

Season 5 | Episode 16

Creating a Peaceful Home: Parenting Wisdom from a Mother of Ten! Laura Hernandez

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Crystal Keating:

This is the Joni and Friends Ministry Podcast and I'm your host, Crystal Keating. Each week we're bringing you encouraging conversations about finding hope through hardship and practical ways that you can include people living with disability in your church and community. As you listen, visit joniandfriends.org/podcast to access the resources we mention or to send me a message with your thoughts.

Laura Hernandez, mother of 10, joins us on the podcast today to share her family's unique story of raising many children, both natural and adopted, now between the ages of 4 and 17. Listen in as she shares her journey through adoption, talks about caring for children with hidden disabilities, and transparently reveals her transformation from being a do-it-all mama to having an eternal perspective who leans on the Lord daily for his strength, wisdom, and grace.

Laura, thanks so much for taking the time to speak with us today.

Laura Hernandez:

Oh, I'm so excited to be here. I'm such a fan. So, this is a treat for me.

Crystal Keating:

Good. Well, it is a treat for us, and we have prayed for your 10 children as mama is away for a little bit and may God just grace your home right now. And we just appreciate these moments together.

Just a few years ago, your family of six grew to a family of twelve. Oh, my goodness! And I'd love to just start a conversation by learning more about you and your story. What's it been like to be a mother of ten children? I love that. And what led you to adopt three of your little ones?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, well, it has been a journey. This did not all happen- some of it happened overnight, but all of it did not happen overnight. We had four kids and right after we had our fifth biological, we reconnected with a family that we had fostered before and took in their three kiddos to make a really long story kind of short.



And so, we, in like a six-month period, we went from four kids to eight kids with our new bio and then our three adopted. And also, in this, we had a cross-country move, and it just was really a lot and overwhelming. I don't know if I knew it at the time because I was just kind of in survival mode, but looking back, I'm like, oh, that was a whole lot that we did there.

So, a big piece of that was just trying to figure out how to manage day-to-day life. And that's kind of spilled over into this looking for ways to bring order to our home, even amongst all the chaos that was going on and everything that I would look for, nothing seemed to fit our family. And I would look for things for homeschooling as we are homeschooling some of ours. But it wouldn't quite work because we had therapists in and out of our home and we had some that went to public school, and everything was not really tailored to our very unique family.

And so, I had to kind of create systems that worked for us that were as unique as we were. And that process kind of led me to, oh my goodness, you know what? Everybody has a unique family, and this one size fits all situation doesn't work for anybody. And so, I kind of found my joy and my, my kind of outlet for life in this space of being able to help other moms create systems for their homes. But that's where it all started is that big upheaval from going from four to eight kids.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah, that's a big change. Okay, moving, in general, is a big change, and it's very stressful.

Moving cross country is a whole other level, especially while you're adjusting your family that is ever-growing, and it sounds like you have children you're homeschooling and also children in the public school. What's that been like and what led you to do that?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah. We decided, like, I guess when my oldest was, right before she was going into kindergarten, that we wanted to homeschool. And it was very much a, I did not want to do this, my husband really wanted me to. And so I have a few times like this in my life where I'm almost embarrassed to say it, but I was like, Lord, I'm going to pull a Gideon here and I need you to have someone call me in the next 24 hours and mention homeschooling to me if this is really what you want me to do because I feel like you know, you just make such a big thing and you're so stubborn about something and then all of a sudden you're like, oh, the Lord is calling me to do this.

And so, that next day I had a friend call and say have you heard about this Classical Conversations? I was thinking about going to ask if did the Lord tell you to call me. It's just like, uh, no, I just. So, I signed up, and then once we had our three buddies that we adopted because they were foster first, they had to be in this early childhood program at school. And that's kind of where we learned just a lot of their delays and things like that, that they would need that extra help and support. And so, we put them into the public school system, and we wonderfully live in a great area that has a wonderful SPED department. And so, they've been going since day one of their time with us to the public school system. And we've more recently put a few more in as well. And every year it's just kind of a reevaluation of who needs what right now, like what's best for each kid. So-



Crystal Keating:

That's good. That's good. Well, let's talk more about the adoption process and your experience raising children, you know, with some challenges. And you and I talked about the children that you have who were born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and some other disabilities.

Maybe you can explain what Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is and were you aware that your children may have some developmental issues and difficulties bonding with you as parents?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, that is such a loaded question, so I'm going to try to break it up a little bit. I think that in foster care training, they do a really good job of prepping you for hey, these kids may be behind when you get them, and they may say and there may be drug exposure or alcohol exposure. But it's kind of like a brief hot-minute topic that we touch on, right?

And then we talk a ton about attachment, which is very important. Do not hear me discounting that at all. Talk a lot of attachment, making them feel safe. Once they feel safe, they're gonna start catching up, you know. They're gonna be back up to grade level, etc., etc. So, I kept kind of waiting for that moment of we're back up to grade level, and that didn't seem to ever come for our kids, and I kept waiting for them to catch up.

And I was like, well, really, the only logical explanation here, because I thought that I was providing a safe home. If they're not catching up, maybe I'm doing something wrong. Like I'm not attaching properly. And so, it must be me. This must not be a good fit for us. Right. But I kept pushing, kept trying to search for answers and I learned a lot more about FASD and FASD stands for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. And that is like a whole gamut of things with FAS, which is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome being on one end of the spectrum. And then on the other end, it could just be some developmental delays, some intellectual delays. And the gamut is so wide, and nobody talks about the other 92% of the gamut.

FASD is so much more common than anybody recognizes. The CDC says that probably about 1 in 20 kids has some form of FASD.

Crystal Keating:

Wow, that's significant.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, it really is. It's two and a half times more common than autism. And it's staggering how much it affects our nation as a whole in everything, like our prison systems, our homeless, like mental health. All these things are affected by this, and we don't talk about it. Specifically in the church and the adoption community, it's estimated that about 70% of kids in foster care have some form of FASD. Foster parents are not being trained in this. They're not being educated in this. They don't have the support. They don't have ways to get diagnoses. I mean, we just have to start talking about it.



So often when people go to a doctor and say, I think my child might have FASD, the doctor will look at the child and say, oh, well, they don't have the facial features, so they mustn't have it. And so, this was kind of my experience as well. I had a therapist tell me like, hey, their gait reminds me, like how they walk, reminds me of a child with FASD that I worked with before.

And I was like, oh, you know, mom told me she never drank during pregnancy. But I was definitely wrong and went back and found documentation that that was the case and went to doctors and was like, hey, I think this is what's going on.

Because the more I researched it, it was like, oh, every single one of these things is going on with my kids. And it was so eye-opening for me to just to be able to connect those dots. But I would go to doctors, and I would say something and they're like, oh no, you can't diagnose that. You can't, like, basically, there's no facial features, we're not, no, we're not doing that.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah, like if it's not physically evident, then we discount that diagnosis.

Laura Hernandez:

Exactly.

Crystal Keating:

You're living with them day in and day out, so moving from like the physical to emotional and to some of the reactions that children affected by FAS may have, like, what does that look like in the day-to-day life? Maybe that was different from some of your other, quote, typical children.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, it always felt very puzzling. For example, I would think we would have something pegged. Like, we would be like, maybe he has autism. Maybe that's what's happening right now, just some of the behaviors and the things.

And then, he would do something, and we're like, that doesn't fit this mold. So, it just always felt very confusing trying to figure out, like, what bucket are we putting stuff into right now? The oldest where I feel like he was the one because he was the oldest and had developed more than the others was the most puzzling. And I felt very determined to figure that out with him and the other ones were confusing as well.

Crystal Keating:

Like you weren't seeing that pattern.

Laura Hernandez:

Correct. And so, Andrew would just lie about things that would get him in trouble. Like he would just make up stories all the time and like really believe them. It felt very confusing to us because normally you would lie to get out of trouble. But he's lying and getting into trouble. And it was a lot of things that they talked about in foster care like stealing and lying and sneaking and hoarding and all of those things, right? So, some of that is trauma. All of that's kind of tangled



up into a big knot. And so, it's hard to kind of dissect a lot of that. But common things with kids with FASD is that quote-unquote "lying."

We call it confabulation, because it's kind of like they have holes in their brain, and it's kind of like a block of Swiss cheese. And if you can kind of think about it like that, their brain being like Swiss cheese, and they have these huge holes and gaps. They may have part of a story, but not the whole story, and so their brain works to fill in the gaps, just like we all do. But with them, it's a lot more often in common so they may have a thought about oh, I would like to go to the water park and so when dad gets home from work, they may tell this whole elaborate story about how they went to the water park today. But they can't differentiate between reality and imagination. Does that make sense?

Crystal Keating:

Yes, it does. So, are you saying that in particular your child was talking about stories not with the intent to deceive but almost as if they didn't realize what they were saying was untrue?

Laura Hernandez:

Exactly.

Crystal Keating:

Okay.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah. And that's, that feels very confusing for people.

Crystal Keating:

Oh yeah where we're like, this is violating every moral fiber of our beings, right? You know?

Laura Hernandez:

Yes. Yes.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah. So, what were some of the other things you're, you're we're seeing? And you know, the reason I bring this up is because working with Joni and Friends for 10 years, through the years we've gotten calls from parents who have adopted children with FAS or other developmental difficulties related to trauma, and some of the stories you're telling me really sound similar. I remember one mom used to talk about how her daughter would steal money from her and jewelry and like put it in her child's closet and then she'd be asked about it and she would lie.

It's like you don't even need money. You're five or you don't need this jewelry. And so, it became again, it's like a moral issue that in her mind stealing is wrong. And it's like well, what is happening to this child that's causing them to want to do that? And so even when you talk about the brain being like Swiss cheese, I've heard FAS related almost to like a brain injury.



Laura Hernandez:

It is. And if you can think about it as we just think about the development in utero and how amazing it is that God creates and fashions, like all these little parts. And I mean, every fiber of our being is created there, right? We're born with everything we need. If that little basin, that little womb that they're cooking in is full of alcohol while they're developing all these things, right?

They're just brining in alcohol. Everything is being affected by that. And so, it's not just the brain. It's the kidneys. It's the intestines. I mean, it's everything. It's the growth hormones. So, everything is affected. And so, if we can kind of go into viewing these kids, knowing that information and knowing that it's not their fault, right?

They're not trying to deceive. They're not trying to lie. Stealing is another one that we really struggle with in our house. And it feels like as a parent, it's infuriating because you're like, I know that you have it, like just hand it over. But how it's explained to me is they don't have those boundaries to be able to say like, oh, this is yours.

It does not belong to me. It's like, oh, there's a phone. I think I might like this. And they just put it in their pocket. Like there's that executive functioning. All the planning that goes into our minds is neurotypical people, just does not exist with them. Or I guess it's harder to reach I guess would be a good way to put that.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah, that's really helpful to hear it framed that way. Laura, I'm curious. How did this affect you as a mom and how did it affect the siblings?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah. So, most of the siblings have just grown up with them, right? So, they don't know any different. They came into our home when our now 12-year-old was two.

Crystal Keating:

Okay.

Laura Hernandez:

And so, they were all just so young, right? Probably the older three are the ones that have seen kind of the difference the most in their development and then the level of care that they need and the attention that they get from their behaviors and all of those things which has taken a lot of trying to rebuild, like, on this back end. Now that I have a lot more help and I'm able to kind of see a bigger picture view of things, I think that there's now a lot of back-end healing that we're having to work through with my older three as well. And I know this is not a, oh, when they're 18, then they're just gonna, with so many special needs families, it's this way, right? So, I know I'm not unique in this, but I know that when they're 18, they're not just going off and living their life now.



It's, oh, it'll be the rest of our lives that we're dealing with this kind of behavior and it's going to be a lot for a long time and so I know that's going to affect them. We're really right now trying to do the work of trying to heal all of that with all of us, you know?

Crystal Keating:

Well, you know as you think about being an adoptive parent, I know you really felt called by God to do that and you wanted to live without regret.

So, I kind of have two questions. I'd love for you to share a little bit about your heart for adoption. And then also, how can adoptive parents prepare for the unknown of possibly adopting a child, whether intentionally or not, a child with intellectual or developmental delays?

Laura Hernandez:

So, I have always wanted to adopt. Like, I think when I was 12, I read an article about the wars that were going on in the Congo, and how the warlords were crucifying pregnant women and cutting their babies out, and I remember reading that and my heart just breaking. And so, I think that's kind of when a seed was planted of just knowing that there's so much hurt out there and that maybe I could do something to help change it.

Fast forward, my husband and I was like that was just part of our conversation it's like okay, we're gonna adopt when we get married, and we decided to foster after going to a class at our church. And it got really a clear message when the foster care panel was up there because I wanted to adopt from Africa. He wanted to adopt from China. And the foster care panel got up, and we both looked at each other and said, oh, this is what we're supposed to do. It was like the spirit just spoke to us at the same time. And so, we moved forward with that, and we got Andrew in our home. And he's the oldest of our three, and he was with us for eight months, and we kind of fell in love with him and he was our baby and then he went away, and our hearts were broken, and he went back to be with his mom and they always say in foster care that nothing's final until it's final like until papers are signed nothing is final. But-

Crystal Keating:

Like, keep it with an open hand always. That's hard to do.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah. It is really hard to do.

Crystal Keating:

And you get attached.

Laura Hernandez:

And everybody was saying like, oh, mom's not going to get him back. She's already had two taken away. Like you're going to be able to adopt him. Like they knew her story and they were telling me this.



And so, I felt like all the experts were saying this and, and then he went back and was like, oh, okay. Well, I guess not. But we got him and his two siblings back into our home. You know, people often ask me, like, do you regret adopting them because it is so different than what I thought it was going to be and it's so much harder. I think that we had some of the training where it didn't feel like we were going in with rose-colored glasses. I felt like we had the reality of how hard it could be.

What I wasn't expecting was my reactions to it. Like how much my body would react to my emotions around these things. Right? That felt really surprising to me. But when people ask me that question, I like, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we were to just adopt these kids. There's no question in my mind.

And so, I know one day I will stand before a holy God and he will hold me accountable to what I did with this time, right? And so, I feel like it's just like with a marriage. It's a commitment, you know. If it's not going how you want it to go, which it probably won't the majority of the time, you just need to know that that's what the Lord's called you to do and just stand firmly in that.

Crystal Keating:

Amen. And what he's called you to do, he will also empower you and equip you to do. And we don't do this alone. And we'll talk more about the church. You know, I'm really curious. You said that you were surprised by your own reaction to the process of adoption and raising your children.

Let's do talk about the emotional experience for parents raising a child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Reactive Attachment Disorder. Parents have said it feels like their household is being controlled by their child's challenging behaviors. I even feel saddened to say that, but that is the reality of what it feels like in the homes that, hey, my kid's reaction feels like it's in charge.

And I know you can relate. You know how hard it is. So, Laura, what encouragement do you have for parents who feel like, you know what? I feel like I've lost control.

Laura Hernandez:

I feel like we all feel that way sometimes, right? And I think that with kids that can be explosive in their behavior and, in their words and in everything. It's kind of like you just start walking on tiptoes so as not to trigger anything in them because that reaction is so much and so intense and can be so traumatizing for parents as well.

I've worked with a lot of moms who say that it feels like they're being held hostage by their child. And sometimes they literally are being held hostage by their child. And other times it just has that feeling of like, we can't go anywhere because I don't know how he's going to respond out in public. I don't know what he's going to do with the other kids out at the playground. Like he might punch one of them in the face, and that's the scary thing. I don't even want to deal with that, because last time I went it was so traumatic, right?

Crystal Keating:



So unpredictable.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, there's just so much, and it's so constant, and you have to be so vigilant. And so, I know these mamas and dads are tired and weary. And I think that some things that have just been really helpful for me is getting a diagnosis and then being able to ask for help with that has been huge. Because then I have people on my team with me and so when I have a child that's going a little off the walls with different behaviors, I have someone to call that is a safe person that I can talk to and even just talk about the scenario that they understand and they're not going to say like, oh, you're overdramatic or you know, giving me these little cliché things to say. They just get it. I'm so sorry. This sucks so bad right now, you know?

Crystal Keating:

No, we need people like that, someone that can be sort of a mirror to us to say, "I see you what you're going through is really hard. I may not have the words to fix it or change it, but I'm with you in this." There's something really powerful about that.

Well, Laura, maybe we can talk about your church. Would you share how your church and community have been a part of your family? I know the Lord Jesus is your anchor, your rock, and you really love your church. And the reason I want to talk about this is because we've heard from moms and dads, kind of like I mentioned before, who have adopted children with disabilities, hidden disabilities, and have felt completely just loved by their church and supported.

And yet, sadly, some haven't received the kind of understanding they were hoping for, largely because, you know, people just don't always get it. We misunderstand the child's behavior. It's often attributed, as you said to like, lack of discipline, or poor parenting, or loose boundaries. What's been your experience and connection with your church? And how can we, as those listening and the greater church, be better at coming alongside families like yours?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, I have to first say that I was totally one of those people. If I would have seen this out in public, I'd probably have been like, that woman needs to get her act together. She needs to tell that child what they need to do, that they can't talk to her that way, whatever.

Like, I was one of those people. Then on the flip side of it, I'm like, oh, okay, well, this is good over here. That's all he said to me. This is great. So, know that I have not arrived anywhere. I'm nowhere. I'm just, just wandering along this journey here. Our church has been absolutely amazing.

Our first kind of encounter with the foster care group at our church, they had just started it when we started going there and we went thinking like, oh, we're going to go serve and we're going to be a part of this and we're going to help other foster families because we had just completed our adoption and we're wanting to get plugged in and we went to this little banquet that they had and they sat us down at the table.



And they said, no, we're here to serve you. How can we serve you? So, I had this whole table of people just wanting to know how they could serve us. And it, for the first time felt like the Lord and the church cared. Like, I know that the Lord cares. And I know that the church cares about adoption and foster care.

And they care about the orphan and like big picture wise. But like small practical wise, it felt very lonely and like the church could be doing a lot more and just kind of disappointed at the church's reaction, you know. And so, it was a beautiful thing for me to sit there and be like, wow, this is what it's supposed to look like.

I feel like I could adopt all the children in the world if the church was doing what it's supposed to be doing, right? If we could just come around each other and carry this burden together. So since then, they have really grown their foster care ministry and have done respite nights for us and have done respite mornings for us, have paid for different activities for us around town for us to be able to go to and experience together as a family where we couldn't normally do those things because we are such a large family.

It's just been a real blessing. They've brought us meals and we've had hard times and they're, they're always the first to like step in and care for us with zero judgment attached. And it's so great because there's other people around us that get it, like they know exactly what we're going through, you know?

Crystal Keating:

That is so refreshing. So, refreshing. Laura, talk about your walk with the Lord. You are one of those powerhouse women that I'm like, ah, what an example. How do you do it? I mean, you're a can-do mama. Where does your strength come from?

Laura Hernandez:

Well, I don't know how to take that comment. I don't think you should put me in that bucket. I mean, Jesus is, I mean, he's the obvious answer, right? That's just it. That's, that's the only reason I do anything is because this is what I feel like I'm supposed to be doing. Like, I feel like this is what he's called me to, just with work and with wanting to advocate for the foster care system and wanting families to know about FASD and wanting just all these little things that I have going.

I'm like, I want, I want to be a blessing with the things that Satan maybe meant for evil, right? Like having these really hard kids, just different trials that we've gone through. I want to use all of that, and I want to encourage others and I want them to be built up because I know that this is not coincidentally part of our story.

I know that the Lord wants to use us, and so I also know that I can't do anything apart from Him. There's nothing fruitful that will come from me if I'm working in my own strength. And so, I think that's the biggest piece is continually to turn my eyes to Him and wait for Him to show up for me, you know.



Crystal Keating:

That's beautiful. And you know, I think that a trap that parents can fall into, whether they have children with disabilities or not, is well, I've raised my child in the admonition of the Lord and here they are turning their own way and now I feel like a failure as a parent. Has that ever occurred to you? Have you ever wrestled with that? Where are you at in that, you know, season of life?

Laura Hernandez:

I think that often, like in our Christian community, and even this kind of spreads over to just our foster care training of, hey, when you do X and Y, you're going to get Z. Like, it's just very matter of fact. You follow this formula and you're going to have great obedient children.

And nobody ever says it quite like that, right? But teach them scripture when they're young. Have them memorize it. Train them in obedience, and you're going to have a great kid. And recently we've really struggled with one of our, our teens and just some choices he's made. And, oh my goodness, it has been so hard for me to kind of untangle that lie.

I think that I have believed it so deeply that if I do X and Y, I'm going to get Z. And I feel like that leaves no room for God writing his story in our kids' lives, right? So, for me, I mean, this has really been a very fresh thing for me. So, I get emotional talking about it. But I was working through this with one of my counselors and it was just kind of telling her, like I don't understand, like, what did I do wrong?

Cause I don't want to make the same mistakes with these other kids that I have, like, I still have more to go. And so, it's not so much that I'm looking for myself to blame and why I did X, Y, Z, but it's more like, oh my goodness, I have to raise all these other children and I want them to turn out great.

So, and she said to me, she said, Laura if the king of the universe raises children and they depart from him and he doesn't think he's a bad father, why should you? And I was like, oh, okay yeah, I guess so. So, I started kind of like mulling that over. The next morning, I wake up and I have this, I mean it feels weird seeing a vision, I don't know.

I don't know what to call it, though. It wasn't really a dream. It was like right when I was waking up and I was walking through fire because that's normal and the words, I will burn away the dross came to me. And which again, it's like, who says that ever? And so, I was like, well, I know that that's from the Bible.

So, I went to go look it up and it's in Isaiah 1 and of course, then you're going to read all of Isaiah 1 to get the whole context. Isaiah 1:2 says, "I had children, I raised them well, and still they departed from me." I was like, okay, thank you, Lord. I'm hearing you. And then, then there's a book on my counter that I randomly got in the mail about a year before from Amazon.

Amazon made a mistake, and it came to me. And so, it was *Raising Grateful Kids*, I think is what it's called. So, this book is sitting out and I've started reading it.



I'm on like chapter three or four something like that. So, I pick up my book to read that after my quiet time. In that same chapter, she's talking about how X plus Y doesn't always equal Z in Christianity and she states that verse. And I don't think I've ever paid attention to that verse or known that verse or ever.

But that was the verse she stated was, "I had children, I raised them well, and still they departed from me." And it doesn't make God any less of a God that his children depart from him. And it doesn't make us any less of good parents if our kids depart from the Lord.

It's just part of his story, it's a part of his will. And not to say that we need to give up on how we're training them and teaching them by any stretch of the imagination. But I think that pressure that we put on ourselves so that we could control the outcome is something I'm still learning that is not true, you know?

Crystal Keating:

Sounds like it gave you a new kind of freedom and release to say, okay, Lord, you know, we talk about it a lot, our mirage of control, right? We believe we have a lot more control than we actually do. And it doesn't negate our responsibility to press into the Lord and be obedient and trust him. And yet, with that open hand, we say, okay, Lord, I will trust my children with you. And it sounds like you're walking through that. You're not the only one, Laura, for sure.

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, I'm grateful for that.

Crystal Keating:

Well, Laura, what are some practical ways, and you, I feel like are the queen of practicality and good mama systems. What are some practical ways special needs parents can put structure in place to bring a sense of calm and order to what may often feel like overwhelming and unpredictable demands?

Laura Hernandez:

I'm a big believer in that it's really all about the mama being okay. Because when she's okay, everything else kind of can fall into place appropriately.

At least that's the case with me. When I'm in a good mood, then I can parent a lot better and I can do life a lot better, right? So, for me, that's taking care of myself in the morning and getting up earlier and going on a walk and spending time with Jesus and doing those key things that are gonna fill me up so that way I can pour into my kids. We all hear this all the time, but we can't pour from an empty cup. And so that's not necessarily a full family system, but that's a definite priority for mamas.

And then for our kids, I think having those anchors in our day of hey, in the morning time, we do X, Y, and Z and I feel often resistance from people about schedules and structures and things like that, because it feels very much like, oh, it's 10:02 we need to be doing this, right? Like, we feel very rigid in our thinking about it.



And that's not what I want us to think about at all. I want us to think more about a rhythm, more like a musical or a symphony if you will, that it flows. It just creates a better flow for your day. I think so often, especially as special needs parents, that it's more like a cacophony, right? Like everything's happening all at once, all the time. But if we can kind of provide some of those structures and some of those pinpoints in our day, oh my goodness, then it can flow more like a symphony.

Crystal Keating:

Amen. That's good. And, you know, Laura, you really have leaned on the Lord through all of this, and you know, just as we close our time together, is there any encouragement that you want to share with our listeners today?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, I think my number one encouragement for special needs families is always just to ask for help. Even if you are so weary of asking and no one's showing up, keep asking for help because somebody will show up and it will be beautiful, and the Lord will provide.

I would be happy to help you in any way that I can, especially if you're hearing this and you're an adoptive parent and you think your child might have some form of FASD. I would love to kind of give you some resources and tools around that.

Crystal Keating:

Good. Well, and where can they go to learn more about you and your story and get your contact information?

Laura Hernandez:

Yeah, mamasystems.net is my website and you can find me on Instagram, Facebook, all of those things @mamasystems.

Crystal Keating:

Good. Well, Laura, thank you for your words of encouragement and just for following after the Lord and what he's called you to do.

Thanks so much, Laura.

Laura Hernandez:

Thank you.

Crystal Keating:

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