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SPEAKERS

RC: Ross Cochran

JW: Jim Wideman

Y: Yancy

0:00:00.1 RC: This is the resilient disciples podcast, powered by Awana. I'm Ross, I'm glad you're here. You know who you are today, you've picked a fantastic episode because I think this is the first time I've had not only a father-daughter, but multiple ministries, I would say... I'm gonna just use the word icon, I'll let the two of you decide which one I'm speaking to when I describe that. No, look, I'm just really excited to have you both. Pastor Jim Wideman and Yancy to the podcast. Welcome to both of you. Thank you for being here. Or

0:00:36.0 JW: Thanks for having us...

0:00:37.6 RC: Yancy, Can you... for someone who hasn't necessarily heard you or isn't following you on social media, can you just help folks understand the sort of context and scope of your ministry, 'cause I do think you've carved out a pretty unique spot for you for yourself in the kingdom.

0:00:52.0 Y: Sure, I am a singer-songwriter artist, worship leader that is focused on music for kids and families, and so I have been making music for the past 24 years, but I have been focused on the kids and family space here since 2008, and I'm blessed. I get to create a lot of songs and videos that church is used in their children's ministry programs, as well as get to travel and do family concerts and lead worship at BBS and camps and various events. So worship is a huge part of my focus in my ministry and just about doing that first-hand towards families, but also equipping the church to be able to have the tools they need to go in and lead worship.

0:01:38.1 RC: Well, I'm hoping for these conversations is an ability to talk about discipleship and all that goes into that, and how worship plays into that, and this idea of spiritual formation... Now, when I say the word spiritual formation, I think some people are listening go, that's some new UI, we will staff some new way stuff... I don't know what that is, I don't know if it's biblical, so both of you as experts in the field, let's start with Yancy. How do you begin to define worship and spiritual formation? Is there a difference? What does that look like for you as someone who quite literally does this every day and every weekend.

0:02:17.0 Y: Yeah. Well, worship ultimately, man, it's a verb, in action, but I think in the context of church world and ministry, worship is a tool that we have under that giant umbrella of discipleship, so it's something that we can use to help... I could help a child get a taste of who God is, help them taste and see that he is good, and by seeing songs that help them encounter his presence and experience who He is, we are able to give them that taste. And one of my big goals in worship and being intentional about helping children start learning just from the weekend, week out, repetition of going to church, going in class, having a time of worship, my hope and prayer is that they'll realize that worship is an avenue. It's a pathway that they have to experience in God's presence. And so when they're going through something in life, I wanted to teach them that, Hey, one of the ways I can experience God's presence, one of the ways I can approach God and talk to him about this thing that's going on in my life, whatever way that might be, you know, the way I can seek him out is by praising him and worshipping him, and so that's kind of my big goal, is just to help kids learn how to run to the father and everything they face...

0:03:44.8 RC: I love that. Now, Jim, I wanna turn you here because I think in particular, that word spiritual formation, people have this idea, but worship is... I wanna talk to both of you about how sometimes that's a... They maybe even have a misconception of what worship is, but for now, for spiritual formation, how are you seen it play out, you are someone who was doing Kidman and child established before, it was cool.

0:05:10.2 JW: Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. In my 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, halfway through the 60s, and looking forward to the 70s. I did tell my pastor the other day in my 90s, I'm going part-time and so that I do, and so I just want him... And gave him a 20-year head start on that. Then I am planning on working going to three days in my 90s to... Good to know. Where your leads are. Yeah, yeah. And so it's kind of good. We were talking beforehand, nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to go and make leaders, but it says going, Nike disciples. And the first institution that was created even for the church was the home, and parents were the first one that we're given this task of Spiritual formation or discipleship of your kids, so when we look at drones, it's not just a verse that all the family ministry folks... Wanna talk about and do. It's actually you very first discipleship program, and yes, it was, and parents, but grandparents were there in that scripture, that whole idea of your children's children's mentioned there's aunts and uncles and extended family, and it's more than just physical care, it's spiritual care as well. And so this whole idea, I don't know why parents want better for their children in every area except spiritual things, and when it comes to spiritual things will settle for just as spiritual as mom and dad are just not bad. And I believe with all my heart that I wanted best for my kid, and I cared not only about the kids in my ministry, but the kids at my house.

0:06:29.6 RC: There's a bunch of sites out to me about that, but... And we may be even talk about this last time you ran Jim, but in the context of yalls homes, because this might be a crass way to say it, but you guys have done the thing, we talk about Resilient Child examples up here, Jim, you are... You are... You are a disciple that made disciples, who's now making disciples, anyone... Do you... I guess I wanna go right to that tension for both of you, because both of you are in different ministry context... How do you manage that tension? It's not a problem to solve, it's a tension to manage, of the discipleship of your own kids and what that looks like in the ways to lean into the unique ways that God made them, while also trying to do that for broader communities and regions and all around, the world...

0:08:15.4 JW: Like you guys do a good question. You know, it all starts with time and everything to me... Batman has a lot of different things on the utility, but yes, in the 60s, we saw the shorts pay, they didn't really use it in very many episodes with that one episode he had to pull from the back, but the one thing that Batman kinda goes to regular basis is the better for me. That whole wrestle of how I spend my time, I am married to my family and date my church, I'm not married to my church and date my family, and so one of the things that when people ask you answer the things that... And mom did, that are good, that devoted a lot of time and now with her kids and done on me, there's a reason why there's four grandparents and only two parents, and it's because parents need a lot of support, and it's one of those things that when Yancy brought our first grandchild into the world, I looked at her mom and said, Whatever dance made you to do and keeping and supporting her with this child, say yes. And we have been very determined that like when her boys come over, the very first thing we do is pray, I wanted to be known as a pre and grand fall, just like I talk

dancing her sister. When you start make selection, you start the evening prayer in the evening, a prayer in your board, intentional about what you do between the two prayers. And so when the grand boys come over, I just say a prayer, it's not a formal thing, and I just grab them, kiss them and ask God to bless them. Use our time, I think. Thank you for that time. I wanted to... And what it's done is when they have things they want me to pray about, they know that's just part of what we do, and so it's one of those things that I'm intentional in that. I've said before, we probably talked about this last time, you can wrap up every Jewish holiday and feast day and remember what the Lord did teach it to your children and his grandparents, we have even more that God's story of passing that on to our kids.

0:09:31.0 Y: Yeah, I'll add to that too. I mean, we know that there's power in our testimony, if we were talking about that related to a different subject, we would all be signing up saying 100%... I believe that's true. There's power in our testimony and just the things that you bought through in life to share those with others, to help them know and trust God in some of the same ways, but the same is true within our family, and actually Psalm 145-4, it says, Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts, let them proclaim your power, and we as parents are supposed to be passing on to our kids the ways that God has been faithful, the ways that God has been worthy of our trust, the things that God has asked us to do... And it's just literally like a week or so ago, just a little over a week ago, my son came to me one day and he was just like, Hey mom, I was praying last night before I went to sleep and really felt like God had told me to do something. And he was like, I don't wanna forget about it. So I'm telling you right now, so you can help me be obedient to it, and it was so cool just to... We were actually heading out of town, so I can understand why he was concerned he was gonna forget to do the thing, and so when we hopped in the car, it was so great just to encourage him and say, number one, I'm so proud of you for... Here in God's voice, and for responding to it and caring enough to be like, This is important, like I Can't Forget this, so I need you to help me, but We've never been an emotional family, we've kind of been... Take every opportunity and look for teachable moments to pass on those God stories, and even with them telling us, then me and my wife are able to talk about a obedient pores and just to keep throwing those things in where we're able to just really hone in on it pays to obey.

0:11:08.9 RC: Well and both of you end up speaking to something I alluded to earlier, which is that spiritual formation consortiums feel like this kind of woo thing, and both of you stressed the ways in which it happens driving in the car with your kids, it happens, you're handing the kids off to grandparents for day night or for a weekend or a week, those are the things that spatial formation entry looks like, and I hope that that encourages folks who are listening who does hire that for their own kids in their community to know that you already know how to do this.

0:12:46.1 JW: I wanna read it back, bring it back to nian the morning at my way somewhere, and when you're at the house... And I think the problem is, when they're at the house, we don't ever turn off all the gadgets and the boxes and all the things that talk and the voices, and it's just the whole idea that while we partner with parents and church is... 'cause parents have more time and the church does, and that whole concept, we realized that we have four times as a family with our kids, although we all go to the same church, and many times I get my grandpa kisses on Sunday morning, in between or after classes but at the same

time, we take advantage of the time we have at home,

0:14:12.0 RC: and you guys are a beautiful testimony in not only how it works, but why it works, both of you are leading fruitful ministries because of the investment you've made in your own family in your own context. I wanna lean into your ministries here next because... And then I wanna talk about books, because both of you are writing books, which really... I mean, the family that ministers together stays together, but the family that both... Right. Post at the same time, I don't know that. I think for anyone, I think when people hear perhaps to speak one of the more common responses, it's probably something to the effect of, I love what you're saying, but my kid's worship time, my kids, a large group time, feels really stale, I can't get the kids into it or it doesn't feel super speared or I don't like the sound of my own voice singing. Yancy, I'm sure you've heard a lot of these more practical excuses every day that you are in your ministry, but yeah, how do you begin to change a culture in the context of worship, because I think part of the reason why that exists is because of how adults approach their own worship. How do you begin to change the culture and get folks to see the power that both of you have experienced in being in a room with children who are radically pursuing and worshipping and being formed by Jesus?

0:14:44.8 Y: Well, I think in a context where there's a long history of a lot of elements that are not working together to advance what you're doing, I would like to let... It's kind of like your flower bed in your front yard, I don't know about you, but increasingly over the past few years, I've had more and more weeds that are starting to grow this, and so when we're maybe doing some right things, but not always doing them in the right context or with maybe all the information that should be given along with doing some of those things, maybe it's some bad song choices, there's a lot of ingredients as to what goes wrong, but it's kind of like your flower bed, and so we would all love to just come through, spray one big chemical and just one Saturday morning of work and my flower bed looks amazing forever. That's not how it works. We have to get our hands in there, and yes, you are gonna do some spraying to kill off some things, but you're gonna have to devote certain things, you're gonna have to get in there and completely remove that wrong thing... That's not supposed to be there at times. You're gonna add some new fresh ground, even you're gonna fertilize it, you're gonna maybe feed certain plants, you're gonna water it, it's gonna take some time, it's gonna take you nurturing it to see it grow, and so the same is true in this context of worship, you're gonna have to undo certain things, but that process as well as you getting a vision for it, and you just understand that like this is a goal we wanna happen or a ministry, we wanna be intentional in this time to not just do songs that take up time and space and our service, but to realize that these songs help kids experience the character of God and the presence of God, and so I wanna be intentional about the songs that I'm putting in, I wanna be intentional about what this type of song might do, but as well bringing information and teaching. I think so much of it comes down to is we're just like, It's time to saying, but we're never, for the most part, explaining why singing to God is important or why our action here is important, and so teaching kids through scripture, teaching kids through our own testimony again, teaching kids week by week, I get... You're not gonna have a 30-minute worship sermon every single week, but you know what, you can be intentional to bring something to the table before one of the songs that you do every single week that I say, Give them something about the what, why, where, when and how a worship so address one of those things, and week after week after week after week, you're slowly building in

the knowledge and understanding to inspire them to take part in what it is that you're doing.

0:17:53.3 RC: Yeah, I think it's really critical because I think folks often feel the pressure of like, This isn't working, so I need to need to change it right away, and to tie it back to some of the bigger things you're talking about, it make sense and takes time. Jim, I'm curious the same question, you especially because you're seeing the evolution of this work play out in real time in your career.

0:19:56.4 JW: Well, we have a helper, and so many times we're so busy looking for volunteers or external things, or this one action song or this fun thing we can love, when really we just need to ask our helper to help us lift up Jesus and get in the presence of God as you as talked about. And I just wanna... I want kids to come face-to-face with a living God who loves them and cares for him and learning how to be in his presence. Jesus can do more around an altar in 30 seconds, and we can do in a month of Sundays, and it's one of those things that concentrating on lifting up Jesus, pointing to him, making... You can't live what you don't understand, and you can't remember what is not visual, and so it's one of those things that presenting the word, helping kids to experience the presence of God, we have a little theme in our church that there's no junior Holy Spirit and just like any, talking about training kids for a lifetime of being an adult worshipper, we're training them to be deeply in love with Jesus for the rest of their life and that whole... Disciple who can make disciples. And so it's one of those things that if everybody listening would just look at next week's lesson, the minute they get home from church this Sunday, and as Holy Spirit, help me to make this real to the kids and understand this one point and this one scripture and then let their helper just teach that lesson and show them, my cane said, Don't just pick a song, look at something that will underline a point that you wanna make, if you're talking about the faithfulness of God, saying something about his status, it was goodness of how we can depend on Him. And I judge a good worship set, I have many days in the next week, I sing it, and it's one of those things that whether it be in children's service here in the main service, good set has me still singing and when I'll be walking by a few guitars on my way back downstairs, I'll pick up one and saying something we did on Sunday, usually just onto the Lord, and so it's that whole intentionality, and I think children's workers are so busy with the ministry to children, they don't focus on the discipleship of children, which is the call like a mission...

0:21:44.2 Y: I'll add to that too. Music has memory, music has seeking power, and so it literally is a tool that you have in your ministry to help those kids remember what that lesson was about, what that memory versus that you want them... Because we can all think of songs that we haven't studied or had as part of our daily playlist in years, but you're in a random store or something crosses your mind and you have... Your memory is cued up to that song and you can start singing it, even though you might not have listened to it in 20 years, and so I think the same is true in your ministry contacts as well, things that you're teaching your kids now tied to music have sticking power, two decades now and down the road or one day, you have an adult that's going through something and I believe that song comes to their mind and they remember something you taught them out of God's word, or they remember a leader that invested time and energy into building a relationship with them and a hen becomes a difference maker, and I hope helps lead them to Christ, into the Gospel, and all of that.

0:22:57.8 RC: Well, yeah, well, I think that what I'm so grateful for both of you is that normally when I need podcast, people maybe listening to be like, Ah, but I want more, and both of you have more 'cause both of you have books that are coming out, it'll be a couple of weeks, a few weeks. And like I said, Follow the show notes for information, so you have them when the books are available, but with the time we have remaining, and I mentor with you again, I'll ask the question this way, you were someone who is making music and touring in a non-covid context in doing this worship, why write a book? Where did this book idea come from, who do you hope that your book for and also what is your book called?

0:23:43.0 Y: Yeah, of course. Well, I have known for a long time that there is not much practically read that as non resources out there to equip children's ministry leaders on the idea of worship and what that looks like in their ministries. Otitis is not like a new problem that just entered... I've known this for years now, that there's nothing that a leader can grab that has information about this subject of kids worship, and nothing that they can hand over to a volunteer or a coordinator that's gonna help them, and so... It's just one of those things like last summer, as I was living my life and walking things out, I knew that God was saying, now is the time, like I'm ready for you to do this and I'm ready for you to speak into this and so... Again, it was really just a step of obedience of like, Okay, 'cause I can think of myself as... But I write songs, or I just think some and I lead songs, but just sit down and write a book and share it on my thoughts, so I'm so excited about it though, I believe that there is a whole lot of practical wisdom, there are things that you're gonna be able to read and instantly be able to put into practice in your ministry, but I know that both as a church leader and also just as a Christ follower yourself, that those who read this book are gonna be challenged in their own personal expression of worship and just redefining for themselves, even how much their worship matters to God, I think often we just think I'd like, it's a nice thing that we should do, and I share through scriptures that like, this is God-ordained, like this is something you were made to do, you were created to do it, and so just helping leaders understand that for themselves, but as well as for all of these kids that they're leading ministry for. I'm really, really excited about it. It's called sweet sound, the power of discipling kids in worship, and you'll be able to go to tennis dot com, suite, sound, and learn more about the book, and I'm so excited for you to read it because I know that it is gonna transform the contexts of worship in the ministry you lead...

0:26:04.2 RC: That's a pretty good plugin. I probably should have started with you Jim, 'cause she raised the bar pretty much about your book, man.

0:28:04.3 JW: She must increase and I must Cris. Kind of fun. But yeah, I wrote a book 20 years ago called Children's Ministry leadership that you can do it, that it's pretty much been a textbook and things that people have used, and during covid, it came back to me, it's now fishy out of print. And so I started just gonna update that book, and as I started reading, I realized, Man, I've learned so much in 20 years, and really, I'm not the guy who... I'm not the leader today that I wasn't wrote that other book and I've learned a bunch of things and I don't need some of that I don't even think is relative anymore, so I actually re-wrote the book and it changed so much, we just change the name and as well as the content and everything within it, and so we are releasing a new book called Authentic Leadership at last, and just really... Leadership, we all are called delayed heads, tails follow, but really

leadership in a church concept looks really more like discipleship than anything else, and just that availability, people say, Have you ever thought about quitting or in the early years every Monday, but yet, here I am, almost 50 years later, still doing ministry in the Fall of doing anything but Ministry, and coming around this new generation of leaders just excites me, and so authentic leadership at last, and now you can go to JIM in dot com as well as check the show notes. And we're looking to do some things we've never done before as far as malolos and things with this, and so just really excited that kind of work on my legacy and those things of just finishing strong. So I've got another one that I'm redoing, and then there's bits and pieces of four others that hope to finish, and that's what I was doing during covid and just working on books and so... So excited about some time before your 90s... Before you go part-time. That's gone. Yeah, I gotta go part to days in my 90s that mesons...

0:29:33.3 RC: That's incredible. More year. Yeah, so it's good. That's incredible. Well, let me just say, thank you guys so much, not only for a otomi istres, I'm really grateful that there are people not only who can speak into this, but people like the two of you who can make this feel accessible, I hope that for folks who are his tone deaf as me, but lead kids ministries that they recognize the opportunity and power in creating authentic experiences for this, and let's make sure that from the conversation on the forum to this podcast that who lives in this podcast feels well supported every week, especially by ministries like both of yours. So thank you both for your time. And thanks everybody for listening.