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

Episode #101: Seeking the Simple to Find the Rich and the Deep

**Cheri**So let’s talk about how we react to things going, when things keep going wrong, like they did with the scheduling of this interview. I think we may have actually rescheduled a dozen times; it feels like hundreds at this point.

**Amy**

It was crazy.

**Cheri**How do you tend to react when the third time is still not the charm?

**Amy**

Well, Cheri, you know how laid back I am…no big deal! How do you react?

**Cheri**

Well, you know, I can be totally patient and understanding when it’s someone else’s fault, because, of course, that means I don’t get any blame, but the moment that anybody is inconvenienced I go into this total shame place, because perfectionism says that I should be always flexible but nobody should ever have to flex for me. And here’s the thing: even if I feel like I ought to be flexible, I’m not. It’s like a lie that I would be flexible; I mean God is working on me, but I’m not naturally. Then the idea that other people should never have to flex for me, well that’s a lie, too. Inconvenience is kind of a part of life.

**Amy**

Yes, well, unless someone is listening to this episode for the first time for *Grit-N-Grace*, our whole audience knows I’m exactly the same that I struggle with these same things.

<Laughter>

And so I have to, even in this circumstance, I had to rehearse new thoughts. I had to, instead of getting so angst-y, I had to start thinking, this is going to be so worth it. In fact, I had to really start thinking; if this is this hard, then this interview is going to be awesome. And it actually was.

**Cheri**

No, but I totally understand, because I was battling things like well maybe were not supposed to. Maybe we shouldn’t. Maybe we should just cancel. Maybe she’ll just not notice if we don’t reschedule her.

**Amy**

Isn’t that funny?

**Cheri**

We’ll just ghost her.

**Amy**

If we had bought into those lies, we would have really lost out. Just like one listener wrote to us, “My biggest struggle is actually figuring out what is the root of my perfectionism. How did I come to believe that lie, and how do I pull it out at the root and answer it with God’s truth?” You know and I think about in this situation the lie would’ve been, “Hey, since it’s so hard it’s just not meant to be.” I’m SO glad we didn’t listen to that lie; we did the interview!

**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*, the podcast that equips you to lose who you’re not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

**Amy**

Today, we’re talking to Donna Jones, author of *Seek: A Woman’s Guide to Meeting God*. She holds a degree in communications and is an international speaker. Donna and her husband planted Crossline Church in 2005. Her favorite role is wife to JP and mom to their three wildly funny young adult kids who frequently sit on her kitchen counter just to chat.

**Cheri**

You know, I go to hear Donna speak at a conference a few years ago, and I took tons of notes and then I went home and highlighted my notes, so y’all are in for a treat.

**Amy**

So, Donna, tell us what led you to write the book *Seek.*

**Donna**

Well, initially I wrote it with one type of gal in mind, but as I was writing it, it kind of morphed into two types of gals. The first one was the gal who really wants to know about God but feels a little bit intimidated to go to a bible study, to ask questions, because let’s face it…nobody I know, I don’t like to feel stupid. And so, sometimes when we ask questions, then that reveals what we don’t know and anyway we get to a certain point in our life when we think, I really should know this. I don’t know how I don’t know this, but I don’t know this. And so we kind of find ourselves in this quandary where we want to know about God, but we don’t want to let people know how much we don’t know. And so, I realized there really was no book on the market that just took a woman by the hand, and said, “Hey, let me just in a really conversational way, walk you through the basics of what you really need to know about God.” And so that was really my heart behind it is to kind of be the first step, but as I started writing something really happened to me as I wrote it. And I realized not only was I helping women who maybe don’t know God fall in love with Jesus. I realized, like, revisiting all this helped me re-fall in love with Jesus, and the interesting thing is that is the biggest comment I get from women who read this book who are already believers. It doesn’t matter if they’re from California or from Virginia. I hear this over and over again: “Oh my goodness, that book helped me fall in love with Jesus all over again.” So, it really has a two-fold purpose.

**Amy**

Wow!

**Cheri**

You know sometimes we do just need to go back to the basics.

**Donna**

Yeah. And it’s just so refreshing when we just kind of, I don’t know, just pause and go, “Wow, Jesus you’re amazing” and kind of just let that wash over us anew.

**Cheri**

Absolutely. Well, those of us who are recovering perfectionists we can get caught up in researching the right resources that’ll help us get to know God perfectly, but in the book, in *Seek*, you say don’t rely on second-hand knowledge of God. So why not and what should we do instead?

**Donna**

You wouldn’t ask somebody to stand in for you at your wedding. You wouldn’t hire somebody to take your vacation for you. You wouldn’t say, “Hey, you know could you be in the delivery room when my baby is born?” There’s just certain things in life…

**Amy**

Well, I might have done that.

<Laughter>

**Donna**

…maybe that one, Amy. But there are certain things in life that you just have to be present for to experience them, and you just wouldn’t want to outsource that. And a relationship with God is like that. It has to be something YOU experience personally for it to become real. So it’s one of those things that it really cant be secondhand. It has to be firsthand.

**Cheri**

There’s a couple concepts that you contrast: God’s mercy and His grace. And both of those are things that us recovering perfectionists…we need all the help we can get learning about those and understanding them so kind of unpack the difference between those for us.

**Donna**

Yeah. In fact, this was so cool because I was trying to explain these concepts of mercy and grace, and I was trying to think you know I grew up in the church and so, for me, mercy and grace were words that I’ve heard all my life. But as I was trying to figure out, okay, how would I explain this to someone who didn’t grow up in the church…who doesn’t know what the words mean. We have the acronyms you know, *GRACE is God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense*. All those cute little phrases that we Christians use. But that means nothing to somebody who doesn’t know anything about God. So I’m thinking how do I explain this? So I asked my husband, tell me what this is and he goes, “Well, Donna, grace is not getting what you do deserve, but mercy is getting something you don’t deserve.” So I’m like okay, okay this sort of makes sense. So I’m sweeping my kitchen floor, and I’m thinking about this and all of a sudden this memory comes back to my mind when I was 16 years old and my grandparents came to visit me from out of state, and I had just gotten my driver’s license, and I was so excited. You know how you are when you’re 16, and you just got your drivers license. You wanna volunteer to drive for everything. So my mom had run out of milk, and so she needed to get a gallon of milk and I said, “I’ll go, I’ll go!” And I asked my grandfather to go with me, because I wanted to show off my newfound driving skills. So he goes with me, we’re pulling into the parking lot, and all of a sudden my grandfather goes, “Ah! Sweetheart, I think you better stop.” And I said why? And he said, “Sweetie, I think you’re hitting the car next to us.” And I was like, “What?” And he goes, “Yeah, sweetheart, I think you might have scratched the car next to us.” So we get out, and this is a brand new car, my mom’s brand new car. There is a scratch, this tiny little scratch, from the front of the bumper all along the side to the back, the entire side.

**Cheri**

Oh, no!

**Donna**

And I took one look at that and I went, “My dad is gonna kill me.” Like, this is gonna be a nightmare. So we go into the grocery store. We buy the milk. My heart is just as heavy as the gallon of milk I’m holding. We’re standing in line waiting to pay. My grandfather leans down, he whispers in my ear, “Donna, if you wanna tell your parents that somebody hit you, I’ll go along with it.”

<Laughter>

I said, “Oh, thank you so much, but I really need to tell my dad what happened.” So I go home. I’m totally dreading it. I walk in the door. My dad’s sitting there in the family room, and I said, “Okay, dad, I scratched the car.” Now, what I expected was a lecture, grounding, maybe yelling. Instead it really shocked me. My dad just paused, and then he said okay, well, I guess it happened.” And I said, “What do you mean?” And he goes, “Sweetheart, everybody gets into a car accident at one time or another. Yours just happened to be sooner rather than later. So it happened. Just don’t let it happen again.” So I thought, “Wow, totally did not see that coming.” So a couple hours later I get a phone call from a friend. There’s no way. I couldn’t ask.

And you know when you’re 16, of course, your friends say, please ask, you never know. And so I went in and asked my dad, and I say, “I know you don’t want me to, but Kathi really wants me to ask, can I come over…” Before I could even finish my request, my dad reaches in his pocket. He pulls out his car keys, and he says, “Sweetheart, go and have a great time.” So I’m thinking about this story, and I realized that when my dad did not give me the punishment that I deserved, that was grace. But when my dad reached into his pocket and he gave me the car keys, he gave me something I didn’t deserve. He gave me mercy. That’s what grace and mercy is. It’s not getting what you do deserve; it’s not getting the punishment, but it’s even more that that. It’s getting something that you don’t deserve. It’s getting a gift. It’s getting heaven. It’s getting eternal life. It’s getting a relationship with God. It’s getting the Holy Spirit. It’s getting; it’s getting everything. And that’s grace and mercy. But the interesting thing is I had to receive that. I had to say, okay, I’m gonna take you up on that. And that’s, I think, where some women get, it’s hard for them to embrace it.

**Cheri**

It’s hard to even need grace or mercy. For recovering perfectionists, we are trying so hard not to ever make a mistake so that we don’t ever need grace or mercy. And so receiving it feels like such a failure or a letdown rather than the freedom God intends it to be.

**Donna**

Exactly. Exactly. And you know what, Cheri? I think that for a lot of women because we so don’t want to be imperfect that number one it’s hard for us to admit and number two we don’t even know what to do when someone says, “You know what, it’s really okay. You really don’t have to be perfect.” We almost really don’t even know how to respond, but the interesting thing, as I thought back on that with my dad, that really that moment really changed our relationship.

**Cheri**

Sure.

**Donna**

My dad could have told me he loved me. Me, seeing that, it made our love just go so much deeper. And I think that’s when we allow ourselves to experience; just God loving on us, it does something in our soul where we start to get what it means to really be loved by God.

**Amy**

Well, one of the things you said in the book, Donna, is, “Jesus was God with us, the Holy Spirit is God in us.” People pleasers can tend tobe so externally focused and seeking the approval and guidance from other people around them, so how can that truth help people pleasers depend less on people and more on God?

**Donna**

Yeah, that’s such, such a great question because I think so many women are people pleasers. And it comes from a good place. It comes from a place where we don’t want to disappoint people, we want to love our people well, so it can come from a really good place, but it can also, and we have to be really honest about this, it can also come from a place of insecurity. And that’s where it gets a spiritual component because that translates then to our relationship with God. It’s kind of like this: so do either of you like to go to parties by yourselves?

**Amy**

No.

**Cheri**

I’d rather go with somebody, for sure.

**Donna**

Yeah! We’d all rather go with someone, right, because there’s a sense of security. Let’s go together! What time should we meet? What are you wearing? And there’s something about having somebody with us that gives us a sense of security. Well, that’s like the Holy Spirit. He’s with us. He’s that friend that we have that provides the security that we need, but when we become believers not only is He with us, He’s actually in us. And it not only gives us security, but it can give us confidence. If I could just share probably the most significant thing that I’ve learned in my life about overcoming being a people pleaser is that, you all know I’m a pastor’s wife, right? Well, I first became a pastor’s wife when I was in my twenties. And looking back on it now, you know, being a twenty-something as a senior pastor’s wife, you know, when there’s people in your church that are 70 and 80 years old, you’re just way in over your head, right? So we, my husband became the pastor of this little church, and I so wanted to be a good pastor’s wife. I wanted people to feel loved. I wanted to be accessible, and so they had the very first women’s event after my husband had become the senior pastor. Well, I had just had our second child like 2 weeks before or 3 weeks before, and I planned on going. And the night came, and I was absolutely exhausted, and I could barely think straight. I was waffling back and forth. What should I do? Should I go? Should I not go? My husband came home, and I was just in a quandary. And he looked at me and he goes, “Donna, why is it so hard for you?” And I said, “Well, ‘cause I don’t know, I don’t know what I’m supposed to do. Should I go or should I not go?” And he goes, “Okay, sweetheart, let me ask you a question, do you think you should go because the women of our church think you should go? Or do you think you should go because Jesus wants you to go? Because if you think you should go because the women of the church want you to go, then you go get your jammies on and call it a day. But if you think you should go because Jesus wants you to go, then you get your car keys and grab your purse and get in your car and you go right now.” That question, I probably have asked myself that question 1000 times in the last 25 years. Am I doing this because I think somebody else wants me to do this or am I doing it because I think Jesus wants me to do this? And see, when you ask yourself that question, it forces you to depend on the Holy Spirit, going back to your question, Amy. Who lives in you and is beside you. Okay, I have to listen to you. And that helps you to develop your relationship with Jesus.

**Amy**

Well, that really leads to the next question, because you’re talking about listening to the Holy Spirit. My word for 2018, is pray and let me just tell you I’m scared about that word, but I’m excited about it and about learning more. And so one of the quotes in your book says, “Most people focus on the prayer, God however focuses on the pray-er.” That is such a great lesson. It spoke to my heart even for this year. So what do you mean by that?

**Donna**

Yeah, well, I think sometimes we ask ourselves. Am I praying the right way? Have I prayed enough about this? God, are you hearing my prayers? Maybe I’m not doing it right, because you’re not answering me. Or I’m not feeling you. Are my prayers are bouncing off the ceiling? So we start thinking is what I’m praying the right way? But God doesn’t look at the prayer; He looks at the pray-er, the person. So when we pray, it’s not that we’re bringing just our words to God, we’re bringing our whole selves to God, so when we focus on our heart, and am I right before you? That will completely change what we pray about, if we focus on the pray-er, me. I’m bringing my whole self into God’s presence, rather than just I’m bringing my words into God’s presence. And also, it just it makes praying so much easier because for the person whose never prayed before…let me tell you this quick story. This is adorable.

I have friend and she brought two gals to church with her who have never been to church before, and they had gone out to dinner last week and my friend just kind of out of habit, bowed her head to say a silent prayer before her meal. Well, her friend goes, “Are you praying?” And my friend said, “Oh, yeah, I’m sorry. Does that make you feel uncomfortable?” And her friend goes, “No, but could you pray out loud because I don’t know what it sounds like? I’ve never heard someone pray.” And I realize, that many times, people that have grown up in the church we assume everybody knows what it sounds like to pray. Everybody knows what you say when you pray. But if you’ve never done it before, you don’t even know where to start. So this is why it’s so freeing when it comes to understanding just talking to God.

**Amy**

I love that idea of bringing your whole self. That’s awesome!

**Cheri**

You say that, “Christianity is not a religion; it’s a relationship.” And I love the sound of this, because my heart wants relationship even though there’s still a part of me likes rules, because they’re easy to follow. It sounds like you’re squarely on the relationship side here. So what do you mean by that. What does it look like in every day living? That Christianity isn’t a religion; it’s about relationship. What does that look like?

**Donna**

Okay, Cheri I am so glad you brought this up. Do you mind if I tell a story? I feel like I’m telling a million stories.

**Cheri**

We love stories around here. Go for it, girlfriend!

**Donna**

Okay, the reason I love that you asked this, Cheri, is because my daughter, last year, has a really good friend on her cheerleading team who is not a believer. And they had a mutual friend die in a car accident and so it really compelled my daughter, she thought, “Wow! I need to talk to my friend about Jesus. And so they met at Starbucks and my daughter said, “Chelsea you know I love you so much, and you know I’m a Christian, and I want to be able to answer any of your God questions, so what would you like to know?” And the very first question that my daughter’s friend asked was this: I keep hearing Christians say Christianity is a relationship, not a religion, and I have no idea what that means. What does that mean? And so, my daughter went on to explain to her that it’s a friendship, which means, like we said before, it’s not something that you can outsource. It’s something that you personally have to experience. It’s something that is real. It’s something that can be had. It’s something that when you are in a relationship with someone whether it’s a friendship relationship or it’s a romantic relationship, it’s life altering. It really is. When you become a best friend with someone, then that best friend changes your life. When you fall in love with someone that changes your life. That’s what it’s like in a relationship with God. It changes your life, because now you know them. And I’ll tell you, my favorite line when I wrote the book *Seek*, I don’t know why this was my favorite line, but it was my favorite line. I think it’s even in the introduction, and it says something like this: If you’re ready, I’d like to introduce you to God. And I love that because, I want this friend that I have, and a reader of my book or someone I know from church, they’re my friend, too. I like my friends to connect to each other. You know how that is! Oh I love Amy, I love Cheri, let me introduce you to my friends because you’ll love them. too. It’s kind of like that with God.

**Amy**

So Donna, give our listeners some parting words. How would you like to encourage them today?

**Donna**

Seeking God is not something you do one time. It’s a whole lifestyle. And we can kind of think

of seeking God as something you do at the beginning of your spiritual journey, and I seek God. Okay, I find God when I come into a relationship with Jesus Christ, but now I’m on my own. And now it’s up to me following the rules. It’s me being in a bible study. It’s me serving Christ. It’s me, and the thing about that is, it’s all about me, me, me.

**Amy**

It’s crazy, right?

**Donna**

Yeah, it’s amazing! When we’re seeking God, it’s really all about God. We’re trying to figure out who are you God, and what are you like God, and are you real God? It’s all God focused. And so I think that’s sort of the transition we have to make. Is to realize I need to always be seeking God and seeking to know him. And realizing, also, I always tend to think of it as my responsibility, you know, my seeking God, but I’ve come to realize that no, He’s seeking me 1000 times more than I’m seeking Him. And to me, that’s just not only comforting, but it’s also a constant reminder of God’s love and His mercy and His grace.

**Cheri**

Head on over to *gritngracegirls.com/episode101.*

**Amy**

There you’ll find this week’s transcript, our digging deeper download, the bible verse art, and you’ll have a chance to enter to win this week’s giveaway of *Seek.*

**Cheri**

Now at the beginning of this weeks show we talked a little bit about rooting out perfectionism, and it turns out we both written the book on perfectionism. Like, literally.

**Amy**

Mine’s called *Breaking Up With Perfect: Kiss Perfection Goodbye and Embrace The Joy God Has In Store For You.*

**Cheri**

And mine is called *The Cure For The Perfect Life: 12 Ways To Stop Trying Harder And Start Living Braver*, co-authored with Kathi Lipp. You’ll find links to both our books in the show notes for this episode.

**Amy**

Make sure to join us next week when we’ll be processing together what we learned from Donna.

**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…

**Amy & Cheri**

BREAK IT!

**Outtakes**

**Amy**

Oh my, gosh. I love that you threw in a ya’ll!

**Cheri:**

I thought you would.

<Laughter>

**Amy**

I’m winning you over.