

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

Episode #105: Building Confidence that Empowers You to Make a Difference

**Cheri**

All right, well, let's talk about scuba diving and skydiving. So have you done either of those and is there one of those you want to do someday?

**Amy**

I have not been scuba diving; I used to want to do that. I have gone snorkeling, which is kind of the lightweight version of that, right? But I used to want to skydive so much; in fact I had an opportunity when I was in high school. I had two teachers that were skydivers that offered to take some of us skydiving.

**Cheri**

No way.

**Amy**

I wanted to go so badly, and I was so mad at my parents for saying no, but they told me I could go when I paid for my own medical insurance.

<Laughter>

**Cheri**

I love it. Well, you're more daring than I am. I would never in a million billion years do the skydiving thing, 'cause I kind of like being on planet earth. But I have been scuba diving. Only once. The day that I went it was a horrible storm with like 10-foot swells. And we won't discuss how many of us threw up before, after, or anything like that. But what I remember is being absolutely terrified until I got a little bit under the water, and even to being with, the water was so churned up from the storm that it was murky. I couldn't see. But once I got under that it was crystal clear and it was like being in this totally different world for like an hour. It was the most amazing experience.

**Amy**

So our guest today, Lynn Cowell, she has actually gone skydiving. Did you know that?

**Cheri**

She's a braver woman than I am, for sure.

**Amy**

Oh me, too. That takes a level of confidence I'm not sure that I have at all, and it turns out we're not the only ones that struggle with confidence. Once of our listeners says "One of my biggest struggles with perfectionism and people pleasing is the constant fear that I'm not good enough, and what if when I fail people will see that and leave me?" I think we could all use a big dose of confidence to overcome our fear.

**Cheri**

Well, I'm 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 Lynn Cowell, author of *Make Your Move: Finding Unshakeable Confidence Despite Your Fears and Failures*. Lynn Cowell is a *Proverbs 31* speaker and the author of several books. She helps set girls and women on the path toward wise choices by leading them to the only love that can fill the love gap in their hearts. Her husband and their 3 children (all in college) live in North Carolina where they love hiking, rafting, and anything combining chocolate and peanut butter.

**Cheri**

Well, fears and failures are two of my least favorite topics, but Lynn is the kind of friend you can totally trust to help you make your move towards confidence.

**Amy**

So Lynn, tell us what led you to write this book and bible study?

**Lynn**

Me. I was tired of me constantly struggling with confidence. Like some days it was my parenting and other days it was in my work, other times it was my marriage, my friendship, my family. When things in my life weren't going as planned or as society and social media told me it should, my confidence would just slip away and then doubt would fill in the space. And I got so worn out with feeling confident and good about myself one day, only to find I needed to scrape myself off the floor the next. I just — I needed a change. I personally needed to "make a move."

**Amy**

So it's so interesting because in your book you refer to the women in your study as mentors and I love that because I need that change too Lynn. So who are the mentors and what do they tell us and why did you even choose that term?

**Lynn**

Well, if you look up what the word mentor means in dictionary dot com, it says a wise and trusted counselor or teacher. And so, over the past couple of years these mostly obscure women in the bible became my mentors as I began to build a confidence that I couldn't lose or have taken from me on Christ. And so, I think my favorite part of the book was finding these women that you know don't have a total book like Ruth and Esther. I mean they're awesome, right? But they get enough face time. So it was these other women. Women like Sheerah and the daughters of Ze [Zelophehad] and Abigail and Deborah that I saw that the bible is full of confident women that we've kind of bypassed over the years.

**Cheri**

I love that. I love the idea of obscure women being mentors. That sounds like people I can identify with. One of the things that you said that I really kind of zeroed in on, in your book, and your bible study, you say knowing and living our spiritual gifts builds confidence as we understand our place and purpose in God's plan. And I agree with that. But last year I had an interesting experience working with a group of women, and I discovered that not only do a lot of women not know their spiritual gifts, but a lot of women are even uncomfortable asking the question what am I good at. They worry that it is prideful or even selfish to focus on themselves. So how would you respond to the concern of maybe someone whose struggling with people pleasing, and they would never ever want to appear to be self-centered?

**Lynn**

I think part of it is the misunderstanding of the word gift. I mean I think there's a reason that God specifically uses that word gift. Because gift implies and means something that was not mine before. It was something given to me. So for instance, this year for Christmas my husband gave me a really thoughtful gift. He gave me a wooden watch and on the back of it he engraved a hashtag I have called #adventureswithgregers. These are things that he and I do that are adventurous together. And Greg gave me this watch that had nothing to do with me. He gave me this watch, because he loves me and it represents the things that he wants to see he and I continuing to do together. This gift represents our relationship with each other. And God gives us gifts because he loves us and it represents what he wants to see us do as we live out our life with him and in him. And so these gifts are about him. They are not about us. They're about his goodness to us, and how we can impact those he loves so much. And it only becomes about us when we make it about us. When we draw attention to ourselves instead of pointing to him. And I don't know if you guys see this, but where I live celebrity Christianity is a thing. It is a thing. And it's not what God intended. He intended for us to keep our hearts close to his and when we do he empowers us with these gifts in powerful ways and as we remain close to him, we will remain humble as well.

**Amy**

And then hashtag #adventureswithGod.

<Laughter>

**Lynn**

Exactly!

**Cheri**

I love it. Oh, that is so helpful Lynn. The gift isn't about us. The gift is about God, and so we could go either way. We could either make it all about us or a false humility where we don't use the gift that he gave us because somehow using it might be perceived as pride. And so both of those extremes are going to be an issue. All right, so let's talk about comparison. Comparison is another one of those things that can kind of seem humble, "Oh, she's so much better than me," but you talk about comparison in your book

**Lynn**

Absolutely. Because comparison is the poison of confidence, it takes our eyes away from the confidence builder, who is Christ, and it gets us looking where we have no business going. God gives us his confidence to make himself famous and that's where we need to be looking at all times. How can I make God great in the eyes of another person?

**Cheri**

So once again, it's a matter of where the focus is.

**Lynn**

Right. Right. Looking to him instead of looking to ourselves or other people. And that's a hard thing to do. I think that, my daughter is home from college, and we've been dialoging about that because everything around us drives us to look to other people. And it takes so much dependence on Christ to not do that.

**Cheri**

Well, and I'm thinking about what you said when we started talking about scraping yourself off the pavement? Off the floor? I mean I think there's a direct correlation between looking at other people, face planting, and having to scrape ourselves up off the floor and then doing it all again. Okay, so let's see if I can read this next quote without getting all choked up. You said, "A confident woman doesn't crave other people's approval because she already has God's" and I agree with this and I keep getting choked up because I'm so convicted by it. But honestly, how? I mean really how do we live like this? I mean I remember this kind of thing 24 hours too late when I'm scraping myself off the floor. So how do we live it out on a daily basis?

**Lynn**

And you know what? I am living it out, too. You now one of the things I think about writing is that most of us, I would think, don't write out of this great thing we've learned and let me teach you all the ways that I've finally arrived! That's not what's going on here in *Make Your Move*. And this is something that I am looking to grow in every day. But here's how I'm doing that as I'm partnering with the Holy Spirit. That, when I soak my heart in his truth about what he says about me, and I have to do that over and over and over again. I've been doing this since I was 20, and as you know, I'm 50. So that's 30 years of –

**Amy**

We are too! We've got a club!

**Lynn**

But that's a long time to be soaking your heart in what God has to say about us, but we have to because our hearts crave approval. We crave love, and if we don't have that love gap filled by him, then we will look for it to be filled by other people. But when we do receive it from him and our heart is full of what he says about us, then when other people approve us, and other people love us then that love overflows. But if the opposite happens and our heart is empty and we don't get that thing we crave, then we begin to live our lives out of that emptiness, and trust me, when that happens, that's really bad. So just recently I experienced a pretty major rejection from someone that I thought loved me deeply and should love me deeply. And it hurt really, really bad. And over the few days as I processed that hurt I honestly had to just continually go back to Jesus over and over again and say I know what you say about me. I know you want me. I know you approve me. I know that you love me. And as I began to rehearse in my heart what he says about me, that healing began to come, and he began to fill me and then when I interacted with that person, instead of reacting out of that place of deep hurt, I was able to love her and forgive her and come from that place instead. But I'm telling you the truth it had nothing to do with me. It had everything to do with his truth flowing out of me.

**Amy**

Well, there's so much grace in what you just shared Lynn because you're saying that what Cheri said about remembering 24 hours later is still enough. That even if we don't remember until 24 hours later we can remind ourselves and rehearse that truth. And this is another place of grace where you are talking about the story of Rahab, and you said God is less concerned about our perfection and more about our pursuit. And you know this is what our podcast is all about. And this is so beautiful. So what does it mean to you in the daily life that you live to be more about pursuit than perfection?

**Lynn**

So throughout my day, where is he? You know lots of us may begin our day with Jesus. We may begin our day with praying in the car on the way to work or reading a devotional as we're eating our breakfast. But where is he at 10 o'clock when that skating email comes. Where is he when you get that text from your child and fear just wants to completely grip your heart? Where is he then? Am I thinking of him? Am I'm purposing to do life with him and not by myself? Am I consulting him and asking him for the wisdom and the health that I need? And then thanking him when the good things come and crying with him when they don't? We have to remember why we were created. We were created for relationship with the whole of trinity. With the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. They were all there at creation, and they all want to be a vital part of our daily walk during the day with him.

**Amy**

Mmm. That's so good. Now one of the things that I want to explain to our listeners about your book, cause we keep kind of tripping over it's a book, it's a bible study...and it's both!

**Cheri**

It's amazing!

**Amy**

And not only that but you also did some video with it. So, I want to know, how did your own relationship to dun dun dun... failure change as you wrote and filmed the study.

**Lynn**

Amy, are you holding our friendship against me right now?

**Amy**

I might be. I do have a little insight into all of this. Lynn and I are really close friends and so we get to compare our notes on our fear of failure.

**Lynn**

Yeah, so umm, a desire of my heart has always been to do bible study video. In fact, several years ago I asked God could I do this? And you know it took seven years for him to say yes, but I had no idea what I was asking for! The day that I went in to film I sat in my car outside, and I thought I'm not going in! I was terrified. I was so scared. And as I began to think about it, I thought, failure in whose eyes? You know, whose eyes am I afraid to fail in? You know when sin is not involved; we have to remember that what looks like failure to us is more than likely a learning opportunity from God.

**Amy**

Oh!

**Lynn**

And even when sin is involved, it's time for us to admit the sin, to ask for forgiveness, and to ask the Holy Spirit to empower me with the wisdom and the power to move forward so I don't sin again. So failure, whether it's failure in our own eyes or the eyes of those that we so want their approval, either way God can use it. God can use it.

**Amy**

How can we reforming perfectionists quit wasting so much energy on avoiding failure and learn to "make our move?"

**Lynn**

For me, its been learning that failure is part of learning. It is not IF, it is WHEN. So who do you know that learned without failure? When a child fails, when they fall down trying to walk or ride a bike, do we look at them and say, "Done. No more. Give your bike. You're never gonna walk." Absolutely not, that would be ridiculous. And yet that's how we treat ourselves. We treat

ourselves as if we are supposed to be awesome the very first time and that's just not how life works. So learning requires failing. And it's part of it, so accept it. It's the norm.

**Amy**

Oh, awesome.

<Laughter>

**Lynn**

Great. Maybe I don't want to learn so much.

**Cheri**

Well, I listen to you and it sounds so good as long as it doesn't happen to me today we will be fine.

**Lynn**

Oh gosh. Oh gosh. I just got a rejection yesterday, and I wanted to pick up my computer and throw it and say, "What do you mean you don't like it? Well let's see how I can learn." As if that were my initial response.

**Cheri**

Hey, if you're doing it on the same day, I'm impressed. I'm very impressed. All right, well, I want you to tell our listeners just briefly about the daughters of Zee. You got me so intrigued by them at She Speaks last summer when we were talking about them.

**Lynn**

So honestly, these are my favorite, most obscure women in *Make Your Move*. And the daughters of Ze story is told in Numbers 27. Basically, what was happening was that it was time for the promised land to start being divided and as traditional calls for, the land was being divided among the men. Well, there were 5 daughters of Zelophehad. And Zelophehad had died in the desert with no sons. So here we've got 5 women with no father, no brothers, and it also tells us they were single. So they had no husbands and no sons. So at that time and culture, that meant nobody to take care of them. Now, if this was 1818 instead of 2018, you and I would get that because at that time period in America women could not own land. And we would have been in the same situation, because we don't really get that today because we can rent an apartment and save our money and go and buy a home. But that's not how it was. And so these women had a choice. They could either be stuck in what culture said and that was that men were landowners or they could believe what Abraham — the promise that he received from God way back when. And if you go back in Genesis and read God's promise, there is nothing about men in that promise. God says to Abraham that the land was to be given to his descendants. That includes women. And so the daughters of Ze went before Moses and the priests and the entire tribe, and they said, "Basically, give us our land!" And so Moses went before God and God said, "Yep, what they're saying is right. Give them property among their father's relatives. So the cool thing is that not only were they confident enough to push back

culture's norms, to push back the whispering that we absolutely know had to be happening inside their heads. Who do you think you are? Why would the entire tradition change just for you? What do the other women in your tribe think about you? They had to push back all that to go get what they believed God had promised to them, and then probably my favorite part of all, was that they changed the tradition from there on out. From there on out the law was that the land was to be given to that family. It was to remain in the family and not have to necessarily go to the men any longer. And I love that, because my word this year is difference-maker. I want to be a difference-maker and not let things like tradition or what other people would say about me or basically my own fears inside my head whispering to me, hold me back from doing awesome things with God. I'm excited, can you tell?

**Cheri**

I love it! Thank you, thank you, thank you. What was your favorite discovery while researching and writing this study? We know that this kind of work is transformative. So what was either your favorite or most surprising, or you take your pick.

**Lynn**

A woman named Sheerah. Sheerah, I had never seen Sheerah until this year. And Sheerah was a woman who was born into a nomadic family, and before she was born two of her brothers were murdered. And then after they were murdered her mom and dad had two more kids and she was one of them. So Sheerah, a woman born into a nomadic family, grows up and she builds 3 cities. So she goes from agriculture to architecture. And I just think, where does a woman in ancient history get that kind of confidence to learn a skill that absolutely would not have been within her tribe; would not have been something where she had a mentor around here. She had to go and get it. And she went and got what she needed to get in order to build this city so that her family would not longer live in the flappy, flimsy tents, but live behind the walls and be protected. And that's what I see — that's what women are. We are difference makers. We are change makers. And whatever it takes, the Holy Spirit inside of us can empower us to go get it. Do we need an education? Do we need a new mentor? Do we need to get outside of these walls of thinking that block us in and go and get what we need from God in order to do the great things that he has for us to do?

**Amy**

I want to go do something right now!

**Cheri**

I'm about to just run out the front door. All right! You got me! You know what Seth Godin calls people like you? He would call you a ruckus maker.

**Amy**

Wooh! We like that!

**Lynn**

Yeah, I like to be a ruckus maker. Thank you.



**Cheri**

All right, well, I am dying to gather a group of women and dive into *Make Your Move* and watch the videos together. What kind of women, especially, do you find are enjoying and benefitting from *Make Your Move*?

**Lynn**

Let me tell you who it's not for. It's not for the woman who wants to get up and checkmark off reading her bible each day. Instead, it's for a woman who is tired of doing life as she's been doing it. And she's ready to embrace the hard work that it's going to take to make a move and benefit from it. We are deceiving ourselves if we think we can get up each day and do life as we did life yesterday and look for a different outcome. That's not going to happen. And so that's what I'm challenging myself with this year. If I truly want to be a difference maker, whether that's a difference maker in the life of my man who walks in the door each night, or if that's in my community. Yesterday, I met with a woman who's involved in a movement called Changed Choices. And I want to get involved with women who are coming out of the federal prison system. I don't know anything about that! I've never been in prison. I've never worked with women coming out of prison, but you know what? I want to make a difference. And if I want to make a difference, I have to change what I did last year, and I have to do something completely uncomfortable to me and do something new this year, all the while, hanging on with all my might to the Holy Spirit saying you're gonna have to give me what I need to do something new.

**Amy**

So good. So what final words of encouragement would you like to leave with our listeners Lynn?

**Lynn**

You have everything inside of you. Everything you need to do what you were created to do. And his name is the Holy Spirit, and he wants to partner with you each and every morning to do this thing called life in an exciting adventure. It is not easy. It is not easy. It is hard work. It's challenging work. It is, sometimes it's gut-wrenching work as he changes us. But it is adventurous and it is a life worth living.

**Cheri**

Head on over to [gritngracegirls.com/episode105](http://gritngracegirls.com/episode105).

**Amy**

There you'll find our transcript, this week's digging deeper download, the bible verse art, and you can enter to win this week's giveaway of *Make Your Move*.

**Cheri**

If you'd like to be a part of the team that supports this podcast, head on over to [patreon.com/gritngracegirls](https://patreon.com/gritngracegirls). We have some fabulous gifts for every level of supporter.

**Amy**

Next week, we'll be processing together what we learned from Lynn and the biblical mentors that she shared with us.

**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!

**Outtakes**

**Cheri**

Well, fears and failures are two of my least favorite topics, but Lynn is the kind of friend you can totally trust to help you make your move towards confidence. See what I did there? See, see what I did there?

**Amy**

Love it!

**Cheri**

That's p-a-t-r-e-o-n.com/gritandgreat...

<Laughter>