

## ***Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules***

Episode #63: Recaptured — Finding the Girl Inside You Again

with Chrystal Evans Hurst

**Amy:**

When women sign up on our website [gritngracegirls.com](http://gritngracegirls.com) for the podcast in their inbox every week, they receive a set of 12 permission slips to help them learn to “break bad rules”, as we say around here.

**Cheri:**

Sometimes they even email us and share their struggles with Perfectionism, People-Pleasing, and being an HSP — a Highly Sensitive Person in a pretty insensitive world.

**Amy:**

And we really love hearing from you, because then, we know we’re not the only ones who struggle! One listener wrote this to us:

“...a very loud voice constantly echoes in my mind that I am not doing enough for God, that I am not living but watching by the sidelines and will die having missed "the ride", and that **I can't figure out who I am even after all these decades of life.**”

**Cheri:**

Just listening to you read that, I can feel the panic rising in my own chest! Do you think this is something that just <ahem> “older” women wrestle with?

**Amy:**

Does 50 count as “older”, ‘cause that’s my upcoming birthday. I may be in the older category now, but I glad I’m still growing! These pain points are good news because we’re still growing!

**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:**

Today, we’re talking with Chrystal Evans Hurst, author of ***She’s Still There: Rescuing the Girl in You***. Chrystal is a writer, speaker, and worship leader in addition to serving as the

chief executive operating officer in her home as a wife, mother of five, and grandmother to one.

**Cheri:**

Chrystal firmly believes God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans that I have for you..." and today she's here to help YOU believe and apply that truth to YOUR life!

**Amy:**

Well Chrystal, I am months away from a significant birthday – I'm turning 50 this year! And so I'm so in love with the title of your new book, '*She's Still There: Rescuing The Girl In You.*' Tell us about the title!

**Chrystal:**

It was an accident, actually. I was on the phone with a publisher and they were asking me you know, "What do you want to write about?" and I was rambling on and in the passing of a sentence I just said, "You know I just want to remind every woman that the girl she wanted to be that she never knew she could be, that she thought the time was passed for her to be, that girl is still there." They were like, "Ooohhh"...so it was that kind of thing. But I will tell you that when my daughter who is now 25, was 19, I don't remember the decision she was facing, but she was really just overwhelmed with a choice that she had to make and couldn't figure out what to do. And I remember having a conversation with her and telling her. I said, "This is going to sound very 'Oprah-ish', but you need to remember a point, if there is a point, where your girl felt good about her life. Like, what was it that made her feel good, what was it that she was excited about, what was it that she was passionate about? It could be when you were 10, it could be when you were 16; it could be whatever. But what was that? Why don't you reconnect to that person and ask her – what would she do right now with the decision she has to make?" We carry with us life – life experiences and sometimes that 's baggage and sometimes that 's not. But we find ourselves in places I think where we're totally disconnected with the clear choice or decision that the best of the girl in us would make. Now that girl could be a past girl or a dream of a girl – the person that I want to be - what would she do right now? You know I have to make that decision every time I go to Panera and I'm looking at those chocolate chip cookies. What would the girl who I want to be do right now? Would she add it on for .99 cents or would she skip it? And so it came from her and I said, "What would your girl tell you to do? Get with her and ask her." So it was kind of an outgrowth of a couple of different things but because we all refer to each other as 'girl' – girl this, girl that, girl you need to get your act together, girlfriend – I just thought women will identify with that. They'll know what it means

when we say she's still there; rescue the girl in you – who's that girl? Well, maybe you lost her. Maybe you never arrived. Maybe you've just forgotten. Maybe you never knew. You just lost hope and you never knew who that person could be. It doesn't matter. That girl – the best of who you're supposed to be – she's still there.

**Amy:**

So good.

**Cheri:**

It's totally resonating with me, you know, it's strange to be almost 50 and trying to figure out who I am and yet, at the same time, I'm grateful for the opportunity. A lot of people never get the chance.

**Chrystal:**

That's the wonderful thing, I think, about this concept. I thought it was for me, but I'm finding it's really for so many. It doesn't matter if you're 20, like my daughter was, or if you're 50. We ask this question and for most of us, we've probably asked this question, "Where's that girl?" We've asked it multiple times for different reasons. I asked this question as a 25 year old who was recovering from a really difficult relationship break. I asked this question as a 30 something year old mom who was so sick of changing dirty diapers. I've asked this question when I turned 40, just because I turned 40. You know? I think we ask ourselves these questions for different reasons, in different seasons. Sometimes it is just time based, sometimes it is situation based or relationship based – I think the great thing is we can be comfortable with asking the question, because we're always a work in progress. We're always discovering something about ourselves we didn't know. So when we realize that there's some kind of disconnect – or as I like to say, cognitive dissonance - what I expect is not what is, that we're free to ask that question to seek out the answer and then to realign or recalibrate our lives accordingly. That's part of living; it's part of the journey.

**Amy:**

There's so much grace in that, that's it's a process because, even, reading through a little bit of your book and looking at the chapter titles and that kind of thing. I kind of still, until you just said that, was thinking of it as a one-time reconnection, so thanks for giving us the grace to be in process.

**Chrystal:**

No, you know it's like your Internet connection. You know, sometimes, for no reason at all – you just realize, it's not connecting. So you may turn off your Wi-Fi and turn it back on. And we don't – if it happens too much, that's problematic. But if it happens every once in a while, you just know that it's a part of the glitch of technology. And because it is what it is, you fix it and then you move on. And I think

that's how we have to look at our life. As a part of living, sometimes there's a glitch, so you do what you've got to do to recalibrate and then you move on. It's not the end of the world or it doesn't mean it's not working or it doesn't exist, you just fix it and you move on.

**Amy:**

For reforming perfectionists that is radical! Thank you!

**Cheri:**

Okay, we've got you for like 3 hours, right? Because I just want to keep listening and listening! I can't even tell you the notes I'm taking. I'm joking, I know we have a time limit here. Alright, well you probably know that our podcast is aimed toward women who are like us – reforming perfectionists and people pleasers and so chapter 4 – Good Girl, His Girl really stood out. And I'm going to read a portion where you describe yourself and I'm like, Yes! Yes! Yes!

“I was smart, a straight 'A' student, and usually the teacher's pet. As a teenager I was a good girl by all standards, and I liked it that way. I was proud to know that I pleased my parents and myself by doing things well. I was focused. In charge. Maybe a bit bossy at times. I knew what was important and I ran hard after those things.”

How did that description change by the end of your high school years and how did that change happen?

**Chrystal:**

Well, I think – and maybe this isn't the right thing to say but this is how I feel today. Y'all are the perfection recovery experts so correct me if I'm wrong. I think that while you can learn to recognize your tendency, and while you can learn the actions you can take to combat your tendency, largely your tendencies remain your tendencies. And you can practice and get better at it, but you know, just our DNA, the way we're carved on the inside, in our heads and in our hearts, we just kind of have a leaning. So when you ask me, how did that change, a lot of it, honestly, has not changed. I've just gotten really good at fixing it or correcting the glitch. I've got a lot better at recognizing when a glitch is coming. And that was a major glitch in my life, to keep using that terminology, and because it was a public glitch – it wasn't a glitch I could hide, I mean it was part of what I think has helped me to learn to love the skin that I am in is that when you are forced to learn to love it because you can't hide behind a mask. You have a choice at that point, you can either go crazy and live your life in shame, or you just say, well, it is what it is, so, you know, I'm going to do the best that I can, because I can't hide. So part of what happened then was that I couldn't hide. You know, no, I'm actually not the good girl that you guys thought I was. And I actually don't always make good decisions. And so what I learned to adopt then, that I have been forever grateful to continue to live under the banner of,

is the beauty of God's love and grace and mercy for me, and that regardless of what I do, that there is a value that I have despite my actions. Now my actions totally – the decisions I make – they totally effect my fellowship with God, they effect the consequences, good or bad, that I live with – but they don't effect my value. Now that is a concept that I have had to continue to repeat to myself because of my leaning and because of my tendencies. But it is a truth that I learned in my early 20's that I have hung onto for dear life for the whole rest of the ride.

**Amy:**

So beautiful. Well, okay, so Chrystal we're going to talk about the elephant in the room, which is, you talk about your family a lot in this book and so (for) any of our listeners who may not have met you yet, tell us about your family.

**Chrystal:**

So I'm married to Jesse, 16 years. We have 5 children, we're a blended family when we got married each one of us brought a girl and gave a girl as a gift to each other on our wedding day, we added 3 boys after that. So our kids range from girls, 25 and 21 right now, to boys are almost 14, 12, and 8. So I have a lot going on, and my oldest daughter is married, and she has a daughter, so I'm a grandmother, as well!

**Amy:**

The cutest thing y'all! You need to follow Chrystal on Instagram and see pictures of that sweet baby!

**Chrystal:**

So, yeah, we have a lot going on, and it's a lot of work but it's a lot of fun.

**Amy:**

Well, and the family you were born into, too, had such an influence. When I was reading through chapter 4, you talked about these bad decisions that you made as *drift*. So how did the values that had been instilled in you by your parents feel when you were drifting and how did those embedded beliefs help you find your way back to the girl that you had wanted to be?

**Chrystal:**

So my parents are Tony and Louis Evans. My dad has faithfully served as senior pastor of the church he founded for 40 years. I'm a church girl. When I think about my story and people ask me the questions, you know, "Why do you think you drifted?" I always think about Eve, and I think about the fact that she was the first woman in creation and she had the perfect Father and the perfect setup and the perfect husband, because they both had been setup just so well. But because they were human and God gave them the greatest gift that he could ever give, which is the freedom to choose. They chose to not obey. They chose. And if she had – with the

perfect set up, with the perfect Daddy, in the perfect situation, could make an independent, incorrect decision, then so can we all. So we always face the reality of the opportunity that we have to make choices, and I'm no different. But when I was making those choices, and you know I talk in the book a lot about why those happened, and I think you know Satan is really good. He's been doing what he's been doing for a long time, and I think he observes us and knows what our tendencies are. And then allows life to present opportunities to us in a certain way where we have to make choices. And if we're not on guard - you know the Bible talks about being ready for battle, and if we're not ready for battle, totally guarded with truth, we can so easily be guided or misguided away. So that's kind of what happened, but in that

circumstance, I mean it was huge cognitive dissonance. I mean whenever you are acting in a way that is not consistent with your upbringing or your belief system, it creates that, but we override that because there's something more that we think we want. So we kind of quiet down the voices that are trying speak to us, the Holy Spirit in us, our conscious – we 'shush' to those, because there's something we're focused on. Wherever your eyes lead, your feet follow. And so I just think that's totally what happened, but the goodness of God is that as soon as we turn our eyes back to Him. He says seek and you will find. Draw near to me, James 4:8, and I will draw near to you. He doesn't move. We turn our eyes back towards Him. Turn your eyes upon Jesus and the things, everything else, grows strangely dim in light of His beauty and grace. So as soon as I made the decision to turn my eyes back, he never moved; he was waiting for me. Since then, every time, because none of us are perfect, he's consistently been there again showering love, grace, and mercy as I learn to be faithful.

**Amy:**

So beautiful. Well, Cheri and I both were talking, before we talked to you this morning that your voice in the book is so engaging. You're so vulnerable. You're so real, and you're also so funny! I mean I found myself laughing out loud! Thanks for all of that.

**Chrystal:**

I'm so glad to know that because in my family, my parents have 4 kids. I'm the oldest of the 4. Don't tell anybody I told you that. But I'd get away with murder, because I'm told I have a baby face. Then, now you know. I'll be 50 in not too long. But you know I'm the one that was not funny. When I would try to be funny. Like everybody would be quiet and then my youngest brother would make a cricket sound, because you're not funny right now. So when you say that to me, I'm so happy! I'm so happy!

**Amy:**

You have sharpened your funny bone!

**Cheri:**

The Hershey bar with almond story, you just had me hook, line, and sinker! And just the way you drew it out. I was there, every step of the way! She's on to me! She's in my head! I think the beauty of that one is we all have our Hershey bar with almond, and I'm now willing to listen to anything you say because you're not coming at me from a top down, you know preaching at me. You've been there. Clearly, you've been there. You've had the similar thoughts I've had, and you know, at least I'm going to give you the authority to tell me whatever you're going to tell me which leads to the next question. In *She's Still There*, you give six steps for finding our way back, and I love that phrasing. Finding our way back just sounds so inviting. And so, you've got Fight For Your Life, Look at Your Life, Embrace Your Life, Develop Your Life, Encourage Your Life, and Choose Your Life. And since I'm a total nerd, I actually searched the eBook for the word 'choose,' and you use it like a billion times. So choice must be a really, really an important thing for you. So tell us a little bit about these six steps. And part of what we're doing is a series on 'grit,' and it seems like grit and choice go closely together.

**Chrystal:**

So there's a journey, and if you can think back to the story, and I tell the story in the book of the girl who fell down the well, little Jessica. There's a progression when you are rescuing someone. The first thing is, you realize they need rescuing, and you have to make the decision to engage in that rescue process. And so when that little girl fell down into the well, of course everybody wanted her to live. And they fought to save her. But what we need to recognize is that when we're the person that's down at the bottom underneath, we have to be willing to fight for ourselves. It's not anyone else's job. And sure, people should encourage you, and they should love on you, and in the body of Christ, as sisters in Christ, we should reach out and give a hand. But we all know that if there's someone who needs help, and they don't want help themselves there's really nothing you can do for them. So as an individual, you have to be willing to fight for your own life. In order to do that, you have to be willing first to assess the situation. Why am I here? So that's the second section of the book. Look at Your Life – what is going on around me? What can I use? What hands are extended for me to get myself out of here? What is here for me to access? How long can I last? Do I need to move? What is the assessment of the situation? Before you can bring in the cranes to rescue baby Jessica, you've got to know, if I put this down in the ground is everything going to come crumbling down around? You've to look at it to know what you're working with. And a lot of people don't want to look at their lives. They just want to move forward. But what happens is when we don't look – and I'm not a person who says, "Stay in counseling over the same thing for 30 years." I'm just like, you gotta look, but then you've got to move forward. We don't want to get stuck looking. But if you never look, that stuff you don't look at will come back to bite you. So I just think you have to take the time to look. The third thing is Embrace Your Life. Is whatever you find, it is what it is. You

know what I mean? And so, if your pain is your pain, it is what it is. If your joy is your joy, it is what it is. If your history is your history, it is what it is. So all of it, the good parts, the parts we love to talk about, and the bad parts, the parts we wish had never happened – it's a part of what makes you, you. The gifts that God has gave you, the abilities that he's enabled you with, the interests, your passions, your unique personality. We spend so much time wishing we were other people, wishing we had other people's talents or wishing that we didn't have a certain history, or wishing we had somebody else's husband. Embrace YOUR life, you know? Cause you're not going to move forward until you're willing to do that. Develop Your Life – the book is like – the first 3 chapters, I'm rubbing you like a friend on the back. Like, it's going to be okay. Cry it out. Let me encourage you. And then the last 3 sections of the book are like, alright, now get up! We got to get up and go.

<LAUGHING>

**Amy:**

A little kick in the tushie!

**Chrystal:**

Exactly. All of your life is about the focus that you need to live your life, and what's involved with that. Making a decision, having a direction, you know exercising discipline, all of those things. It's the mechanics of what it means to get yourself out of the ditch. Encourage Your Life is when you are doing the disciplined work, the developmental work, you do get tired, you get tired. So be your own cheerleader. And many times we want other people to encourage us, and we won't encourage ourselves. What does it mean to coach your life? How do you do that? I walk you through that. And then Choosing Your Life is the fact that you know this whole progress is a wheel. And it turns. You realize that you want to move. That's the first 3 sections. Then the last 3 sections, it takes discipline to move, you've got to develop muscle to move, you've got to encourage yourself to keep moving, but here's the rub – you're gonna have a point in your life, and we all do, multiple times, where you're just not going to want to. And the only thing that separates you from continuing to go and stopping where you are is the choice. And that's why you hear that word repeated a million times because none of this works, none of it, if you don't wake up every day and choose the small steps, the small things, that you can do to keep your life moving forward.

**Amy:**

Well, and that so leads me to ask you about your podcast, because I really was oblivious to podcasts until Cheri asked me to cohost a podcast! And then I was like, 'I should listen to Chrystal's session from She Speaks!' So that's where I started! SO I recently started listening to your podcast, and I love it, because it's very practical - how to make choices every day to make your life into what you want it to be. It's fantastic! Talk to us about your favorite thing about podcasting.

**Chrystal:**

It's faster than writing.

**Amy:**

Amen!

**Chrystal:**

Kinda sorta. I mean if you do the whole thing from start to finish yourself, and the editing and the graphics and all that, then maybe not. In terms of content driven – I mean I've done, and I've said this in my podcast class – if I sit down and write on a good day, you know, on an overflow day, in 30 minutes, maybe I'm going to get out 2,000-2,500 words, maybe. You know podcasting, if I'm flowing, oh, my gosh, that's 7-10,000 words! You know? You could write a book in a week! So in terms of just the speed at which you can communicate and then the flexibility with it – you know people can – they don't have to sit and look, you can listen while they're doing other things or while you're riding in the car. So I love it for those reasons. I will say that it has made me lazy with writing and one of my goals this year is to be just as consistent with my writing voice as I am with my speaking voice. Because I think it's a different muscle but it's just as important.

**Amy:**

You're in my ears while I'm doing a couch to 5K app.

**Chrystal:**

I've done that! I need to do that again! 'Cause when you don't use it you lose it, honey!

**Amy:**

Indeed!

**Cheri:**

I love it. Alright, well wrapping up here, what final words of encouragement would you leave with our listeners who are – they are listening to you and they're, like, shaking in their perfectionistic boots, their people-pleasing boots, and some of our listeners are highly sensitive people who want to make better choices but – um, it's hard. So what closing words of encouragement would you have?

**Chrystal:**

So the beauty of choice is that it doesn't matter if it's a major life choice or what we would consider to be minor. For instance, every step that I take, if I want to walk from here to my mailbox outside of my front door, every step that I take moves me toward the mailbox. It doesn't matter if it's a one-inch step or a one-foot step. Every step moves me forward. And part of the beauty of understanding that your choices

can be small or large is that even if you are a perfectionist or a recovering perfectionist or a people-pleaser – any step that you make, however small it is, moves you forward. And so if you can just say, "Man, I wish I wasn't so perfectionistic, I wish I wasn't such a people-pleaser. I'm doing it again." But okay this time, today, I release myself from this. Maybe a person asked me to do something, and maybe I felt the need to say 'yes' but my small step forward was I said, "You know what, can I call you back? Can I think about it and pray about it?" and maybe you still felt it, maybe you still did it, but you created – you built the muscle of putting distance between you making a decision. That is progress. If you're a perfectionist and you're realize that you're feeling anxiety rise because you have a list of 20 things on your to-do list today and you only got to 2, well you know what? And then tomorrow you say I'm going to write 3 things down, and I'm not going to worry about the other 17. Okay, well, even if you felt the anxiety of the other things you didn't do because you feel like you need to get all these things done, guess what? You made progress. Because you didn't create such a high bar to meet. So, sometimes, I think we confuse the feelings of whether or not we're progressing – the doubt of progress with the reality of progress. So I think that if we can just say to ourselves, "Any step that I make, no matter how small or how big, is moving me forward." And then pat your own self on the back for that. I think is encouragement that we need and that anybody can use. And then even if you still have the anxiety or you're struggling with the steps that you want to take that are bigger,

you can give yourself recognition for doing that one thing. Sometimes doing one thing is all you've got, but the great news is that, for today, doing that one thing is all you need.

**Cheri**

Head over to [GritNGraceGirls.com/episode63](http://GritNGraceGirls.com/episode63).

**Amy**

You'll find links to this week's Digging Deeper Download, Bible verse art, and transcript.

**Cheri**

We so appreciate the reviews our listeners have been leaving on iTunes. If you haven't had a chance to leave one yet, you'll find a link on the webpage for this episode.

**Amy:**

Be sure to join us next week, when we'll be processing together what we learned from our time with Chrystal Evans Hurst.

**Cheri:**

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

**Amy 'n' Cheri:**

**BREAK IT!**