



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 37: Put More of Jesus into Your Coaching

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[Intro Music]

Brian Miller: Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries Podcast, where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. Our podcast today is sponsored by our leadership coaching. This is a nine month, ICF approved, coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in April, so if you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for coach approach ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by the president of Coach Approach Ministries, Mr. Chad Hall. Welcome Chad.

Chad Hall: Brian, good to be with you today.

Brian: We want to talk about a challenge. We try to give out a monthly challenge, and our challenge this month is to put more of Jesus into your coaching. We bring something that secular coaches can't. We bring Jesus, but now a word of caution. We don't assume our client's agenda, and so, let's make sure we don't assume Jesus' agenda for our client. Chad and I are going to discuss five ways you can bring Jesus into your coaching sessions without assuming his agenda. So, Chad, I'll get started. Here's number one: exude a quiet evidence that Jesus is already working in you. How do you do that?

Chad: Yeah. Well you know Brian, I think in coaching, we talk a lot about our coaching presence, and of course that's one of the 11 ICF core competencies, but this idea of just how we show up is really important, and we have a certain presence about us. Now, all coaches should have, of course, a coaching presence, but within that, there's a wide range of different ways that we can show up. I think as Christian coaches, part of our coaching presence is we do kind of give off this aroma, to use the biblical term, kind of the aroma of God. Jesus is working in us. I think a big part of that is we exude this Christ-like character, a quiet confidence, and if you kind of think about how Jesus showed up with people, that's going to be part of our coaching presence with others. So, we're not easily disturbed by strong emotions. We're not trying to control people.

We have this confidence that God is in control and moving things toward fulfillment, so we have this trust. One of the ways I think it comes through loud and clear is if we're in a deep trust of God, we have a deep trust of the coaching process too. We don't feel like we have to hustle, or scheme, or try to control things. It just oozes through in our coaching presence.

Brian: I love that, and how do you create that? I mean, how do you create a quiet evidence in yourself of Jesus' work?

Chad: Well, I'm thinking that your clients are going to be the, I hate to use the word judge, but I guess they're the judge of that. Are you exuding that? I also think that it's helpful to review coaching conversations, especially when you feel like you got off track, and maybe you dialed up sense of trying to control things too much, or you found yourself going into an anxious place. I think any time we show up, what's the term, as in anxious presence. That's probably not really exuding Jesus' character or Jesus working in us. One thing is to recognize on your own, give feedback to yourself, of when you're getting off. I also think we should prepare ourselves, and preparing ourselves for the coaching conversation that we are going to show up with a Christ-like presence. Not just a coaching presence alone, but a Christ-like coaching presence. If we find that difficult to do, it may mean that Jesus needs to do a lot more work in us. Which, I mean, he's not done with any of us, so I like the way you phrased this earlier, evidence that Jesus is already working in you, not that Jesus worked in you. Obviously, we all have a ways to go.

Brian: Right. I'm thinking one thing is that I don't think I'm the Savior, that I'm reminded that I'm not the Savior of this conversation, that Jesus is the Savior of this conversation, and a reminder that, again, I'm not sure how he's going to show up in that way.

Chad: I think that's a great point, Brian, and I think if we look at the narrative from scripture, we see Jesus tends to show up in unusual, unexpected ways. I love the way you say that we are not the Savior, we are not the Messiah in this equation, and I think that's where, when I use language to try to engage people but not control them. I tend to think when we try to control people in situations, whether we think we're doing it or not, we're probably trying to be the Savior, we're trying to be the Messiah, we're trying to be the one who's in charge, and we are not the one in charge.

Brian: I'm thinking of ways I think I have shown up in the past. One is I have a strong belief in my client, and they can feel that. I think Jesus shows up that way. It's probably Jesus showing up in me that way, that strong belief in my client. I think there's a feeling that there's wisdom in the room, and wisdom in the room can easily be disproved by you speaking. Right? And so, it isn't that I have all the answers, it's that there's a wisdom in the room that I think comes from that presence of Christ. Certainly, I would say as a coach, you should pray before your session to prepare yourself, but that's honestly not enough. You certainly have to show up with just that smell of Jesus on you. They can tell you spent time with him.

Chad: Yeah, and I think what makes people really get a ton from coaching relationships is they do have that confidence that this is a safe person, a safe place, and I kind of get the image that they feel that they can... Not that they're leaning on us for advice, or anything like that, but they do feel like we're the kind of person who can handle what they put into the conversation. The only way we can handle that is because God has us. So, kind of get that picture of, I'm not encouraging people to do a trust fall, but if

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you imagine the client falling, and you're able to support them, it's only because you are supported by Jesus.

Brian: We're resting in Christ, and they can also kind of come into that rest with us. I think that's true, and again, I just want to reiterate, it doesn't happen because I say anything like, "I'm resting well in Jesus today." I don't think it comes from saying anything, which makes it really hard, very subjective. How does this show up? We have four other ways that I think are a little easier than "exuding." The other four start with "create." Let's go to number two. Create an awareness of how Jesus has already been at work in the client's life.

Chad: I love the way that you word that because obviously, Jesus is already at work in the client's life whether we know it, or they know it, or not. So, what's happening is we're creating an awareness, and that's coaching competency, and what kind of awareness are we inviting? Well, we can invite an awareness of how Jesus has already been at work. To your point earlier, we're not assuming the client's agenda. We're certainly not trying to lead them to some awareness that we've already had, but what we're doing is inviting them to look at how has Jesus already been at work in their life, and they're going to be the expert on that, but they're not going to really think about that necessarily unless we help create that awareness from questions, listening, through maybe some observations. I think a lot of it's just through our questioning.

Brian: I was thinking that a clue that we need to create this awareness, because we don't always have to do this, we have to be observing, paying attention, listening, in order to know when to create this type of awareness, but I think a clue that this type of awareness needs to be created is that there's an insurmountable obstacle, or it just doesn't seem like this is going to be possible, we're not going to be able to find the right people, we're not going to be able to convince the right people, different things like that. So, this is a great time as we in our model use the hour glass that we love all the time. This top piece of creating awareness, we can create an awareness of how Jesus has shown up in the past in insurmountable situations, either in the bible, or in other people's lives, or maybe appropriately in my own life.

Chad: Yeah, and as coaches, we don't talk a ton about the past, but when we do talk about the past, we tend to talk about it as a way of resourcing the present and the future. We're not looking at even necessarily finding solace in the fact that Jesus has been at work in our lives previously. We're actually looking to that to find the encouragement, the motivation, the confidence that's going to allow us to assume that Christ is going to be at work now and in the future as well. I tend to think of that as helping the client see the trajectory of what's been going on in his or her life. You look at the past to get a sense of where things are headed in the future or what's going to be true in the future based on the past. Looking at where God has been at work previously gives you that confidence that God's going to continue to be at work now and in the future. We don't necessarily point out all that and say, "See how Jesus was at work then? Well, you better have confidence that he's at work now." Instead we say, "How has Jesus shown up in the past? What light does that cast on this current situation?" We let them make that translation, or that application, into the present or into the future.

Brian: And even allow Jesus to make that determination in some type of awareness in the conversation. I also like to remind myself that awareness isn't just created by asking questions, but it can also be created by concise messages, direct messages, and a direct message here might be... I was just thinking about how when God told Moses he was going to show up in this unbelievable way, this obstacle of the Pharaoh, who's not going to let the people go, he showed him a couple things early of how he can show up. He gave him some examples of how he can show up. So, that wasn't very concise, but I think a direct message could be, "In the bible, we've seen God give hints to different characters about how he's going to show up in insurmountable situations." I don't know if that's the best example, but I do think we could do it that way.

Chad: So what's the third one Brian?

Brian: The third one is create an awareness of God-given purpose in the client's life.

Chad: I love that, yeah. One of the things this reminds me of is, you know for the last several years I've been doing a ton of research on the field of psychology, especially positive psychology, and one of the things that's absolutely necessary to live a life marked by flourishing rather than by languishing is people need a sense of purpose. And it's interesting because there are kind of two sources of purpose. One source is [sound cuts out], it's kind of self-generated. I'm reminded of the commercial that's been on since the Super Bowl where the, and I don't know who it is, Melissa McCarthy I think, that she's going around saving the whales, the rhinos, it's funny. We could say, "Well, my purpose is to save the planet, or my purpose is to help underprivileged, whatever." Those are good purposes, but they're kind of self-generated. To be a good dad could be my purpose, but it's infinitely more powerful to have a purpose that comes externally, that is given to us rather than self-generated. Creating an awareness for the client of their God-given purpose. That just helps them put themselves in a story that matters, and that is so encouraging, sobering, humbling, all of those things. I could just go on and on about that. I think this is a great, great point.

Brian: Well, it can be a subtle one too when using the idea of purpose. I remember mentor coaching a coach who was mostly in the corporate setting, and she was wanting it to have a spiritual flavor, but she was certainly, distinctly, in a corporate setting and couldn't say Corporate Jesus Coach, she was not able to do that. I was just asking her awareness questions of "What other words might infer that there's a spiritual aspect to it?" And the first word she came up with was "purpose." That this idea of purpose is a spiritual idea.

Chad: It sure is. You could create a purpose out of the material world, but it's a spiritual concept. I don't think you talk about spiritual things or purposeful things very long until people really get it deep and meaningful aspects of who they are and what they believe. One of the ways that I try to do this is in the intake session with the average coaching client. I do an intake session, and I have a series of getting to know them, helping them get to know themselves. And I ask them about their life story, take about twenty minutes to just share your life story, and then I ask them, "What's the next chapter in your story?" And then a lot of times I'll ask them, "What's the end of the book? What's this story about?" In terms of getting at that, "What's your purpose in life?" I think we have to be ready that not everybody

can have an immediate response to that. It's not like they've been walking around with their purpose statement stuck in their wallet, they're going to pull it out and read it to us. That's some deep awareness that gets created around their God-given purpose.

Brian: And you need to be listening for their purpose for them. I like the concept of we don't listen to them, we listen for them. I'm reminded of a client I had who the doors had all been closed ahead of him. He knew what the path was, but he couldn't find an open door to take that path. In fact, where he was sitting that door was being closed as well. He just was kind of overwhelmed with "I really thought God was leading me towards this, but the paths are not opening." As I listened to him discuss that path he had longed for, I heard more from him about an idea or a concept than I heard about a path. I just gave that back to him and had him think about what other paths were open to him and how he might be able to work around this idea, that concept that certainly God had given him. That was just a tremendous shift for him because he was stuck on a path as opposed to a purpose as opposed to a concept. I made that a little vague for confidentiality purposes Chad, but did that come across?

Chad: I think so, I love that distinction between a path and a purpose. A path is not a purpose. That's neat.

Brian: And we found quickly that the path that he was most likely going to take, it was in fact, instead of just thinking about this idea or researching this idea, he was going to be able to live out this idea. It was much more incarnational. and it also didn't close the other doors. It gave him even further options to advance himself. I thought that awareness was really good. I liked what you said, that people don't always say, "I know the purpose of my life," but I think we can hear it for them if we create the right questions and get them thinking in the right direction.

Chad: We're listening on that level. We're listening at that third level, hearing those big themes, able to hear and see the trajectory in a way that's different than the person actually growing all of this. We need to offer that back to them from time to time.

Brian: Number four is create space for the client to invite Jesus into the conversation. I like this one Chad, but I think we also need to create some caution in that.

Chad: We could talk about maybe how to not do this.

Brian: Sure.

Chad: Creating space for the client to invite Jesus into the situation, if we're not careful that becomes us imposing Jesus into the situation, or even we may think we're inviting but maybe it's a leading invitation. "You're not really a saint if you don't invite Jesus into the situation right now." I think just through simple things of "How do you want Jesus to be a part of this next part of our conversation?" Sometimes in the beginning of a conversation of course we're asking, "Where do you want to get by the end of our time together?" And they say, "I want clarity on x, y, or z." Just simple response of "If Jesus were really present in this conversation with us, and let's assume he is, what would he contribute to us making progress toward that outcome?" Just creating awareness that Jesus is already in the conversation gives

them permission to invite him to be here in a more explicit way. The client may have then the permission almost from us as the coach, permission to stop and pray, permission to maybe even pray silently in response to one of our powerful questions as they seek a new awareness.

Brian: Those are really good. I'm reminded that two recent coaching conversations I've had that I've prayed. And I hesitate to say, I just think this sounds terrible, I rarely pray out loud during my coaching conversations with folks. I rarely offer prayer. I think it's open, I think I can, I just don't feel like it's necessary to just overtly, "I will now pray for our coaching conversation" or close it in prayer. But the last two times that I did, there was in the conversation a sense of being overwhelmed, and I felt like at the end I was able to close with this idea of just asking God to show up and bring comfort and bring strength. I think that was helpful, but because I don't regularly do it, it certainly was a prompting from somewhere that this was a good idea to pray at the end of the coaching conversation.

Chad: And I know some coaches that they pray every time, and that's fine.

Brian: Yeah, that's great.

Chad: That's part of the routine, especially if the client is open to that and values that. Super. What we don't want to do is pray like a parachute. Emergency, the plane's crashing, let's pray. I don't know what else to do as the coach, let's pray. Sometimes it can be an excuse for poor coaching. That's not really what we want to do. I often hear some recorded sessions where people who are just learning to coach, at the very end it's kind of obvious the client didn't make a lot of progress. The coach, just in desperation, says, "How about we close in prayer?" And that's somehow going to make everything right, you know? With their coaching conversation that went very wrong.

Brian: They could've just skipped the coaching conversation and prayed. That's probably what we should've done. Just get the parachute out early.

Chad: We don't want to pray as a way to make up for our shortcomings as a coach. When we do pray, we want that to be one more strong thing that happens in the conversation.

Brian: The best prayer I've seen in coaching conversations, and I rarely, rarely do this. But it's to have the client close in prayer. It certainly has to be a sense that that's already, it needs to be not out of the blue. That there's a sense that we've invited God into the conversation. That there's been a sense of Jesus being a partner in this conversation. And then, I think it's this awareness of me showing up, exuding Christ's presence, is I don't feel like I have to pray because I'm the coach, because I'm the pastor, because I'm the expert, but that the client can then bring their new awareness straight into a conversation with Jesus. And whatever that might entail.

Chad: And I think you saying it's the client that prays in those instances and not you as the guy in charge, I think gets back to what we said earlier about not trying to be the Messiah. We're not trying to be the Savior, let the client be the expert, let the client be the one who prays, let the client be the one who invites Jesus in in the way that the client really wants to. I think I like what you're saying that the Scripture says that the Scripture will blow wherever it wants to blow, and if it feels like the conversation

is being blown toward closing in prayer, we are sensitive to that as Christian coaches, and we certainly invite that to happen, but we don't try to blow it in that direction.

Brian: It also really empowers the client to be the expert of their own spiritual life. That they're praying for their situation going forward. It certainly is a little different than me going to pray for them, but coaching certainly takes a different tack at different times.

Chad: I tell you, before we get to number five, when you say praying for them, I find that I do far more praying for my client outside of the conversation. Again, that's also a way to prevent me from trying to "fix them" through my prayer. "God, please help Brian."

Brian: You hear this at the end of sermons a lot. You hear they're praying, but they're not actually praying, they're reiterating their three points. Instead of talking to God, now they're praying to me. They're not talking to God.

Chad: They're wanting me to overhear their conversation with God and hope it will stir me to something. But I'm like you Brian, I rarely pray in the conversation, but I very frequently pray before the conversation and after the conversation. You pray for the people who matter to you, and if your clients don't matter to you, you probably need to find a different line of work.

Brian: Here's number five: create an awareness of how Jesus might partner with the client. This is the last one I came up with, but I think I like it the best. Because we're not making an assumption of how Jesus might partner. That Jesus is the fix-it guy. Even when you're talking about the preacher reiterating the three points to God, he's talking about "Here's the three points. I don't want you to miss how you're supposed to show up." Open this up for us Chad, how do we create an awareness of how Jesus might want to partner with the client?

Chad: I think we're often asking clients what resources do they have. Who are the people around them that can be supportive? And by the way, not just in accountability, but often when we're designing actions, all parts of coaching. We do assume the client is creative and resourceful. We don't assume they're the only creative resource in the world. We're always helping them to look around and see what sort of resources are available. We'd be grossly mistaken and didn't see Jesus as the ultimate resource. Again, I want to be careful here that we're not just saying, "Hey God, I want to do this, help me" as if God's our errand boy. We're going to get Jesus to come to our aid in this endeavor we want to accomplish. Inviting them to leverage Jesus as a resource of wisdom, of guidance, of security, of confidence, of character development. He is the Word who was God, was with God, and created everything that is, so he's pretty competent at helping. We'd be remiss if we didn't invite them to consider partnering with Jesus after the conversation.

Brian: I distinctly remember a time that I was being coached, and it was on a pretty serious topic to me, it was about who I might disciple at this point. That's a key element in all of life, who you're going to disciple. It was really important to me anyway. And my coach asked a question, and I wish I could say just exactly how he said it, but that's probably a bad idea to try to preplan a question. But he simply brought to my awareness that Jesus is here, and he wants to help and he'd like to know who you'd like

him to do for you. Now, I didn't take that as I had rubbed the lamp, and now I had three wishes. It didn't impact me of "Oh, I know what I want Jesus to do." It impacted me with this new awareness that Jesus does want me to disciple people, and he's willing to do something to help me get there. I was able to articulate some things, it was a wishlist, but it didn't feel like I was demanding it, but I felt like I really get to talk to God about this and share with him. It was just so powerful, that awareness and openness in how Jesus was going to partner.

Chad: I think we look at the Scripture narrative though, and we see that Jesus is not just concerned with high minded spiritual things, Heaven and Hell sorts of things, he's also very concerned with safety, security, healing, these sorts of things, but he's also pretty concerned with just mundane things. People running out of wine at a wedding. Inviting the client to consider how Jesus might partner could be on lots of levels with what they're going through right now. I think something as simple as asking, "Where do you need Jesus to show up in this? What part of this is yours and what part of it's Jesus'?" Just getting people to consider that and invite Jesus in to do his part. If you're doing things that don't require Jesus, you're probably aiming too low. We want our clients to stretch, and part of the stretching is that they can't make it all the way. Because they have a God-given purpose, they are doing things that require the activity of Jesus and to just be aware of what part is His and what part is the client's.

Brian: It's reminding me of a client that I've had recently, and he is a staff pastor. Out of what he's supposed to do, he has a great plan, but what he can't plan for is how people show up, how people buy in and because church is such a volunteer level program, he certainly can't guarantee it or pull rank. That is a frustrating place to be. This awareness of how Jesus can partner. "What is Jesus' responsibility in the growth of the church?" is a real serious question that can bring relief, comfort, a lot of things, to the client.

Chad: As you describe that scenario, I'm thinking that recognizing what part of that is Jesus' and what's up to the client, probably has a more anxiety reducing effect than the strongest prescription medicine. We get anxious about things that we can't influence, that we want to see happen, but we can't control. It's just not our stuff, it's up to somebody else, and all we can do is invite Jesus to be a part of that. I think God welcomes that kind of partnering with us.

Brian: Direct message could be the Bible tells us to cast our anxiety upon Jesus. You just see what they want to do with that, you can just stop there and let them figure out what that looks like. Chad I appreciate so much you joining today for this podcast.

Chad: It was fun Brian.

Brian: And thank you for joining us. This podcast again was sponsored by our Certificate in Leadership Coaching. It's a nine-month, ICF approved, coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in April, so if you're interested, go to our website at <http://www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow>. We'll see you next week.

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