



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 133 – Helping Your Children Know Jesus with Sarah Cowan Johnson

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy-Adkins with Sarah Cowan Johnson

[Music]

Sarah: We're often tempted to be a priest for our kids, standing in between God and our kids, and telling the kid what God meant, and... and telling God what the kid meant. And she said no, *we should get out of the way and turn them over to God as soon as possible, because that way, when the kid, as a natural part of growing up, rejects their parent's values, they won't reject God, because God is theirs.*

[Music]

Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

Eryn: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Eryn Adkins.

Elisa: And I'm Elisa Morgan. Do you have children? Do you help with any type of kid's ministry, like babysit, mentor, or do anything that involves teaching or parenting kids in some way?

Eryn: Have you ever stopped to think about how you are discipling the kids in your life? We may fear teaching our kids about Jesus because we may think we're not equipped. Or we don't have time or the energy. But today's guest has some important information that will help us all learn how to disciple our children.

Elisa: Sarah Cowan Johnson is the mother of two boys, and a ministry trainer, consultant, and coach who works with church planters, pastors, and ministry leaders across the United States. She recently discovered a shocking statistic that has led her to equip people in helping their children grow a relationship with Christ.

Eryn: Let's learn more about how Sarah stepped into this role after years of working in ministry. Join us for this conversation on *God Hears Her*.



Sarah: Since I left the, sort of, role of pastor, I have been moving into a space where I... I work for myself, I'm a consultant, and I work with a lot of, yeah, lot of different people, and I kind of come in and... consult and then step out. So, for me... some things that I have learned. I think there's something, and this is just to be, yeah, really vulnerable I guess, there's some... something when I was in a system where I was very competitive with my... colleagues and looking across at my male counterparts and noticing how they're received in a certain space or how I'm received. I mean, there was always a perception that I must be somebody's wife, or... something like that, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: So, there's a lot. I think when I'm on my own, I'm not comparing myself to other people, so, I think there's something for me about the confidence that comes with differentiating myself a little bit. And then, the other thing that's been interesting is I'm doing... a, you know, the book that I wrote, and a lot of the leadership that I'm doing right now is to equip parents, so I am talking with a lot of moms. I talk with dads, too, but I do get a lot of, just a lot of, chance to get in the trenches with moms... and I think that those conversations when we talk about parenting, they can be fraught... and people make all kinds of different choices, right, do we stay home, do we work? I always remind people, like, I... I wrote a discipleship book, not a parenting book... so I'm trying to, like, bridge all the different choices that we have as women to get at the essence of the calling that we all have to raise children to know Jesus. But yeah, it's been interesting to be in that space and to... to work with moms of all different stripes.

Eryn: What's the difference between discipling your children versus parenting your children?

Elisa: I love that differentiation, yeah. Thank you, Sarah. Yeah.

Sarah: Yeah. What I mean when I say that is, for example, I'm not giving tips on how to discipline your kids. I'm not going to weigh in on whether you should stay home or work, you know...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... I'm not... people often want to talk about, like, school decisions, public school, private school, Christian school... home school. We do public school. I'm not going to advocate that that's a choice that everybody makes, right? This... those are not the...

Eryn: Yeah.



Sarah: ... the decisions that I'm weighing in on in my professional work with parents. What I care about is, regardless of any of those things, how are we helping our kids to know and follow Jesus? And how can I help you to do that well...? Whether you're a working parent... stay at home parent, whether you've chosen to home school, or send to Christian school, or go to public school, private school. Yeah, so there's some stories that I share... where when I do a seminar I'll say, you know, it's the story about kid getting several timeouts and I'll say *remember... I am not here to teach you how to discipline your kids... but, let's talk about what God's doing in the middle of this moment.*

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: It's such a neat path that you describe, and thanks for sharing... your life transitions here, you know, it... the "insecurities, struggles" of being in the pastoral ministry, and then the competitive things that were bubbling up there, and I can hear great freedom in how God has given you a new street, path, to walk in where it's just you bringing you. How did you get passionate about the discipleship of children uniquely? Where you were in the context of discipling more adults and leaders?

Sarah: I was serving as the executive pastor in this church plant, and in a church plant, that role looks different than it would, probably, in a big established church. But my... the... the broad strokes of it were to develop the people and the systems needed for growth. And... while I was on staff there, we planted two more congregations, so it's, like, a constantly changing, moving system. So, developing people and structures, and we did not have a children's ministry person at the time, and I was trying to hire somebody, and I wasn't finding the person that I wanted. I was looking for, essentially, a seminary-trained person who'd be willing to work, like, eight hours a week. It was like... it just wasn't... wasn't happening. So, I said, *well, under the leadership umbrella of my role, I'll step in for a year and I'll develop a team of lay-leaders and then I'll try to hire again in a year.* But I was really... hesitant as a woman in ministry, I didn't want to lead children's ministry.

Elisa: Oh, gosh.

Sarah: I was very... I was very nervous about being boxed in there, and...

Elisa: The label.

Sarah: ... Yeah! Yeah, and...

Eryn: That you can't get out of.



Sarah: ... yeah, so I was very clear *I'm... I'm coming at this from leadership development...*

Elisa: Let me be clear.

Sarah: ... I was a little... was a little bit defensive about that, to be honest...

Elisa: Yeah.

Sarah: ... and even when I wrote the book, I was a little worried about that, cause that's one part of what I do...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: It's, I do, you know, what I'm doing for our denomination is around church-planter training and discipleship resources, so it's... I have always, sort of, felt in me a little defensiveness, but here's why I care about this so much and here's why that doesn't bother me as much, cause I pushed through it. So, when I was on staff and I started to work with this team, I had no background in children's ministry. I had college ministry experience... so I just started reading, and I read *Sticky Faith*...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... which is a great book, and that's the first time I heard that statistic that fifty percent of our kids in our churches that are actively involved are walking away from their faith after they graduate, and I... I just couldn't believe it. I had never heard it before, I had two little kids at the time, and I was, like, *how are we okay with this? This is terrible.* So... and I think it explained my experience in college ministry, because we had often had the experience of setting out a sign-up sheet at an activities fair, and we'd get all these youth group kids who'd come and they're like, *oh, I'm... I was part of a church,* they sign up and then they disappear. And so, I... I knew, like, now that I thought about it, *oh yeah, I've seen those fifty percent walk away...* But I could not believe this was, sort of, normal. So, my little competitive side kind of came out, and I was like, *we're going to beat this at our church.* So...

Elisa: I think a lot of women and moms had the very same response you do. It's like, we have been in a career, or have been finding ourselves, or have been finishing our growing up, or, you know, doing therapy, and then we become... and then we become moms, and we don't want to be boxed into this idea of, *okay, now you're the children's area,* and... and we resist that, and we want to take our kids and have



somebody else do it, cause we want a break, but we also... we want to be... have our voice in a different platform...

Sarah: Right.

Elisa: ... a different place, and I love the honesty that you're sharing. That there's more of you than discipling your children, but you came to realize the holy calling...

Sarah: Yeah. Discipling.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... of discipling yours and other children...

Sarah: Exactly.

Elisa: ... for the kingdom. It's really... just want to make it more in, you're raising up the next generation of leaders, okay?

Sarah: That's right.

Elisa: And... and I'm just really glad that you said that, because I bet there's a...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... zillion women listening who've had that same hole that they've tripped down and fell into face first.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah, well, it's really interesting to me that when I first became a mom, I've always worked, I worked full time through having babies, and that was very difficult, but I was, like, *I am staying in the game*, you know. But lately, and some of this is working for myself, I have more flexibility. The past couple summers I've taken almost the whole summer off, but I just, I'm like, these moments with my kids. It's funny how I've softened to a lot of that as I have also, simultaneously, seen how important the discipleship of our kids is. And that's not something that I take exclusively... my husband and I are both in that space, but it's just been interesting to feel that softening in my own heart as I have, I think, matured, and worked through a lot of those insecurities, that... yeah, this is... this is really important... but yeah,



the... the fifty percent thing, so, that was my moment, my little kairos moment of *what the heck is happening to our kids?* As I began to research and figure out is there anything we can do to change that statistic. The thing that I landed on was this research that says that, yes, there's one thing that makes a difference, and it's not church programming, it's not hiring the staff person I was looking for, it's none of that. It's parents who talk about and practice their faith at home. And... the statistics show that eighty-two percent of kids whose parents do that go on to follow Jesus as adults...

Eryn: Wow!

Sarah: ... so, to me... Yeah. So, you hold up fifty percent on one hand, and eight-two percent on the other, and so, again, as a pastor at the time, I was, like, *okay, we can keep putting all of our energy into our Sunday morning programming, or we can divert some of that energy towards equipping and empowering parents...*

Eryn: Right.

Sarah: ... and that's what I started doing. And so, I started doing trainings, that then I started doing locally... for other churches, and then that grew into this book and ministry that I'm doing now.

Eryn: Because churches, they have only fifty-two, is it, like, fifty-two opportunities to influence a child?

Sarah: Yeah, if you think about once a week...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... if perfect attendance...

Elisa: If they're there every week. Right.

Eryn: If it's perfect attendance.

Sarah: ... Yeah, the average is forty. Yeah.

Eryn: Wow. The average. Forty days...

Sarah: Yup.



Eryn: ... out of an entire year.

Sarah: Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah, I think a lot of parents outsource discipleship to the church...

Sarah: That's right.

Elisa: ... because they're tired, like I said, but maybe because they feel inadequate, you know. So, what does it really mean? I mean, you say practice and... talk about your faith at home...

Sarah: Yup. Yeah.

Elisa: ... What does that look like? And... and how do you do that?

Sarah: Well, the thing that I have started to zero in on, so, parents always say two things when I say *what... what keeps you from doing that?* Right? *What...* There's a lot of reasons that keep us from doing that...

Elisa: Devices.

Sarah: ... Two things... Right.

Elisa: Yes.

Sarah: ... the two things that come up over, and over, and over again, one is time. You know, *when... when am I going to do that*, in addition to, you know, getting everybody everywhere they need to go every second of the day. And then the other thing is just a sense of, like, *what do I do?* Like, what does, exactly the question you're asking, what does that look like. So, what I try to focus on is two things. One is... helping parents respond to what I call God moments... just when... be able to kind of disciple on the fly as... they're aware that God is trying to get their kids attention in some way, and I can talk a little bit more about that if you'd like. The other one is being proactive in, kind of, taking the initiative to say *I'm going to disciple my kids today*, but with simple spiritual practices that take three to five minutes... that you, kind of, can stack on top of other routines. So, for example, as you are shuttling them to soccer practice, can you do a little... you know, something called a God hunt, which is *where did... where did you see God today?* Or as you're sitting at the dinner table, can you do a little devotional practice? Or as you're bathing



your toddler, can you do these things? So, I think that's... those are the... the two things I focus on is, kind of, responding to these moments that come at us where we're aware there's some spiritual activity happening, and then these simple spiritual practices that I use a framework to help parents think about the age and stage of their kids, you know, what discipleship looks like. Like, what are we actually aiming at? Those kind of things. But the goal is not to add hours and hours to your life, or have to have a seminary... degree to do any of this... it should be simple, and... actually, very much like Deuteronomy 6, that's the biblical inspiration that I... the story that inspires me is that this is what God did with the Israelites as they're getting ready to go into the promised land, and there's this danger that they might forget God. What He does is He says *okay, we need to teach the kids, and who's going to do that? It's parents who are going to do that in the midst of everyday life. As you go to bed and as you wake up and as you walk along the road and as you sit at home.*

Eryn: I love some of those practical applications that we can apply. What encouragement, maybe some advice... would you give a woman that wants to disciple her children, and she receives pushback. Maybe the child doesn't even want to talk about God today, *oh my gosh, Mom, quit over spiritualizing everything! Everything is not God...*

Sarah: Yeah.

Eryn: ... and you're like, *everything is God!* And they're like, *no, it's not!* Like... How... does that... I will tell you...

Sarah: I know, I know.

Elisa: Keeping it real. Yup. Yup.

Eryn: ... as somebody who's a bonus mom to three girls, six, twelve, and fourteen...

Sarah: Yup.

Eryn: ... there is this pushback that you get that you... that can affect, one, your confidence...

Sarah: Yup.

Eryn: ... and... and then you're, like, scared to talk about it again...



Sarah: Yes.

Eryn: ... kind of share some, just, real...

Sarah: Yeah.

Eryn: ... real tangible things that we can take away with, in knowing who we are even when we continue to do it, all of the things.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah. So, I think one thing that's really important to know. So, kids go through... stages of spiritual development just like they go through stages of emotional development, social development, all the things. So, it's really helpful to know...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... the age and stage of your kid and what is normal spiritually for them. So, for the... twelve and up crowd, the primary way that they engage their faith is by questioning, and by... it looks like rejection, even, sometimes. And a lot of parents... and churches, experience that stage as threatening, right? So, this is... yeah, the kid who wants to either pushback, rip something apart, say *I don't get this, it doesn't make sense...*

Elisa: Deconstruct would be a word...

Sarah: Yes.

Elisa: ... that's used today a lot.

Sarah: Absolutely. So, all of that can feel very threatening and I think that a lot of times with a certain lens on that, we can assume these questions, this pushback, this... stab at independence, here, that this is a threat to adult faith, when actually it's more of a threat to adult faith if we shut that down and don't allow that. So, actually... kids who, kind of, spiritual development stops at the stage before that, which is... in their middle years, it's called the affiliative stage, this is a... a model by John Westerhoff, their primary motive of... of engaging faith is... through the community, so they're... the way kids in that, like, middle, seven to eleven, the way they think about faith is *I believe because we believe*, and so, if that's where their faith development stops...



Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... they're going to have a really hard time figuring out how to follow Jesus apart from the family or the church, so in those teenage years when it can feel like everything is a battle sometimes, right, I think it's helpful to remember that actually some of that, not everything is spiritual, what are they trying to get at? Like, what is that? Is it, *I don't want every conversation we have to be spiritual?* Like, what's... what's beneath that question or that pushback.

Eryn: Right. What do you think would be underneath that?

Sarah: I mean, not knowing the kid or whatever, but just that idea of not everything is spiritual, is there, like, a sense that, yeah, every conversation we're having is about God because mom or dad is anxious and wants to insert that into every conversation...

Eryn: That's good.

Sarah: ... versus we have other conversations that... of course everything is spiritual, but we're not... we're not overtly talking about spiritual things, and then there are these conversations where we are connecting the dots.

Elisa: It would seem like it... it's natural for a teen to want to separate from parents...

Sarah: Yes. Yes.

Elisa: ... and so, if the parent makes everything spiritual, the teen may want to separate from that, or feel...

Sarah: Yup. Yeah. Yup.

Elisa: ... controlled by the parents and their own agenda. You know, I... I wondered if we can back up and give the big picture of what are the stages of spiritual development...

Sarah: Yeah.



Elisa: ... you know, how do we begin to understand them from infancy and then on to teenage, cause teenagers are definitely a... a main, huge issue. That's where we all go *oh, they've got to fix this*, and maybe... maybe we don't. So...

Sarah: Right.

Elisa: ... help us see the big picture.

Sarah: Yeah, so the model that I like to use is by John Westerhoff, and there are other models, this is not the only one. I like it because it's very simple and I think for parents it gives you just such a clear handhold through the stages. You don't have to remember five or ten, it's three. So...

Elisa: Oh good.

Sarah: ... so, it's... experiential, that's little kids from birth to five or six, it's, like, just about to school age. Their primary mode of... spiritual expression is experience. They are doing the actions of faith. They are learning the stories, singing the songs, copying and mimicking the parent. And so, the thing that Westerhoff says is that the stages are not linear, like, you pass through one and leave it behind, they're like tree rings that you just add to it, so that in adult faith you still have that experiential faith. That's really important. The actions and activity of faith is still important.

Elisa: That's why liturgies and sacraments and...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: Yes.

Elisa: ... days of the week, those are all important. Yeah.

Sarah: Yes, and spiritual practices, you know, and engaging your body, and... and your senses in a spiritual life, you know? So, for little kids, you know, sometimes I think we... we can get caught in the trap that we think this is pre-faith, and their real faith happens when they cognitively understand the gospel, and that's not true... I mean, if you think about what is it that allows human beings to interact with God at all. It's not that our brains develop to a certain level and then we can...

Eryn: Right.



Sarah: ... get to be in relationship with God. God is the one who... steps and stoops towards us, and so in that experiential stage I believe our kids are absolutely interacting with God, they can hear His voice. They may not cognitively understand theology, but that...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... doesn't mean that that's not real faith. It's what three-year-old faith looks like.

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: So, that... that's the... the first phase, and then sort of that seven to eleven, these are all rough, but you know, just in elementary and then just kind of peeking into middle school... Westerhoff calls it the affiliative stage. Again, this is where they begin to identify with the community of faith. So, I believe because we believe. I... I'm part of a tribe. My family believes, my church believes. At the beginning the family is kind of the primary...

Eryn: Right.

Sarah: ... but... by the end it's like, *Ooo, are my... where are my peers at?* And so, this is where I think really connecting the kids to the life of the church, allowing them to participate in mission and service, you know, exposing them to not just monogenerational... you know, kid's ministry, but intergenerational experiences in the church is really valuable. And then, again, that searching phase is they're questioning, they're pushing. They need to wrestle to reach an adult-owned faith, and... I think kids who... whose faith gets sort of truncated before they do that wrestling, I think that's where we see sort of a delayed searching phase that happens to many adults, right, who just begin to, yeah, maybe you want to call it deconstruct, but sort of... begin to ask the questions that maybe they weren't able to or weren't allowed to...

Eryn: At a young age, right.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah.

Eryn: Right, that makes so much sense.

Sarah: So, you know it's funny... you had said, yeah, that it's natural for the teen to kind of push away from their parents, so... this is something that I talk about every time I talk about this... So, my mom who



is...the... the book is dedicated to and she was... my inspiration for this... for this book in many ways... she had this incredible ministry, she touched hundreds of people's lives just by being herself. She was not a flashy, platformed leader, she was just a very consistent, faithful person. Anyway, she, in her... last years of life, she had a degenerative neurological disease... called Multiple System Atrophy that took everything. It took her mobility, and it took her speech, she couldn't communicate...

Elisa: Oh no.

Sarah: ... Her mind stayed, like, totally intact to the end, but she couldn't talk, she couldn't type...

Eryn: Wow.

Sarah: ... but we had, in the last two years of her life... we had been given an Eyegaze device. It's like an iPad that can track your retinal movement, and...

Elisa: Wow.

Sarah: ... when I... when she found out that... yeah, so it was... it was difficult for her to use, so she didn't use it for, like, everyday communication, but she would send us emails for, like, important things. Anyway...

Elisa: Oh, and you knew she worked hard at those, yeah.

Sarah: ... Oh, yes, it was a labor of love. But when I... when she found out I was writing this book, she typed with her eyes an email congratulating me, and I wrote her back and I said... well, she had said in that first email, she said *I always wanted to write a book, but I had nothing to say*. And we were, like, *Mom, you could've written a hundred books*. So, I wrote her back and I said, *Mom, what's the one thing you would say to parents who want to disciple their kids*. And she said this, and it's, like, the thing that... let's see if I can... recite it from memory, but she said, *I would say to parents... who want to disciple their kids, that we're often tempted to be a priest for our kids, standing in between God and our kids, and telling the kid what God meant, and... and telling God what the kid meant. And she said, no, we should get out of the way and turn them over to God as soon as possible, because that way, when the kid, as a natural part of growing up, rejects their parent's values, they won't reject God, because God is theirs*. So, she typed this with her eyes. I mean, this is the quote that in every seminar that I do, this is the money take-home thing...



Elisa: Yeah.

Sarah: ... and I did not know that was the last email that she ever sent. But anyway, that idea that, yes, our kids will push away from us, but the goal is, we want to... connect them as early as we can to God directly... one to one and not make it a triangle... So that when they do push away from us, they still are connected to God...

Elisa: I love that so much...

Eryn: That's good. That's a good word.

Elisa: ... Can you give an example of how we might do that?

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Elisa: Maybe a time you've seen it happen.

Sarah: One of the things, I think, starting with little kids... I think we need to teach our children how to hear God's voice. So, this is a practice that I do with little kids, I do with adults... but it's the practice of imaginative prayer... and this is something, I think, can really help change our expectations of what does it mean to hear God's voice. So, a lot of times, even adults, we don't know, like, are we expecting an audible voice? How does God speak to us...? This... this is a question that adults have...

Elisa: You bet.

Sarah: ... but certainly kids would want to know, like, what does it mean that God can talk to me? And so, I think rather than sort of opening up just silence, which God could speak to a child in silence, I'm not saying He couldn't, but I think this practice gives all ages sort of a handhold a little bit here. So, this is the idea that the Holy Spirit could inspire our imaginations. And so, we would invite a child to close their eyes and picture taking a walk with Jesus somewhere that they like. So, maybe it's the woods, or maybe it's the beach, or maybe just sitting on their bed with... with them. And then inviting the Holy Spirit to speak. So, *Jesus is there... anything you want to say as you're going on a walk...* I mean, it... to give you a really specific example, one of the... the first times that we did this with our youngest son, Silas, he was four, and he'd had it, this is the timeout thing I was talking about earlier. He'd had... this dinner time where it just was, like, terrible behavior, and... he'd had four timeouts in a row, and, you know, it's just, at the end of every timeout we always do this little thing where he says he's sorry, you know, and *I love you*



and I forgive you. So, anyway, he's back at the table, I love you and I forgive you, but he... he just is miserable. And I asked him, what's wrong? And he said, my heart feels yucky. So, that was a moment... like that... that God moment idea that I'm talking about, like, that's a moment where I think God's doing something, right? He's convicting, there's something going on spiritually in that my heart feels yucky. So, I had him do this little exercise right at the dinner table. Just close your eyes, let's talk to Jesus about your yucky heart. And so, we're quiet, you know, picture Jesus, take a walk with Him, and let's talk to Him about your yucky heart. And we asked him, you know, after a... not... not even a minute, right, just a little bit of time, is Jesus doing anything or is He saying anything as you're... as you're walking with Him. And he said, yeah, He's taking my yucky heart and He's giving me a new one. So, that's something, like, I... I don't think that my husband or I in that moment would have thought about, right? But that's a biblical image, from Ezekiel, right? Where I'll take your heart of stone and I'll give you a heart of flesh. That's, in four-year-old language, that's I'll take your yucky heart and give you a new one. And so, that...

Elisa: Yeah.

Sarah: ... idea that Jesus could give him that picture directly, that God can communicate with our little kids... I think is a valuable...

Elisa: That's helpful.

Sarah: ... skill...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... to teach as early as we can because we want to... to foster an independent relationship with Jesus.

Eryn: And it develops this building block of faith...

Sarah: That's right.

Eryn: ... that the Lord is doing His work, and silence doesn't mean stillness...

Sarah: Right.

Eryn: ... in the hearts of our children...



Sarah: That's right. Amen.

Eryn: ... and He... and we can remove ourselves from the in between of...

Sarah: Yeah.

Eryn: ... of translating what God is doing, and trusting that God is doing.

Sarah: Yeah, I think it's helpful to remember that God knows our kids better than we do, He loves our kids more than we do, He wants relationship with them more than we want them to know Jesus...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... and, you know, He's at work... so I think a lot of times, when parents, when we talk about discipleship, parents get all anxious or they feel, you know that eighty-two percent statistic can feel weighty. It can feel like *oh no, do I also have the ability to screw it up?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: And I think it's really helpful to remember you're yoked to Jesus, and He's the one actually doing the work... You're...

Eryn: Yeah.

Sarah: ... you're participating, but it's not all on your shoulders.

Elisa: We do what God leads us to do over a lifetime...

Sarah: Right.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... and often, specially from my perspective, my vantage point, now in life, often you wait for seeds to grow in the dirt in the dark, you know?

Sarah: That's right. That's right.



Elisa: And you just trust that you... you've invested, and you nourished, and you did as God led you to, and you trust that it really is His job...

Sarah: Right.

Elisa: ... to grow the fruit in that life.

[Music]

Sarah: That's right. You know, your kids are not robots, you can't program them to follow Jesus. You could do "everything right," and they still have their own will, and that's part of what it means to be... a parent, is to surrender that. Yeah, my dad talks about teenage years being like your kid kind of disappears to the dark side of the moon, you know? Like, the Apollo missions going behind the moon and losing communication, and you're just praying and hoping that they... come around the other side, but there are these moments where it's out of your influence.

Elisa: But it's not out of God's...

Sarah: Not out of God's.

Elisa: ... and He's on the back side of the moon...

Sarah: That's right.

Elisa: ... as well.

Sarah: That's right.

[Music]

Elisa: God is with our children always, even when we feel distant from them.

Eryn: Yes. Let's all go out and be disciples for the kids in our lives.



Elisa: Well, before we go, be sure to check out our website to find a link for Sarah's book, *Teach Your Children Well*. You can find that link, and a link to join our email list on our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Eryn: Thank you for joining us. And don't forget, God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you, because you are His.

[Music]

Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Amy and Pat for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

Eryn: *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.