

# Blake Hamby\_Audio\_V1

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aaron, dad, faith, story, blake, lord, doctor, people, nicu, hospital, angela, uab, baby, nurses, vincent, honestly, home, situation, praying, life

## SPEAKERS

Blake Hamby (Guest), Scott Hilton (Host)

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Scott Hilton (Host) 00:15

Welcome to the that's my dad podcast blank canvas here blank is a dear friend Blake Blake was in my youth group when I was a youth pastor many years ago at Cherry Street Baptist Church. And Tal, Alabama. He was just a little boy, but I was only a little boy too. I think I was in my 20s. So we're not far apart. And several years past Blake that I didn't see you. I went on and opened the Boys Ranch and you went off to college and, and you call me up one day and say it's Blake, you know, God's just led me to call you. And we began to talk and you remember that conversation? And I remember it. Well, yeah. And you said God laid on your heart to do some mentoring, basically. And so will you feel isolated on your heart because I've been praying for it needs a mentor. And Reimann was the guy that you mentored and you came up? I think he was 13 or 14 years old at the time. And you drove an hour every Saturday morning to train with him for a half marathon that you already did that for a year. Did you

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Blake Hamby (Guest) 01:23

think we did it? Raymond, now we're in relationship for a year really longer, but the training was probably about six months. Drive up on Saturday morning, like you said, pick him out and then drop back to Birmingham. To meet the other trainees at 730.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 01:40

You put in a lot, a lot of time in the morning. There's a lot of miles a lot of effort. That's great story. So Blake, tell me about your relationship with your dad and and granddad.

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01:54

Yeah. So you know, Scott, when you asked me to do this, I really did was a little hesitant can open fence somewhat just because I've listened to several of these and that text Scott after every one that I listened to, because I'm like, I think I'm either four for four or five for five. Now

I get a cry and get emotional. And I just get so encouraged by the stories of the men that I've heard. Raymond's brother James was one of them. And just to hear his story, and what he's doing in his life is incredible. But, you know, my story's just a little different. My dad and I have always had a great relationship. You know, he and my mom really think they just celebrated their 50th year coming up on their 50th year anniversary. And just, you know, really had a great home life, great relationship with my parents. My dad owned a hardware store here in Attalla, that he bought from his father in law, my granddad and, you know, it was kind of at what I would say, just a normal, good, solid, family and relationship with my dad, as I've thought about this conversation, and just my dad in general. One of the things and there's many I could say, but you know, my dad's thank God that I could literally pick up my phone right now call him and he would be here, as long as it took him to drive here. Like he was just such a consistent presence in my life and my mom to be just so thankful for that. And then my relationship with my granddad, both of them really. My mom's dad and my dad's dad got a different personalities, but just great men.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 03:30

So you're the beneficiary of a generational blessing. I am absolutely I asked you to tell a story about your dad, you know, I collect these little stories, these little column dad stories. And by the way, if there's anybody out there, who has a dad story, you know, let us know. We love those stories. There's just little nuggets. They don't have to be anything fancy, but it's the little things that really affect us. And I said, Blake, you know, you have any dad stories. I'm working on this book of that stories. And you thought for a minute we were having lunch one day and you said I really don't? I don't know. I can't think of anything. He took me off for slushies and Gatorade. Remember that? Oh, yeah. Tell me tell me tell the rest of that story.



04:19

So back when Bill school think like the first of high school but was playing football in. So dad, you know, I wanted the biggest guy and I wasn't the toughest guy. But you know, I can always remember I would be out there on the field. And I'd look over and you see a lot of the dads standing on the sidelines and my dad was always one of them, which you know, I think back about it now and realize how much that means is I have my own kids and try to do some of those same things. But dad would always be there for practice and kind of watching me and then after he would pick me up after we'd finished practice, we would always go the same gas station Have over and Attalla down from a wall Middle School. And he would buy me a Gatorade in a slushy or an icy. Probably not the healthiest thing but it sure didn't taste good. And in honestly, as I've grown up, I've been back to that gas station several times I've been back in this area and just literally just, you know, to get gas or just even just drafted the parking lot and walk in the store and just think about just that little thing that even still to this day, 46 years old, you know, means a lot.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 05:35

You were 13 at the time. Yep. Yeah. So you told me that story. And you're like, oh, Scott, I don't know. It's just slashes and gay, right. It's not a really flat. You know, that's not an exciting story. It's not gonna it's not a tear jerker. And I looked at you remember? And I said, blank, how old

were you? And you said, I think I was 13. So you realize this has been 30 years? 30 plus years? Yeah. And you're still talking about your dad taking you for slushies and Gatorade. And you still go to that gas station? Because that means the most to us. So I think the theme of your dad's Fatherhood has just been consistency. Yeah, just mentally just be consistent. So what kind of mistakes do you think you've made?

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A mistake I make often is, I can be around them, but not with them. You know? Aaron, my wife will tell you one of my, one of my main love languages is quality time. So I just like to be around. But I think so often, I just get busy doing what I want to do around the house or wherever. But I'm not really with the kids. And I really as they've gotten older, that convicts me a lot of just Am I really taking advantage of the opportunities I have? And there's many other things I've messed up on. But that's one that I think about a lot recently.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 06:56

So your kids are really active. They're soccer players, and they're doing whatever they're doing all kinds of other stuff.

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Yeah, they do play soccer. Our oldest Becca is just really honestly gifted in kind of performance and creative area. She is always kind of practicing for show choirs are big thing right now. But really, she's got a song journal. So she's very into that. She just finished cross country. She's pretty fast. Both of our girls are pretty fast.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 07:24

They're very well rounded. They're athletic. And

 07:27

yeah, in faith, the face primary thing is probably soccer and basketball. Her coach said to her recently, he said to their soccer team, he said, you know if I'm, if I find myself in a dark alley, I won't face him be with me because she has no quit in her. She will not give up.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 07:44

Yeah. So do y'all have time to get together as a family and sit down and have a meal on a regular basis?

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We make time out how will we do that? Aaron, and I'll credit her with this. I mean, she's so great about just being intentional about we need to sit around the dinner table together. And I would say that is one thing that I think we have been able to do fairly well and fairly consistently, I think providing some huge benefits. That's a four or if not more nights out of the week, you know, we're eating together in generally around our dinner table.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 08:21

So Blake, your wife, Erin had an experience that involved in adoption. And I think there's a message. We've talked previously about whether or not we can talk about this, but you and Erin have talked about it. And I think it's so generous of her not only what she did, but to be willing to share this story because I think it's for somebody somebody needs to hear this story. So you know what I'm talking about whether

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they tell that story? Yeah. So and I'll say up front, this is Erin story, sitting here. So I'll recite it as best I can. But I give my wife a lot of, you know, honor and credit for really having such an ability to to make decisions that I think are uncommon in that are hard. But yeah, so we were dating and I remember I still remember sitting in the parking lot of the summit movie theater in Birmingham. And she said, you know, hey, I kind of like you. I was like, Oh, I kind of liked you too. And she said, Well, I just think there's something you should probably know. And that is about 10 years ago, I had a child with a guy I was dating, and long story that I won't really get into but you know, she said I just knew that it was not going to work, you know, and she came from a family that was had divorced parents and obviously that happens a lot and there's obviously grace for that but she just wanted to something different for her family and friends. felt like the right decision for her at that time was to not have the child and she was not going to have an abortion that was just not part of who she was or was ever going to be in. So she 22 years old made the decision to have the baby but give it up for adoption. And she really just kind of moved in with somebody, just a co worker, she didn't know that, well, they were kind of took her in and kind of really was on her own for a while as she worked through that. And she found an adoption attorney in Birmingham, prayed through that she actually Lord led her to church of the highlands, which is where we still go today through that process, but she, you know, gave Angela Grace up for adoption. And obviously, her family was involved in supporting Aaron through that. Her mom and dad, brother were just really critical during that time. And you know, when I heard it, I didn't know how to take that, honestly, you know, I had some preconceived thoughts about that's just not the right thing you do. You just get married, and you just suck it up, and you go forward. And Lord really has dealt with me over the years about my attitude on that. And I think the thing that stands out to me a lot, and there's a lot that stands out, and I'll try to just make it brief with kind of one thought that our kids need us to fight for them. And our kids need us to stand up for them. And I think we can sometimes do the wrong thing for the right reason. in it. It. You know, there's just a grace that the Lord has for us. But I saw a scene in what Aaron did, she did. And I'm not saying what she did was the wrong thing. At all, I'm just saying, I've seen how the Lord has brought a huge amount of blessing, not just to Aaron, but most importantly, to Angela grace. And so January of last year, Erin got to meet her really, for the first time as an adult Angela, you know, chose to make that outreach. It was Angeles decision. And you know, we got to meet her. But just to kind of see that play out.

We've now got to be an angel a couple of times, and she's just an amazing young woman. And just she has a wonderful family. And she has a wonderful family that loved her. She's got great brothers and sisters, a mom and dad that you know she adores, and just to see how the Lord can take any situation what the devil means were harmed Lord means for good.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 12:35

To me. It's such it's the ultimate act of love for her to carry that baby. And to know this baby needs more than I can give her. And to be able to give her away like that. She never forgot about her, though. Oh, no. I mean, yeah. Tell me about that reunion that she had recently.



12:58

The reunion just, it's kind of just so cool how God works things out. But the adoption attorney lives a mile from where Aaron and I live in Aaron has stayed in contact with him and his wife, and they're wonderful people. But Aaron went over to their house, who Angela knows them as well. They're kind of family friends. And it was just really, I don't know, it's kind of kind of hard to describe. But I think if I could speak for air, and it was just a very what's the word I would look for? It was sweet. It was wholesome. But it just was, it was just right. Like, I think Aaron just knew that like, and Angela, I think would agree. And I don't want to speak for either one of them. But you know, this might look a little different than other people's paths. But this is the right path for us. And, you know, to see Angela just be such, so welcoming to Erin, and so welcoming to her biological dad, too, because she's gotten to meet him and think he's a great man. It's just been cool to see how you can now kind of step back 1818 to 19 years later, and how angel would say and we asked her, you know, what do you think about where you are, and she's 100% Thankful she's where she's at with the family she's at.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 14:23

And in a day and age where so many people turn to the alternative. I wanted to share that story. And it's you and Aaron. I've taken a lot of vulnerability to share that publicly. But somebody needs to hear it. So we're going to delve into your story of your daughter, which is a special story, but there's one thing I want to do before we get there. I want to give you a chance to honor your dad.



14:48

So dad, you know I was thinking about this is I was coming here because I watched a couple of these and I thought this question might come up that, you know, just to reiterate some of the things I've said, You are the most consistent person in my whole life, and I think about when Aaron got checked into the hospital, and honestly, so many things are going on, you know what I'm talking about Dad, with faith before faith is here. And the only thing I wanted to do was, was to call you and just just, you know, have you come and just be there with me and give me a hug. And, you know, an hour and five minutes later, you were there. And I just want to tell you how much that in so many other things you have consistently done, have meant to me. And, you know, I think about all the people that came through the store, you know, so often things

you kind of get made a big deal out of and they need to be because what people do is important, but I think you really have selflessly sacrifice for so many people that probably will never be known. And I just want you to know, I've noticed that and because of you and so many things you've done, it's helped me to be the man I am. And I just appreciate you and love you.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 16:18

Awesome. So there's a story, we've got a tale that the world needs to hear. And it's gonna be here that you actually there's gonna be a book coming out about this. We don't want to be pre material. But it's such a story. It seems like such an incredible story, that I just want to sit back and let you tell the story of faith.



16:40

So try not to get too long winded with this. But Aaron and I got Brian with our second child. And Aaron actually was getting baptized at our church to the highlands in Birmingham. And Aaron honestly grew up really close to the Lord knowing the Lord, but she just had something on her heart that she wanted to get baptized and she had been baptized before. So get baptized on a Wednesday evening at our church. So we're kind of having a big event around that. And Erin said, she didn't tell me this beforehand. But as she was being baptized, she said, Lord, I want you. I don't want to just do this. I want you to change my life forever, and take my faith to new new heights. And just really is a sign of surrender to the Lord. Well, that night. We wake up, I wake up at about one in the morning. And there's not next to me in the bed. And I can hear kind of saying something from our bathroom, which was right on the other side of our headboard on this little cottage we had she like Blake Blake, and so I kind of jump up go in there. And she's sitting on the on the on the commode. And she said, I think we lost the baby. And we sat there that night. And you know, we we cried. We prayed we did what unfortunately I think so many husbands and wives have to do in that situation. Because it's such a common thing. Unfortunately for ladies and couples, we go to the doctor the next day, and basically everything checks out fine, you know, and we were just so thankful, so elated that the baby was still alive and healthy in from that point for the next probably two to three months. You know, Aaron just continued to experience bleeding and the bleeding wasn't getting better. It was honestly getting worse worse to the point where blood clots were being passed. And we had a situation where we were in mobile with my parents and my family for a surprise party for my mom. And Aaron woke up at three in the morning in a pool of blood just shivering uncontrollably and we call my sister who's a nurse her and her husband, they come into the room and kind of assess the situation and my sister just being so calm, cool and collected says you know, I think we need to call an ambulance like while we're doing that aimless is for sick people, we're okay, we're not sick, right? And she's like, I think you need to call an ambulance. So you get wheeled out of the Battle House Hotel, go to the hospital there and mobile in again, baby checks out fine. And, you know, we're confused. We don't know what's going on. And it's one of those situations where everything we're praying for the exact opposite is happening. So we get to kind of the weekend before our anniversary coincidentally, and Aaron starts having really bad stomach cramps, and we've been at this point been to the hospital three times and always get the same answer. Everything checks out fine, but I could just tell this time was different. So we rushed her to the hospital. And the nurse does the ultrasound and they just don't have the same sense of leash, you know, Glee or excitement from the standpoint of Oh, everything checks out fine. They said the baby's heartbeat heartbeat is there, but there's just

kind of a heaviness to this monogram Tex, Prasanna, so I knew something was not right. So the doctor comes in and basically says, you know, Aaron, we're going to have to admit you in an error says, Why can't be admitted, I've got to go to work tomorrow. She says, Well, no, you're, you're not going to work tomorrow, you have to be admitted in honestly, honey, you're not leaving this hospital until this baby comes. And she says, Well, I can't stay in this hospital for four and a half months. And the nurses or the doctor just looks at her says, sweetheart, you'll be lucky if this baby makes it. 24 hours, we were at 22 weeks, and we knew that there was just no chance that really, the baby would be born, would make it at that point. So we get checked in and just a whirlwind. I can remember just laying next to Erin in the bed that night and just praying. And it was like I saw Mount Everest at the foot of the bed. I mean, I literally just in my mind's eye saw that and thinking, you know, Lord, Your word says that if you have faith, the size of a mustard seed, you can move this mountain until this mountain does be thrown into the sea. And it will and I'm like, I don't have that faith. Just I don't know where that comes from. I can distinctly remember thinking, but I do know somebody that does, and it's one of our close friends. They Matthew Calhoun, like he's crazy enough to believe that that's gonna happen. And we called him the next day to come pray with us. And he did that, along with so many other people, but the next morning, the doctor comes in. And he literally just pulls out two huge handfuls of clotted blood out of air and, and that's probably about 530. In the morning, he ordered some blood work, he leaves comes back about three hours later, and he sits down at the end of the bed. And he's not really looking at air. And he's not really looking at me. And he's just starting to talk in he's basically saying, you know, I've consulted with my colleagues at UAB high risk OBGYN ends in the the unanimous consensus is, we have to induce labor, and we have to take this baby. And Aaron is just kind of almost nonchalantly, like, we're not doing that, like we're not going to do that because the baby will not make it. And the doctor who we have a ton of respect for he's a great man, great man of God. And is is just basically trying to convince Aaron of the reality of the situation without telling her the reality of the situation in that is. He can't say both of them. And then finally, in this conversation, he gets to the point where he just looks at Aaron and says, Look, Aaron, I cannot say both of you, and I have to save you, you have a husband, you have a child. It I can assure you my heartbreaks with you. We just this is what we have to do. And I remember leaning up, I had not really said anything to this point. I felt like that was Aaron's conversation to have you was going to put my hand on her leg to say, look, we have to listen to the doctor. We trust him, you know him here and before I can get those words out of my mouth here just looks at him and says, What would a doctor we we believe in miracles. We want you to believe in miracles with this. And I was just like, I seems kind of crazy here. And then right when she said that the nurse said with Dr. Johnson the Aaron's bloodwork has come back and her her madaket Which I know now is her blood count is 26. And so really what that meant is I know now I didn't know then but she it seemed like it was at least enough that she wasn't fully bleeding out. And I can just remember that looking at Dr. Johnson. And he has had this confused look on his face. Like that doesn't make any sense. And it ultimately ended up buying us enough time to to not make that decision then. And long story short, we ended up being on bedrest. Aaron was on bedrest for two months, two weeks in the hospital. We actually got discharged back home for a week which was kind of strange because they said her placenta was 50% abrupted which is not going to just reattach itself. And after being on bedrest at home for a week, then her water broke. We go back in and three days later faith is born. Do an emergency C section at 25 weeks and two days weighed one pound 14 ounces. And honestly if that part wasn't a journey enough, you know, the part then that started with faith being in the NICU was was a whole other rollercoaster. It's a long road and there was a lot of uncertainty within this and anything from severe cerebral palsy to blindness to all kinds of other issues would more than likely be a part of face life forever if she even made it And we were in the hospital at St. Vincent's in Birmingham for about



a month. And faith did well for about five days, which is normal. We've learned and then she really just started going down hill and got intubated. So she had, you know, a trach in her to help her breathe, and over a number of weeks, just kept getting worse and worse.



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You know, she was on 100% oxygen, but still, her SATs were kind of hovering in high 80s and drop below that. I can remember being so frustrated, because there was just nothing I could do. And the one thing I did know to do, and so many people were doing this for us was just praying for us, loving us. But we call it a prayer meeting. One day towards the end of our time there at St. Vincent's, and just ask people to come pray with us at The Chapel at St. Vincent's. We had one in our house later that evening. But as I was going to that prayer meeting at St. Vincent's, I went up to see faith as I normally did, before I went down. And I was staring at her. And I could tell that things were kind of going downhill, the monitor started going off, which was normal. And so I just kind of watched it for a little bit. But it started getting worse in my course, her oxygen oxygenation level went from, you know, 80 something down to 70 something then it went down to 60. And then her heart rate starts slowing down and all these buzzers are going off. And you know, just think it was busy in the NICU at that time. But nobody was coming. And I just remember being so scared and so freaked out. And I just ran through the NICU hollering for anybody like you've got to come help like I don't I don't know what's going on, in nurses, Dr. Kim running over and they start doing things to faith. And I can remember standing just in the corner of that little pod, so to speak, you kind of just all you have around us a little curtain. And just standing in the corner watching probably four people surround her she's turned in blue. And I'm like, I don't have anything I can do at this point. And all I could get out was Jesus help. The only words I could get out of my mouth was just Jesus help. And I just kind of sunk down in the corner there. And at some point, you know, probably a minute or so later, one of the nurses came over and put her hand on me and just said Mr. Hamby know, who the faith gave us a scare. I was like she alive. It's like, yeah, she's alive. And that's always stood out to me, just from the standpoint of, I don't think as parents, we should ever underestimate the opportunity in the power, we have to be able to humble ourselves and just say the name of Jesus, of our situation over our kids. And just take competence in he knows best. It's not to say that things are always going to work out. But I don't know. I just that has always stood out to me. Just how powerful just his name can be.



Scott Hilton (Host) 28:17

She was released from the hospital.



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She was and so we, I say got kicked out of St. Vincent's the doctor and how long were you there? Were at St. Vincent's for a month and then again, the doctors were incredible at those St. Vincent's and UAB but the doctors called us one day at St. Vincent said, look, there's nothing else we can really do for faith here. We would recommend her go to UAB she went to a B. And she was in bad shape. But thank the Lord, long story short, she she started to get better.



The the miracle of the Lord and the miracle of modern medicine and the nurses and the doctors but she stayed at UAB for three and a half months. So she was in the NICU for a total of four and a half months.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 28:59

And what was the prognosis when you brought her home?



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You know, by the time we brought her home, she was doing so much better. You know, we came home with just a heart monitor. So she had a heart monitor attached to her she had to wear all the time but she didn't come home and on any supplemental oxygen or anything which is very common in that world and you know, in that situation. But during her time in the NICU, she had I think they call it like chronic lung disease like her lungs were her main issue. There's a lot of issues that can go on with that we've learned but she just was struggling so hard with with her breathing. And that was her main issue from being intubated and whatnot. But when she came home she actually did pretty well we and I credit my wife so much with so much of this but like the doctor Dr. Carlo, who just incredible man said, you know, you really need to basically not see people for like a year or in an errand was like, Okay. And there's like the most social person but like for a year, people didn't come to our house like she people would come over and say hey, and she would like make him stand at the door. And like wave at us through the door. But Aaron just sacrificed not just she put her life on the line literally for faith, the face to an awesome now,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 30:25

it's an incredible story. And I asked you to tell that even though it's it takes a lot. It's hard to tell. I remember coming to the hospital. And you know what, you know what we were thinking, the rest of us were thinking, This baby's gonna have some serious long term problems, a one pound one was 1.1 pound



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14 ounces.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 30:48

Yeah. Those of us who are friends who, you know, would not say this to your face. Or Thank you, this baby's gonna have a series of problems then happen now, then happen. You know, we're going to do what I'm about to do. They, we got a couple of videos from your two girls. The first one I believe is faith. So we want to show you those this this is this your pride and joy. That's what makes you heartbeat. And I know, Becca has ever been a specialist faith is just has

a different story. So we want to share this with you as well as the rest of the world. There might be somebody out there Blake, who's going through what you and Aaron went through. It's my hope that this will encourage them



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the best. The best thing about my dad is that he's the best he can be. And he does back ride with my sister.



Scott Hilton (Host) 31:54

What about favorite story you might have?



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One time, me and my dad got pizza, and I just ate one slice. That's a true story. My favorite thing



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about my dad is he's always in a light and fun mood. And he's always like making me laugh. And my favorite time with him was that when we went to Yosemite and the plane right there, we said actually each other, it was really fun. It was just like just the two of us. And we really got to connect. That's awesome. That's



Scott Hilton (Host) 32:30

a that's a blessing. Yeah, it is. Just Would you ever thought that you'd have this moment? 13 years ago?



32:39

No, no, definitely



Scott Hilton (Host) 32:40

not being a dad worth it.



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Being a dad is worth it. It's, you know, it's one of one of or maybe the hardest thing I've ever done but it is absolutely worth it. And

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Scott Hilton (Host) 32:50

let's let's close by you looking in the camera and telling your girls what they mean to you.



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You know back in faith, you get the opportunity to see me and your mom you know as vulnerable and as is raw as anybody else. But I can just tell you that you all bring so much just life in joy into who we are who I am as a person you know, Becca, we say it often you are the best of us in You Really Are you love people love the Lord in just love so purely and you have such a heart of compassion that it really it just encourages and propels me to try to emulate some of that, who you are in faith, you are so full of passion. Like your coach said, I would want you with me in a dark alley. But you have no quit in you. And you just show a courage that is uncommon among people and you inspire me to just be stronger to be braver, and, and I love both of you so much. And I just don't know that words could really encapsulate how I do feel, but I'll make life worth living. And Erin, goodness, I know. I'm not always the greatest partner sometimes but you give me such grace in such space in you really honestly never quit on us. And I truly mean it. When I say often that, you know, my life is better. It's more exciting. It's richer, it's fuller. Because you were willing to come along with me and do this thing called life together and as much as sometimes. You might get mad at me for certain things, but you really do bring joy to my life and and I admire you for who you are as a woman who you are as a mom, you are is a wife and who you are as a person and I couldn't be who I am without you.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 35:16

All right, surprise you with that one. We look forward to you sharing your story because I think it's going to inspire a lot of people. Yeah, I can't wait to conclude this episode of this my dad where we're inspiring fathers to become great dads and breaking cycles of generational fatherlessness. See you next week.