

## Episode 2-7: Parenting 1: Foundations

### Resources:

Documents

[Frequent Parenting Q&As](#)

[Goal Planning](#)

[Resource links from parenting conference](#)

Podcasts

[Biblical Counseling in Action](#)

### Transcript:

Janet: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Alexandra: I just want to make it as totally simple and no brainer as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy. Typically, I'll be joined by either Jocelyn or Alexandra, but for our first full episode listen as all three of us discuss the topic of joy.

Janet: Well, welcome back. My name's Janet, and I'm here again with my lovely co-host, Jocelyn. We are starting a three-part series on parenting. So, the first thing I want to say is if you're not a parent, a lot of these principles are true regardless. And they're important. Yes. I know for me, working in the working world as a supervisor, before I had children, I was parenting adults. These principles will work in a whole lot of areas, but we are going to specifically focus on parenting to see if we can provide some hope and help specifically in that area.

Jocelyn: And that could also be applied at grandparenting or helping to support your friends who are parents. So there's lots of applications of this truth.

Janet: So, the first thing that I want to talk about is, just foundationally. What are we trying to do when we parent, and I think most of us know what we're trying to do, but maybe it's fuzzy or maybe we would say it in a lot of different ways. And when I was actually learning to be a counselor, my supervisor said this to me and in it really has affected how I counsel begin with the end in mind.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: From day one in counseling, your thinking, where do I want them to be so that they can graduate and handle problems? I would say the same with parenting begin with the end in mind. So if I were going to say, what are some typical goals, if you would say to someone, what are you trying to accomplish in parenting? What might you say?

Jocelyn: Well, let's funny because when we started having kids, we'd been married for five years and we didn't begin with the end in mind. We didn't really even know why people became parents. Like, it's just what you do after a certain amount of time. Like, I guess if you love Jesus you

Janet: should have a kid.

Jocelyn: You procreate. So, I'm looking back on this saying, if someone is thinking about what are some of the goals and parenting like? Well, a lot of people want their kids to be successful. They want to one day be able to be financially self-sufficient not, you know, living, living in your parent's basement, eating all your food up, you know, be, be quality citizens, not be, responsible not to be a drain on society, to have some sort of work ethic that is honorable. So lots and lots of goals.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: Tons of different goals.

Janet: Yes, and I think even within Christian circles, we have a lot of those and we might add good.

Jocelyn: Sure.

Janet: I want my kids to be good kids. I don't want them to be the kid. Yes. I want them to be considerate. I want them to be godly. I want Godly kids. Okay. I want them to be popular. We don't always say that.

Jocelyn: At least not that weird.

Janet: Yes, I want at a minimum, I don't want the weird kids.

Jocelyn: Please don't be the weird ones.

Janet: Yes. And I just want everybody to like them, cause that would make their life easier. I want them to be well-rounded, well-respected, or I want to maximize their intellectual potential. And I see that, like, I have to have my kid in everything because if he's capable, he has to push to

whatever his limit is. So, we have to think about that. So, what are my goals? And a lot of those, everything that we've said so far, I'm not sure any of those are like bad.

Jocelyn: Nothing is outright sinful. I don't think.

Janet: No of those. So, what do we want to do? So, I'm going to say let's at least think through what do we even mean by goal?

Jocelyn: Okay.

Janet: You know how I am.

Jocelyn: I love words.

Janet: Yes. Let's define this. Just a definition of goal, a desired result, the end toward which your effort is directed, so something you're trying to do or achieve. So I have to be thinking into the future and saying, what am I trying to accomplish? And when I think about that, I think that I'm just going to choose to differentiate, two different kinds of goals in parenting. Think we ought to have right. One is what is that desired result that I control. And one what our desired results that I don't control, and I would say, for example, what I believe my short version, what is the bottom line parenting goal, overarching goal of all, the goal, I guess you could put it that way is I want to honor God in my parenting. That's my goal. My goal is to honor God in my parenting. It's that straightforward. None of that's easy, but it's that straightforward. I know we need to say a whole lot more about, okay, what does that mean? Absolutely. We need to do that, but I need to be able to come back to that's my goal, and that is within my control.

Jocelyn: Right. That's what I was thinking. I can honor God in my parenting. I can't make a lot of other things happen, even if they are great goals.

Janet: Exactly. I don't even do that very well, honor God and my parents.

Jocelyn: Exactly.

Janet: So, how much less am I going to do? Well, the things I don't even control.

Jocelyn: Helping other people honor God and their decisions.

Janet: Yes. So, thinking about all those other, I want successful kids and I don't control that. I want godly kids. I don't even control that.

Jocelyn: Even healthy kids.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: There's so many things that we can't control.

Janet: No, but my ultimate goal, I want to honor God in my parenting versus I want my children to love God. Is that one of my goals that I don't control? Yeah, it is. It's a desire that I have, but I can't make that happen.

Jocelyn: Right? Cause you can provide a really excellent environment for that to happen and it might not happen. It's a great goal, but it may not be possible in your exact situation.

Janet: Yes. It's always helpful to me when we do our parenting conference and Brent says, "God has only prodigal children except Jesus." So if God, the perfect

Jocelyn: The perfect father

Janet: parent. Had Adam and Eve and that didn't go so well.

Jocelyn: What makes you think that you could provide the perfect environment and automatically pop out godly children?

Janet: Yes. So that's not my responsibility, but I do have a responsibility to honor God in my parenting, which should show Jesus as beautiful and should make it easier for my children to choose Jesus. Yes, but that can't be my goal. And so why is that so important? Like why are we saying, because ultimately if I'm trying to honor God, I'm going to be behaving in ways, and of course, I want my kid to love Jesus. So, why is it so important to differentiate that? I think I will end up trying to control a result that is not my responsibility. Here's what I'll end up doing, not honoring God in my parenting.

Jocelyn: Totally fail.

Janet: I'll be so mad at my kids for not loving Jesus, but now I'm not honoring God in my parenting. I'm not doing the thing I can do while I'm trying to do all the things that I can't. So, everything is going to go together as my ultimate goal honor God in my parenting causes me to think through what that looks like. I'm going to show my children that Jesus is beautiful, and it really is my greatest desire that my children see that and that they love God too. That is what I want.

Jocelyn: Because it's been such a blessing for you. It is a good thing in your life

Janet: I'm totally confident it's what's best for their soul.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: It's my earnest prayer. Which is part of how I honor God in my parenting, I need to be praying. So, I think that distinction though is incredibly important and it's going to help me

figure out am I clamoring after trying to make my kids believe? I'm going to make them love God. I'm going to make them obey. Am I finding that ironically, doing all of that means I'm not honoring God? So, I think it's really important that I have to distinguish what's my responsibility and what's God's responsibility.

Jocelyn: And it could also help identify some of why parenting might be discouraging for you because if your goal in parenting is make your kids believe, then you're going to be ultimately worn out and tired because you're just clamoring to try to get something to happen that you can't do.

Janet: Right. What am I doing wrong that they still don't believe?

Jocelyn: Right? How am I going to fix it? Right. Because it's such an honorable goal. Why would God not want to bless that?

Janet: So, when we do a parenting conference, we talk a lot about goals and all of that. Then we get really practical as well as what would that look like? But, the overarching goal that we communicate in the parenting conference, we say it this way, the goal is to faithfully image God to my child, which includes providing an environment that is conducive to my child understanding the superiority of God and His ways and making it easy for him to choose that way. That's a lot of words.

Jocelyn: But that's a good overarching goal. It helps a lot of other goals to take shape underneath it.

Janet: That's the hope. If I want to make it easy for him to choose that way then what am I doing? How would that practically look? We have a whole Q and A section that's probably five pages long that people have asked and we put it in a book format and we send it out. Every one of them starts with, in this area the overarching goal is the same. Now, underneath that, what would discipline look like? Underneath that, what does Bible time look like? Underneath that, what does it look like when they disobey? What does chores look like? How do you handle finances? How do you handle sex? All of that, we keep coming back to understand the ultimate goal. And now within that, what can I do in providing an environment that shows the beauty and superiority of God's way and makes it easy for my child to choose that, not makes him choose it.

Jocelyn: Right because, and if you think about, if we're going to think about long-term results, your control over your little kids is going to end at some time. If you just forced your kid to do the right thing, one time, they're going to be out of your control, and they're going to get to choose for the first time ever as a grownup. They may not choose God's way because someone's not forcing them to. So, what you're saying is you're making an environment where it's easy for their relationship with God to be personal and for it to affect all of their life now and on into the rest of their adulthood.

Janet: That is our hope. Then we get really specific. How would I encourage obedience? Because that does honor God and they can see that obedience brings blessing. I can remember when our kids were, I think they were first and second grade, we went to Disney world. When you're at Disney world, you know, the happiest place on earth, you're surrounded by a lot of unhappy people standing in line for an hour with their kids screaming. And I just remember the four of us were just having a good time and one of the kids even said like, I'm so glad that we've been taught because we're having a good time. We're not yelling at each other. So, what we tried to do, even in that, to look around and say, who's having more fun here. Do you understand that being under our authority and learning obedience and learning self-control and learning that every thought you have, you don't have to run with that emotion because it's not fun standing in the heat. But that doesn't have to control you. Do you understand how much better our life is right now than if we were out of our emotions? Because it's happening all around us.

Jocelyn: And one of the things that I think is cool, that you guys have exemplified, but a lot of godly parents exemplifies that they talk through life with your kids. They connect what's going on in their life with their overarching goal. So, the reason we're doing this thing is because look how it fits into our goal for you and the reason what we are processing this way or thinking this way is because there's a reason behind it. I love it when parents can communicate through life with their kids. So, it's not just detached, impersonal.

Janet: I wish I could say we did it all the time. We didn't. So, for all of you out there going, oh, I don't do that all the time. Well, we didn't either.

Jocelyn: No one does.

Janet: But when you did, it was an opportunity, and so, it's never too late. Take an opportunity when you have it. So, what we also just did was created a document. I think that's probably in part because I'm married to a wonderful engineer. So, we have a document that helped us think about what are, what is our overarching goal, which we've already said. Then within that, then how does that drive other goals that we have for our children. What we said, if we're going to begin with the end in mind. Imagine they're 18, they're leaving your home, what do I want them to look like?

Jocelyn: Exactly such a useful exercise. Invision what you want them to look like as grownups and is what you're doing right now, moving them toward that end?

Janet: Because I have to tell you that was a new way to think about it. It was like, okay, today there's an opportunity and it would be good. We should take it. Oh, here's another thing. This would be good. We should take it. Oh, they want to go to that. And it would be fun. We should do it.

Jocelyn: And when you do that everyone is frazzled and needs sleep and is crying and it's not honoring to God most likely.

Janet: Yes, and I can even remember, we chose to homeschool for several years as part of this. I can remember my husband saying at one point, so, I guess I thought homeschooling would involve you being home? I was like, yeah, how did that happen? But every opportunity seems good.

Jocelyn: Yeah. But it's not the best opportunity for your family.

Janet: Unless, and I'll never know that if I don't know what I'm heading for. Because you know, if I have a child that's academically advanced. Every opportunity to advance his academics, I guess I should take? So, how am I going to decide? I found I really struggled with that. I really struggled with how do I decide?

Jocelyn: Between all the great opportunities?

Janet: The more weight that I felt with homeschooling, the harder that was for me. I'm now responsible. So, every opportunity we have to take it. For me, it was very helpful to go back to that document and say, when they leave our home, what do I want them to look like? That was actually surprisingly and some ways easy, like to think about what I want them to look like when they leave now, what do I want for next year? I want them to advance them this on. But when I think when they leave my home, what I want them to look like? That really helped me. I'm going to, in the show notes, I've put our document, which is not the ultimate document. It's funny because we wrote it with the idea that we would go back and update it every year and we didn't update it. And I'd even says in one of the sections later, we're going to add blah, blah, blah. We never did.

Jocelyn: But at least you had what you had and it guided you.

Janet: So to know my goal is not everybody needs to do it perfectly or even needs to use our document, but sometimes it's helpful to take something and change it than to create from scratch. You can also see, it wasn't fancy. I don't even know if it's grammatically correct. It was just what we did and it really helped.

Jocelyn: It's helpful to see an example.

Janet: Yes. So maybe that would be helpful. When we look at what one of our main goals was, when they leave our home, we wanted them to love God and love others because that's what Jesus said are the two most important things. So that seems like it should be our most important things that they would love God and love others. Okay. So in that, one, I cannot make my kids love God. I cannot make them love others, but if that's what I want for them, I needed to expose

them to that. So then, that became, especially when they were younger, a driving influence on how we made decisions. Was this going to teach them how to love others?

Jocelyn: And show them because so much can be theoretical. If you don't put some feet on it, like, what does it look like to take care of someone who's sick or care about someone who just had a baby?

Janet: And my tendency is to lecture and to explain.

Jocelyn: That doesn't connect well with children.

Janet: Not at all. I can teach over and over about why we should do this, why we should do this, but instead of guilting them because they don't love others well, or instead of lecturing them on why they should love others. Why don't we just go love on others?

Jocelyn: Yeah, show them how to do it.

Janet: So for us, that meant for a few years, we did meals on wheels. That was because there's so many ways you can love others, but my weakness, if it's not structured into my week, I might not prioritize it as I should.

Jocelyn: And it will never happen.

Janet: Right. So, you could just say, we'll take meals to someone in the church that would be great, but every week would go by and I didn't get around to it. So, I had to be there. They were planning on me. So, Friday mornings we needed to be there or these people weren't going to get food. That became part of our school, Fridays at 10 is where we need to be. It did not guarantee that my children now will love others.

Jocelyn: But it certainly showed them what it might look like.

Janet: Right, and that was the goal is how can they see me loving others and seeing that it's fun. I still think their favorite time was when it was all done, we ate lunch with the other volunteers. They got to eat in the hospital cafeteria and get whatever food they wanted and sit with the other people and talk. They looked forward to the hot dog, probably more than the other.

Jocelyn: But so many other things were being learned and they were learning community and conversation.

Janet: Yes. So for me, to quote my overarching goal statement, that was one way that I provided an environment that was conducive to my child, understanding the superiority of God in his ways, because I wanted to make it easy for them to choose it. I wanted them to taste and see that whether or not they responded well. I had met my goal to honor God.



Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: And then, I begged God, would you move in their hearts? Would you help them to see that this is good?

Jocelyn: And I would imagine as you guys serve together, at least in that ministry, there were all sorts of little events that happened that you had to coach them through. Here's how we talk to someone who's in pain. Here's how we don't talk to someone who's in pain. Like just practical, teachable moments within that opportunity.

Janet: People who are grumpy. Cause we had very grumpy people. So, how do we not take that personally? How do we love the grumpy? Yes, and people that come to the door with oxygen and they're carrying stuff and you're little kids are not used to seeing someone walking in through the door with things attached to them.

Jocelyn: That's a foreign thought.

Janet: Yes, and to say, how do we love them by not being freaked out at the other stuff that's with them? Not everybody smelled good. That's hard. And so, how do we love when it's hard?

Jocelyn: In those really practical circumstances. That's so different than saying we should love and serve all people. Here's what it looks like to serve someone who's sick. Here's what it looks like to serve someone who's tired. Like here's an example of this thing that we've been talking about.

Janet: Yes, and so I think that's what -just writing it out- that's what I want them to look like. It helped me to say, well then what are you doing? How are you structuring? Because it's crazy how busy you get as a parent. You don't even know what you're aiming for, but you're doing all things that you think you're supposed to do as of right.

Jocelyn: And then, you're so busy all the time. You can't even think, and you're not having family time together. You're not ever seeing each other. There has to be a reason why you say yes to what you say yes to.

Janet: Yes, and I think, everybody's family dynamic is different. I am married to a man who was very helpful in that way because Brent is very like, why are we doing this? Why would we create chaos in our life? I kind of am someone that just go with it. If there's chaos, I'm just going to do it.

Jocelyn: If someone needs it, then we are doing it.

Janet: There you go. Yeah, let's do it.

Jocelyn: Yeah, we're meant to serve.

Janet: I can't tell you how many times I've said, "Honey, maybe they should just live with us." And whoever it is, and we've had several deaths, but I say it every time.

Jocelyn: But, it can't be the solution every time.

Janet: And so, in my mind, there's a need, we should meet it. They should live with us. He would say, maybe we should pray about what the actual need is and see what's the best. And I'm like, how can it not be?

Jocelyn: What a gift he is for you.

Janet: But, you know, it may be that both of you tend to be the chaos people, and I get that. It's not like everybody has that. So then, we need to have something that grounds us.

Jocelyn: Something that guides you.

Janet: So for me, it helped me think about things like, okay, do we add another sport? There are good things about sports. You learn teamwork, you learn failures.

Jocelyn: Problem solving.

Janet: You learn how to not do something well. You learn how to.

Jocelyn: How to be physically fit. All sorts of good stuff.

Janet: So, I have to look at my overarching goals and say, do I add another sport? Do I take a part-time job? Do my kids take a part-time job? Do we serve the homeless? Do we take an AP class? Do we invest in the youth group? How do we prioritize family nights? Because all of those are good things and you probably can't do them all.

Jocelyn: And those smaller goals within your overarching goal are going to look different for every single family.

Janet: And every different year in the same family.

Jocelyn: Yes, because every child is different and they have different strengths and weaknesses. If your goal is, it will be as easy as possible for them to love and serve Jesus Christ for the rest of their days. It needs to be taking into account what their days look like. Some kids might have health problems or be exceptionally brilliant or behind. So those smaller goals within the overarching goal are going to be incredibly individualized.

Janet: Yes, I had one child who academically did not need to spend much time and would do well. So, what are we going to do with that? Well, we could do harder and harder and harder and harder classes.

Jocelyn: Fill up the time with everything.

Janet: That at some point they'll get stretched or we could say, well, if I look at my overall goals academically, one of our goals was that they would be prepared and equipped for college, if they chose that. Well, we were already on track for that so this child had more time to serve.

Jocelyn: And so you don't just add stuff academically to their calendar because they can handle it.

Janet: Right. So, it was okay, we're not trying to maximize Einstein. We're trying to say once we've done this, if there's more time, what do you want to do?

Jocelyn: Let's do other things.

Janet: There were so many decisions we're making on a daily basis. If we're not tethering ourselves back to some goals, at some point I've said it and I've heard it, I am so exhausted and I don't know how we got here. We're not accomplishing anything, but I'm busy all the time. I think we've all felt that way.

Jocelyn: Especially, I think some families see that after the kids are grown up and moved out, they're suddenly, like what was the point of our life? What did we even accomplish? Totally lacking purpose because there's not something just filling every second of the day, which was not the purpose of parenting just to fill every second of the day with activities.

Janet: But you're going to hear that pressure everywhere.

Jocelyn: Oh, everywhere.

Janet: I think I can remember, you know, I battled being a people pleaser anyway, and then when you're parenting, you've never done it before. So I'd ask advice or I just watch people that I respect. Brent would say, how come every time you spend time with different people, we totally restructure how we're doing it? Because I have to have a sit time and a play time and an nap time and they have to have at this time and we have to do that.

Jocelyn: Your day was working just fine.

Janet: Until, I know. And so it was like, okay, we don't change anything unless we sit down and talk about why. I didn't even realize I was doing that, but I can remember feeling behind. When I talked to someone, who's like, you know, they learn languages better when they're young. So

when they were two, I had them listening to it. I'm like, oh, my word, my kids are four and five years.

Jocelyn: We are failures!

Janet: They're never going to be able to whatever. And I think, okay, it's not on my list. When I look at my goal, I can help them love God and love others. I can help them. We had skill areas. If you look at our document, we chose to just say, what are their strengths and weaknesses? Every year was the goal. We did it when they were little, and we stopped as they get older. I think it just kind of becomes more ingrained.

Jocelyn: More intuitive, I think.

Janet: Yeah, so we didn't always look at it, but early on it was what their strengths, what are their weaknesses? How am I shoring up their weaknesses? How am I encouraging their strengths? I just had to really sit down and think about that. That document for our family, it would help me, when I would get caught up in a lot of other things. So, it didn't mean that we avoided all sports. We did do some things and it cracks me up, when I think about my son is not big. He's a little guy and, he was playing little gridiron football. Which was, I don't know, like fourth to sixth grade, he was in fourth grade. The minimum weight was 75 pounds. He was 75 pounds. There were kids out there, 150 pounds. There's my little 75 pounder. He was also, a very polite child, and not an incredibly aggressive child. All of these things are still true. I would not look at my son and say, aggressive.

Jocelyn: I would've never thought he played football. That's shocking to me.

Janet: It was to a lot of people, but it was like, you know, sure. He was interested. Yeah, we'll do it. He got the award for the most polite on the football field.

Jocelyn: I didn't know there was an award for that.

Janet: But he got that. We still talk about when his coach, you know, they're on the sidelines, and Josh is going to go out. He looked at Josh and he's like, you ready? You want to go out there? And Josh says, if you'd like me to.

Jocelyn: Pounce on people.

Janet: Okay, very polite. When it came to sports, my daughter was on a swim team, gifted in that area, talented in that area. The older she got, the more time they wanted from her. I can remember the coach saying they need to be here five days a week. Some of them were going before school, going to school, after school, five days a week. And so they would tell you,

Jocelyn: How is that possible?

Janet: What's got to happen. I just smiled because you know, I'm paying to be in this. So, I smiled and I said, okay, we'll be here three days a week in the afternoon. And she said, okay. That was the end of that. Everybody else was probably there or wherever, but I just said, here's what we're going to do.

Jocelyn: That helps because in those moments, the pressure as a mom to make a decision that someone is helping you to believe is in the best interest of your child.

Janet: To Maximize visibility.

Jocelyn: To maximize their college scholarship potential or whatever. It's such a heavy burden. You don't want to be the reason that they're limited in their productivity.

Janet: Whole life.

Jocelyn: Yeah, and then you ruin them.

Janet: It helped because I go back to our goals. It was like, if we did that, how is she going to be in youth group? How is she going to serve?

Jocelyn: Even three days a week is intense.

Janet: It was a lot, but you know, I could drop her off and then I would go to McDonald's and sit and meet with college kids. They shuffle through there.

Jocelyn: So it worked.

Janet: So we made it work and it was fine. We could sacrifice some time, but we didn't want to sacrifice a higher priority. I only knew because we'd written down what they were. So that was really helpful. We could spend the whole episode saying, well, what about this? What about if you have to decide? But the reality is, I think it's just valuable to say, let's become biblically goal oriented for your family. What does that look like? With the goal, I believe every one of us should have the same overarching goal. We want to honor God in our parenting. That needs to be. I don't think we get to choose whether or not that's our goal.

Jocelyn: And to honor God in your parenting means you're obeying his word about parenting. Not some nebulous mystical, honoring God. It's specific. God teaches specific passages about parenting, which we'll explore in another episode.

Janet: Our next episode. So, that's my ultimate goal and then within that I have goals that I believe would honor God. I want my kids to learn how to serve because God says serving is better than getting. So then, I want to expose them to that. As we did that, that really helped us. I've said a lot there, but it should be pretty straight forward. I want to honor God in my parenting,

and then underneath that, I want to define other goals. That I don't control, but that would honor God for my children. Pretty straightforward.

Jocelyn: It seems so black and white. Why aren't we all doing this?

Janet: Why do you think it's so hard?

Jocelyn: The first thought that came to my mind is like, the time that I am the most angry mom is when we're running late because our schedules are too full and people take forever to put their socks on.

Janet: Or even though you were about to leave, what is that? That you can't put them on until we're getting, I know.

Jocelyn: I know, when we're overtired, or where you've been sick or something. Another thing is like, sometimes people are just really good at stuff and you're like, dude, I want to maximize all this potential because I don't exactly know what field they want to go into, so why don't we explore lots of things so we don't waste money in college, studying something that they don't connect with. Maybe my kids are behind. There's just a lot. I feel a lot of pressure to help them get caught up. Ultimately, I think what makes me remembering the overarching goal is to honor God in my parenting. Sometimes I just don't feel like it. I'm tired and I want people to stop annoying me. I prefer to sin at times.

Janet: Yeah, so what I am hearing is that sin makes this hard.

Jocelyn: I have lots of things that I want the world to work a certain way, and when people get in my way, it irritates me.

Janet: Yes, and I think sin is what makes it hard. To remember, even when you said, what if my kid is behind and I feel the pressure to get them caught up. Then I would say, look at your document. Does your document say your priority is to get them caught up?

Jocelyn: No, my priority is to honor God with the way that I'm parenting that child.

Janet: Yes, and what does caught up even mean? The world doesn't get to decide what normal is.

Jocelyn: Yeah, exactly.

Janet: So, but we get caught up in that and then to go, okay, so finite thinking, but I think a lot of it is sin. Why is it swimming upstream so much just to guide my children? Do I realize that the biggest problem in the room when it comes to parenting is my sin?

Jocelyn: Yeah. It's me.

Janet: Yeah, I can't show my children how beautiful Jesus is and what a joy and privilege it is to know him, if I don't believe it.

Jocelyn: Yeah, and it's going to become apparent by the way you live. If you really believe it, it's going to come out of your mouth.

Janet: And if you say it, but don't live it, we are not stupid.

Jocelyn: It's going to be obvious.

Janet: So, if my goal in my life isn't to honor God, if I don't see that that really is the most beautiful, satisfying way to live, I'm going to be constantly confused and tempted by so many other things. Decision-making gets so much more difficult. So really is my joy contagious?

Jocelyn: I'm going to see, possibly see, that I am getting off track, when some of these lesser goals become unbiblical. I have to keep them caught up with everybody. They have to get a scholarship, whatever, whatever this thing is that I'm obsessing about, my obsessions show me what I actually believe.

Janet: if that's the most important thing that means honoring God, isn't.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: They can't both be.

Jocelyn: Right. They can't both be.

Janet: When I find that, cause we're all gonna find it. That's when I get to run to God and ask him what is going on in my heart? What is getting in the way?

Jocelyn: For each of us, that's going to look different because we are each individual moms listening to this or grandmas or aunts or whatever, and our own heart issues will become probably more obvious.

Janet: Yes. So what am I really saying here? If you're going to parent well, the foundation to good parenting is know your own heart idolatries, know your own heart sinful worship patterns. You have to be able to saturate yourself in truth first. I really believe in God's good providence. That's the foundation to parenting. We talk about this in our conference. If you don't know your own sin patterns, how in the world are you going to help your kid with theirs?

Jocelyn: Or you're going to keep on bumping into a problem, a personal problem, that limits you from helping your kids. I remember when I first retired from where I was working to stay home full time, I had a meeting with you because I was struggling with that. One of the things you said was you have to be aware of your own proclivity of sin. We all have a bent toward a sin in a

certain way, and it was just helpful to be reminded of that. It's going to be natural for you to want it to go this way. You'll probably have this reaction when it doesn't. If you keep on doing that over and over, you're missing a million parenting opportunities because your idolatry keeps on butting heads with you.

Janet: If you think about it, cause I think as parents, we can, believe the lie, I need to be above that. So I don't do those kinds of sins anymore, now I can show you, or I have to hide mine from my kids, so that they'll respect me.

Jocelyn: But that's not very mentor-like.

Janet: No, it's a lie.

Jocelyn: They're not going to see you clinging tightly to Jesus to be able to obey and also seeking his forgiveness when you don't. Even our handling of our sin is teaching our children how to handle their sin.

Janet: When I'm honest about my sin, I now have more humility and I have more compassion on their sin struggles.

Jocelyn: When I'm honest about my sin, I now have more humility and I have more compassion on their sin struggles.

Janet: Yes. Brent likes to say this, you know, your children tend to be like you.

Jocelyn: How encouraging.

Janet: I know, and so, we apologize to our kids on a regular basis. Oh, you got that from me.

Jocelyn: Sorry.

Janet: Oh, you got that for me. The hard news is they're going to be like you, but the good news is, if you know how to deal with your sin, you know how to help them.

Jocelyn: You know how to teach them how to deal with theirs.

Janet: You can say, honey, I totally get it.

Jocelyn: It's not like this prideful platform that you're yelling down at the little babies on the floor. It's like, look, we're in this together. We're both dealing with sin because we love Jesus. We want to deal with sin.

Janet: I think now I'm living with integrity and now I'm living with increasing joy because God is meeting me and I'm going, oh my word, even when I sin every day, he loves me so much. How



do you not get more joyful? And that is beautiful. That's what you want your kids to see. Not my mom is perfect.

Jocelyn: Not the perfect because that's not reality. They're not living in that world.

Janet: First of all, it would, if they actually believed you were perfect, you have discouraged them to despair because they're not. Second of all, they're not fooled. They know you're not. So now what they know is you're a hypocrite.

Jocelyn: That's what I was thinking is, so when you do fall because you will, they're going to be shocked that the person that they thought was perfect has shown their weakness. They're not going to know what to do with that.

Janet: Right. So letting them know, cause it's not you, that's amazing, it's Jesus. When they see that, that's the best environment for them. You knowing your sinful worship patterns is a gift in your parenting and is only going to help you. I believe it is foundational for you being able to parent well.

Jocelyn: What a humble way to approach life, like, hey, I'm aware of the way that I tend toward sin. You're aware of the way that you tend toward sin. Let's both work on them as if it's okay that we have to work on them.

Janet: Yes, which is why, you know, and I may have mentioned this in another episode, but it's why our family had our family shirts made is to say we're on the same team. My kids could tell you my besetting sins. We know them of each other. Now it's how can we develop that environment of humility and fellow traveler? I think sometimes as parents, we wrongly believe then they won't respect me. I'm the authority. I'm not a fellow traveler, I'm above you; no, I'm not, but I am your authority.

Jocelyn: You are an authority. That's really an authoritarian way of viewing life, not authoritative way.

Janet: I don't have to be above them, even though I'm their earthly authority. I get to model how to deal with sin. I like to tell my kids what's better than 1 John 1:9, "If you confess, He's faithful to forgive and cleanse." We want to live in a way where we're confessing. We're agreeing with God. Why? Because I want my kids to experience forgiveness and cleansing because I need forgiveness and cleansing. We want to first know why don't we live this wonderfully goal-oriented life. Well, sin. First, my own. Am I humbly recognizing my own sin? Am I trying to hide it from my kids? Or do they see from me, how to fight sin and how to humble yourself before God and how to rejoice in His forgiveness? Then am I begging God to help us develop an environment where there is humility? We can talk about those things. They don't have to hide

their sin from you because if you tell them that you're perfect or try to portray that. Here's what your kids are going to do, they're going to hide their sin from you. They don't want you to know.

Jocelyn: Go underground with it.

Janet: Because they would disappoint you because they're not as good as you.

Jocelyn: It's so funny, in both cases, sin is so deceptive. Parents think they can hide their sin. Kids are seeing it. Kids think they can hide their sin. Parents are seeing it. It's like, let's just be out with it already.

Janet: Yes, and I used to tell my kids, you know, we tried to avoid saying things like, I love you because you're so sweet.

Jocelyn: I love you.

Janet: Because I love you, and you're not always sweet. Can we just say that?

Jocelyn: I love you, even though you're not.

Janet: Yes, and then I can remember talking to them, which they may or may not remember, they were pretty young, helping them to see my job is to guide them. I can't guide them if I don't know where they're struggling. So they're keeping me from doing my job, if they don't tell me where they're struggling

Jocelyn: That's a good point.

Janet: So, it's not a matter of, they don't want to burden me with it. I'm going to stand before the Lord and he's going to say, why didn't you guide your children? I'm going to say, I didn't even know they had an issue. I need you to tell me what's going on in your heart. Then as a parent, here's my job, don't be shocked. When they actually share their heart, don't be shocked.

Jocelyn: I agree.

Janet: My children have said some things to me that I've thought I would never have told my mom. I need to just not show anything on my face right now.

Jocelyn: I was actually thinking, it's also how I counsel. You practice not wearing your emotions on your face because you want your children to be real with you and that will include them divulging sins that are shocking and scary.

Janet: Thoughts that are shocking.

Jocelyn: Right, but there's nothing that shocks God. There's nothing that He can't handle. There's no temptations that is not going to have an answer in God's word. We build openness where we're like, please, please, please share your heart so we can work on it together.

Janet: Yes, and their sin, isn't really shocking. We know the depth of all of our sin, but because they're our babies, I want them to not have to deal with that. No, I don't want that for you. Well, they're just like me. So of course, they're going to have those same kinds of shocking thoughts that I've had.

Jocelyn: And I found it several times helpful, when my kids have had to talk to me about really difficult, especially temptations or thought sins. Oh yeah, I just thought something similar couple of days ago, a bad thought popped into my head and here's how I dealt with it. We're all the same. We're all fighting the same battle.

Janet: I love that. So, what have we said so far? Well, first of all, I would encourage you, if you haven't written down, begin with the end in mind, where are you heading with your parenting? I just highly recommend that. It's not a requirement. I just think it's a really helpful thing.

Jocelyn: I agree. I think it's really helpful. What would you do for someone who they're in the middle of parenting and nothing's written down?

Janet: Yeah, you know, what? I think what they may find is they kind of already doing this. It just may not be written down, but it helps me because my mind goes so many other places and I don't realize it. I think I'm still doing all the good things. So for me, the document to come back to was because of my weaknesses. It helped me refocus. They may already be doing that. It may be clear to them and they may already make. This is not a requirement of God. It's just a tool.

Jocelyn: For our family, we don't have our parenting goals written down, but I can certainly tell you what as a couple, our parenting goals are because we have talked about them so much. Over the years, we've been parenting for almost 20 years now, over the years we have had repetitive conversations where say the same theme, bubbles up, over and over. I could tell you what my husband's goals are and his vision for having children. But I would encourage those who don't have them written down to talk about them as a couple because you may think you understand what your husband's goals are and if he were to verbalize them, you may not be on the same page, and so, that would be important as you figure out exactly what you want your family to be focusing on- having a couple of conversation is really critical because you don't want to have the husband doing one thing and the wife having a different goal, that's not going to be cohesive, and you're going to end up with no goals being met with possibly.

Janet: And yet there are husbands who operate differently, so they may not be as verbal, quite frankly, women are more verbal.

Jocelyn: They may not be as organized as your husband, not every husband is an engineer who writes stuff down like this.

Janet: Right, so that doesn't mean he's not parenting. It doesn't mean he's not leading. It might be, if it's helpful to you to write it down, that you might write it down and then say to him, can I show you this? Is this in line with what you want? I think it is. Is this in line with what you want? He may really just look at it and go, well, yeah, okay, then it's helpful to you to have it to go back to.

Jocelyn: It's helpful for me because I forget.

Janet: Yeah, and he may look at that and go, is that what you think? Because even if you said let's talk about our parenting goals. He may be like, what do you want to say?

Jocelyn: Yeah, I'm tired, dude.

Janet: But if I write it down and say, this is what I think our goals are based on just daily life and conversation.

Jocelyn: Is it accurate?

Janet: What do you see? So it was making it as easy as possible for him to be able to either just go yes or well, I don't know that I would say that's a goal. Then that's helpful.

Jocelyn: That would be a super fun date night conversation, not that you want every date night to be talking about the kids, but that's something that sometimes when you have a little bit of time away and you can think about it and talk about it without kids interrupting you all the time, like that might be a nice weekend away conversation or a plan for a date night. Just say, hey, we're going to talk about what our goals are and we're going to hopefully end this with something written.

Janet: Right, and if you're the better writer and he's not, you just write it.

Jocelyn: Write it.

Janet: It's not like the leader has to write, who cares. Just somebody needs to write it. Typically it was me and for us, I mean, Brent had a structure in mind, but I'm the word smith. That's just kind of how we do things. We did actually, when the kids were younger, we made it a priority to get away for two nights to a bed and breakfast, once a year.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Janet: The first afternoon we worked on this, and then that was it. The rest of it, we didn't, we weren't going to spend a whole two days on this. Maybe we should have, but we didn't. I don't

want to dread this because we have to spend 48 hours, whatever. To be able to go, how did the year ago, you know what, I'm seeing a lot more whining. Yeah, what do you think is the heart behind that? Are we intentionally doing something that would help? Oh, you're right next year we should do this. I need that, or I get caught up in all the daily, and I forget the big picture.

Jocelyn: We would review, I guess we did have some written goals. They didn't look quite like this. Ours was more like behavior contract. So every six months we would say, okay, where are the kids not doing so great? Well, actually we started with, where are the kids doing great? Where do they need to grow? Then we made a plan for how we were gonna work on that together. We had goals, they just looked a little bit different. They were in the form of a behavior contract.

Janet: Right, and we didn't have that, but I needed something to say, where are we headed? The same kind of thing. So, everyone's can look different, but it can be helpful. I recommend at least yearly, review it.

Jocelyn: Because surely things are going to change in a year. Your kids are growing. Their activities are going to change. What they're capable of doing is going to change.

Janet: Hopefully, as we grow in wisdom, something that we thought was a sub goal that was important, we might go, I don't even know that I even think that's that important anymore. Okay, so let's intentionally change it. I think part of it is thinking about begin with the end in mind and really being intentional. The word I would say is be intentional in your parenting. So don't just let the next good thing happen.

Jocelyn: You don't have accidental successes, right? It's good to know you're focusing on what needs to happen.

Janet: But then I would say really a foundation of you being able to parent well is you've got to spend some time looking at your own heart. When we do our parenting conference, we have a list of links and I'm going to get those listed in our show notes. Lots of resources to help you look at your own heart. One of the articles that I think should be in there, I'll find it is when kids don't bow to your idols. I love that because, boy, does that influence your parenting?

Jocelyn: Definitely.

Janet: It's just a great article. So just a lot of it you might think, I feel like it's a bait and switch. She said it's about parenting. It's really about my heart. And I would say yes.

Jocelyn: Yeah, but you are being parented by God, the Father, so.

Janet: Yes, and if you're going to really be able to help your child, their sinful worship patterns are frequently similar to yours. How in the world? Because we hear this from parents all the time. How do I help my kids with blah, blah, blah?

Jocelyn: How did you deal with it?

Janet: Well, let's talk about you first. Oh, do you realize you do that too? How are you working on that? Oh, you're not. That would explain why you don't know how to help them.

Jocelyn: Then you don't know how to help your kids.

Janet: Right?

Jocelyn: I've thought several times like, wow, look at that little kid acting just like it's parent. How has the parent dealt with it? That's how the little kid needs to deal with it, which they should be an ally. They know how hard it is.

Janet: It should make me more confident because I've already been working on it, so now it's like, oh, actually I know how to help you.

Jocelyn: Yeah, let's get on it.

Janet: Yeah. So growing personally is not only going to help you know how to help them, but you're modeling it. Now, you're showing them actually people can change. Look at mommy changing. So I can change too.

Jocelyn: Which is so hopeful 'cause as parents, we mess up big sometimes. So big and it's defeating when you think, oh my goodness. I just sin so big. Then you can look at yourself six months previous and say, look, remember that one time when mommy sin so big, it hasn't happened in six months or a year.

Janet: Look what God has done!

Jocelyn: Do you remember when we used to be yellers? We haven't even raised our voice in like a year. It's exciting because you're working on it together. They're seeing the results of your hard work as well.

Janet: Every time I do that in my own heart. I'm getting the log out of my own eye. If you just think about that analogy, clearly I wasn't seeing very clearly cause I didn't stinkin' log in my eye so it's gone, I see more clearly. Even decision making gets easier because I can see.

Jocelyn: Yeah, correction. Correcting the little ones.

Janet: Oh, I know. And then saturate, saturate all of it with prayer. I have a responsibility to honor God in my parenting. I have a responsibility to do what I can to create an environment that will make it easy for my child to see that God's way is better only God changes hearts. I beg God, and then I thank Him that He's not limited by my weaknesses.

Jocelyn: And you keep on doing what's right. No matter what the results are. You keep on doing what you have seen in the Bible is accurate, proper parenting, regardless of the results.

Janet: Reflecting God's character to my child.

Jocelyn: Right.

Janet: Excellent. In our next episode on parenting. I'm glad that you're going to be leading us to talk about. In a more specific way, what does discipline and instruction look like?

Jocelyn: I'm excited too. I really love talking about that.

Janet: Yes, I hope you guys are excited too, and that you'll be able to come back for our next episode on this joyful journey.

To keep from missing any future episodes, please sign up for our newsletter on our webpage [joyfuljourneypod.com](http://joyfuljourneypod.com). From there you can also subscribe to this podcast on Apple, Google, or Spotify. You can also visit us on our Facebook page or Instagram at Joyful Journey Podcast. If you have questions or comments for us, you can email us at [joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com](mailto:joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com). Joyful Journey Podcast is a ministry of Faith Bible Seminary. All proceeds go to offset costs of this podcast and toward scholarships for women to receive their [MABC through Faith Bible Seminary](#).

Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).