

## Episode 29: "Overcoming Fear in Parenting" with Micca Campbell

Audra Haney: Thanks for tuning into the Newborn Promise Podcast, a production of Graham Blanchard Incorporated. You are listening to an interview with Micah Campbell, called "Overcoming Fear in Parenting." For today's show notes, transcript, or more information about your Newborn Promise Project, please visit [GrahamBlanchard.com](http://GrahamBlanchard.com).

Thanks for joining us on today's episode; I'm Audra Haney and we believe today's guest is going to have a powerful impact not only on your parenting, but also your faith. Our guest Micah Campbell is a speaker for Proverbs 31 Ministries and is the author of the book, "An Untroubled Heart."

In her book, and for audiences around the world, Micah makes a big claim. She no longer wrestles with fear and anxiety. For many parents, this may seem impossible at this stage of life. It's so natural to envision the worst or fret over the unimaginable in our parenting.

But Micah's confidence comes not from the absence of tragedy, but walking through the very pit of it and coming out on the other side. As the 21 year old mother of an infant, Micah's love story was shattered when she lost her husband in a sudden accident. Micah says after the accident, her faith was lost and paralyzing fear became a familiar friend. But when she found the remedy for fear and re-found the God that promises peace, her life and parenting were changed forever.

Today, she uses her story in a powerful way to help others find freedom from fear, too. Here's our interview with Micah.

Micah, thank you so much for joining us today. We can't wait to hear your personal testimony. But I think we have to stop and congratulate you, because at the time of this recording, you just dropped your youngest off at college and you have become an empty-nester.

Micah Campbell: Yes, that's right. Yes, we survived. Woo hoo! Our kids are [inaudible 00:02:18]. They're alive. They're well. And we all survived and it is a great celebration. It's just a good new season that we find ourselves in. We're loving it.

Audra Haney: That's so great, and that's a great encouragement to parents in the trenches that you can run this race and one day, you'll be like Micah and be able to look back and smile on the sweet season that God gave you.

Micah, even though your children are grown, a very powerful part of your testimony starts when you were 21 years old and you had a six month old. And your story about overcoming fear, oddly enough, starts at a place that would be a nightmare for most of us. And so, Micah, would you mind just starting back at that place in your life and sharing your story with us?

Micah Campbell:

Sure. Sure. Well, I married young and God did bless us with a baby about a year and a half into our marriage. We were poor as church mice, but we didn't care, because we were in love and we were living the dream, as we all dream about a day that we'll meet the man of our dreams and start a family.

That's the place that I was in. It was as if all my dreams were coming true. And then, one night, Porter, my husband, he didn't come home. And he had gone that morning, over to my brother-in-law and sister-in-law's home to waterproof their basement. And so, the day before he went over there, he had dug a seven-foot ditch around the foundation of the home, so that he could get down there and apply this very sticky, flammable substance to the wall of the basement.

He worked all day long and then, my brother-in-law, he got off work early and came to help him finish up. And they were probably about, I don't know, seven feet left to go before they were done when, the air conditioner unit turned on to cool down the house inside. It was springtime, and so the afternoon was warming up and caused the air conditioner unit to click on. And when it did, it ignited those fumes that were in the ditch, and it just exploded.

And it wasn't until we got to the hospital that we realized, my husband was burnt over 80% of his body and the doctor explained that he was not only burnt on the outside but because he had been breathing those fumes all day long, that the fire went in and out, like a dragon. So, he also had trauma to the inside. And they just gave him a 50/50 chance to survive.

He was in excruciating pain, as you can imagine, as we landed at Vanderbilt Burn Center. And the doctors there, they wanted to do a procedure on him called skin grafting, but it was during that time that in that surgery, that he went into cardiac arrest and we lost him.

As a young mom, I can remember just standing out alone somewhere, just crying out to God. You know, and praying something like, "God, you know, you're God. You can fix this. You can save him." And you know how we do, we start telling God, "I understand, if he lives, he probably won't keep his arms," because that got the worst of it. I knew that that meant he'd never hold me again or play ball with his son, but I didn't care, I just wanted him to survive.

But tragically, that didn't happen. His organs began to shut down. And I sat beside his bed and I knew that he had, you know, already left me, but I just could not let go of him.

Audra Haney: And Micah, what kind of emotions were running through you in that moment?

Micah Campbell: I felt this strength come over me. At the time, I didn't realize where that strength was coming from, but looking back, I know that that strength was from God and his presence and he enabled to do what I couldn't do, without that strength, and that was to let him go.

I remember announcing to the crowded waiting room of friends and family and church members that he was gone. Boy, when you're 21 years old, you begin to grow up really quickly when that happens.

For me, it was not only grief that I experienced, it was not only the anger, it was not only doubt that came ... I lost faith in God because I believed that he could have changed it, you know? And that I was a good girl and I was a Christian girl, and so I just became paralyzed with fear. Just fear was one of those other emotions that sickened me spiritually and mentally, because I had lost faith in God.

And fear changed, really, the person who I was. I became very protective. I became a fear-driven parent. I was afraid of the unknown. I was afraid of how was I going to now, as a single parent, parent my child? I'm the only one making decisions here. What if I mess up? How am I going to support us? My whole world had changed.

And I went from being happily married to being a single mom in one day. It just absolutely terrified me.

Audra Haney: I can't imagine that. And for many of us, that is the unthinkable, not only losing your mate, but feeling left alone with your baby. And you were so new to motherhood. What was it, during that time, with your world turned upside down, that helped you and got you through?

Micah Campbell: Well, I want to say probably two things, and one of those is very practical. And it was people. People got me through. I think we forget sometimes that we are the hands and feet of God, we're that tangible touch or comfort or help to someone when we listen to God and we reach out to others.

So many in my neighborhood and community and church and family, they just reached out to me, because I was that new mom. And I would have older moms come in and help me take care of him. They'd bring

diapers and baby food. I had people cut my grass and they really, just supported me and uplifted me in that way.

At first, it was hard for me to receive that. But I so desperately needed it, so I had to push my pride aside and begin to see that this was God's provision for me. When I let ... we took hold of that provision, it was such a huge blessing and support.

But the other thing goes back to that strength that I was talking about. The more I came away from the accident and the funereal and looked back, I could see the hand of God and his presence was with me, all the time. And in the midst of it though, I didn't feel God ... well, I can't say I didn't feel it. I doubted his presence, you know?

I think we do that. I think we tend to think that God is somewhere, off distant when we're going through a hard challenge. It's just the opposite; he draws near to us and strengthens us.

One of those times in particular that that really got through to me, I can remember, I had rocked my son, you know, back and forth on my hip, trying to get him to sleep. It was a very fussy night, and again, there was no one to give me a break. I was tired. We get tired and hungry and weary, just as our children do.

He finally fell asleep in my arms and I laid him down in the bed, but at that moment, in all that frustration and going it alone, I just began to weep and wail and just go through another dark time of grief. But then, suddenly, that grief turned into anger, as I started thinking about, you know, "I'm doing this alone," you know? This is not what I planned!

In my mind's eye, I just did I think what any woman would do whose life had just been destroyed and I just sort of burst through the door of grace, the throne room of grace of God, and I shook my fist in the face of God.

And I questioned Him and I just called out, "Why?" Why, God, did you do this? Why did you give me a baby and why did you take his father? God, I just need to know why. And it was in that moment that God didn't respond like I thought he would. I thought maybe he'd say, "Now, Micah, you can't talk to me that way, I'm Almighty God." You know, he didn't strike me dead.

In that moment, his presence just filled my small little duplex like I've never experienced before. It was as if he just kind of paused heaven and earth and said, "Everybody, just take a five minute break, because my daughter needs me." And his presence just filled the room in a way that I couldn't have cried another tear if I wanted to. I knew that I knew that

I knew he was there with me. And it was such a peace and such a comforting time, it was so strengthening.

That was really a turning point in my grief and in my healing was to understand that God was with me, that I was not going through this alone, that he was my strength and that was for me and he was with me. Gosh, during times of aloneness and grief, which I went back forth to joy and healing and grief, remembering that and calling on his presence, just really brought me to new levels of healing day by day.

Audra Haney:

Yes. I'm sure, and just deepening that relationship with Christ. As you walked out that grief with God, what was it that really helped you through and helped you overcome some of the emotions that I'm sure felt so real?

Micah Campbell:

Well, like I said, I had lost faith in God. And I think fear is one of the Enemy's tactics to keep us from trusting God. You know? He wants to keep us away from that relationship. I began to see that you can't ... fear and faith cannot coexist. You're either gonna live by fear, or you're gonna live by faith.

And I was living by fear, and I began to see, by the grace of God, just opening my eyes, how much fear was robbing me. It was robbing me of my relationship with God. Of my peace. Of my healing. It was robbing me of just opportunities for my son and I, it was robbing me of just, even my witness.

And so, I began to see these things, see the negativity of it all, and again, turning to God was me casting fears on him. His word tells us, in Peter 5:7, which is one of my favorite verses, that to cast our cares on God, because he cares for us. And in 2 Timothy, I think it's 2:7, he tells us that God doesn't give us the spirit of fear but of power and love and sound mind.

As I turned to God's word, seeking to trust him again, and seeking comfort and healing, he was really showing me the remedy to overcome fear was to put my trust in him, to realize that when I was afraid, this was not coming from him and that he promises me peace when I put my mind on him and cast all my cares and burdens on him.

And that doesn't ... that seems maybe super-spiritual. It's really not. It's really very practical. I would really just take those thoughts captive and give them to God and say, "God, I don't want to live this way." And right now, I'm having trouble trusting. And you know, God knows that. He knows how frail we are. And he encouraged that.

And he helped build my faith as I turned to him in his word. And so a lot of times, doing those things, seem super-spiritual but they're very practical, and they're the way to our healing.

Audra Haney: Micah, you've written an amazing book called "An Untroubled Heart" and you really share a lot of the gaps that we can't share in one podcast episode. But one thing you say in one of the chapters is, "God has a plan far beyond our suffering and he will not let our trials go to waste." How have you seen that be true in your own life? Tell me a little bit about how God has redeemed your times of deep suffering.

Micah Campbell: That's such a true statement, that God does not let our trials go to waste. You know, we live in a fallen, broken world and a lot of times, we are touched by tragedy and death and sickness and war, but these are not ... this is not the world God created us to live in. He said that it was good. A lot of times, I think we lose faith because we know that God says, "I'm going to work this all out for your good," but we can't see any immediate good, we lose hope.

But I want to encourage us to hang in there, because God is so faithful. He is so faithful to his word and to his promises. And so, it was about five years after my first husband died that I was introduced to an accountant with a personality and he turned out to be my husband, and God blessed us with two more beautiful children, and so, I was beginning to see that sometimes it's a journey. It may take a while before we see the good, but God makes good on that promises.

And then the other thing that the suffering that we go through, I mean, nobody likes it, but it really is preparing us. It is really growing us to be more like Christ that God uses those times in our life. I never dreamed, in a million years, that I would be a Christian speaker and author. I had no idea that was God's plan for my life. I still pinch myself and he ... as God is compassionate and comforts us, he calls us to be compassionate and comfort others.

And I think that's what suffering does. It helps us see others from a place of grace and a place of compassion and then God wants us to bring glory to his name by sharing our stories. So, I'm just thankful any time I get to share my story because I hope that others can see that he is true and that he is faithful and that he is a good, good God.

Audra Haney: Amen. And another statement in the book, maybe one of the most powerful for me, you did say that from time to time, like, inhuman fears do sneak up on you. But you say, "I can honestly say I have been liberated from most of my fears by placing my faith in God instead of my circumstances." And that may seem impossible for many of our listeners today in the world we live in, but I think that speaks so much to

your relationship with God and is an inspiring hope for us as we move forward.

And Micah, since this is a parenting podcast, one thing that I loved, you addressed in the book, was the difference between fear-based versus faith-based parenting. Can you explain the difference?

Micah Campbell:

Well, I became a very fear-driven parent, because I was afraid that my son would die, you know, just like his father did. So I became what's called this helicopter parent. I was hovering over him and I was trying to control every situation around him. When he asked me to do things or go places or spend the night with his friends, the first thing that came out of my mouth was no, because I felt like, if he was under my care and my supervision, I could prevent him from experiencing any kind of danger.

But that really teaches our kids to grow up frail and fearful, when we are parenting in that style. And so I began to learn that of course, faith-driven parenting is the best way to go. It's God's plan. And how I would describe faith-parenting is really parenting with grace. With the grace of God that he gives us and to realize that he's in control of all things.

I had a pastor tell me one time when I was pouring out my heart, and I was in that fear-driven parenting and my son wanted to do something that was age-appropriate but I was so scared to let him go, and he turned and he said to me. He said, "So, Micah, what you're saying is, you are the giver of life." I thought, "Wow." I'm not the giver of life and I have to choose to believe God's word, which he says in Psalms 139, that he ordains all of our days before we live one of them.

And that tells us that God's in control over our children's life and that, you know, not that he doesn't give us wisdom in parenting, but if the number of days come to an end, then it doesn't matter if my child's in my care or somewhere else, God is in control of that. That really gave me some freedom. I began to parent by grace because I began to see the damage that fear-driven parenting did.

It puts a wedge between our relationship, you know? And there's actually other forms of fear-based parenting. It's not only the controlling and the hovering over, but it's this behavior modifying style. That's really popular today. That this assumes, from fear, that if I give my child the right environment, education, influence, that that's going to shape their heart and their character.

But you know what? It may shape their character somewhat, but it doesn't really shape their heart, because you know, if you live in a home that's just full of rules and rigid, it doesn't mean those rules will shape

the heart. It's the grace and the love that we give our children and then another type of fear-based parenting is when we focus on image.

That our family has this great image. We focus on our appearance and dress and that our kids say the right things and they do the right things. That was kind of the home I grew up in. They're all based in fear, but grace-based parenting is really about not standing aside and looking down at your kid and pointing the finger, but it's about getting in the boat with them. And it's about riding the rapids through them with life and coming through some smooth waters and just being with them and understanding.

I think a parent that understands the grace of God, that they have been forgiven much and they are loved much can easily parent their children that way because they just have that same attitude towards others. Not their kids, but they're gracious towards others and they're forgiving. And God just fills your heart with this heart when you are grateful and realize how far you've come and what God's done in your life.

And so, for me, it's not that we're not teaching our kids to obey or respect but we're doing it in a grace-like manner, that we're not shocked when they sin or they break a rule. I used to be shocked. And to realize that they're just like us, that they're fragile and they're sinners. And when we get in the boat with them and we show them grace and we forgive them and then we take them by the hand and show them the right way, that is faith-based parenting.

It's really depending on God, too, you know? God doesn't call us to anything that he doesn't equip us to. And if he's called you to parenthood, then God wants you to build your home through you. He is the master builder.

Audra Haney:

I love that. And Micah, let's talk a little bit about prayer. You mention a lot that it's not a way to control our children, but a way to get our hearts aligned with God for what he wants to do. Tell me about the role prayer has played for you as a faith-based parent.

Micah Campbell:

Well, my prayers, when my kids were ... I was a new mom and they were young, was really about begging God to protect them. But then it changed, as I grew in my faith with God. And I began to pray for them differently. I began to pray God's promises over them.

The verse I chose for my kids that I pray daily is Psalms 1 and 3 and it talks about that ... I ask God to plant my children, as the verse says, "Like trees of righteousness beside living waters." That they would have a love for his word and not the evil way of man but that planted by that



stream of living water, that they would grow strong and prosperous and that their leaves would not dry up and fall away.

And really, what I'm asking God to do or I'm praying back his promise to me, is that my children will grow up with a love of God and that they will see and discern the difference between good and evil and that as they trust God and follow him in faith, then he's going to prosper them according to his will.

My prayers changed and I just would pray to God when I saw weaknesses in their lives, "You know, God you see this, you already know this. But you've also promised us that where you begin a good work in each of us, you are going to bring it to completion. So God, I know you've got this, and I know you're working out that little thing in their heart and that little rebellious attitude and you're going to bring that, you're going to finish that and complete that and mature them and grow them."

And it's such a difference when we pray believing God than begging God to fix our kids. It does fill me hope and with assurance and it builds my faith. And what I've found, also, is when I pray that way, God will give me little signs. I mean, I will see things in my children where I know that I know he's answering that prayer. They may not be at that place yet, but they're growing there. That also is very comforting and reassuring as well.

So, I would say pray positive. Pray God's promises and just watch him work.

Audra Haney: Micah, thank you so much. This time has been so amazing and thank you for bravely sharing your story. To help us heal and see the faithfulness of God in every circumstance. And as we close, now that you're a seasoned empty nester, what would be your top advice for new parents who are listening?

Micah Campbell: Well, of course the first thing that comes to my mind is to live by grace, to give yourself some grace, because God does. And so, yeah. I'd say don't second-guess yourself. Don't compare yourself, but live in the grace of God.

Audra Haney: Thank you so much for joining us for this special conversation with Micah today. We hope it has impacted you as much as it did us. For our listeners today, it is my honor to close out our time in prayer.

Lord, I pray for these parents who are listening. It's so hard sometimes to entrust our loved ones to You. But Lord, remind us that ultimately, they belong to You. You love them, even more than we do, Lord. It's so

easy to imagine the worst, but Father, you have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Remind us that you are in every moment of our future and our children's futures. You are faithful to a thousand generations. You tell us to be anxious for nothing, but in everything through prayer and thanksgiving, to make our requests known to us, and a peace that passes all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

I pray that we'd be parents who pray rather than worry and parents who parent from faith rather than fear and I pray today, Lord, for a mighty breakthrough in this area for all of the parents listening. And praise you for your faithfulness. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Thank you so much for joining us today. Remember, you can learn more about Micah's ministry, find today's show notes, and learn more about our resources for growing families, including Your Newborn Promise Project, at [GrahamBlanchard.com](http://GrahamBlanchard.com)