

Eleven Children and a Global Mission

Todd and Beth Guckenberger connected at Indiana University where, they say, they majored in Campus Crusade (Cru). The mission trips they took then gave them a heart and a vision for the world.

When they finished their education, they headed to Mexico to work with a mission there. Before long they were leading their own mission focused on orphan care. When they weren't able to have children, they adopted twin young teen girls and life changed. Those girls, and their struggles from their challenging childhoods, introduced them to new understanding of the needs of orphans.

Their ministry, Back2Back Ministries, has been called "the best orphan care organization operating in the world today."

The Guckenbergers say, "There are 163 million orphans in the world today. We're on a mission to change that."

In the meantime, God gave them three biological children; then added six more through adoption and fostering. What they learned from parenting 11 children and their now global work with orphans has given them transformational insights into what happens to children growing up in difficult, dangerous, destructive situations.

That's what we talked about when I interviewed them for my *When You Love a Prodigal* podcast. Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, abandonment often act out, rebel and make destructive choices, not because they are bad or rebellious but because their brains have been seriously affected by what has happened or been done to them.

So Beth and Todd found tough love and harsh punishment did not

help. It takes good boundaries and clear consequences but they must be applied with love and mercy and grace.

Please join me for this week's episode to gain greater insight into living with and loving a prodigal—and even children who seem to do all right. {eo}

Judy Douglass is a global writer, speaker and encourager. Her most recent book, *When You Love a Prodigal*, has ignited her podcast of the same name. She directs Women's Resources at Cru.

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