

SPEAKER_00 0:10

Welcome to the Practical Missions Podcast. I'm your host. Today on the pod, I talk to a guy who, along with his wife and three young children, are preparing to leave their lives in the West to move overseas and begin a new life in cross-cultural ministry. I think this is a fascinating episode for anyone thinking about going overseas into cross-cultural kingdom work, or anybody who just kind of wants to know what it takes to get out onto the field. My guest talks about how he and his wife live incarnationally now in their own home country, the value they've experienced in being members of a local church, and how the struggles and joys of doing hospitality with three young kids crawling all over them is preparing them for ministry on the field. Well, I really do have the perfect guest for you today, so stay with us. Well,

The Blessing of Generational Faithfulness

SPEAKER_00 1:00

welcome to the podcast. It's good to have you on. I've kind of wanted to have you on for a while now. You've got an interesting story, you and your family of four, one on the way, any moment now. You guys are planning to come out to the Middle East in the next half year, I guess. But for you, the story doesn't start there. It starts with you being born into a missions family. So I'm curious to know where's a good place for us to start to know a little bit about you and then how you ended up as an adult with a family deciding to go out into missions. So where's a good place for us to start?

SPEAKER_01 1:34

I like to start even way back to my grandparents on my dad's side, just because they are both first generation Christians, both grew up in difficult homes, and a neighbor shared the gospel with them and brought them to Christ, invited them to church. Because of

that, they, as believers, decided to do the hard work of raising their four kids in a Christian home and in a way that showed the Lord's love and prioritized certain things. And because of that, my dad married a woman who loves the Lord, and I got to grow up not only in a home that was involved in the missions world, but in a home where I always heard about Jesus, even from a young age. And I think that for me is big because it is not an easy thing to be that first generation believer that takes that step and does the hard work of raising your family in a way that you didn't see and entrusting the Lord's faithfulness. Because of that hard work that my grandparents did, like I um received the blessing and my my story is of them and being able to say that I've never known a time where I didn't know who Jesus was. So I'm very grateful for that experience. And I think too, you mentioned the the missions world. Um I I spent almost two and some change, some years in overseas with my family. And I feel like because of that experience, the Lord opened my eyes at a young age to the fact that God is not just a God of one country, He is the God of all things, and He is working and calling people out into the missions from all countries. And I got to see people that didn't look like me and didn't talk like me that love the Lord. I think that has had a lasting impression on me that when I see people or interact with people that don't look like me or talk like me, I don't think, oh, like that's not someone I want to interact with. I think that that is someone that has a story to tell that may love the Lord or may one day love the Lord. I think those two big pieces of my growing up and childhood, both being raised a Christian home and having that early experience with people in different countries, has both, I think, shaped that trajectory that I've

Why Missionary Kids Drift Or Return

SPEAKER_01 3:58

been on.

SPEAKER_00 3:58

When you when I think about missionary kids, I think one side they're they're either like headed back out to the mission field, they can't stand be in their home country, uh, or it's like they want nothing to do with the faith of their parents. What do you think is going on there? And why maybe this is an impossible question to ask you? But why why do you think that is why do you think that's part of the missionary story? That so many missionary kids either walk away from the faith or go back into the mission field. Do you have any thoughts on that?

SPEAKER_01 4:28

I mean, we've talked about this before too, but I personally know friends that I love and care for, even some that I've grown up with that no longer know and care about the Lord. I don't want to generalize anything because as I've talked to friends that have walked away from the faith, friends that grew up in that MK world, it's different for each one. I know some have felt abandoned by parents, parents that sacrificed their children for the sake of the call. And others, they grew up and as they moved away, that sphere of influence went off went away. Um, but I think in general, yeah, I just see a need for parents, and this is a challenge to me as I think about bringing my family to another country. Parents need to see their children as a missions field as well. Like your your kids need to hear the gospel, they need to be discipled, they need parents who don't just bring them along, but actually raise them up in the way that they should walk. But yeah, I think besides that reality, not that's not at all to say that every parent whose child has walked away is just in a terrible job. There's also just a lot of pressure on MKs of not knowing where home is, of not knowing where to fit in and relationships and not yeah, friendships can be a struggle because you're jumping from place to place or

you don't feel as included or welcomed in the place that you live in. So there's I I think there's a lot of a lot of different factors that goes into that.

SPEAKER_00 6:03

And you and your wife will be bringing three children with you onto the mission field. Have you guys had conversations about those things?

SPEAKER_01 6:11

Yeah, we we have. And we in our conversations have I think realized too, we don't have all the answers. So we have been taking all the advice we can. Part of the the blessing of growing up in the missions world is that I have relationships either through my parents or personally with people that have gone through what we're about to go through before. And what what a blessing that is, because we have not deceived enough to think that we have it all figured out. And we know, we know we need as much help as we um can get. So we've we've been having conversations with couples that have kids that have been overseas, with couples that have just moved. But I think for us, at least a few things that we know we are going to prioritize is setting a good, healthy rhythm for our family, where we are pouring into and loving on our kids. Setting a good and healthy pace for our family to where, yes, we're doing the hard work, we're not neglecting the reason we're going overseas, but also we're not neglecting our our children because we want them to be ultimately partners with us in the work we're doing. Right now, they're kind of getting dragged along. The oldest is three, so he uh they don't have a choice.

SPEAKER_00 7:31

They don't even know what's going on. Yeah. I heard somebody say once that if you're losing at home, but you're winning in ministry, you're losing. And I think it's so important uh that our

number one ministry is our family, our number one mission field is our family. The the people we want to disciple first is our spouse and then our children, and hopefully our our spouse is thinking the same thing about us. But yeah, just keeping the family uh at the center of the mission is super important. It'll be awesome to have another conversation with you in a year or a year and a year and a half or so when you guys are neck deep in language and uh frustrated with culture and see how things are going. We'll have to come back and uh have this conversation

When The Call Became A Plan

SPEAKER_00 8:18

again. I'm curious to know from you when when you kind of started to think about going out into the mission field. Were you married already? Were you single? Was this something you always kind of a direction you always thought you were gonna go into?

SPEAKER_01 8:29

I think for me, I would trace it back. Maybe the mission field in general, there was always an idea there, just having experiences as a kid and seeing people that had done it growing up as we hosted missionaries. I think it's always been an idea in the sense of um, and not many people can say this, so I know this is kind of spoiled. Like I saw so many people that were doing it. It's it's like a was a normal thing people did for me. Which isn't it's true for a lot of people, but for me, I saw so many people do it. It's like, oh yeah, this is a thing people do, moving overseas and and serving the Lord in a different country. Um, but I think for the region and for the for where I wanted to go, and more specifically, my dad and I took a short-term trip over a summer to a different country and stopped over in a country. And I think seeing people in that

country that were fired up for the Lord and and wanting to serve him where they were was a big part of that. I mean, even uh even you, you you were one of the guys I think I rubbed shoulders with when I was in high school, seeing people like you that were fired up for what God was doing. Yeah, I think that kind of started a trajectory that then propelled me into college. I decided to do international business with the intention of studying abroad and then moving after I graduated. So I feel like that that initial kind of exposure at a pivotal age started that ball rolling towards towards the missions field.

SPEAKER_00 9:55

And then you got married. Or you met your wife. Tell me about tell me about that and if that changed anything, or how did that change or affect the dynamics of what you wanted to do?

SPEAKER_01 10:06

I went into college thinking I was gonna move overseas right after I graduated. I was gonna study abroad. I did a lot of uh ministry with internationals that were coming to our country to learn the language and and got a lot of hands-on experience and the Lord grew and grew my heart, um, not just for a country or a people group, but but for like actual people and humans that I was interacting with, friends that I had. And my wife and I met in college, but since I was gonna be moving right after college, I said, I'm not gonna date in college. And so we didn't actually start dating until the Lord, I think, placed on my heart after I graduated, you want to move and live long-term somewhere, but you haven't been rooted in a community here where you are. What would it look like for you to take the time to be rooted, to be vulnerable with others, to do the hard work of gaining some maturity, of understanding what my church is and should look like before you go and try to replicate that somewhere else. And so in that season after college, my wife and I met. We had known each other in

college, so she knew that was the direction I was headed. And it's actually really cool the Lord had been working in her heart as well and slowly bringing her point of that direction too. I don't know, maybe I can tell a bit of her story. Yeah, please do. So for her, she grew up in a church, um, but she would say not a healthy um church,

Marriage And The Benefits Vision Trips

SPEAKER_01 11:35

loving people that that not necessarily taught the right message in the Bible. And so she would say when she came to college, that was when she first really heard the gospel, responded in faith, in repentance, and followed the Lord. And in college, our ministry at that time, there were a lot of students that were really excited about missions and going overseas. And as a new Christian, she was like, Well, what's the what's the biggest best thing you can do? It's that's go go live your life. Yeah, give everything up and go overseas. Um, but she did the wise thing of kind of testing that against some short-term trips to a few different countries, ended up changing her major to sports because she loved sports-related ministry. She's sorry, changing her major to PE because she loved the sports-related ministry, and eventually did work with some refugees and really working with um a specific people group, she fell in love with those people, similar to my story, which is cool. And the Lord began to do a work in her. But when we so when we got married, we were both pointed in the same direction, which is cool, but we knew we had heard wisdom that you shouldn't just move immediately after getting married. So we uh we took some time and we are glad we did because you are not ready right after you get married. You're already entering essentially a new culture of uh marriage to just transplant yourself somewhere else.

SPEAKER_00 13:09

Yeah, two incredibly challenging things happening at the same time, going into cross-cultural work and getting married. Yeah, I think it's well, I think it's wise for couples to stay home for a year. I think that's what uh the out the typical advice is. So just listening to your story, it sounds like what you're saying is you both were interested in missions or in the idea of missions, but maybe not the same people group.

SPEAKER_01 13:37

Yeah, I think the Lord, as she went on her short-term trips, it it ended up merging to where it was a very similar people group, um, which I was grateful for. But she had only had the one short-term trip experience there. And so when we, you know, after two years of marriage, you know, we had figured all of marriage out and started thinking about moving overseas. We had not figured it out. Um we we did uh what we called kind of a vision trip of sorts, where we went over to the region and and interacted with the people group we were hoping to do ministry with, met with people that were working in the region um to help us discern and think through vision and call. And I think that really exposed for us one, yes, Lord, this is where you are calling us, but also I don't think we're ready.

SPEAKER_00 14:39

It it was uh well tell me about that, unpack that a little bit for me.

SPEAKER_01 14:44

Yeah, I think we we both loved it. I think at the same time, it it was a very uh stressful, at times, anxiety-inducing experience, not because of anything anyone did. I think partly because it was a complete, you know, it's a completely new culture, a completely new place. My wife is a very in the moment person, and she was

envisioning herself being here, right? Leaving behind the school she was teaching at, the students she was coaching, the friends and community that she had built, and imagining, okay, I can't even go to the grocery store and order cheese uh because I don't know how to say that. And I it's in kilograms and not another whatever. So I think for that, we are grateful because shortly after that we had our first kid. I think the Lord really moved in my wife's heart during that season to uh, you know, I want to be home with my child and spend that um prioritize that time with them. And in order to do that, stepping away from teaching, which was something she was so passionate about and so good at, and then likewise stepping away from coaching, which again was something she was so passionate about and so good at. And instead of this fear of like the Lord is like ripping this out of your hands to like force you to go somewhere, like the Lord was very patient and kind with her, like really shifting her heart towards um other things, both our children, and then because she was working from home, uh it enabled us, sorry, because she was yeah, working, she was she was uh working by raising our our kid at home. Um, that enabled her some time and space to work with uh refugees in our in our area, and the Lord used that to grow her heart and also grow her capabilities towards working with that people group. And so I think for me it was encouraging because right, I was ready to go as a single. That's like, okay, who do I have to ask? Me, myself, I, we all agree.

SPEAKER_02 16:57

Let's go.

SPEAKER_00 16:58

Pack your toothpaste and toothbrush.

SPEAKER_01 17:00

Yeah, if even. But seeing even how the Lord patiently and steadfastly encouraged her towards that in that season was a good example to me as well, for how to lead my family and how to encourage us towards where we felt God was calling us, while also being patient to take the time to go well,

The Refugees Next Door

SPEAKER_01 17:26

so to speak.

SPEAKER_00 17:26

Well, there's a lot there. Yeah. You you I mean, you've talked about doing stuff with refugees and your wife doing stuff with refugees, and when you think about the entire Western world, it's like you can't go to the smallest village without there being people from you know the 1040 window there. I'm just wondering like, what do you see are the positives with with the church engaging uh refugees back in the West or like in your in your sphere of observation? And then what are the challenges? Like, what are the dreams? What what could you see? What are the opportunities for the church in those areas that we're not taking advantage of?

SPEAKER_01 18:00

It is such a beautiful thing that the Lord can use, uh, you know, horrible things like war and these other things to bring people who are far from Christ near to him. Not that the West is like the church or anything, but to a place where um there are and hopefully are believers that desire to show hospitality and to welcome these refugees into their homes. Yeah, I think that is the beautiful thing I've seen positively is that we have people that are

willing to drive people to the DMV, are willing to teach English, are willing to um share the good news, are willing to invite and befriend. I think that's that is big. We we need to practice hospitality in our sharing of the gospel. For I mean, that's what the Lord does for us, right? He prepares a table for us in the midst of our enemies. He breaks bread and wine with us that we might commune with him, those, those who are in him. That like we should be sharing that and taking that out into the world with, especially with those who are in our place where we feel comfortable and we feel at home. We can share that with those who feel displaced, feel very out of place and nervous. I think what I'm saying too is making me realize as well, we experience that in the smallest amount on our vision trip to another country, right? This is so different, so overwhelming. And these people, not necessarily wanting, are here feeling that in like a permanent form. Like this is where I am, and I don't know how to go to the grocery store. I don't know if my kids will make friends at school because they don't speak the language. So I think maybe encouragement is be a neighbor. Like look look in your neighborhood. That's what the Lord used for us. We prayed that the Lord would give us opportunities, and we met a neighbor down the street that was a refugee. Who would have thought in our town? When you find those people, invite them in and welcome them. I think we need more believers and churches that are willing to take the time and effort, the slow hard work of showing hospitality to our to our

Hospitality Means Sharing A Table

SPEAKER_01 20:25
neighbors.

SPEAKER_00 20:25

If you could demystify the word or the concept of hospitality, how would you do that? If somebody was like, I have hospitality, I don't even know what you're talking about. Invite a refugee family into my house, I don't even know what you're talking about.

SPEAKER_01 20:37

I mean, honestly, in the most concrete forms, it is like breaking bread and like eating and drinking together. Like literally come in the door, have a snack and talk with me. Or you going to them and when you are welcomed in, perceiving that, like eating and drinking with them. I feel like, yeah, in concrete form, that's what Jesus did, right? Like part of what made some of his ministry seem radical was he was eating and drinking with those whom the locals thought you should you shouldn't or couldn't. For us, I think it's just as radical that we instead of staying in our bubble, we welcome someone who we're less familiar with and that's uncomfortable, into our home and just eat dinner with them. I think that's at its most basic form what I'm saying. Eat dinner and talk.

SPEAKER_00 21:28

Amen. What do you think are the biggest barriers for us when it comes to hospitality?

SPEAKER_01 21:34

I have two kids, one on the way. If my house is not in order, and what I mean by that is it is stressful for us to even eat our own food and uh prepare uh life, it is gonna be hard to invite someone in. I think some of our daily lives either feel so full. Because there's stress and work, takes up a lot of time, or so hard in the sense of, okay, I have a young kid. I don't even know how to feed them food. How am I supposed to invite someone into this? Those things I feel like end up being barriers, busyness or like our feeling of stress. I think also a barrier is it is difficult to start a new

relationship or to someone who is a stranger to welcome them in and to have the imagination to say, oh, this person I do not know could be a friend or could be someone that becomes a part of my life? I think that's maybe three three barriers that seem insurmountable. I'm too busy, I'm too stressed, I don't know them.

SPEAKER_00 22:53

How have you and your wife, in the midst of the stress, the chaos, the lack of time in your schedule, how have you guys managed to be hospitable?

SPEAKER_01 23:03

Yeah, I I think for my wife and I, it has started with us aligning. What is important to us? Like what do we want? What kind of people do we want to be? What do we want to be true about our family? What should we want to be true? But what does the Lord call us to? And I think starting with that, like having that understanding, yes, Lord, you are patient and steadfast, and you will patiently, slowly, gently but firmly discipline us towards these things. How can we do that? I think having that agreement between you and your spouse, or you and your roommates, or just you if you're by yourself, like this is important and good. I want to be the kind of person that does that. And then practically for my wife and I, it's like one, being okay with inviting people into that stress. Two, number one, I think above all, that us prioritizing to eat dinner as a family creates a space that then we can invite other people into. We we can have people over and have conversation because we have had ourselves over and have conversation as many days as we can. So I think that is a good starting place. Can we, and again, this comes back to what we said earlier, right? If if our start is discipling our kids and raising our kids well and prioritizing them, if we have a rhythm or a space where we are eating and showing them hospitality, when we're showing our wife hospitality, our wife is showing us hospitality,

then now we have a space that we can invite people over to. And I say then, my wife and I have not arrived, but we have an understanding and an agreement and some practical experience with it now to where we we feel welcome to invite people in. The Lord has humbled us a lot to where we're not too prideful to let them see the mess of what that looks like. And for people we're working with, they have kids too. Yeah. So they're they're used to that. It's messy for them to invite us over as well. So I feel like people get that. Their lives are messy, and they see you inviting them in to your messy life and the love that it takes to do that. And right in this, it's not just hospitality. Our hope is, and part of our family rhythm as well, is that we do talk about God and his word, and we do challenge each other and try to pray together. Like, and that is also what we're hopefully inviting people into as well. Like, look, we we desire to show you hospitality because Christ first showed hospitality to us, and not just some superficial hospitality, but he loved us sacrificially, even to the point of death, gave himself up for us that we might be able to feast with him forever. And he can throw out all the stops, and we get to eat with him and dine with him and all of these people for the rest of eternity. I think that that has to be the impetus behind why we're doing it. It has to come out as well while we're doing it.

SPEAKER_00 26:05

I think it's so interesting because I think the person who cares most about how the house looks is the person who lives in the house. I've almost never gone to somebody's house and thought, oh, this place is just so dirty, I can't believe they invited me over, you know?

SPEAKER_02 26:18

I'm too busy saying, I'm so glad they've brought me over. I'm getting free food.

Rooted in the Local Church Before Church Planting

SPEAKER_00 26:24

Before we move into more, just kind of like what has been the process for you guys as you guys have started to now sell your things, raise support and prepare for moving overseas. I just want to go back to something you said earlier about being a good member of a church and how this time where you thought you would be overseas, and now you've been several years in your home country raising your family, and that that has afforded you this opportunity to be part of a church. What has been the value there and what what have you learned?

SPEAKER_01 26:54

I struggled in the years after graduating because I felt like, or I kept asking the Lord, Lord, why am I not there already? Like it was this tension of feeling unfaithful to some extent. And now, as we've been able to share a story a lot and recount God's faithfulness as we've been raising support, it it has become very obvious to me that the Lord was not wasting that time. He was building maturity, he was building, yeah, there's so much. And I think in that time he showed us a few things. One, this Christian walk that we are doing should not be done alone. You need to be invested in daily, weekly life with the people of God, and that takes work. It took us a few years, even though we were in this town for a while. It still takes a few years to really have deep relationships. And for me, it takes a level of vulnerability that I don't normally show. Like I want to be seen as perfect or seen as good and all things, and I have to humble myself before others to really allow them in. So I think that's really prepared us for support

raising. And right, we've had some hard family experiences, loss, challenges along the way that the Lord has used to show us that we need his people, that grief is not something you should bear by yourself. It is easier in the short term to hold it in and to just deal with it yourself, but it is not as good. I can say that from experience. Like we need um fellow believers to bear that load with us, even if they do it imperfectly or messily. Um, we we need that, and the Lord has made us for that. So I think we we definitely saw that, which is important going into support raising because those people that we have leaned on already in life and that we've encouraged and helped are now the people that we're calling to action, so to speak, to partner with us. I think as well along the way, seeing just the importance of church and the Lord maturing me in my understanding of his word and of the gospel and getting more experience long-term walking alongside someone and discipling them. Yeah, our church even went through series, seasons of transition, and the Lord placed me in positions where I got to kind of be in a front row seat to experience some of the mess of like transition and the mess of being in a part of big decisions for our church. And in the midst of that, really refining and forming my heart and love for the church in the midst of that and learning a lot, still learning, but learning a lot about what it looks like to encourage older men as fathers. Like that is a hard thing to do, but we shouldn't neglect it just because it's hard. I think, yeah, there's a lot of lessons the Lord has been teaching teaching us along the way, so not wasted time.

SPEAKER_00 29:57

Uh man, I feel like there was a lot going on in your mind, and you just gave up talking. Too much, too much, yeah, too much going on in there. One of the things I think is super important, one of the things I'm growing in my understanding of importance is actually the doctrine of the church. I what I didn't realize was that I have a bad doctrine of the church. I thought I had a pretty robust doctrine

of the church. Uh, but it's been in the last few months, in the last maybe year, from people who are more mature than I am, they've been pointing out to me just how kind of uh neglected or or some of the uh the blind spots I have in my own doctrine uh when it comes to the the value and importance of the local church. And I do think it's so important for us before we go out into the mission field. I mean, it's not it's not like the most important thing or whatever, but I do think it's very important. So many people come out, like you were saying, right after university, or a lot of people come out right out of after high school or whatever it may be. And they've never had, they've never kind of put in the reps in a local church through the good times, through the bad times, covenanted with a body of believers together and learned how to be a good church member before they go out onto the field. And I'm I'm learning the importance of what it means to be a good church member before you can think about being a good church planter. Yeah, I think God will really use what you've experienced uh at your church. Question for you. I mean, I don't know if you had anything to say to that. I would just say I I agree.

SPEAKER_01 31:30

I I think, yeah, and it's not even just learning how it works, but also receiving the blessing of being a part of the body of Christ. God has, through his Holy Spirit, has poured out gifts upon the church that we might use our gifts to build up his church and build up fellow believers into mature believers that are not tossed to and fro. So, like getting to receive that blessing as well as a young believer by being a part of the people of God. There's something unique about understanding that when God, we are born again into God's family, we are born into the body of Christ and we are born into a people of God, and to be physically, locally, formally a part of that body, I think is formative and very helpful for us in preparing us for whatever ministry or work God is calling us into.

SPEAKER_00 32:22

Uh, when I hear the story that you've been telling me up until now, I think, well, God is really using you guys. He's using you in your community, he's using you in your vocations, he is using you in the church. Did you ever think, well, God is using us right here? What's the value of going overseas?

SPEAKER_01 32:38

Yes, I think in the waiting, it has been difficult to you know wrestle with that tension, Lord. One, I've always felt pulled that direction. Um, why am I here? I think that's been the predominant tension for me. But in the midst of that, like knowing and understanding that while I am here, this is not time to just sit around. I must be faithful and obedient to what God has called me to, where he has me. I can't pretend like, okay, one day, when I get to this ideal place that I want to be, then I'll start obeying and following the Lord. I think it is hard for people we've been sharing with as well that we are going. There, hey, there's plenty of work to be done here in this country. Why would why do you need to go somewhere else? Or even for us, as you and others have helped us kind of refine what that vision is. It's not necessarily a vision that has to be done in a different country. And and we do truly believe, like if something happens, which it can, and the Lord calls us back to our home country, or the Lord calls us somewhere else, there is some flexibility for us to continue to be obedient wherever God has us. I mean, he's given us refugees down the street, like we don't need to go to a different country, but I think for us, we still feel that call, and and there is a real need for those who have been called and equipped and are able to really love and serve the Lord in places where there are a majority unreached, and where the work is is hard, long, slow work, and and the ground needs to be tilled and the seed needs to get planted. There's always a work to be done for God's people

wherever they are. We've seen that work is preparing us for future things. I don't know if I really answered your question.

SPEAKER_00 34:30

I kind of was talking about what I heard in there is yeah, we could stay here, and God has given us a lot to do here. Well, at the moment, we feel called to go. And I think that's a beautiful thing. I think just being obedient to the call of God. And the vast majority of Christians don't feel that calling. 99.9% of Christians never feel that calling. And so for those that God has put on their heart that calling, whether it's for two years or a lifetime, obedience to that calling, it feels like the only thing we can do, we're compelled to obey God's calling in

Support Raising As Partnership

SPEAKER_00 35:04

going. All right. We've only got a few minutes left. And I feel like we've just been riffing this whole time. I want to talk a little bit about the I want to get into the weeds a little bit about support raising. You guys have been planning to go for a long time. This has probably been no shock to your community, but how did you actually start the process of looking for people to partner with you financially in this?

SPEAKER_01 35:27

Yeah, I think we are unique in that, right? I've been talking to people about this since college.

unknown 35:34

Yeah.

SPEAKER_01 35:34

Like people are like, when are you going?

SPEAKER_02 35:37

Like, what is this happening? We're glad you're here.

SPEAKER_01 35:41

I think practically, right, we we made like a huge list of names. And these were again, right, people we've already leaned on with our needs. We've got two kids, one on the way, we live a couple hours from family. When you are in that situation, you are in constant need. So and and we have also, the Lord has blessed us to be able to serve in the church and we serve with young people. And and I think because of that, there's there's like these established relationships with parents, with parents of students that my wife has taught, with parents of youth that we've worked with, with people that I've co-labored with at our church, with friends that, you know, now that I'm old, that have jobs. So I think we we use those relationships as like our starting point for a list of people.

SPEAKER_00 36:36

It seems like it would be it's a hard thing to do to start raising support. We need help. Would you partner with us? What do you feel? What do you feel like it it required of you to do that?

SPEAKER_01 36:47

Uh I think the Lord had to do a work in us. I think my wife, if she were here, would say that she did support raising for a small role. Oh, I think this story is funny. She did support raising for a short-term role at our local church that she ended up not following through with. But the first person she called, she was so stressed. She asked them, told them what she was doing, asked for support. They said yes. She hung up and then she started crying.

SPEAKER_02 37:20

Because it was just, it was just so overwhelming and stressful and uncomfortable.

SPEAKER_01 37:26

But I I I honestly think for us, it has been this need that we have had from our community, for our kids, for grief that we had gone through before we started support raising, to where we had been humbled by the Lord to already have been in a position of need where we had to ask people, like, hey, we need you to do this thing. Can you we need you to watch our kids so we can go to the hospital? We need you to, we need meals. And and I think as well, the Lord had placed people in our life that were willing and able and initiated some of that hospitality. So I think it took some work in us to really understand that it is okay to be in need. And for the work that we are doing, we can't do it unless someone else provides the funding and support. And we do feel like the Lord has called us here. And so we're asking people to like come alongside us. Like you said, 99.9%, you're not gonna go, but you can send and you can support. And I think we have also seen the Lord give us an abundance in some places and the blessing it is to be able to share that with people in need, and then having experienced that blessing, get to say to others, hey, use the abundance God has given you to bless others. And for us, it's like you're joining with work in a region you may never visit, you may never get to go, but you get to say, I am partnered with that work, and that I am partnering with God's church in this area. We think it people don't want to do that, but that idea I think excites people, people that have an abundance and that are believers. I think a lot of them genuinely are looking for opportunities to give in that way.

SPEAKER_00 39:09

Oh, it's powerful. Makes me want to give the world. Uh just a comment. There are so many opportunities for us to spend our money on stuff that doesn't really matter. There are so many opportunities to go kayaking, uh, to take another vacation, to go to another ball game or another concert or buy another couch or whatever it is. You know, there's so many opportunities for us to spend our abundance on ourselves. And I think this is a beautiful part of the body of Christ that that generosity is built into the body of Christ.

SPEAKER_01 39:44

Yeah.

SPEAKER_00 39:44

And that this actually gives us an opportunity to use our resources uh for something that has more eternal value than another than another car does or whatever it is. I don't want to judge people who have lots and you know, God, God bless you, but I do think this is a beautiful thing that we can, in a sense, like I don't I don't like raising support, I don't like asking for money, but theoretically, it's a beautiful thing that we get to invite people into something far, far more meaningful than the average thing we're spending money on. Praise God for that. Let me let me say something there too.

SPEAKER_01 40:22

One thing and then a story or two.

SPEAKER_02 40:25

Sorry, we're gonna go over time.

SPEAKER_01 40:27

Um, but I think part of our story as well, to me, testifies to the value of being rooted in a local church, right? We have these

relationships because, and not everyone has that, and not everyone's gonna be able to have that before they go. But I would encourage those who who want to go, be rooted in a church. Let them know you, let them know your desire to go and and let it be a something you're you're bringing them along with you. Because then when you need and you ask for support, it's not a surprise. It's a yes. We've been we've been looking forward, we've been saving for this, we've been looking forward to it. And then like two two stories while we've been support raising that have been so encouraging to me. One, we planned to meet and get dinner with this family, and they made sure they said, let's do it at this time because we want our two, one high schooler, one middle school kid, we want them there because we want them to think through how we can be giving. We want them to see, they know you. We want this to be an encouragement to them and start a lifetime of generosity towards world missions. And we were like, what? That is it is insane that the Lord would use our little story to encourage that. What a blessing that these parents as well want that to happen. And then the other story was I shared a friend of mine has been inviting me to we go to a uh a prayer meeting after we we work with some of the refugees, and it's a smaller church, and I shared with them, and afterwards one of them said, It is such a blessing to be able to support a real life missionary that I have met personally because he he has been supporting people faithfully that he has heard about, that the church has told them about, they've heard stories about, but like never hasn't had the experience of seeing someone before they go share that he has known, that then he gets to support and send out. And I was like, what? I hadn't even thought of that. Like what a that that could even be a blessing to somebody, that that would be an encouragement, that they would feel like good pride of that. Like, Lord, thank you for giving me this opportunity. So, all that to say, as you're being afraid of and terrified of and wanting to throw up thinking about support raising, don't lose sight of the fact that the

Lord can use little old you as a blessing to people who do have an abundance, that desire to share that with someone. It can be a blessing, it's not just terrifying, scary.

SPEAKER_00 42:56

I think it's so hard, especially as men, you know, to ask for help, to say I'm in need, would you give? Would you support? But God gives grace to the humble, but he resists the proud. How many times have I been personally resisted by God because of my pride when he was just longing to stretch out his hand of blessing if we just humble it humble ourselves? If I would just humble myself, when you think about support raising, now you guys are the finish line is ahead of you, you're getting close, you're pushing out your chest. When you think about what you've learned along the way about fundraising, do you have any like tips or tricks? Do you have any do's or don'ts? Do you have any things, things that you've gotten better at along the way?

Practical Fundraising Tips

SPEAKER_01 43:36

I would say, first of all, don't do it alone. Whether it's if it's through your organization or through your church or whatever, or something you set up, find someone either that can keep you accountable, that can encourage you, or that can give you advice along the way. Like, don't try to do it yourself. You'll it'll be too hard. You want you want to have someone somewhere that can meet with you or encourage you or keep you on track or chat. Challenge you if you need to be challenged as well. So don't do it alone. I would say we've definitely learned, don't be afraid to ask for what you actually need. That same church where the guy was excited to give. I got asked to share last second, so I wasn't necessarily prepared. This is me giving excuses for myself. But I

didn't, I didn't actually ask. Like we need money, we need financial support. And afterwards, a different guy called me out. He said, Don't be afraid. Don't be too proud to ask because there might be someone here who's able to give. I would say that too. Don't when you practically go through your sharing your story in your support raising, don't be afraid and make sure you're clear. Like you're asking them, hi, can you, are you able to and willing to give to us? Can you partner with us financially? And what would that look like? I think that's the other thing for us that we got good advice on was making it clear and actionable. When you get to the end, if they say yes, what does yes mean? Are they gonna give monthly? Do they know how to give? Are you gonna follow up with them in the week? Right? People remember and are more responsive if they've said yes and then you follow up a week later versus like three months later. Wait, what was that? Who are you? Did we have a conversation? Oh yeah, you're that guy. It's much easier if it's fresh on their mind. So following up and getting concrete um responses from people to go ahead and give.

SPEAKER_00 45:25

And how did you how do you do that practically? So say you're in a small group or in a church, you give your presentation. How do you actually invite people to support? Do they fill in a piece of paper or what does that look like?

SPEAKER_01 45:39

You can be flexible depending on the environment. We we prioritized a lot of us and one other family, like smaller sessions. Not everyone can do that. We had a longer timeline to prepare, but that allows you to get more personal and to ask specifics. If you're in a group, we have been shown to use like fill out your name, your number, best way to contact you, or like what you're interested in. You know, I'm willing to give monthly. I am willing to just get your newsletter and I want to hear more. And so getting

that at the end, having people fill it out, you get the papers, and then in a week or two, you text them. Hey, love that you heard our story and responded that you wanted to support. Here's what it looks like practically. Here's our link. Let me know if you're able to give. Like following up. Or hey, you said you were interested, want to know more. Let's set up time. I think it's being as specific as you can be, especially when you're in the thick of support raising, is so important. Hey, do you want to get together? That's broad, that's vague. Hey, I'm free on Thursday at lunchtime at 12:30. We can meet downtown and get lunch. Does that work for you? Like that, that helps make it sound you're organized, you're planned, makes it way more concrete for people. And again, I'm saying all this. This is all advice I've gotten from other people that I'm repeating. We are we are still learning and we're putting that into practice. So again, the value of having wiser, older, better people pour into you really helps because otherwise you feel lost. Yeah, 100%.

SPEAKER_00 47:09

Has there been any recurring questions that you guys have gotten when it comes to support raising?

SPEAKER_01 47:14

Early on, with people that knew us super well, we used them to kind of gauge hey, do you feel like we should say things different? And and one of the advice we got was you sound really excited, you sound super pumped about going. Is it gonna be hard? Is there anything you're nervous about that you're like praying through? Is there anything that makes y'all feel anxious? Being real, they they were encouraging us to share that so that people can see that we're going into this with eyes wide open and not just like oblivious, and this is the easiest thing we've ever done. I think also people ask if you're going to a region where there's conflict or it's in the news, you'll always get people that ask, you

know, are you sure this is safe? People like to ask practical questions as well. Like, are you gonna go with a team? Is there training? Honestly, there haven't been consistent questions. I think each person or people you meet with have their own concerns or feelings that tied to it, right? Because often when we share, people are thinking, oh, if this was me, this is what I would be stressed about, this is what I would be worried about, this is the questions I would have. And so being able to feel those in a gracious, clear way is hard, but helpful, I think.

SPEAKER_00 48:29

Yeah, interesting. So the questions they're asking you are maybe questions that are coming from inside of them. If I was doing this, this is what I would be asking myself. Yeah.

Staying Close To God With Kids

SPEAKER_00 48:37

Maybe uh just as we close, how do you or you and your wife keep your own relationship with God strong? Of course, you're talking about through all this, you know, leaning on other people through the many trials that you guys have been through over these last few years. What does it look like for you guys to be sustained by the Lord? How do you stay close to God? What does that look like for you guys?

SPEAKER_01 48:58

It is easy to prioritize just doing more, doing all the right things, moving and checking things off the box and lose sight of like we're going because we feel called by the Lord. We need Him to sustain us and we need to be connected with Him for any of this to have value. I think again, it has to be a priority that we get time with the Lord. It is hard with kids, especially young kids, right?

You're you think as like a young adult or a college university student, whatever, that oh, I'm so busy, all my time is taken up. But then you have kids and you realize hours of the day I thought were already booked are now booked. Okay, 3 a.m. I'm busy.

SPEAKER_02 49:42

Who knew I could be busy at 3 a.m.?

SPEAKER_01 49:46

Or unexpected things happen, right? Like this morning, instead of waking up at 6 a.m., my kids woke up at 5 30. Or the other day, instead of our kids going down easy for a nap, they were screaming or went down difficult. Like it is what I'm saying is don't let anything I say about getting town with the Lord sound like we've got it all figured out and it's easy. It's hard, it is a hard thing to do. But I think you have to prioritize it. It has to be part of your schedule and part of your rhythm of daily life. For us, it is both together making sure as a family we come together at dinner and read the word and pray that before we go to bed, my wife and I pray together that in the mornings as much as we can, often it's with the kids. I'm like sitting while they're playing with toys, trying to read the word. Or like for me, my kid goes to school for part of the day and I walk him there, and on my way there, on my way back, I pray and get some time with the Lord. I think it's starts with knowing I need this and I must prioritize it. And then, okay, where can I prioritize this in my day-to-day life? I love this like sequence that I learned from someone of just if you have things you want to do, goals or priorities, that goal needs to be informed by priorities that you have set. And those priorities need to be informed by the schedule that you have. And then that schedule impacts like your day-to-day decisions, right? And it goes back up to if you want to look at where you're gonna end up, what decisions are you making day to day? And then what is on your schedule? And that's gonna tell you what your priorities are, and then that's

gonna determine where you end up and like doing that process for us and making sure, like, Lord, am I getting time with you? Am I praying? Are we going to church consistently? Am I seeking godly counsel from others? Prioritizing that and and really digging into God's word daily has been really important for us.

SPEAKER_00 51:48

Hey, it's been such a joy to have this conversation with you. Thanks for making the time. I really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

SPEAKER_01 51:56

And my wife and I love the closing line, and we want to emphasize as people are hearing us talk here, we I mean, right, we aren't even on the field, and so we feel like like even just being here talking to you is like standing among greats. Um, I'm sure they would not want me to say that. But like we if if you hear what we're saying and you think, okay, they are it must be like crazy good or like crazy or just crazy. Yeah, just have it all together. Yeah, have it all together. Like we we make lots of mistakes, and we I think that's part of the walk of the Lord is needing to be a repentant and humble people, and and we truly are ordinary people that God has continued to work in year after year, day after day, and we are grateful for that.

SPEAKER_00 52:44

Amen, brother. Amen to that. We are just ordinary people who are extraordinary. God uses in ordinary ways for for his amazing purposes in this world. Well, thanks for making it to the end of the podcast. And before I let you go, I just want to remind you that it's okay to be normal.