

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #70: Stand Strong: How to Make Choices that Lead to Change

Amy:

How are you doin', friend?

Cheri:

Don't ask.

Amy:

Oh, OK! Why?

Cheri:

I've had a stomach bug. That's all the details I'm gonna give.

Amy:

Ewww. Well, thanks for that. I'm so sorry, though. How are you feeling now?

Cheri:

I'm feeling FRUSTRATED. I was gone for five whole days. When I got home, I was *supposed* get caught up. But all I have to show for this week is long list WITH NO CHECKMARKS.

Amy:

Oh my gosh! That's truly tragic. A long list with no checkmarks is, like, one of my worst nightmares.

Cheri:

It is so wrong! I hate getting sick not because I feel so bad but because I end up falling so far behind and end up feeling so ... DEFEATED!

Amy:

All right! I feel ya, but you're not defined by your list! Those warrior boots that Lisa talked about last week are for walking in truth. Don't forget you're loved!

Cheri:

Good point!

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 reflecting on what we learned from our conversation with **Lisa Whittle**, author of ***Put Your Warrior Boots On: Walking Jesus Strong, Once and for All***.

Cheri:

I want you to start by talking about your *unexamined funks*.

I just think that's really important because I think a lot of our listeners will identify with that.

Amy:

Okay. One of the things that Lisa said, actually there were two quotes from two different parts. She said, "It's been 'let's just react to the world so that when the world goes crazy, let's just sort of respond to it.' You know?" And I was like, oh yeah, that's me. So the world goes crazy, I respond, not always in very positive ways. And then she said that God said to her, Lisa, "Girl, you're living below your spiritual potential." And I was like whoa...living below your spiritual potential. I have this lived out in my life as a pattern that happened on Sunday morning. I woke up, and I'm a worship widow. My husband leaves for church really, really early in the mornings, and so, on Sundays I'm by myself.

<LAUGHTER>

Amy:

Oh, I needed to explain that I guess. And so, I was by myself getting ready, and I woke up in a funk. I mean just a funk. One of those mornings you wake up, and, you know, you've heard me talk about it. I had the weight on my chest. And I just was feeling like nobody loves me, everybody hates me, I'm gonna eat some worms. It was just — it was that feeling! By the time I really confronted the feeling...of course, it just continued to grow all morning...the negative thoughts, and who was I gonna run into at church, and what was I gonna say and yada yada. By the time I got in the car, looking all pretty, where nobody would've known I was feeling like that, I realized, wow, where is this coming from? And then I thought, hmm, its not coming from anywhere. There are no circumstances in my life that warrant this feeling. It's just a funk, and yet, because there are no circumstances, and it's "just a funk" in quotation marks, I'm sinking in it. I am absolutely sinking. And you know, really in the past I've had days of sinking into funks. But that day, I guess from our interview with Lisa, and some other things God has been doing in my life, I thought, 'No, I'm not doing it'. And I started praying in my head and nothing was happening. And I was like, 'Oh, I'm gonna pray out loud.' 'Cause, if the circumstances aren't the source, then I *know* who the source is. So I started praying out loud and just saying, 'No Satan, I'm standing this morning. I am standing in Christ this morning, and I am not running; I am not sinking; I am standing.' And that was the beginning of my prayer time. And I just said a whole bunch of stuff in the name of Jesus. And prayed on the armor of God out loud. And do you know...by the time I got to church about 15 minutes down the road, the funk was gone! Lo and behold!

Cheri:

You put your warrior boots on.

Amy:

I put my warrior boots on. BUT that has not been the norm for me. It will be from now on, because guess what! It works!!

Cheri:

I love it! Okay, so what do you think made the difference? What do you think made the difference between doing it in your head and actually speaking out loud?

Amy:

I think two things. First of all, doing it in my head I get too easily distracted by everything else. So that'll work for about two seconds before I see something shiny. And then um...

Cheri:

Squirrel!

Amy:

But then the other thing is that I think I needed to hear myself say it. I mean God could've heard me saying it just in my head, right? In my heart, so it wasn't God. But it changed things for me to say it out loud. It made me focus, and I got to hear myself saying it and saying the truth. And that's what I loved about our interview with Lisa is that reminder that we have everything we need — to live a bold strong life, God's given it to us. Why do we settle for less?

Cheri:

You know what I love about what you're saying? I think we've talked about this, but I've just become so aware of how much authority we women give to outside sources. And it's so easy when you're in a funk. When I'm in a funk to go, "Okay, who said what?" What's the most recent disappointing, discouraging thing that's happened outside of me so I can lay the blame?" And I love your honesty that you were in a funk and there was no actual external reason for it. It just kind of was what it was. And then to ask yourself, "Okay, what are you gonna do with it now?" I think there's something about physicalizing — you know that you didn't just keep it mental. It's so easy for us to just kind of keep things in our heads. And I think something about the multisensory of vocalizing it and being kinesthetic with it...I think that's part of what moves it from the head to the heart and really makes it a whole person experience. Here's the other thing I like, because as you were talking —when you quoted Lisa saying that she heard God say, "Girl, you're not living up to your spiritual potential...my mind immediately went to the academic part of life. What would you or I have done if a teacher had called us up or privately pulled us aside and said, "Amy, you're just not living up to your scholastic potential." What would you have done in school?

Amy:

That's an interesting question. Um, I actually sort of had that happen, because I don't even know what my IQ score was. But my guidance counselor saw my IQ score and was surprised!

<Laughter>

Amy:

And she said...

Cheri:

Wait, no, this may be my favorite moment of podcasting in over a year with you. Okay, sorry, keep going. That's just too good!

Amy:

Now I was an A, B student, but she kinda said, "Hey, you should be making better grades than you are. And do you know what my response was? Now see, this shows you that I was so secure when I was younger. I fell into the pit of insecurity when I was in my late twenties, early thirties, really. I laughed. And I was like, you know, that's okay. A's and B's are fine for me. And I'm having some fun along with it, so we're all good.

Cheri:

I love it. So your answer wasn't where I was headed, but I love it even more than where I was going to go with it. So there's that.

Amy:

Now you can edit it out. Tell me how you would respond, Cheri.

Cheri

No I'm not editing any of that out. That is just the best of the best. Well, I'll tell you two things. One, is if a teacher a really called me aside and said that I would have burst into tears. Of course! But other than that, the second thing I would have done is I would have looked for strategies. I would have looked for tools and strategies to help me do a better job academically. So aside from the fact that Amy was too busy having fun in school for this illustration to really work well...

Amy:

Well, how hilarious is it that I'm such an underachiever and yet a perfectionist. How does that work?

Cheri:

No, you are not an underachiever. That is not a word I would use for you. But I think what you did is you did grab for a strategy, because you recognized that you were under your spiritual potential for the day. You grabbed for a strategy. You found that the most basic strategy wasn't working...keeping it all inside your head...and so you took it up to the next level. So, that's...

Amy:

Well, it really does come down to what you really picked in the interview with Lisa, which is choice. So talk to me about choice and what really grabbed you about that.

Cheri:

Well, here's the thing, as a highly sensitive person, I am sensitive. When people say, "Oh, well you just, you have lots of choices and you need to make better choices..." and you heard me say before that sometimes we don't realize we have choices. Sometimes because we've done things a certain way for so long or a family did things a certain way, and so, realizing that we have options is I think so, so important. And one of the things that I really got out of our conversation with Lisa, is yes, it's important to have people who cheer us on; who motivate us; who hold us accountable; who don't let us settle; but for me, it's really important to have people in my life who listen and ask good questions to help me recognize that I have more choices than I realize. Because if that step gets skipped, if people are just like "C'mon Cheri, you can do better, make a better choice." I'm like; I'm doing the best I can! And I freeze. And I freak. Whereas if somebody can take the time and say, so tell me about it. Tell me the alternatives you've considered, and then ask some of those, well perhaps, and maybe, and what if. And again back to that kind of lingering and listening we've talked about, so that I can discover, "Hang on! I can do such and such instead!" Then I tend to get really excited about it. But if they're just kind of behind me cracking the whip implying that I'm behind the game, and I'm just being lazy, or the one that makes me craziest is, "You're just making excuses."

Amy:

Oh, mhm.

Cheri:

I'm sorry. How dare you? You do not know me. Now, if it was you...if it was Kathi...if it was people closest to me who have permission to speak into my life, that's fine. But when it's an outsider, who's like, "Well, you're just making excuses. You just need to woman up and, you know, whatever." I'm like; oh don't even, don't even pretend that you know my life. That's me and choices in a nutshell.

Amy:

Oh well, that's really insightful. I have a million thoughts going around in my brain, because I had a college professor. It was when I was doing my student teaching, which was extremely important to me because that was, you know I had wanted to be a teacher my whole life and so I was just — it was just the pinnacle for me. But I ran into some problems that I went to talk to my professor about and without really listening, without helping me think through choices and things like that. She looked right at me and said, "Well, when life gives you lemons, just make lemonade, Amy"

Cheri:

GRRR.

Amy:

Which, horrible — because I am not by nature a whiner. I usually just try to buck up and take care of it, so for me to go to her once in the semester and try to talk about a problem was so difficult. So it is a gift to have those people in your life, because especially for perfectionists, and as you point out that I'm at least borderline HSP, that we tend to get very tunnel-visioned in the midst — especially in the midst of a freak out, you know. There's — it only looks like one way out to us, so it's a gift to have other people to come alongside and say, "You have a choice. You have a choice, and let's think about some of the possible solutions."

Cheri:

Well, that professor was so wrong! Just make lemons out of lemonade was an ignorant statement. I'm sorry. That's just...

Amy:

Thank you

Cheri:

Our listeners couldn't see my strangling motion. I wanted to shake some sense into that person. And again, we're not saying let's be whiners, but it takes some time and intentionality. Some people, they must just wake up in the morning, and all they see are options all around them. And I think you and I are doing better. You've told me that you're starting to feel more creative, and I know I'm doing better at seeing more options sooner, so think this is part of the process of *breaking up with perfect*. I really do. I think it's part of the evidence that we are healing and being freed. I'm going to label it as actually cruel to tell somebody that they should be just making better choices if you're not willing to be the person who sits with them and brainstorms with them and helps them have the resources that they need to know they have choices and to be able to generate that list from which to choose. So, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Amy:

It's helpful to have choices. And it's a good way, if you think about the opposite, if you have something that you need to talk with someone about that is difficult go with some solutions. That's the other side of it. We have this rule at Proverbs 31 that you can come and talk about a problem only if you also bring some solutions with you. So I always think about, if you're gonna tell me I stink, you better tell me some ways that I can get better. So yeah, I think it's a good thing to have.

Cheri:

Is that a challenge, Amy? Is that a challenge that if I wanna tell you you stink I just need to have a list of 10 ways you can get better?

Amy:

Yeah, Cheri! Next time you tell me I stink, I'm gonna make you tell me how I can get better.

Cheri:

All right, well you said that you are really on a tear about something. I wanna know what Amy Carroll is on a tear about. This is exciting.

Amy:

Listening to Lisa just, it brings out, I don't know, the warrior in me. It really did. She stands on truth and at the same time loves people well. And I have some people like that in my life, and one of the people that I think does that well is my oldest son. He stands on truth, but he loves people well. He's much quieter personality than Lisa, but he listens to some other podcasts. And there's one in particular, and it's actually a podcast that sort of celebrates the fact that we fail. We flub up all the time, except that, evidently there's a lot of bad language on it, that kind of thing. And I am really disturbed – really disturbed by the trend that I see, even in the Christian community to say, “Well, we're just not gonna be perfect so let's let it all hang out.” You know? Or just embracing things that are not scriptural, and so I was just thinking about that as I was listening to Lisa, and right now I'm in a neighborhood study. And we're looking at 1 John, and 1 John 1 is so strong... or, actually, it's 1 John 2. He says, “We know that we have come to know him if we obey His commands.” That's a big “if” and “the man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar and the truth is not in him.” And then verse 6, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” I just think that there is, yes, we need to acknowledge that we are not going to be perfect, in this life, we are not going to be perfect. We have a sin nature that's at our core, and it will be a battle to the end. On the other end, holiness is the standard. I mean God says be holy as I am holy. He gives us a really high bar. And I'm really tired, I'm on a tear, and I am really tired of hearing differently in Christian communities...so...

Cheri:

Well, what I hear you talking about is flaunting our imperfections. Flaunting the — what some people call freedom, and what I'm gonna call license to live without any limits whatsoever. And you know, neither you or I are here to play Holy Spirit, but one of the things this reminds me of is in the classroom, I'll have students who demand grace from me. Like, they come up to me before class starts when I'm trying to get things started. And they start explaining all the reasons, and generally, they're the same reasons I've heard over and over again. They still haven't figured out how to wake up on time, just some basic things in life that are developmentally expected of them, they haven't been able to figure out. And so they come to me, they interrupt me when I need to be focusing, and sometimes the bell will ring. They're still talking to me about their particular need. Oblivious to the fact that class needs to start, that I have, now, a classroom of other students. They are so focused on why they need grace from me. And then, if I pull out the syllabus and point out, you know, this is the policy on late work; you've known it since the beginning of the school year. They tell me I'm unfair. I'm so unfair. And you know over the years, I've developed a little response that says, “You know I believe the word your searching for is, ‘I'm so disappointed.’ Because I don't think I'm being unfair, I think you're being disappointed, because you have unrealistic expectations.” I know for me that grace is meaningless unless I actually feel remorse for what it is that I need to receive the grace for. Otherwise it just becomes a “Welp, got away with that again!” 'cause I love getting away with things. I love it! And unless I actually feel — and I'm not talking guilt, I'm not talking

condemnation, I'm not talking blame or shame; I'm talking about that sense of, oh my goodness, this is what I've done; here's how it's affected the people I love; here's how it's affected the world...this is not who God created me to be. This has affected my relationship with Him, and I think there a lot to be said for a real sense of remorse that brings about a desire to change, at least that's how it works in my life.

Amy:

Well, that's part of our *warrior boots* costume. Repentance is part of where that strength comes from that we talked about. Because repentance is followed by God's forgiveness for us, and that, walking in that forgiveness is part of the strength that we have. Without repentance, we don't have that. So...

Cheri:

There's a lot of relief and rest to be found in that. As uncomfortable as the process can be, I know that when I get there it's an exhale. And yeah, the desire is to not do whatever the thing was again. Not to celebrate and flaunt it. And wow, what a fine line, because I want to reassure other people. I get it. I've been there. I understand...but it's in a sense of growing forward. Not yes, it's okay to be sliding backwards, 'cause that's not how we were created.

Amy:

Yes. I loved what Lisa said when she said, "Grace came by the holy grit of the cross." I mean there, was a price that was paid for the grace that we receive, and just, anytime I begin to take that lightly, it's time for some self-examination that's a lot deeper.

Cheri:

Good point. Good point. You know one of the things I liked in terms of the *grit* aspect of our interview with Lisa, because she challenged me, she's a way bolder person than I am.

Amy:

Me, too.

Cheri:

I guarantee you that. But I thought to myself, what's a takeaway that timid, Chihuahua-shaking Cheri, can take away from German Shepherd-bold Lisa.

Amy:

Oh, stop!

No, that's how I felt! I felt like the puppy training class. It was Max the German shepherd and Chiquita the Chihuahua, and they touched noses, and Chiquita didn't leave a puddle. That was, like, considered big success. And I know, in my heart, I'm little Chiquita. I tremble at almost everything, and so, the to do, the *warrior boots* action step that I pulled for myself. She said something about being able to preach what we do know. We don't need to know all the details. We don't have to know everything; we take action where we're at. And it just so much

reminded me of the story of the man who was born blind in John 9. He said, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." And I thought that I can do. Because I have that one thing: I know what I was like; I know what I am like now. And I don't need to know everything else, and I can tell that story. Nobody can say it's not true, because I know it is true. That one thing I know, and I can tell. So that's my *grit*. What was your *grace* takeaway from our conversation with Lisa?

Amy:

I love that she pointed out that the Bible is a book of preparation. So, God's given us the grace of preparation and strength. We don't have to create it; we don't have to figure it out; we don't have to make it up. We just turn to our bibles and there it is: the preparation that we need. All we have to do is to appropriate it. It's a gift that's been given to us, full of grace. We just have to live it. Now that's *grace* and *grit*, but it's right there for us. That's such *grace*. God is so good to us. He's given us His word, and it's everything we need.

Cheri:

What's the bad rule that you pulled from these episodes?

Amy:

The bad rule is the attitude that I can't help that I'm limping through life.

Cheri:

Ooh! That's a good one.

Amy:

I've been there. Oh, yeah.

Cheri:

Yeah. There are days that I'm there, and it's almost easier to stay there. So what is the truth we can focus on instead?

Amy:

God has equipped me to walk strong.

Cheri:

Ooh! And what was the scripture that you pulled?

Amy:

Ephesians 1:4 that says, "He chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight."

He's chosen us, and he's equipped us, and he's prepared us to be holy and blameless. Do you see how I might have chosen that to kind of back up my little tear that I went on?

Cheri:

I see what you did there. I see what you did there.

<Laughter>

Cheri:

Head on over to GritNGraceGirls.com/episode70.

Amy:

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

Cheri:

Come on over and join our private Facebook group, where we'll be doing a LIVE Q&A later this week! You'll find us at www.facebook.com/groups/gritngracegirls.

Amy:

Be sure to join us next week, when we'll be talking with Lori Wildenberg, author of *Messy Journey: How Grace and Truth Offer the Prodigal a Way Home!*

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!!!

Outtakes

Cheri:

I'm gonna go ahead and let the motorcycle go by...oh it's a tractor...

Amy:

Hahaha. That's what I wrote my devotion about, is a tractor.

Cheri:

Oh, really?