

SHOWNOTES - Kenneth Bruce (29/50)

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SPEAKERS

Scott Hilton (Host), Kenneth Bruce (Guest)

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Scott Hilton (Host) 00:15

Welcome to another episode. That's my dad podcast got Kenneth Bruce here with us today, Kev. Appreciate it, Kevin, and thanks for opportunity to grab anything else to do to you. Nothing going on pastor this little church here. That's right. A couple people take care of this a few folks. Tell me about your your background a little bit about your your family story story of origin, as we call it.

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Kenneth Bruce (Guest) 00:35

Yeah, absolutely. I was born and raised in Lexington, Kentucky, I grew up in a family with an awesome mom and dad and a sister. And I mean, I grew up playing a lot of sports, soccer became the most important thing to me. And when I got to high school that became one of the most important things in my life was soccer. I got pretty good at it. It became an idol in my heart. It was one of the three gods that I worshipped. The second God that I worship was a girl, she was most important thing to me at the time. And then the third guy that I worship was myself, I was a very, very prideful person. And after I graduated, I lost all three of my gods, I broke my leg playing soccer, girlfriend broke up with me, a lot of my friends just kind of went off. And so I really didn't want to live anymore. And then I read first Corinthians two nine, it says no eye has seen no ears heard no minors can see what God has prepared for those who love them. And I knew that I didn't. And Jesus changed my heart at the age of 18. And so I went off to college at the University of Kentucky as a new believer, and got involved with Fellowship of Christian Athletes. That's where I met my current wife, Christy. We, we've been married now for 18 years. And we have five kids, ages 15, down to nine. We have five kids of have. We have two sons who are biological. We have two sons that were born in Ethiopia, and a little girl that was born in China. Yeah. And so they keep us busy.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 02:11

That's a beautiful family. They are one of the things kenaf that we are, what we try to do here today. And with this podcast is we're trying to reach young guys who are are going to be

fathers one day, or maybe they're already fathers. And one of the mistakes I see those guys making a lot is they make a bad choice when it comes to the to their spouse, or something or the girlfriend and a lot of cases, they'll as the Romans Tell us how that happened.



02:38

Christy is my best friend and all the land. And so I would rather spend time with her than with anybody. We both were students at the University of Kentucky. She grew up in a Catholic family. On her 19th birthday. She got drunk with a bunch of friends, the party was over, they all left and she was in her apartment by herself, and was miserable. And at that moment, she cried out to Jesus to change her heart. And so on her 19th birthday, she was born again God changed her. And we met and hung out in college with a big group of friends. But we really didn't have feelings for each other. You know, first couple of years, we started serving on staff together at a church. I was a student ministry intern, and she was the student ministry assistant. And we just disciplined teenagers, she invested in girls I invested in guys. People kept trying to set us up. And I was like, Nah, I don't think so. And she's like, Nah, I can it's really messy. He's got a dirty car. And that, like even there was one night in which we were hanging out the bunch of friends. And someone tried setting me up with another girl. And I was like, no, no, no, I'm not interested in that girl. I'm interested in Christine. I thought, why am I interested in Christie? And as this guy's talking, she's sitting there thinking then I don't want to sit with her. Why? Why do I like Ken. And if that was the moment where the scales fell off of our eyes for one another. We fell in love and it was amazing. And God has been so kind. We love going hiking together. She also played soccer. And so we love playing sports together. And we stay busy. All five of our kids play soccer. Yeah. And I coach, my kids. And so we just are a soccer family. But it's been really precious getting to spend my life with my best friend how

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Scott Hilton (Host) 04:22

important you think that is in terms of terms, you being a dad to have a supportive wife. How important do you think that is? And for the young guy who's who's maybe made a bad choice there. What would you say to him? How can you correct that?




04:36

Well, there's nothing more important to my children than seeing me love their mom, loving her, caring for her in the same way that Jesus loves and cares for his bride the church. Now I'm imperfect. There's no man who can perfectly love his wife in the way that Christ has but he has set for us an example of how we model love and leadership within the home. And so when we looked at Jesus on how he loves and cares for his bride, the Church, he laid his life down for her. Well as husbands as as men, who have been called to lead and shepherd homes, we got to be ready and willing to lay our

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Scott Hilton (Host) 05:13


lives down for our wives. What does that do for your kids?

 05:17

It's a modeling the gospel, I'm showing them that I am an imperfect person who's following a perfect savior. And I'm showing them this is what leadership looks like. This is how you love a wife, you are willing to do the dishes and take the trash out and mop the floors and in change diapers, because that's what servant leadership looks like. If Jesus is willing to wash feet, we should be willing to change diapers,

 Scott Hilton (Host) 05:39

particularly where your daughter, what do you think it does when she sees how you treat your wife? What do you think that does? In her mind? I see. So now

 05:47

Yeah, Eliana is nine years old?

 Scott Hilton (Host) 05:49

She's getting to the age she's when she's watching. How do you think that your treatment of your wife is affecting her mentality? Yeah,

 05:57

I want to show her what how a husband and a man is supposed to treat a woman. tenderness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, these ways that God treats us in the Gospel, I want to model that before her, she needs to know that there's not a man who should ever lay a hand on her in a way that doesn't honor the Lord, is that there? She needs to find a husband one day, if it's the Lord's will, that she has a guy who's willing to lay his life down for her to serve her in the same way that Christ has served us. I want to model that so she will know what to look for. And how do

 Scott Hilton (Host) 06:34

you kind of how do you guide your boys? Because they're nowhere close to get married? We hope? Yeah, right? If they're long way, but how do you kind of guide them and knowing what kind of woman to look

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for? Yeah, yeah. 100%. So I, I believe in like, show and tell like, as little kids, we would go to school, and we'd have an object that we love. And it was it was show and you would tell about it? Well, I think in many ways, that's what the Christian life is like, is it's a show and tell is I'm

showing you me what Christ is on in my life. And I'm gonna tell you about it. So with my boys, I'm continually teaching them and modeling them. Hey, guys, this is what leadership looks like, man, you love your wife, you laugh with your wife. So Christy and I are regularly laughing with one another. We are showing appropriate affection in front of our children. I want my boys to see this is how you love a woman. You're gentle. You're patient, you put your phone away and you make eye contact and you engage. I want to show my boys. This is what it looks like that strength as a man is not found necessarily in big muscles. It's found in being gentle and tender with your wife. Yeah, a lot

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Scott Hilton (Host) 07:37

of guys don't don't see that these days. Yeah, there's this thought that you got to be Mr. Macho, right. But it's not all about being rough and tough and grumbly. Yeah, sometimes it's about being a servant, like you say, and being kind to people. That's what I hope my kids would say about me is that I was that was kind. Yeah, just just be CAD. But you got that from somewhere. Yeah. Take me back. Tell me about your, your parents.



08:03

Yeah, my mom and dad are incredible people. They are best friends. My dad modeled friendship, in a marriage. They they are together all the time. They love spending time with each other. They would spend time with no one else other than just with each other. And so my dad has modeled that for me throughout my life. He became the best man at my wedding, because I saw a friendship that he had with my mom. But he also was so wise in cultivating a friendship with me. Now there's a sense in which that there was a submission, I realized that he's the authority and and to follow his lead. But he was so good at developing a relationship with me that I want to spend time with him. And even to this day, I'll continually call him weekly. Even though we're six hours away in a drive from each other. I still want to hear his voice. I treasure his insight and wisdom. It's a gift that I get to glean from his perspective. And so seeing my dad love my mom and be friends with my mom has helped me learn how I can do the same thing with my wife.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 09:11

Do you remember any particular incident or something you did that really made an impression on you that impacted you that you can think of, you



09:19

know, there's this there's this moment playing a lot of soccer, I remember there was a game in which I played in which the referee made a bad call. I was fouled and they didn't say anything. And my dad got really, really angry. And I heard him from the sideline, and another parent mocked him. And in that moment, something clicked within me and I got mad and I thought okay, game on now. And that became a moment where I played him a really good game the rest of the way and scored some goals and was able to bring my team to victory. But hearing my dad vocally defend me and him be passionate about making sure I was safe and cared for

was a gift and I'm a A passionate person. I get that from my dad. And but just regularly hearing my dad making sure in soccer games and also at home, Hey, are you good? Do you have everything you need? He was very intentional about making sure I felt safe, loved and protected. But my dad was also really intentional. When I made mistakes, on addressing those in a way that made sure I learned my lesson. It's my junior year of high school, our high school team made the state playoffs, we're headed to the state championship game, we're driving, I'm in the front seat of a car with a buddy of mine. And I'm not wearing a seatbelt. We get into a car accident, I hit my head on the dashboard probably shouldn't have lived that I just walked away with a scratch on my forehead. My dad later heard that I had been in the car accident and was not wearing a seatbelt. And it bothered him so much that late that night, he made sure that I didn't go to bed, he said you're coming with me. And as an administrator at UK hospital, he had access to the emergency room. And so he took me to the emergency room and we stood around until finally someone came in who had been in a car accident not wearing a seatbelt. And their bodies was mangled. It was bloody, it was awful. And he put his arm around my shoulder and pointed that person who said that could have been you right there. That's a moment I'm never gonna forget. And I'm very intentional about wearing my seatbelt to this day. But my dad, I can also see the fear in his eyes that that could have been me. And so for my dad to so intentionally take that moment to drive home the importance of, of being safe of wearing a seatbelt, but also the importance of life. How is it gift? And that's a moment I'm never gonna forget.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 11:49

Did you have siblings?



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I did. I have an older sister. She's five years older than me. And my parents. Were very intentional about making sure we had family dinners together. And that's something that we continue to do is on our family is every night if at all possible. We're around that table in our house that we do to call it peaks and pits mean you share at least one part of your day. That was really good. And one part of your day, that was really bad. And sometimes it's pretty common. Hey, might usually I hear my peak was lunch or gym. Okay, kids love going to recess, or it's math class. That was a bit that was not fun. And so we're regular hearing that. But what's been helpful for us is it's our kids are having an opportunity to kind of unpack their day, they're able to celebrate wins, and address issues that may need to be addressed later on as a family like, Hey, today, it was tough because of this kid saying something to you. Let's talk through that. And you're not doing well in this class. Let's walk through that.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 12:43

Let me get this straight now. Five kids. That's right. This is your pastor over I don't even know how, what size church this is a couple 1000 Something like that. So there are a lot of demands on your time. Yeah. And I hear people all the time. So we you know, we just don't have time have dinner together. Yeah. And there's so they're stopping by and picking up a sack lights and

eating in front of the TV at night, right? You're telling me you're coaching, three of your three soccer team a lot, a lot of teams, you're pastoring a church, you got five kids, and you're telling me that you have time to sit down and have dinner with your kids on a regular basis? We do.

 13:22


We're very intentional. And we say no to a lot of things. Okay, so at our house, television does not come on during the week, okay, we want to make sure that that's not a rallying point for us. We, the kids know, this is a priority for us. Because Good grief, time is going by so fast. I've got a son, who's gonna be heading out of the house in the next two years. And I want to redeem this time, I've only got a limited time with each of my kids. And so I want to make as much of these moments as I can,

 Scott Hilton (Host) 13:49

you know, you're, you're gonna be faced with a day and it won't, it'll be a lot sooner than you think. And I call it the what was our thinking? They and a lot of parents are going to couples are going to look at each other across the table. And their kids are going to be going off to college. And there's going to be an attic full of trophies and ribbons and awards and and they're gonna look at each other and say, What were we thinking? Why didn't we sit our kids down at this table and enjoy more family time? So keep doing that. I'm so encouraged. It's good for me to see that a guy as busy as you still doing that because so many people want to tell me you can't do it. But tell me what are some mistakes you think you've made as dad?

 14:36

Oh my goodness, how much time we got? There are there are so many. I'll share with you some. I think for me what I have found having having five children in some who have some challenges. They bring challenges to our family coming from hard places and hard backgrounds. The Lord has been kind big because what I have found is God has used my children to be tools of sanctification, meaning God is using my kids to help me become more like Jesus. And oftentimes when they're disobedience reveals areas of my heart that don't look like Christ. Because how I respond to their disobedience reveals what's really important to me. So I have seen in my own heart, oftentimes impatience, because of a tantrum over something that is tertiary. It's silly. It's impatience because they're acting out of anger. But what I've also found is that when I sin against my kids, I have found that when I humble myself, and I go to them, and I say, Hey, listen, I want you to talk. I was wrong. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 15:53

So you've actually done that with your kids weekly.

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I am regularly having to go to my kids and ask her forgiveness, because their dad is a big fat
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center.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 16:03

How do they respond to that



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my credibility skyrockets. Their love and trust of me increases, the more I humble myself.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 16:12

So even when you make a mistake, you go to them, and you man up in your mind,



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and I'm making up by getting low. I'm humbling myself. And it's hard. My flesh does not want to do that. But that's probably when the most redemptive things that I can do. Because I'm modeling the gospel. I'm saying, as followers of Jesus, we have to get low and humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness. That's what we do with God, we have to do that with one another. And it's amazing, because I'm getting to show them this is what manhood looks like. It's not someone who's always right. No, I blow it all the time. But this is where God's grace is greater. And I can model humility in the Gospel by asking for forgiveness. And then my relationship gets closer. We are laughing about it later on. Like, can you believe we said that, and we move forward. If we if I'm willing to do that, if I'm so prideful, that I can't handle myself, it's going to lead to a broken relationship, which eventually could lead towards bitterness towards towards me, towards them towards me. And I don't want that. I want to be able to have the kind of friendship with my children so that when I'm an adult, they want to spend time with me, because we have a friendship. Now a different seasons of life, you can't be their friend, right? You can't make there's a day in which that will come. But for now, I'm in a season in which I want to make sure I'm investing in that relationship. So for me as a soccer player, as I was growing up, my dad was the announcer at University of Kentucky, men's basketball games and football games. So he's the announcer that's a big deal in Kentucky. Yeah. As I got to high school, my dad wanted to come to my high school games on Saturdays. And that meant he had to give something up. And so he stepped down as the announcer at UK football games, so that he could come to my soccer games. Wow, the trust that he put in me and to be willing to make that sacrifice. I never forgot it. I mean, here I am, 40 years old. And I still remember my dad being willing to give up things that he wanted to do, that he enjoyed, that he was good at, so that he could just be present in my life. And for me, that was a big deal. He was willing to give something up for me and that, that sacrifice he made of intentionally investing in that relationship. That's how he earned the right to want to be my best man at my wedding. Because it was a friendship. It was a trust. It was a love that required sacrifice on his part.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 18:38

Let me let me go back and make sure I understood this story because that's that's quite an

incredible story. Your dad was the public address announcer That's right, or University of Kentucky.

 18:50

football and basketball. Now for football. We weren't very good during that time. So oftentimes, it was more of a celebration of Hey, first down Kentucky. We didn't get many touchdowns back then. And so we would as fans celebrate when my dad's yelled first down Kentucky because that's the only thing we're celebrating. And I remember his voice booming throughout Commonwealth Stadium. And that was him. You know, 50,000 fans would just celebrate after my dad would say a phrase.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 19:18

And then he was the basketball and he was a basketball guy. So he's Kentucky's known for that.

 19:22

That's right. That's right. That's the Holy Grail. And so he was there from the last year of Eddie Sutton. He did all of Rick Pitino all of Tubby Smith and he was just he was so good at it had that that incredible booming voice that would just echo all throughout the arena. And I remember as a kid sitting by myself at games because I would see my dad down there on the on the court sitting at the desk and when the game was over. He would oftentimes come to the section where I was sitting, and he would point at me and he would talk to the security guard and say that's my son. And I would get to walk down the stage was down down down the arena stairs. And so as the entire crowd is going up the stairs out to their car, I'm walking down. And I get to walk out onto the floor with my dad and get to exit out with him. And I think it's just that that's something even to this day as a 40 year old. I'm just blessed with that memory. And I'm like, Man, what a picture of what God does with us as he points us out in the in the stadium says that's my son. He's coming with me.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 20:25

He validated you.

 20:25

Oh, my goodness, I belong to Him.

 Scott Hilton (Host) 20:28

So your dad gave that up? Yeah. Because he wanted to be at your game.



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He wanted to be with me. Wow, what a story. And and that is something that is so precious to me. Wow, that's a gift. Wow,



Scott Hilton (Host) 20:39

I want to give you an opportunity to address your dad. That's sometimes kind of hard to do in person. But we'll make sure he gets to see this. Yeah. So I want to give you an opportunity what camera we'll have there. Look into the camera and just tell your dad what you think of him.



20:57

Dad, I'm I'm so grateful for your investment in my life. In any fruit that comes from my life, whether it's through my ministry through my family, it falls from your tree, is because you were so intentional about wanting to love me, be there for me, encourage me, you continue to give me wisdom. You, you challenge me to make sure I'm loving my wife and my family. Well, you have modeled that beautifully. And I praise God for the honor of being your son. So thank you for all the sacrifices that you made for me. Things that I know about and things I don't know about. But you made sure I was a priority. And because of your investment in me as a man, I am now able to go and do likewise with my family and to teach others to do the same for husbands to love their wives the way that you've loved mom, for fathers to invest in their kids in the way that you've invested in me. I am so grateful and honored to be your son and I love you so much. And I'm proud to be your son.



Scott Hilton (Host) 22:02

That's awesome. Let's talk about your kids. Get and get rid of kind of ready to wind up here. How's your family come about? girl says Tell me how you really feel about your kids.



22:15

Oh my goodness. Um, I love them with all my heart daily. I tell them I love you so much. And I'm so proud of you. I want my heard that from my dad daily in some so intentional about my kids hearing that from my lips. So when I dropped them off at school, I pray for them as we drop off. It's very quick prayer. It's a few sentences. And I tell them I love you. And I'm proud of you. And I'm so glad you're my son or to my daughter. I'm so glad you're my daughter. I want them to hear those words. So that when I'm long gone, they're gonna hear the pitch and volume of my voice ringing in their head just as even now I can hear my dad's voice speaking blessing over me. I want my kids to hear that. Noah was born. He's now 15. We're teaching him to drive which is an awesome and terrifying thing right now. It was born in 2007. Christy and I in 2010 started syncing a desire to adopt. We've been to Africa many times given our lives to the people there. And so we ended up adopting our two boys at an IRAM And Asa from Ethiopia in 2010. They were nine months old and two years old at the time that we brought them home.

And as we were going through the process, we found out we were pregnant. And so my son Nathan came a few months after we brought them home from Ethiopia. And so we had four children three and under. Which if you want to talk about stress on a marriage that was in but it was amazing how the church loved us and encouraged us through that season. God was so kind. And it's crazy that my goodness, that was 12 years ago now. And then in 2016, God starts during our heart for it to another adoption. Ethiopia shut down. We are going through India, they they closed us down at the last minute. We our adoption agency opened up an opportunity to for a domestic adoption down in a minute. With a young boy. The mom gave birth we were on our way to the hospital and the mom changed her mind. And she decided to keep the baby which we're we're fine with. That's great. So we just got back on the track of of trying to adopt we went and got our little girl Eliane from China in 2016. And so we have five children, and they're all a delight. They have different personalities. And so shepherding them requires great wisdom and patience and grace and communication. Christy and I are daily talking with one another like okay, here's what this child is dealing with. What do we need to address how can we help them through this trial? And it seems like every week, it's a new trial that we're facing, right? And so as a dad, I want to make sure that my kids know they're a priority, which means for right now I say no to the golf course a lot. I say no to doing a lot of things I want to do, because I know my window is so small. And this opportunity is brief. And I want to redeem the time as best as I can. So that future generations, Psalm 78, talks about future generations that have yet to have been born will put their hope in God. And I want to do that by investing in the kids that God's given to me now,

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Scott Hilton (Host) 25:27

what would you want them to say about you?



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My dad loved me, fiercely. My dad loved my mom passionately and faithfully. My dad made us a priority. I hope they'll say that my dad loved Jesus. My dad loved the church, but he made sure that we felt important. And it were a priority in his life.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 25:55

You know, I think one of the greatest honors that a dad and a husband can have is to have his wife, honor him, and respect him and appreciate him and to have his kids honor Him and respect him and appreciate him. And I think one day, that's that day is coming for you. But it's also here already. So our, our production crew, with the help of your wife, put together a little something we want to share with you. Have you comment.



26:29

The thing I like best about my dad is that he's a great leader. He's always wanting me to like, go the right path, in like, you know, leave me what to do in the hardest situations. And he does a great job doing that. Good, thank



26:46

you for making my breakfast. Um, playing soccer with me being my coach, and I love you.



26:56

So one of the things that I like about Dad is that he is really thoughtful. And he's also really wise, I guess. So. Um, whenever I have a problem, I know that I can go to him, he's gonna have really, really good advice. And he's really trustworthy, I guess. And yeah, he has a lot of stuff. And he's really, really smart. And he was really godly. And I think my favorite story from him is, I don't know. I think like just talking about like, this is random stories about how can you relate to like, her struggles or whatever. And it makes it really approachable. And like, really cool, I guess. So yeah.



27:47

What I like about you, dad is that you, support me and provide us with things that are good. And you support me when I'm playing soccer. And you're my coach, and you show attention to me and you helped me with things. And you make me a shrewd, and Lea and what



28:10

do you like best about dad? He's funny. He's smart. And he's good at preaching. And he's good at making dinner for everyone and making breakfast. And also let's see his good cooking on the girls. And he's also fine playing board games with and



28:46

he's also a one on one he's a fun person to play with. And he's also why oh, I think that is not true. I don't know. But he's good at playing with dogs. And yeah. And he was playing us. And good. Yeah.



29:31

The thing that I like best about Kenneth as a father is the example that he sets. He sets an example for our children in his love of the Lord in service to the Lord. He shows them what it's like to be a passionate follower of Jesus. He's the most godly man that I know. And he sets that faith before our children as an example in which to walk. I think about Paul as he instructs those that he writes to you in the New Testament, He says, Follow me as I follow Christ. And that is what Kenneth does for our children. He shows them what it looks like to spend time in God's Word, to spend time in prayer, to love and serve people well, he shows them what it looks like to have a biblical worldview, as we face different things that are happening in the world around us. And I really appreciate that. He also sets an example for them in the way that he shows love and serves me, he loves me very well. He lays his life down for me every single

day, and he does it in front of our children. He's teaching our boys what it looks like to love a wife and children well, and he's showing our daughter, the type of man that she needs to look for in a husband. And lastly, I think his example that he sets for our children is only possible because he's involved in their lives. And that's something that I really appreciate about him. He's super involved in the lives of our children, whether it's playing in the backyard with them, doing their homework with them, taking them to school every day, or coaching their soccer teams. He is intimately acquainted with our children, and I'm just so appreciative.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 31:29

Thank you. So don't know. Don't Don't worry about the tears. We forgot the tissue again. But how does that make you feel killer?



31:43

I'm humbled. I'm overwhelmed with encouragement. The affirmation is so good. The peat knowing that the people I give my life to the most that they appreciate me is a wonderful gift. I challenge our church that you invest your life the most in those who are going to cry the hardest at your funeral. And so knowing that I'm giving my best to my family, and that they affirm that I'm very humbled and encouraged and I feel very affirmed. And I'm really grateful.

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Scott Hilton (Host) 32:18

Awesome. Well, thank you for being a part of this podcast and I think you're gonna inspire somebody. That's what it's all about. We believe that changing. Breaking generational curses is all about inspiring. You got to inspire people before they'll listen they need people like you. Inspiring is a thank you for doing that. That'll conclude this episode of The that's my dad podcast where we're inspiring fathers to be great dads are breaking cycles of generational fatherlessness. Thanks for joining us. See you again next week.