



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 1: God is Showing up in the World Through Coaching

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Brian Miller: Episode #1 God is showing up in the world through coaching

Chad Hall: To me, coaching is maybe the very best way to find out where God is at work so that whoever we are coaching can just join God in that work and be about God's business.

[Intro Music]

Brian: Welcome to the *Coach Approach Ministries Podcast*. Coaching is a skillset and a mindset that helps people find focus, discover options, and take action. At CAM, we train the very best Christian coaches in the world, and over the last decade, we've trained well over a thousand coaches. Through this podcast, we want to share insights from the coaching community and help you to develop a broader understanding of coaching. You can find out more about us at www.coachapproachministries.org and sign up for our proven coach training. We would like to start our first podcast episode with an interview with president and founder of Coach Approach Ministries, Mr. Chad Hall.

Chad Hall has been coaching leaders in ministry and business since 2002, and currently, serves on faculty and as Director of Coaching at Western Seminary in Portland, OR. He has applied coaching first as a denominational leader with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and later as an internal coach with software leader, SAS Institute. He has also served as a pastor and church planter. His publications include: *Coaching for Christian Leaders: A Practical Guide* and *Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith*. He lives with his wife, Holly, and three children in Hickory, NC.

So on this first podcast with Coach Approach Ministries, we're happy to be interviewing president, *president*, of Coach Approach Ministries, Chad Hall. I don't know if you're still running for reelection, Chad, and how's the campaign going?

Chad: Well, right now, I'm sitting here in my oval office, and I'm thinking, "Yeah, I like this president thing."

Brian: Well some of your tweets have been insensitive and just calling out some of the, you know, boy, that's Donald Trump.

Chad: No, my hair is much better.

Brian: You definitely win on hair. There's no doubt about that, but I'm just glad to be talking with you. I really enjoy talking with you, and I think the more I get to know you, the more I realize you are one of the preeminent voices in coaching. Certainly in Christian coaching, but I think in coaching in general. You're knowledgeable and interesting, and I just appreciate this time we can spend together.

Chad: I'm looking forward to it.

Brian: So, I heard you recently say...I want to jump right in to it. I heard you recently say something that just kind of knocked my socks off, and I want to know a lot more about this. You made a statement, and you can tweak the statement if you want to because I may not have an exact quote, but you said, "Coaching is how God is showing up in the world." Coaching is how God is showing up in the world, and you and I love coaching, but I think some people might think that we think too highly of it, but if you're saying God is showing up in the world through coaching, that's a strong statement Chad.

Chad: Yeah, I guess it is. Certainly, not saying that the exclusion of many, many, many other ways that God is showing up in the world, but really, the notion that coaching is one of the ways God is showing up in the world, and that's what got me into coaching, and I've shared this in classes and other places before, but when I was on staff with the North Carolina Baptist, we were consultants and we would drive around and tell people what to do, and they wouldn't do it. We kind of stumbled upon this thing called coaching as a way to really, I think, exemplify, and put into practice, what Henry Blackaby says when he says, "Find out where God is at work, and join him there." To me, coaching is maybe the very best way to find out where God is at work so that whoever we are coaching can just join God in that work and be about God's business.

Brian: Chad, dive in a little deeper with how God is using coaching to move his kingdom forward.

Chad: Yeah. So my theology on this is that God is beckoning every person in the world forward, and God longs for people to move forward. Forward means toward God, and not only in companionship, but also in cooperation with God, and if we'll only listen, we will hear God's voice, we will feel that, kind of, gravity of God, pulling us forward. Of course the challenge is, we don't stop and listen.

We don't take a time out. We're just too busy doing whatever we're doing and thinking whatever we're thinking, and so where I really think coaching is one of the premier ways that God shows up in the world is that it just allows people to take a time out, to really reflect, do some deep thinking, to be intentional with their direction in life, to be intentional with their decisions in life, and we either hear the still, small voice of God drawing us forward, or sometimes in coaching, we hear God very loudly as a trumpet calling us out of something, or into something.

It's just that intentionality of conversations that open people up, let them explore, let them listen to God, and then let them be really intentional about their commitments, and so it's not really that every coaching conversation is, what we would characterize as, a come-to-Jesus moment, but in a way, I think, every conversation is a come-to-Jesus moment. It's a coming to live more fully as one who reflects the image of God and that we would actually own that journey as people who were coached and people who were living in the kingdom. Not to over theologize it, hopefully, but that's kind of the way I approach this.

Brian: So certainly, I hear you saying that in a coaching conversation, we would purposely make room for God to speak not only to us, but to our client as well so they could hear more fully. Just give them

some space, and room, and time to hear that, and second, as they hear that, we would try to help them leverage what God's asking of them, commit to it, commit to action, and move forward. Those are the two big ones I heard out of what you said.

Chad: Yeah, absolutely. Again, I think the reason more people don't do that is they are too busy doing other stuff, you know, and I think the reason coaching works so well for that, as opposed to other types of relationships where we're doing a lot of delivery and telling, is that just the way that humans are wired, we really do need and we want to be owners of our journey, and I think that's what God wants for us. God doesn't want us living according to what somebody else has told us to do.

God wants us... Maybe this is where my theology comes in of free will. He wants us to willingly follow, and in coaching, the coach isn't telling the client what to do. We're not "should-ing" people or any of that kind of stuff. We're really helping people get clear what are they willing to do? And what are they committed to? They really do have ownership of it. I think that pleases God.

Brian: Well we talk about there's a freedom in Christ, but then I think we get a little nervous about giving people freedom, you know? We want to draw out what's inside of people, and well, that can't be possibly good, so there is a nuance to it that we're not just trying to spark people's base desires and to everything exactly they want. All we'd be coaching about would be money and sex, probably.

Chad: And ice cream. Probably some ice cream.

Brian: And ice cream. Sure, sure. My wife says you can't eat ice cream in the winter, and I just think that's silly.

Chad: That's silly, yeah.

Brian: I don't understand that whatsoever. But really, that's the great nuance I think's so important, to really draw out that God is speaking and wanting people to move forward. How do you see Coach Approach playing a significant role in this?

Chad: Well let me mention one thing before going into that question, and it is the whole idea of playing to people's base desires. My thought on that, not only from my own life, but from the lives of people that I coach, it's the un-reflected life that plays to base desires.

Brian: I agree.

Chad: Why do we chase money, or sex, or ice cream, or power, or whatever? It really is because we haven't taken the time to come to a better journey, and I think that's what coaching does. It really helps people upgrade their journey, and again, our theology on this as Christians is, those things are unsatisfying, so who's giving us a chance to step back and say, "That's not satisfying. What would be?" I think God has laid out some very specific, I guess you would call them milestones, in every person's journey that makes a life significant.

I think the way Coach Approach plays to this is we really are helping people live lives of significance. Now, obviously we do it with a couple of layers removed. Hopefully, we are living lives of significance. I think the people we coach, we are helping them live lives of greater significance, but then where the high leverage comes in, we're training, preparing, encouraging, equipping, I think, some of the best

Christian coaches in the world, and through those coaches, God is ministering to just tens of thousands of clients, helping them live lives of significance where they reflect his image in clearer and clearer ways.

Brian: A question I get a lot when I'm just talking about coaching to a group is, "What if the client wants to do something that you just know is wrong?" And I've done this long enough that I now answer that question with, "It's never happened to me." I mean, they may be making a mistake or taking a bad strategy, but I've never had anybody say, "I'm trying to figure out how to rob this bank." I haven't, or "To get away with murder." I've never heard anybody say that to me. I think there's something about the coaching environment, but talk about that a second. Have you seen that? How would you answer that question? What if somebody asked me, wants me to coach them around something terrible.

Chad: Right. How is God in that? God's obviously not drawing them forward when they want to cheat on their wife, or rob a bank, or any of that kind of stuff. First of all, Brian, you've just got really good clients. They're saints.

Brian: I don't think so. Maybe, maybe. Maybe I do.

Chad: That's your niche. "I coach saints." I think two things on that. One is, I'm just going to agree fully with you that it's rare. It's rare that someone really wants to...Again, it's not necessarily rare that they make bad decisions. I see that from time to time. A strategy that wasn't the best. A wrong turn kind of thing, but it's pretty rare that someone's making a decision, going a direction that's just sinful. First of all, it's just rare, but secondly, if I look at the biblical narrative, I see the people of God do a lot of bad things and learning from it and it being a formative process that God is using.

I mean just look at the disciples, you know? It's not that it always plays out to good in the end. Sometimes it doesn't. Judas doesn't end very well. Peter, it does. My tendency on this is if we can facilitate people making decisions and then living with the consequences, we're probably facilitating their growth in God even if it's a wrong turn. If it's a wrong turn, they're going to figure that out. They're going to live with the mistake, and they're going to learn from it, and what better context to learn from that mistake than in a trusting, nonjudgmental coaching relationship that has their agenda, and their good, as the basis of it.

Brian: Now when you say nonjudgmental, I think it would be easy to step back and say that back and say, "There's some things we should judge," and as you give biblical examples, I go back to Moses, and Moses knew he really wanted to free his people, and his first thing he did was kill a guy. Kill an Egyptian. One at a time. Bury them in the sand. So if I'm his coach, and I'm judgmental...There's already a, "You gonna kill me too? That happened." He ran. He's like, "I can't even be here. I can't be around these folks." So a coach has to come in as nonjudgmental as possible to say, "I hear your heart. I hear what you're wanting to do. Now reflect on how that's different." I think that's a powerful piece.

Chad: And I think a lot of times why we're so judgmental is we are not trusting enough of God.

Brian: That's right. We don't trust God enough to speak to this person if we don't point stuff out.

Chad: Yeah, and we think, "Oh, God only works through good decisions." Again, I read the biblical narrative, that's just not what I see. God works a lot through bad decisions, and I think sometimes...

Brian: Oh, almost all the stories, yeah.

Chad: Yeah, we're always trying to micromanage life and thinking we're somehow steering things toward God, and truth is, we're not. God works through good decisions and bad decisions, and I think what we're doing as coaches is we're helping people live with greater reflection and therefore greater intentionality. I kind of think of it as they're getting dialed in to God's direction, so even if they miss it from one conversation, that's the quicker they recognize it and they have that trusting relationship where they can come back and kind of move the steering wheel, if you would, and get it really dialed in, and make progress. I'm just not that concerned about people making bad decisions. Now obviously if they're going to hurt themselves, if they're going to hurt others, not only do we have the moral/ethical, we also have the legal obligation there, but again, that's just not very common. Almost so rare to say never.

Brian: Well two things that are really true about Christianity is that we are a religion of second chances, and we are a judgmental people.

Chad: There's a contrast right?

Brian: Yeah. So if there's one of those two we have to be pressing down, it's the judgmental part because that's the part that gets in the way of transformation and second chances. Let me ask you this, certainly, the entity called the church isn't the only way coaching can be distributed to the world, or to Christianity, or that God can use, but let me ask you this, in the world of church, how would the church be different if there were a lot of engaged Christian coaches? You can interpret that question however you want, but how would the church be different if they got ahold of this idea of coaching?

Chad: Well one, I think churches would look a lot less like one another. I think when we program churches, when we come up with ministries, when we idealize what a healthy congregation looks like, obviously there's some things that a healthy congregation are true no matter the congregation, but when you get to the programming and personnel and ministries and those sorts of things, I think if we had a force of Christian coaches unleashed within the church, I think congregations would look very different from one another because they as a body, as a local body, would be finding where God was at work and joining him there instead of finding where God is at work in the big church, in the big city and copying what they're doing. So, I think that discovery process of what's God doing in our midst and how can we join him in that? I think coaching is the way to really tap into that way of thinking and living.

Brian: Well it takes a commitment to wanting to do what God wants you to do as a pastor. Any church of any size around my area, for one example would be, has a young, male worship leader, so if you're telling me that God's saying, "I really like to bless the young, male worship leader." I'm going, "I think there's probably other strengths." There's just so much to that that feels wrong to me, but it's very, very true. So you're saying if coaching was really drawing out the strengths and the mission of the church, we'd see a lot more variety.

Chad: I think so, and I think we would also see churches that had a goal that went beyond growth, like numerical growth, and I'm not down on numerical growth, I think there's some churches that are called to that, and that is a part of the story that God wants them to live out, and I think there are other churches that God really is calling to be something different and a different kind of presence in their community and the world and to find what they're really good at.

I wouldn't use that as an excuse for disobeying, but I think growth can be just as big of an excuse for disobeying as remaining small can be. I think we'd give up our idealized notions of what a healthy, or vibrant, or blessed congregation looks like and we'd be willing to discover that. Of course within the confines of orthodoxy and the history of the church, but I think God's got...Again, you look at the biblical narrative, and it's just a diverse bunch. A diverse bunch of people that God calls his people.

Brian: With diverse expressions, for sure. Culturally and city to city.

Chad: And the different mission. Some stay in Jerusalem, some sail the seas, and some take up money, others distribute the money. You not only have diversity of type of believer, you have diversity of how they go about expressing and expanding the kingdom of God.

Brian: Caring for the widow. I mean you certainly have that role. Let me switch gears and ask you this question. What's the most significant coaching moment you've ever had?

Chad: Wow. Well, two things come to mind. One is, as a client, a very significant coaching moment. I can think of a lot of coaching moments that have been significant for me as a client, so I don't know if it's the most significant, but one that's way up there was some coaching I got around a career transition. You know this, for a number of years, I worked as an internal coach for a software company and the cushy position that everybody wants in coaching.

You don't have to battle for getting clients, and well paid, and salary, that kind of stuff, and when I left there to go join the faculty at Western Seminary, it was because of some coaching, and I remember the coaching moment of, "Yeah, I can trust God with this." It's interesting because it gets back to when you were talking about earlier, are we going to pursue our base desires or are we going to really hear and respond to the call of God. It was a coaching conversation that really showed me how those two lined up in my life. It was not only what God wanted, it really was what I wanted, and it's amazing how often we, as clients, as coaching clients, can't quite give ourselves permission to pursue what we want and to believe that it may be what God wants as well.

Brian: That's huge. That's a big piece. What's another significant coaching moment? That was a pretty big one. I'd even take number two, I guess.

Chad: Let me think of one, maybe, when I was the coach.

Brian: Either way. I think they're both good.

Chad: Yeah. I'm just trying to think to the other side of the proverbial coin there. Gosh. What's going on in my head right now is I'm thinking of some stories to share, and I don't want to break client confidentiality, so I'm trying to anonymize the story, but I'm thinking of actually one recently where a guy who's actually on a church staff, and it became a very emotional conversation, and he just recognized that he was finished in that role, and a lot of identity issues, a lot of not sure what was next but able to really commit to, "Yeah, my time here is up," and it wasn't just a simple career transition for him, it was a real identity shift. Without sharing too many of the details, just really powerful, really powerful. I don't want to make it sound like every one of my coaching conversations somebody breaks down emotionally, but in this one, that's exactly what happened. It was so powerful. It wasn't just a cognitive, intellectual, logical decision, it was a real breaking down a lot of levels.

Brian: Just real, gut-level...You were able to help that person go deep, and they didn't have to go deep by themselves, in a way.

Chad: It was very interesting, with this particular client, he's very left-brained, very logical, very rational, probably make a great code developer or something, and it was actually processing the decision on the left side of his brain with all that logic and rationality and then just all of a sudden, it was right brain. It was emotional, it was gut. Allowing it to be a safe space for that and the coaching skill of just shutting my mouth and listening, it was...Sometimes I think what we do as coaches, we kind of light the fuse and step away. All we're going to do is mess it up if we get too involved.

Brian: That's good. That's rich. Chad I appreciate you taking time to talk with us at *Coach Approach Ministries Podcast* today.

Chad: Brian I appreciate your ministry, and leadership, and really being the point person for the podcast. Of course, my hope and prayer for the podcast is that people are...That they may be entertained, but that's not my hope and prayer. My hope, prayer for it is of course that they're going to be encouraged and strengthened as coaches. Again, so God can use them to do his good work in the world, and if that happens, then this is really going to be, in my opinion, a successful podcast. I really appreciate you heading it up.

Brian: That's why I joined Coach Approach Ministries, for that very reason. To have that kind of impact in the kingdom.

Chad: That and all the ice cream you can eat.

Brian: I love it. All right Chad, thank you so much.

Chad: See you Brian.

[Outro Music]

Brian: I hope you enjoyed our interview with Chad Hall, president of Coach Approach Ministries. If you would like more information, you can go to our website, www.coachapproachministries.org and download our free eBook, *The Beginners Guide to Christian Coaching*. We're glad you joined us and hope we can help you to find focus, discover options, and take action.