shows that when parents are involved in having conversations at home about what their students are learning at school, that is the most important way to be engaged.

It's not helping on the mimeograph machine or whatever those things are called, or making copies or, you know, helping with schedules at school. It's the legitimate sitting at the kitchen table and talking about what is it that you're learning and giving input that way. And so kind of that's how my whole research was framed around is how do we help parents understand their role in the home, even if we have all the distractions that we're talking about? Well, and so much has changed in terms of, I mean, you're exactly right.

I talked with heads of schools all the time about just the struggle for getting parent volunteers, and it is because we are in a different world where many folks have to work. And then what does involvement even look like? I think that's a lot of the whole FOMO thing is such a pervasive problem of, you know, I want to be a good, a lot of mom and dad guilt out there about, you know, I need to, I see this particular family is volunteering and doing all these things, and I can't because of work, and then I feel guilty. And so there's just a lot of murky water, it seems like right now.

Well, it really, as the head of school at Grace Prep, I would prefer that I had parents who were engaged in the learning of their children at home than them volunteering up here at school. And if I had to choose between what is the very best avenue that they could take to benefit their children, it is what is happening at home in regards to education. And just because they're not able to have the time to volunteer at school does not mean that they're disengaged.

But I will tell you that what I found is that schools automatically think that if parents are not up at school volunteering, then they're disengaged. And that's not necessarily true. That's a great point.

And we're going to, we'll talk, yeah, because we're going to get into some of those practicals of, you know, of how, you know, again, who should be in what position and what are the roles. And again, it varies. You're absolutely right.

We have that many families. Everybody's in a different season in life. You know, the brand new mom and dad with the first born kindergartner versus the parent that's got four kids and their youngest is now a junior.

I mean, they're very different. And they're exhausted. Very, very different seasons in life.

What are other, you know, when I think about kind of getting cultural shifts that we've kind of gotten swept up in, I mean, every, you know, I don't know, I haven't heard anybody say they're bored of late. It seems like everybody's distracted, you know, and I'm quote, so busy might just mean I'm, I'm doom scrolling on my phone, you know, here for hours and I can't quite find time to do anything else. I mean, that might be an extreme, but there are just lots of shifting variables.

When you were doing the research, are there other things that you came across that you think have really kind of just, it's the cultural waters we swim in and sometimes we don't see it. I wonder, you know, even from just at a basic level, what is my role as a parent? I mean, biblically there's a very clear prescription, I think, in terms of what our jobs are versus what the schools are. And we live in a very much an outsource culture.

You know, we drop our dry cleaning off. We don't go in and help them do the dry cleaning. We drop our car off to get service.

We don't go change the oil with them. And I think there's a mindset of, I'm paying you, first of all. So there's a business transaction.

I'm paying you to do something. Why in the world should I get involved? You took care of that for me. And so do you see that, that, that sort of shift of mindset more acutely here in the last decade or so? Yeah, absolutely.

I think the benefit to Christian education is we get to fight that narrative because Christian education is, I mean, the truth is Christian education began in the garden. It's the parents' responsibility to be a part of their children's lives. But in public school, I think that they see that a whole lot more, that I have to work.

This is, they're at school. They're your responsibility from eight to five or eight to four, whatever it is. And it's way easier to just drop them off and let them do their thing.

So clearly when I did my research, I wasn't able to change the landscape for public schools. But what I was able to do was I really got to look at Christian schools and what does this look like to be engaged? And when I think about parent engagement, I think about birth. I mean, when you decide to have a child, God asks you and commands you to be invested in that child's life from all the way through in all aspects.

And that's education. I mean, and education's the most important thing that we do with kids, but really their spiritual development is the most important thing. And so all of that goes

together in Christian schools.

And so I just don't think that it's parents get to outsource that. They don't get to. And I mean, the church and the school are working together with the home, and that's how it's most beautifully done.

But nobody can do it like they can in the home. You could have an engaged parent, a spiritually engaged parent who's doing everything that they have been called to do by the Lord and have their kids in public education. And it worked, and it worked beautifully.

But in Christian education, I don't think that we have any excuse. Right. And that's a very, there's so much research as I know you came across just on statistically that, you know, Barna for years talked about only the 20% that grew up in Christian schools and homes that continue to walk with Christ when they became independent adults.

And so much of it is tied directly to the degree to which they practiced, actively practiced their faith and were actively involved in their children's lives. So yeah, that thing is just a really important point. Again, not to make anybody feel guilty, but just to say we just, there's no room for outsourcing.

In fact, you know, in our classical school world, we love to throw around Latin phrases like *in loco parentis*, which really means you're here. We, the school are here under your authority. So we don't have biblical authority to do this.

It's you. And therefore we are only doing it because you've kind of deputized us during that eight to four window to be in that role. That's really your role.

So it's a, it's a really important partnership. You know, it's interesting because, you know, in private Christian school, we can't do this without the parents. And so just what is the school's role in all of this? We talk about what's the parent's role in all of this.

But if you look at what's the school's role, we have to be seeking the parent and letting them in and inviting them in and wondering what they're thinking and all of that. But so many schools aren't doing that. And so we can say this all we want about parents and what their responsibility is, but as schools and as school leaders, it's our responsibility to create a culture that says we can't do this without you.

Yeah. And I think you're right. There's so on the spectrum of various, you know, from, you know, homeschool to collaborative hybrid.

And, and that's, I think one of the fastest growing segments right now where some days of the week you're at school and some days you're at home and everybody's rolling their sleeves up together to the fully drop and go schools. And, you know, the drop and go school, I know there are, again, on these extreme schools that have said pretty much write that tuition check and, you know, we'll see it from August to May, like, please don't show up. If there's a problem, we'll

let you know.

And in fact, they don't want parents or they're considered kind of, as you were alluding to in a lot of public schools, just generally they're in an, they're, you know, an annoyance. We don't have time for this. We've got to, you know, kind of, and we don't really want you to know what we're teaching over here, so please don't come in.

But yeah, so why don't we take a break? I want to come back cause this, there's a lot of just great practical wisdom that you've uncovered in the process of researching, how does this sort of dance work between parents and school that ultimately generates a student that has, I mean, the positive implications are numerous from academic success to more satisfied parents in their school. So let's take a quick break and come right back, Susan, and jump into some of these practicals. Susan, when I think about, you know, your comment before the break about just, there's no two families are alike.

And I think there's a lot of grace. It's very easy to talk about a subject like this and just, and be very kind of wooden about this is what it has to look like in every family. And everyone must have four dinners together in this family.

Everyone must, it's a lot of grace, a lot of variety, different ages and stages, but there are underlying principles. And I, it seems to me in a cultural moment, there are so many families that are just running at mock eighth, their kids are signed up for so many things. Everybody's on scatter mode and exhausted.

And I think sometimes there are folks that hear what we're saying, go, yeah, no, I agree with all that, but that's just not how it's going to be. We can't, we have just too much going on and we're just frazzled. And maybe even to the point of just everybody's at high stress level.

So how do we, again, what are some of the points of wisdom you might have for families that are just feeling that sense of, I'm just overwhelmed. I'm not even, and I'm not even really sure what I'm supposed to be doing. What are some of the guiding principles that you came across? Um, my very first bit of advice and wisdom I've grown children would be to slow down, slow it down.

I think that sometimes parents think that the more activities that their kids are involved in, the better and more prepared they're going to be for what's to come. And I think it's the opposite of that. I think the more time that they have at home in protecting that is the very best thing we could do.

Um, Harrison Goodall in 2008, which is a while ago, but they said that parent engagement and learning inside the home makes the most significant difference in student achievement. And so the busier our families are, the more activities that our kids are doing is not setting them up for greater success. As a matter of fact, it's having the complete opposite effect on who they become because they never really get to sit and enjoy and be bored and say, who is it that the

Lord is creating me to be? Because they're just constantly in motion.

And I think that busy parents, parenting is the hardest thing I've ever done. And, um, I think that sometimes that we operate in a sense of fear in that, um, if I don't do these things, my child won't have these things. We all want more than we had for ourselves.

We want them to be, to have all the opportunities, the more successful, all of that. And we are operating out of a sense of fear. And I think that really, and truly, if we dig deep into what the Bible, what, what the Lord calls of us as parents, it's to sit, it's to be still and know.

And, um, I just don't think that we do that enough. Um, and, and so with that being so significant in the home, I think conversations about what we're talking about at the dinner table, it doesn't, however many times you're doing it or in the car or whatever, find time to speak positively about school. What are you learning in school? What a gift it is that we get to go to school and what a gift that we get to go to a Christian school.

Um, you know, and just having, having those types of conversations at home. Yeah. Yeah.

Well, I think that's the, you know, the, sometimes it's the simple things that like that just can't possibly be right. Like we're, you know, not doing so much. Again, it flies in the face of all the FOMO fears that tell us we're supposed to be doing everything.

And, and, you know, there is so much to your point, so much research I was thinking about, you know, the book last child in the woods about nature deficit disorder, like kids that they don't even, they don't go outside either. We're afraid tree's going to fall on them or whatever, or we just, you know, or we're, or we dread the mom I'm bored. So let's strap an electronic on them.

So we don't have to hear that, but that's what, that's where imagination comes alive in those unstructured moments. That's exactly right. But it's a distraction for the parent is so busy, but they really don't have the opportunity to deal with a kid that says I'm bored.

And so that's, it's a choice. It's a hard choice, but it's real. And I mean, let's, if we just went into look what sports are doing in families.

Yeah. Sports are, you know, at the age of five, we think that our kid is going to be a D one athlete. They're going to make it into the pros someday, and we're all going to be rich and famous.

And so we're filling our kids time with the special coaches and the, and the Sunday. I mean, we could go all into this, doing tournaments on Sundays instead of going to church. I mean, it's just parent engagement is just so giant.

And when I think about the practical, bring it down to just in every single family, what works it is to know your kids and slow the roll in any way that you can, and let them just explore. Like you said, go outside. If the tree falls on them, then something else is going to happen, you know, in

another time.

Can't predict everything, but yeah. Can't, but it's just a childhood. We have 18 summers, right? 18 summers.

And we are so busy on the hamster wheel of five days a week, school coming home, doing homework, going and doing the things that, you know, are going to get us into a D one college. You know, we're going to play sports at a D one college and the child is just exhausted. And by the time they get to their senior year, and of course we've been teaching them, we've been teaching them the truth of the Bible and we've been having devotions at home and all of that.

But the truth of the matter is when they're a senior and they don't get that D one offer and they're crushed. Now, what are you going to do? Where do we go from there? And what does their relationship with the Lord do at that point? Well, hopefully we've taught them that their identity is in Jesus Christ, not in playing a college sport. Or they're not the national merit scholar that we thought they were because by the time at two years old, everybody was telling us how smart they were.

But like, it's not about that. It's about us as parents teaching them that all of these things are just part of God's plan for them. And His plan will be what it is.

We cannot change His plan. And so just rooting our kids in that is the very most important thing that we can do. So this may be, it's kind of a touchy point, but I think a lot of times, even at a subconscious level as parents, we're living out the life we didn't get vicariously through our child.

I mean, is that a pretty common reality? Absolutely. And being on a campus that goes all the way through 12th grade, I have the opportunity for kids. I just ask kids, how much do you really love this? Whatever it might be, robotics or basketball or theater or whatever it is, I can say, how much do you really love this? And they'll say, this is just all I know.

And then you're like, oh my, how crushing that this is all I know. And then I say, what can you see about your life if you took this out of it? And they say, but my mom or my dad has had me do this all of my life. I don't know my life without this.

Well, that's dangerous. That's dangerous. It's true.

You're just coming out of the Christmas season. And again, I'm not trying to ruffle anybody's feathers out there, but it's interesting getting Christmas cards because you can see this sort of clamoring. On the one hand, you do want to share what's happening in your family.

On the other hand, there's some families you can just tell, it's so important that after I put little Susie's name, I have to declare what Susie is absolutely amazing at. And then I have to say what Billy's absolutely amazing. So I can confirm to the world that I have very successful kids because they've done this sports thing or this.

And on the one hand, absolutely. We need to tell this, but I think there's a real slippery slope there where you're right. It's just, we're so committed to, I can point to success.

I think you're right. There's such an underlying fear of failure that I have to find something I can pin on the wall and go, they are the most amazing ballet dancer and, you know, and X, Y, Z league and thing. And it's like, great.

And you feel more successful as you feel more. So you're looking, it all comes back. Yeah.

Right. But I think there's, again, we're kind of getting kind of, you know, ripping her his guts out here. But I mean, the reality is there is something in our human spirit.

We obviously want to hear well done, good and faithful parent at some point. And so what does well done, good and faithful look like other than these external, you know, nobody can tell that you go into your house and shut your door and your kids are doing something creative and they're having a conversation. Like those things don't sell well in terms of the look at me.

I'm a good parent affirmation. So. That's so good.

That is so good. But good and faithful parent, when we hear that someday, it's not going to have anything to do with our students accolades or kids accolades. It's not.

It's not going to have anything to do with it. I have a 23 year old, so I can really speak on this. I have a 23 year old who graduated with his master's from Baylor in accounting and is a CPA and works for Deloitte.

Great. That's all really, really. You putting down the Christmas card? Nope.

Nope. There was a time in my life when I felt like I needed to. Yep.

You know, but as you get older and as your kids grow, the reality of it is you just want to see your kids in heaven. And so I will tell you when he, when I, we had our moment of, I'm so proud of you graduation and all of that. He literally looked at me and he said, mom, this is, does not define me.

And I said, Oh, I mean like Mike dropped from a 23 year old boy that I thought those times when we couldn't give them everything, we couldn't take them on all those fancy trips. We couldn't do all the things that so many of our, our, you know, friends were doing with their children. It must've been good.

It must be okay. That is a, we, our kids did not see the beach other outside of Texas until they were our, my daughter was in college and my son was like in the later years in high school. And, um, all they knew was Brown sand and brown water, you know, in Texas.

And we did take them to Florida and they were like, we didn't even know, you know, other than pictures and things like that. But our kids don't have to have everything. Mm hmm.

You know, it's, it's engaging in their everyday life in the simple things. And it's so refreshing to hear that. And I think so freeing when we recognize that, like the very best things we can offer our children actually are very attainable.

And again, it doesn't take an excessive amount of money. It doesn't take an excessive amount of, it doesn't, it doesn't take, it's so attainable. All the things that are not important, you have to have so many resources for.

Yeah. And that's a great point. Yeah.

Chasing experience. Like, Oh, we had to go check that we did the Disney thing. Now we're going to do this thing.

I do this thing. Well, because again, there's some, there's a, there's a, on the one hand, sure. There's a value in some experiences for sure.

Building memories, but at the same time, there is a, you're right. There is a cultural narrative that is defined. Good parents do the following.

And therefore, if we don't do these things, we're not a good parent and it's not a biblical understanding of it. And the things that are biblical are getting so devalued. It seems so silly or so insignificant.

Like, what do you mean? We sat on the floor and played with matchbox cars with our kids. And when their children are older, they will see that what felt insignificant is going to feel so powerful and significant. It's so good.

I am so passionate about this because I want to look at every parent and I want to say to them, you're doing enough. Like with what you're giving your child, it's enough now circle all the way back. What really matters.

And it's the conversation. They only want to talk from 11 to 12 at night. Like dig into that.

You know what I mean? Yeah. And do it. And if they aren't hitting those accolades that you want for them as they're heading towards college and where they're, heaven forbid that we don't have the Facebook post to reveal where our child is going to go to school and or college and how many scholarship dollars they got.

Right, right. It's a big, yeah, we're trading in the wrong currency. I think basically what we're saying, we're trading in things that really, we don't use that monopoly money.

Hamster wheel that you and I were talking about and there's just not enough time and there's just not enough, but there really could be. Yeah. Well, let's take a quick break.

Let's take a break and come back because I want to wrap it up and really get into just some more, just really practical. If you could just speak to a young family and just say, Hey, here's,

here's just kind of, if I could just help you set up your week, here's some practical ways to do this that are healthy and in this right direction. So let's take a quick break and we'll come right back, continue our conversation.

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. Susan, there's so many things we can talk about when it comes to this topic. I love your passion for it.

I feel like there are parents around the world right now just cheering, going, Oh my goodness, I don't have to do everything. I can actually breathe. That's the best way to be a parent.

Talk about just again, just a few minutes we have left, just more words of encouragement, practical wisdom. How do we do this thing called parenting in school well? Okay. Well, the first thing I remember being the parent that I think I'm so passionate about it because I remember being the parent that compared myself and my parenting to everybody else.

And when the Lord really got a hold of that, you know, Susan, I've created you differently and I've made your kids different so that you can parent them the way that I want you to parent them. And of course, my husband and I have always been on the same team about that, which is so beautiful. But the practical things that I would have for parents today would be to, like we have said several times today is just to slow down, is to just find time, quality versus quantity.

That's a real thing. And I'm all about quantity of time just because it offers more opportunity to have conversation. But I also understand that the world that we live in doesn't allow for that.

And so if it be, you know, being able to sit down at dinner table and have meals together is a wonderful thing. It's a wonderful thing and something that is so small that has such a significant value. But even if you're eating in the car and you're all in the car together, make a commitment to mealtime to have a conversation about what was not about what's a good thing that happened today or what did you get on your test? Because none of that really matters.

It really doesn't matter. Or did you have fun today? Did you have fun? What was something that was fun today? Or what is a way that you were a good friend today? Yeah, which is a much more substantive question. I care way more about who my kids are as humans than how successful they are with their grades.

And it's so interesting because if we really do focus on who they are as humans, then as they become in deeper relationship with the Lord, He calls us to do everything with excellence. And

so our kids are going to grow up and they're going to know, okay, I love Jesus and I follow Him and I read God's Word and He's calling me to do this with excellence. So I'm not going to blow off my physics test.

If we focus on when they're young or even anytime, who are we becoming as humans? And who are we becoming and who the Lord has created us to be? Those are way better things to be focusing on because they're eternal. Yeah, the old idea of just what are you celebrating? I mean, if you could take a transcription of what a parent says, again, is it about the sports thing or the academic grade thing? And it's hard sometimes to find those more substantive questions, but you're absolutely right. I think that's very revealing as to what we deem to be a priority.

There were times in our lives that my husband and I were like, do we pay our kids for grades? I mean, I'm going to be really real. We thought that that was the measure in which we were successful parents and that we were engaged in our education. If they were successful with their grades, we must be really engaged.

I call it the Krispy Kreme problem, by the way, because that's like the world. At least for a while there, you go to Krispy Kreme with your report card and for every A, you got a donut. I'm like, wow, so now we're giving them unhealthy food for the wrong priority there in a sense.

And that intrinsic motivation is going away. Right. It's just about the donuts, right.

But I've done it. And so I can't sit here and say that I knew how to do all of this. But what I can do is I can go backwards and I can say about my kids' report cards, this is really great and I'm proud of your hard work, but I'm more proud about the way you did this, this and this and this and this, the six weeks.

And so you get to decide as a parent what's important. They really don't ever know the benefit of a grade until you teach them that. Like if your expectation is that they get A's, then that's all they're going to know as they get older.

And so being in Christian schools, we have so much more room than that. I mean, I can sit and have a conversation with a high schooler and I can say they can come into my office just devastated because they failed a test and I'll look at them and I'll go, I don't really care. I mean, and I'm the head of school, it's terrible.

But what I will say to them is I care if you didn't do the things that you were responsible for doing in order to be prepared for this. But what I care more about is that your identity is not in this grade or whatever. And so it's just conversations that we're having with our kids.

Practically, regardless of how busy you are, commit to engaging with your kids in your home and commit to engaging in their learning at school. And that can look like just sending an email to a teacher saying, you know what, we are super busy, but we really care to be engaged in what our kids are doing at school. And so if there's any way that you can see us being able to do

that better, even though we work a million hours, please let us know.

So parents need to start conversations with the teachers and say, we care. We really do want to be a partner in our child's education. And so any way that that can look, please let us know.

And as far as teachers, it's the opposite. Teachers need to invite parents into it. They cannot do it without parents.

They can't. They can't do it. Parents are the experts in how their children learn, how they behave, what motivates them and all of that.

And teachers need parents. It just goes both ways. Practically developing relationships.

I mean, it's okay for you to be really good friends with your child's teacher. Tell your child's teacher, we're going to pray for you. How can we pray? Because your life is busy too.

And you're a parent and you're trying to engage with your own children. So how can we pray for you? And just really developing those relationships, I think are really, really important. I think that anytime schools can engage parents in decision making for their children, I think is really important and it builds a sense of trust.

And so parents expect, especially if your child is in a private Christian school, expect that you get to be a part of making decisions. Expect that. That is, it's not too much.

And teachers invite them in to decision making. If you allow a parent to be involved in a decision, in a decision regarding a child's education, you're going to have buy-in from the parent like crazy. They're going to be, the trust is going to elevate and the relationship is going to be so much more.

And so my last one is just that there's no one size fits all for any of this. Every family is unique. Every school is unique.

What this collaboration of parent engagement looks like is unique, but it's really important. And I think that you should seek a school that really, truly values the role of a parent in their child's education. Wow.

That's such good wisdom. You should go do a doctoral project. Oh my gosh.

I can talk about it forever. I can talk about it forever. I think there's a book in here too, Susan.

This is... I know. I have thought about that. Well, I just think it's such, it's such a, again, I wish we could, maybe we should come back and do a whole part two on this because it's just such a core, the, I mean, it's the heart and soul of every effort a school makes is this collaborative decision to come together and raise this generation.

But what does it look like? And so you've opened up so many practical points here that I think

are super helpful and very encouraging to both the parents and teachers alike. So thank you so much. Absolutely.

Hey, if folks want to hear and connect with you and learn more, what's the best way to reach out and get in touch with you? Well, if you will share my email address, I'm happy with that. Okay. We'll put that in the show notes.

Yeah. Yeah. You can reach out through email and then I'm happy to connect with any parent, any teacher, anything.

That's so good. Just for encouragement. Yeah.

Yeah. Well, you are a great encourager and it's been a fantastic conversation. Thank you so much for being here on Base Camp Live.

We appreciate it. I've had a great time. Thanks for having me.

Well, you've done it. You made it through another episode of Base Camp Live, and I sincerely hope that you've been encouraged along the way. Thank you for being such a faithful listener.

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Thanks again for listening.