

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #90: Why Disappointing Others is a GOOD Thing

Amy

So, Cheri, tell me about your weekend.

Cheri

I spent the weekend in Lake Tahoe, suffering for Jesus, I know.

Amy

Tough. Well that is a place...I've been there once, last year. You can just sense God's presence there can't you? It is so gorgeous!

Cheri

It was so beautiful. So I wasn't sure, I'm never sure how my Friday night message is going to go over, because, for this particular retreat series, when the women come in, there's an orange rubber band waiting on their chairs. And I talk about having taken the *Complaint Free Challenge* and moving the wristband every time I complain, criticize, gossip, or in my case, use sarcasm. 'Cause my students say I hide my complaining under sarcasm, as if I would do that kind of thing, Amy Carroll, really now!

Amy

The nerve of them to point it out!

<LAUGHTER>

Cheri

This was kind of a rowdy bunch of women. It was great. Some of these 70 and 80 years olds were the biggest troublemakers, so I always tell them that the rubber band is not to shoot at each other. No, they're not allowed to do that. I invite them to take the *Complaint Free Challenge* themselves.

It's always amazing to see what God does. Because some women are nervous that it's legalistic, but there were just a bunch of the women in the leadership team who just really decided to be very open to the Holy Spirit.

First thing on Saturday morning, women were looking at me from across the room and holding up their hands with the numbers of times that they've had to move it. And the biggest comment was, "I had no idea. I had no clue." And the ones that are really honest, "I thought it was everybody else. I didn't think it was me." So...

Amy

Yeah. And then there's that verse, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks."

Cheri

Yeah. Yeah.

Amy

Don't you just love that?

Cheri

And what we hear, we take to heart. And so it ends up being this crazy, self-reinforcing cycle we can't get out of.

Amy

Mhm.

Cheri

Hm. 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, the podcast that equips you to love who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy

Today we're processing what we learned last in our interview with Tracie Miles, author of *Unsinkable Faith*.

It was such a pleasure for me to interview someone who is such a close friend, and really, just to watch Tracie walk through that time period. I mean she, literally, was writing that book as all hell was breaking loose in her life. Our listeners probably listened to her, and think, "Oh, she sounds so sweet and calm." And she *is*, and she always was. And that doesn't mean that she doesn't have terrible days. And she's still having some terrible days. So our listeners can be praying for Tracie, but she is walking out this message.

Cheri

Well, and I appreciate that so much. Because you can tell when somebody is kind of talking from theory. And I love data. You and I are both research kinda gals. We can geek out like crazy, but we both think that theory and data ought to then change what we do. That's the whole point of having it. You don't just study it to go, "Wow, look my head has gotten 10 times bigger. I'm full of knowledge." It ought to inform what we do. It ought to change our behavior. And it

was so clear to me listening to her that the research she had done, the statistics she had found, and the scripture study she had done was something that she was putting into practice and so she was sharing out of the abundance of her own life experience. She wasn't just giving us, "Here's what I think you should do. I'm gonna go home and gripe."

Amy

Exactly. Well, and I thought it was so amazing to hear her talk about how she was so thankful that that's what she was steeped in, because it made her think about the positive thinking. But even that, I had the thought, was a choice. Because she could have thought, "I'm not writing this stupid book in the middle of this." And she could've rejected that out of bitterness, and she didn't. She embraced it instead. And she let the truth that she was writing be the truth in her life. That has been amazing for me to watch some of my friends walk this out. Both the friends, I'm thinking of have had some terrible marriage things happen. You've watched it happen; I've watched it happen: where women just sink in anger and bitterness and unforgiveness, but both Tracie and Melanie are friends that rejected that. And it has to be active, because the unexamined path leads you towards unforgiveness and bitterness. So you have to actively reject those thoughts, and I look at both of them and I'm like, especially Melanie, years down the road, over a decade down the road. I'm like, it was worth it. 'Cause look, that discipline of rejecting the bitterness and anger and the negative thoughts and unforgiveness have born fruit in her life. She's joyful; she's happy. She has close relationships. And that wouldn't have happened if she hadn't actively rejected those thoughts.

Cheri

It sounds so intentional. And it is so easy for me when I'm not intentional like that, I blame others when I'm bitter, and when I'm resentful and when people don't want to be around me. Because even my best friends... when I've been bitter and disappointed and absurdly horrible to be around, they're gonna give me space. I mean that's called boundaries. And when I haven't taken personal responsibility and been intentional, then it's like, well, double woe is me. First of all, this bad thing happened, and now everybody's deserting me. It's like, well no, but I'm driving them away! My "baditude" (my complaining, criticizing, gossiping, and yes, my sarcasm. I like to joke that sarcasm is like speaking in tongues or that it's a spiritual gift, but it is neither.) We end up with kind of this double whammy, where again, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. We are bitter and act like nobody would want to be around us, and the world is out to get us, and God doesn't even love us. We're going to go eat some worms. Then you wake up in the morning and nobody's around us, and we might as well eat some worms. And figuring out the difference between blame and responsibility is so tough, because some people blame everybody else; some of us, especially people pleasers, we tend to blame ourselves. And at some point, the blame isn't useful anymore. It's like, "Okay, this is where I'm at. This is what's happening. What am I now going to do?"

Who was I talking — I don't remember who it was recently, we were having a discussion about asking WHY. Why is this happening? Why did God allow this? Why me? And...I know! I was listening to one of our previous podcast.

<LAUGHTER>

Amy

It was Lori Wildenberg!

Cheri

It was! It was. Yes. And the why question is so human and so natural. But the question that we can ask intentionally to move us forward is, "How can I glorify God in this situation?"

Amy

And like you said, there is that fallout from the bitterness and stuff that just affects our relationships so negatively. So negatively. And the funny thing is, as you were talking, I was like, but you know these 2 husbands and these 2 situations that I was talking about... they deserved the blame! Can I just say that? They do! And yet, it is not helpful. It's not helpful. So this is a little "aha" moment I just had: There's a difference between telling the truth about a situation and assigning blame in a situation. 'Cause you can tell the truth and say these guys did things that wrecked their marriages. That's not okay. But then, you just gotta leave it there. And then ask the question, "How can I glorify God in this situation?" So I think you do have to tell the truth about the situation, but that's different than assigning blame in the situation.

Cheri

The temptation with assigning blame is that we then attach responsibility with the blame. And we have to keep that personal responsibility for ourselves. So I had an enormous epiphany this weekend. Are you up for one of Cheri's big "ahas"?

Amy

Please.

Cheri

Okay, it's a long one, so listeners bear with me here. It was Thursday night. I had gone to Tahoe the night before. I'm a 6-7 hour drive away, and just before I was going to bed, I happened to be on Facebook, and I saw this little video clip on how to deal with bullies. And the guy who was leading it basically said, "You just don't react. If someone bullies you, you just don't react." And it made me so mad. I'm like, well goodie, goodie gumdrops for you! You're the kind of person who cannot react. But I'm the kind of person who reacts. Like the moment there's stimulus, I have a response. That's my life problem: the whole people pleasing, HSP, perfectionism. So this little video made me really mad. Because I realized that I've let too many people, too many bully-type people, have authority over me. And they're people who don't matter. They're people who aren't friends. They're not close to me. They don't care about me, but they've had authority about my identity, about my worth, about my actions, about some of my inactions. We talk all the time about the risks we don't take when we're perfectionists. I started getting really, really mad that I have somehow listened to all the wrong people. If they're a bully, if they're somebody who shouldn't have authority in my life, why can't I just not react? Why is it that the wrong people have had so much authority in my life? So here's what I texted to myself:

“I have let people take authority over me. Boundaries say I choose who to give authority. Like, I can say, your voice doesn’t matter. You have no authority in my life. You may speak out loud. I may even hear you, but I don’t have to listen or internalize or authorize your words.”

And then I stopped. Well how do I unauthorize someone? If you go into some secure part of a building, they say, “I’m sorry, you’re unauthorized.” So that’s a past-tense verb. But I was like, “Is there a present tense, active verb for how to take authority away from someone?” That’s my problem with bullies or naysayers. Sometimes they have taken authority; sometimes I’ve given authority. But no matter what, let’s say, here somebody has authority; I recognize it’s the wrong authority. How do I get it back from them? So, of course, I went to the dictionary and the thesaurus, ‘cause that’s what I do. And I was like, okay, I need a really good word that means unauthorized. So I go through all the words in the thesaurus. Can’t find anything. I can just feel this sense of desperation growing. I need a word, because this is the thing I need to be able to do. This is what the guy who is doing the teaching about how to respond to bullies, what he meant. In order to not react, I need to be able to look at somebody and in my mind go, “You are not authorized.” So I’m looking for this verb, and it suddenly hit me. The second time I went through the list, I found a word that is a synonym for authorize. And we have a really good negative version of this word.

Amy

Do tell...

Cheri

“Appoint.” Now sometime people appoint themselves authority over us. Sometimes we appoint them authority over us. But what’s the opposite of appoint? The opposite of appoint, is disappoint.

Amy

Mmmmm.

Cheri

And that is the one thing in my entire life I have had a huge fear of doing. Disappointing other people. That’s what those of us who are perfectionists, people pleasers, HSPs... we will do anything to avoid disappointing people. And yet, when it comes to people who have too much authority in our lives, whether they’ve taken it or we’ve given it to them, the very thing we need to do is disappoint them.

Amy

Okay, I’m sitting here with my mouth open, my head shaking... I need a moment. That is amazing!

Cheri

I think this ties in so well with what Tracie talked about, in terms of worshipping, what we worry about is what we worship. I have idealized and idolized people to the point that I am so busy caretaking, appeasing, making sure they're happy. And God says, "No, it's just me. It is 100% just me. You need to disappoint everybody who isn't me." And so I literally got up in front on Sunday morning, and I told the women to go home and disappoint their husbands and children.

Amy

Whoooo. That is so powerful.

Cheri

So there you have light and fluffy with Cheri Gregory.

Amy

And so, I'm processing everything you said. I'm thinking about a message I heard this summer. And it was at *She Speaks*, one of our keynotes. He was talking about the priestly garments, and he talked about the part of the garment that went over the priest's hearts. And how the names of the tribes of Israel were written on that part that goes over their chest, and the names of Israel were written on their hearts. But he then said, "What have other people written on your heart, over your heart," and talked about how to get rid of that. And in your picture, I'm thinking of the lesser gods coming up with some sharp thing and carving a name, a label, or whatever on our breastplate...Tracie pointed out to us that you should only accept the names that God has given us.

Cheri

Exactly. Anybody who disagrees with God has no authority.

Amy

Is wrong! I love that! I was like let's think about that for a minute!

Cheri

Yes. Exactly. And then, of course, I come home on Monday and I get ample opportunity to practice this...I'm like, really, I don't even get a day off? Because all sorts of things went wrong, and I would start to react. And I guess this is so important to me because for so many years I wanted to change my over-reactivity. It's one of the hallmarks of being a highly sensitive person. I want to feel my feelings, but I don't want to be ruled by my feelings. And for me to be able to go, "Wow, this is so disappointing. Oh, I feel so bad.... Oh, If I feel this bad, I've given this situation too much authority." In that sense, disappointment is good. We need to embrace disappointment because it means God is saying, "I'm God. This isn't, and you've put too much value on it." I'm not quite ready to say I'm going to welcome disappointment, but it has given a completely different spin. I'm not going to say Monday was fun, but it was a very different day than I've had in the past when things have gone wrong, wrong, wrong. I was like, I understand what's happening. I understand what's happening. I get it. Okay. Not happy, not happy thrilled. I'm not going to paste a plastic smile on my face, but disappointment is good for me.

Disappointment keeps me from idolizing that which is not God, and it keeps God as the one and only authority about my value, my identity, and my calling. It worked.

Amy

Oooh! Wow!

Cheri

Alright, so what is the scripture that you pulled for us to tie into this episode?

Amy

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts." It's so true, too, isn't it?

Cheri

I'm like, wow, the Bible actually says things like this? Clearly, I need to read the Bible more.

<LAUGHTER>

So practical. So true. So what is the bad rule from these couple of episodes with Tracie?

Amy

I can let thoughts float through my head unchallenged.

Cheri

Ohh! That's so easy to do. And she said we have so many thoughts everyday, AND what killed me is some of them are repeat, like the number of them that are the same thoughts every day. That made me mad.

Amy

So fascinating. Mhm.

Cheri

I want to do something about that. Okay, so then, what's the truth? What's the fact we can focus on?

Amy

I'm called to shape my thoughts in order to shape my life.

And you really can see that, like, when we start to take control of our thought life, then the life that we live out begins to change in response to that. It's amazing!

Cheri

For me the *grit* part of this is that some of it just feels so unfair. Like so many of my thoughts are because of parents, they're because of teachers, they're because of past boyfriends, and so

I want to go into the blame game. I don't want responsibility for all of this work; I really don't. And so I think the *grit* part of it is recognizing that whether or not I asked for it, and whether or not it seemed fair, this is my work to do. Nobody else can do it for me. And it's so tempting to reach out and have other people make me feel better or to scroll on Facebook and find something to distract me. The *grit* is doing the work that needs to be done, 'cause nobody else can do it. Only we can do this for ourselves.

Amy

That's so true. We can't hire this one out.

Cheri

No.

Amy

And I think the *grace* is that we just have to recognize that this is hard, and that we're going to make imperfect progress in this. And the thing, recently, that I've been processing with a friend is that a thought isn't sin. It's the seed for sin. And so as you're learning, and as we're learning when we don't chase the thought off the first time, I don't think we have to feel so condemned. Chase it off the second time. Chase it off the third time it happens. It's hard work, and it's not going to be perfect. But we'll get better at it as we practice. And we just need to give ourselves *grace* in that.

Cheri

Head on over to [gritngracegirls dot com](http://gritngracegirls.com), episode 90.

Amy

There you'll find this week's transcript, a digging deeper download, and Bible verse art.

Cheri

If you haven't yet gotten your free permission slips to remind you to break bad rules, come on over to our website and sign up for our email list. We promise not to spam you, but that way you'll stay in touch with us. And we'll send you 12 free, downloadable, printable permission slips that'll remind you to break bad rules.

Amy

Join us next week when we'll be talking to Ginny Yttrup, author of *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 & Cheri

Break it!

Outtake

Cheri

'Cause I always tell them, you can start this on Monday. At your Christian women's retreat, if you need to complain, criticize, and gossip in order to have fun, go right ahead in Jesus name.

<Laughter>

Amy

Wow!

Cheri

No, no. I never say that. I never actually say that out loud. I don't need to. They're all, like, looking at each other going, "I guess we'd better start tonight."