

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules **Episode 37: Embracing Small in a Bigger-Is-Better World**

Amy

"Just be yourself." Sounds like it should be the easiest thing in the world, right?

Cheri

But for some of us, it's anything but easy to "be ourselves." Inside we're thinking, "I'd love to 'be myself' — but I'm not sure who I even am!"

Amy

One of our readers put it this way: "The challenge is to NOT self-censor for fear that if I were truly me, I would be rejected and found seriously lacking. "Be you" is the gauntlet to run. Scary stuff!"

Cheri

Well, this is Cheri Gregory...

Amy

...and I'm Amy Carroll...

Cheri

...and you're listening to "Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules."

Amy

Our guest today is Emily Freeman, author of ***Grace for the Good Girl*** and ***Simply Tuesday: Small-Moment Living in a Fast-Moving World***.

Cheri

If you sometimes find it overwhelming to "just be yourself," Emily has words of relief and rest for you today!

Before we dive in I just have to say it hit me this morning that you're on and you're the one who inspired this podcast. This is so exciting! I got all teary-eyed. I'm like it was because of this thing that I did with you —The Artists Bench—that I did with you earlier this year ... you kept insisting that the message was more important than the method. I was so stuck on a particular format. You gave me the freedom to try something different, and now Amy and I are...she can't get rid of me. It's very cool.

Amy

We're more fun than should be allowed!

Emily

I love it!

Cheri

And that's been the biggest unexpected part. But we can do a whole interview on that some other time.

Alright so we're going to be have some questions out of your book *Simply Tuesday* and I wanted to start by you starting out telling us about the title. Where does this title *Simply Tuesday* even come from?

Emily

Yeah, so well years ago when I, even before had any books come out I did a weekly link up on my blog called "Tuesdays Unwrapped." And it was really just inviting women who read the blog to sort of recognize their ordinary every day moments and sort of celebrate them. Because at that time my husband was a youth pastor, and so Sundays were really a Sabbath or a restful day for us. So I just chose another day of the week to be my rest day. Which at the time was easy to do because the kids were little. So it wasn't like I was taking them to and from school, it was a little it easier, I had a little more control over my schedule that way.

So I just chose Tuesday, and I started writing it on the blog. And I thought *why not just invite other people to join in with me?* Because if I'm struggling to sort of recognize the sacred and the lovely in the midst of my everyday ordinary, I'm sure I'm not the only one. And so that was just, it was really just like let's just choose Tuesday because it was just seemed like the most ordinary day of the week. Wednesdays is like the middle day of the week. Thursday's a great night for TV. Friday is, "its Friday," Saturday and Sunday - the weekend, and Monday it's the first day of the week.

It's like every day has a thing, except for Tuesday. And if y'all pay attention, Like if you watch movies or if you listen on TV shows whenever they're trying to convey that this day is really

boring or nothing happens, it's always a Tuesday. Or like in commercials they'll say, "Do you have a bad case of the Tuesdays?" and then they'll say "Come on and get a discount!" They give you money off food just because it's Tuesday. Because it's like this ordinary day.

So I think in our culture we all agree that Tuesday is sort of an ordinary day and the reason why and so that's where *Simply Tuesday* sort of started being born from.

Also there's a song by Sara Mason called *Tuesday*. And in that song she sings about, the lyric goes, "Tuesday after a reckless and used day I was running and running without a chance to stop and chat at the sky."

So, that also inspire the name of my blog back in the day we used to be chatting at the sky but also that idea that on Tuesdays are the day were sort of running and running, we're doing the next thing and just this book just sort of came from wanting to celebrate my smallness in the presence of Christ and where better to learn to do that then in the midst of my ordinary life.

Amy

I read your book after my book came out and it was exactly what my soul needed. Because you talked a lot about the competitiveness of our world. And even our listeners that aren't writers, the competitiveness of our whole world not just a writer's world. So speak to that a little bit.

Emily

You know, when you think about competition, when we're competing only one person can win. And you're all faced the same direction, so everyone has the same idea in mind and only one person gets to win. And that's fine if you're running a race. But when you're living a life, if we're all competing and running in the same direction and thinking that one of us has to win, then we're never relating with one another. We're only competing with each other. So of course that comes out in the writing world, and maybe for me in my life that's where I see it the most. But it also can come out just in conversation. Sort of like, did you ever feel like you're in a conversation with someone and they're not really listening; they're just trying to wait their turn so they can save their thing that's going to wow you, change your life, or make them sound great?

Cheri

I am that person unfortunately I'm learning not to be so much.

Amy

That is not true friend!

Emily

You're a great listener Cheri!

But I think it comes out of really subtle ways that we would never call it like, "oh I'm a listening competitor." We would never call it that. But on the level of our soul I wonder if that's really kind of what it is, is that I'm going to win at this relationship.

I've realized that when you think about when you're running a race you're both facing not towards one another. So what I'm sort of learning as it takes two people to run a race. So even if I'm with someone else that brings out that competitive spirit within me—because you know those people in your life this will trigger that. Sometimes I am that person. But recognizing that even if they are doing that, even if that's the name of the game, I don't have to engage in it and I can take myself out. Just refuse to run. And that takes some times a minute by minute setting of the mind to do that. But that's part of what of the message *Simply Tuesday* has been for me.

During a really overwhelming and stressful time in my life had a friend, counselor, mentor friend tell me ... I was hoping he's going to get me some really helpful advice on how to organize myself and how to really get a handle on my overwhelm.

But this friend invited me to celebrate my smallness in the midst of my overwhelming life. So that phrase "celebrate your smallness" has really become for me a mantra. Because in those times when I feel that I have to compete, when I feel that I have to grow bigger, that phrase has brought me back down to myself, it's brought me back down to Christ and helped me recognize that really is where relief is found. It seems like relief will be found climbing higher, and gaining more and being more successful that relief is really found in settling in and being who I am in the presence of Christ and allowing myself to be loved without anything to prove.

Cheri

There is a particular line that when I was reading *Simply Tuesday* for the first time where I actually almost had to close the book and cry because I knew we couldn't be friends anymore. You said, "your limits can be a gift." And I was like *what kind of friend says that? No, no, friends tell us "I know you can do it, I believe in you!"* They pull us by her bootstraps and they cheer us on. How on earth can limits be a gift?

Emily

It's such a backwards way of thinking, isn't it? When I think about the way that God came to earth, he could have come in any way he chose. He could have come as a king, he could have come as head of an army. In fact that's the way they expected him to come. But instead he came as a baby. It doesn't get much more limited than that. And so, how can I then look at my own life and say that I would be so much better off if I had limitless potential when the way that he chose to come – and it was the greatest rescue mission in history – that he chose to come as a baby, fully dependent on this young woman and a young man. Completely helpless,

submitted himself to time, gravity. I mean it just blows my mind. It's not the way I would have done it. It's not that I would want to do it now. But it's the way of Jesus. And therefore, it's our way.

I was watching my son one day trying to create something, he was trying to make an airplane. He went to he went through this phase where he was really into drawing airplanes. And I walked into the kitchen and he was very frustrated. He was maybe six at the time. And what I saw around him was a bunch of crumpled paper on the ground, a stack of paper about an inch high that he had gotten from the computer. (Why do they take paper from the computer printer? Take it from the printer instead of just using like scratch kid paper. They have to use the grown-up printer paper.)

But he's got a stack of it about it inch high, he had a jar filled with crayons, he would make one or two lines trying to make this airplane is just didn't look right to him. He crumpled paper up to it on the ground.

The main thing that I realized as I watched him, I thought *This kid needs some limits. I wonder what would happen if I gave him one sheet of paper and two crayons.* He would be forced to be creative and even the mess-ups he would be forced to use them to reveal what I call the full glory of the airplane he was trying to draw.

Because sometimes it's within those limits when the greatest potential of creativity can actually come out. But it weren't for those limits of one crayon or two crayons and one sheet of paper, he would never be forced to be creative.

And so I think that's a lesson I've learned from watching him and watching the kids try to create, but also thinking about the way in which Jesus came. Gosh you all, I just would've done it so differently. So differently! All the resources that you could had as God of the universe but he chose not to hold onto those.

Amy

Well, and I loved at the end of the book it's kind of related to what you're talking about that we say we want to do big things for God. And as I read that I thought yeah, I do. But big things we measure those by numbers. And you said, you flipped it on its head and you said no we should want to do things for a big God. What's the difference in this two ideas?

Emily

I think sometimes it can look really similar on the outside.

Someone is doing something big for God or somebody's doing something small for a big God might look the same. But it really comes down to that place deep within us that only we and God can access. I think we know the difference in ourselves intuitively of when we are embracing our own smallness and bringing glory to a big God or when we are trying to become big ourselves. And so, really it comes down to sometimes for me the difference between is my soul shaking on the edges on the inside. Do I feel a sense of anxiety, do I feel pressured to measure and control the results and if I do, then I kind of know that sort of my alert, then I know what's my motivation here?

I think that there can be a danger sometimes when we try to monitor our motivations too much because then we'll never do anything. Then we'll think we have to our motive are *completely* pure I'm wanting to glorify a big God...and I mean, as a good girl, that's how I grew up. I was always doubting myself. I was always thinking if my motives weren't completely good then I can't do this thing.

But what I've learned is, and what I'm learning, is that this side of heaven I don't know that our motives will ever be 100% pure. But Jesus says that we can move anyway, because we're safe in his presence and he goes with us and he's big enough and intuitive enough and strong enough and compassionate enough to filter those matters for us and to love us anyway through it. And the results are in his hands no matter where they came from, from me. If that makes sense.

So that's a great relief, because sometimes we can be paralyzed to move it all so we wonder *Am I doing this to become big or am I doing this because God is big?* and honestly it's kind of both. I think that's the great beauty and gift of his grace is that he will, he is going to show himself strong either way. And I can trust independent him in that and through that and that is such a gift, that is such a gift.

Cheri

One of our interns picked to a particular quote that she wanted you to unpack a little bit in practical ways. She said on page 96 you talk about being a slow processor, something you know that I identify with. I don't understand anything going on in my brain for a 24 to 48 hours if then.

The quote is, "What part of your personality seems to fight against your own perceived ability to succeed? What might happen if you stop bullying your personality into submission and instead began to welcome it as a kind friend?"

What are some practical ways we can stop bullying our personalities into submission and start welcoming them as a kind friends, especially if we have a personality that doesn't compare favorably to what's currently in vogue?

Emily

That's such a Great point, and I do think it starts with recognizing the culture we live in may value certain personality traits but that doesn't mean that they're the best ones to have or the only ones that are admirable.

In the United States, we value quick results, we value hurry, we value a certain type of success and what that looks like. And those of us to have qualities that are praised in our culture then we, I think we sometimes become slaves to those qualities and we want more and more praise and admiration, and that is its own burden.

And then on the other side those of us who don't have those qualities, who can't, for example, I write on a blog, blogging can be a fast-paced form of writing. And sometimes if you're not writing things that are currently happening in the news or resonating with people right now then that blog post won't be shared and it won't be resonated with or read quickly because it's not relevant or top of mind to people right then.

I can write about the election maybe in 2019. But it's gone, no one cares now. So, it's hard for me to process current events quickly. However, one way I'm practically trying to embrace my way of processing I'm learning, *Okay I may not be able to process a current event post quickly, but that's not what I say I offer anyway.*

Cheri

Sure.

Emily

What I write about is helping people create space for their soul to breathe. Because that's where I feel like, that's something unique that I have to offer. So I think recognizing our personality. First of all, knowing ourselves well enough to embrace that and accept that in ourselves is first. Because before I, I used to feel a little bit of shame that I was a little more gentle or that was more, like you said, it took a little longer to process things. I used to have the sense that maybe that was wrong or maybe I need to confess that or maybe need to be more out-spoken.

Rather than recognizing the difference between conviction of sin and embracing the unique way I'm made. I think when we have done something wrong, our God is very gracious to point that out specifically. And then we can confess that and move on. But when we have this overarching sense of shame or it just feels like *I'm wrong*. Not where I did something wrong but where I am intrinsically feel wrong and myself, that's shame and that never comes from her father. And I think that's for this personality thing can start to come out. Is when we start to

feel a sense of shame for who we are rather than something that we did on the outside. That's the difference between external and internal sort of identity.

And so I think recognizing certain parts of our personality and the ways that we're made a lot of that just comes with time and maturity and with receiving the complements that others give us and hearing them and embracing them.

I don't know, sometimes for me, when someone complements something that I can do well, it's easy to dismiss it because it comes easily and sometimes we think if something comes easily that doesn't count because you didn't work hard for it. And that's another trait that is praised in our culture is *Hard work begets results*. And therefore we can dismiss those things that come naturally.

But really, those things that come naturally to us do not necessarily come naturally to everyone. That's our giftedness. That's something that we're to embrace. And to nurture and to receive as a gift from God. To nurture it, to pay attention to it. And then offer it as a gift to others, for their benefit and God's glory.

Amy

Head over to GritNGraceGirls.com/episode37 to enter this week's drawing for a copy of Emily's book, ***Simply Tuesday: Small-Moment Living in a Fast-Moving World***.

You'll also find some great freebies from Emily, this week's Digging Deeper Download, Bible verse art, and transcript.

Cheri

We hope you've enjoyed Episode #37 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules!

Amy

Join us next week, for Part 2 of our amazing interview with Emily Freeman!

Cheri

For today, **grow your grit ... embrace God's grace ...** and when you run across a bad rule, go right on ahead and

Amy 'n' Cheri

BREAK IT!