

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #121: How to Come Out of Hiding When You Feel Less Than Amazing

Cheri

Let's talk about our strengths-finder results.

Amy

Oh, goodie.

Cheri

Which of your strengths is your favorite, and which strength do you wish you could add to your top 5?

Amy

Okay, so my number one is both my favorite and my least favorite in some ways. My number one is belief, which is kind of awesome. I mean I kind of love that I'm an idealist and that there's a part of me that just wants the best in every situation, believes the best is even possible in every situation. I think, of course, that belief being number one has led to just really my strong faith in Christ, so I love it for that reason. But I also hate it for that reason because I can become disillusioned really fast. Yeah. And also it sometimes estranges me from other people, which leads to the one that I wish was on my list, which is Woo. Woo. I wish I had woo. It's fun to say.

<Laughter>

Cheri

It is. Woo. Woo.

Amy

But also its that thing, you know, its charming to other people and things like that and none of mine on my list make me the least bit charming.

Cheri

I think you're charming, but probably, because you believe in me.

Amy

That's it. Now, we have one alike, which is input, but what's a favorite of yours and what do you wish you had?

Cheri

Of all of mine my favorite is ideation. Input is my number one, but my middle one is ideation, and I love that because that's my creative one. That's where I can combine things, and see different ideas, and put them together. I don't have woo. And that's the one I desperately wish I had. But when I do my ideation well, people go "wow," and wow is kind of close to woo. Its not quite the same thing. And sometimes they go "wow, you thought of that?" And then I go back to the drawing board, but woo must just be the thing that we would all pay for if we could. Like I'd sell everything I own if I could then use the money to buy woo. I'd probably even sell everything you own if I could buy some woo.

Amy

Definitely everything Daniel owns...

Cheri

Absolutely. I'd clear out the garage for some woo.

Amy

Well, we have a listener that feels the same way. She says "I feel like I have to be everything for everyone," see she wants woo. "Like I'm the only one that knows how to do things properly." That is not so woo-ish, "and then I eat up the attention to make up for how unworthy and inadequate I feel. I don't want to be this way, but it seems to be a vicious cycle." And, oh my goodness, I think this listener has the same "gift" in quotation marks that I have, which is overdeveloped responsibility, but its terrible how over-responsibility almost always leads to inadequacy, feeling like we're fresh out of amazing. So I'm glad Stacey's going to give us some relief today.

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 Stacey Thacker. Stacey is a wife and mother of four girls. The author of 6 books, she's also a bible study teacher with a passion to connect with women and encourage them in their walks with God. You can find her blogging at staceythacker.com and hanging out on Instagram and Twitter at [@staceythacker](https://www.instagram.com/staceythacker), usually with a cup of coffee in her hand.

Cheri

So if you feel like everybody expects you to be amazing, but you've got nothing left to give, Stacey is here to remind us all of God's mercies and point us back to the truly amazing one.

Amy

Well Stacey we're so glad you're with us. Tell us why you wrote *Fresh Out of Amazing*.

Stacey

Well, *Fresh Out of Amazing*, I like to call it my come out of hiding story. It's just my story in print. A few years ago I wrote a blog post called *Me, Steve Jobs, and Being Fresh Out of Amazing*. And I had said these words that I was feeling fresh out of amazing for the first time like in print on my blog after reading the letter that Steve Jobs wrote when he resigned. In his letter he said he felt like he wasn't meeting peoples' expectations. And I read that as a stay at home mom of little kids, and I felt like, wow, I feel like I'm not meeting expectations of anyone in my life but most certainly my own expectations. And it just really resonated with me, and so I wrote this blog post that then turned into, years later, the book that we're now discussing, because that term Fresh Out of Amazing really resonated with my readers. I took a turn before this book and wrote two other books called *Hope for the Weary Mom* and *Hope for the Weary Mom Devotional*, so once I got back to this message to really dive into what it was about. The Lord, He really opened the door for me to show me that this was a come out of hiding story for me that I needed to write, and He wanted to speak some truths over my heart and apparently it encouraged women along the way as well, so.

Cheri

I love that description that it's a come out of hiding, because Amy has a serious problem with hiding so I'm glad you're on with us today.

Amy

I'm a professional ghost-er.

Stacey

You guys are ready.

Cheri

No, you said the words expectations, and we both began to sweat cause there's only two words that we use all the time on this podcast: expectations and control. So hopefully you won't use the C-word, because you already used the E-word.

Stacey

I can't promise that I'm not struggling with that as well, so

Cheri

I've been enjoying reading your book, and you open it with a completely unusual story. Like I've never seen a book for Christian women open with a story about Ezekiel and the dry bones, so talk to us about why this was such an important story to you that you chose use it to start the book...

Stacey

I'll confess a little that in my writing journey, I don't know how you all feel about writing, but first chapters are really hard. And so, I had rewritten this chapter so many times, and I was so exasperated and I had come across the story of Ezekiel. And Ezekiel (for those of you who don't know and don't spend a lot of time in the book of Ezekiel, which probably you don't), in the Old Testament, Ezekiel was a prophet, and God was speaking to him. He had a vision where God took him to this valley of dry bones, and God began to ask the questions. And he said to Ezekiel (this is my paraphrase of course) can these dry bones live? And I remember reading that going, that's exactly how I feel, like, I just wanna, can I live through this feeling of being fresh out of amazing? And I just felt like those dry bones that God was speaking and showing Ezekiel was such a picture of my own heart that I just felt very dry. I had come to the end of myself. And I'm a visual person so that visual of these bones on the ground that God then said here's what I want you to do. I want you to prophesize. I want you to speak these words over these bones, and I'm going to bring life into them. And I just thought that's what I need. It was just to me such a great visual as to what work God can do. It can resurrect our hearts. It can restore us and renew us, and that nothing is impossible for God. Like, if God can take dry bones and end up turning them into an army before Ezekiel's eyes, then he can resurrect my own heart as well, and it's through the power of his word. And so that's really where that story, I just gravitated to it. It didn't even occur to me that it was kind of an odd place for a book for Christian women. You know it wasn't a warm fuzzy story, but it so depicted how my own heart felt, and so I just love that story. I love that visual, and more importantly, I love that God spoke and the dry bones came alive. I think that's just a powerful picture for us.

Cheri

Oh, I thought it's wonderful. I thought it was absolutely wonderful. Well, you talk about 5 types of fresh out of amazing girls. Kind of 5 routes to the same dead end. And so the first one is the girl who is burdened and busy, and I thought this was so wonderful. You and Amy share responsibility as one of your top strength-finder strengths. So, I know I've already thrown Amy under the bus, but this podcast would not survive without her, like, we are partners for a reason. I'm just curious from your perspective, how has responsibility been both a strength, and then you said a "weakness of epic proportions?"

Stacey

Well, responsibility, I mean it sounds great, right? Don't you love responsible people? Like, everybody loves the responsible girl and in that chapter which I highly, highly identify with, we talk about the poster child for responsibility, Martha. Like everybody loves to just dog on Martha, but let's just be honest, she was the responsible one. I think she had the strength of responsibility, and I feel like a lot of time she gets a bad wrap but she was doing the things. She was cooking for 13 people, probably more than that, and her sister wasn't helping her. But I feel that deeply. I feel that all the things in all the ways I am responsible to take care of and to fix, and to make sure everyone's taken care of and fed, and everyone's doing the things they're supposed to be doing, and that I'm in the place doing the things I'm supposed to be doing. So I think this great because I get a lot of stuff done, but I also feel like is the fastest way to being burned out and overwhelmed. I probably, out of all these ways that we talk about in the book,

burned out and busy is the one that sits in my life a little more frequently than the others. I'm always chasing the outside of my heart, and go, okay the message in that chapter is that we can be busy but we don't have to be burdened by it. Jesus didn't say, "Hey, Martha you shouldn't be doing these things. He just said, "Mary made a better choice in this moment." And she just missed that opportunity in the midst of her business to find a moment where she could worship Christ, too. And I think that's possible, but I think sometimes it's a hard journey to get here.

Cheri

I like that distinction. You can be busy, but doesn't have to be burdened. We're always talking about the weight we feel on our chest. That heaviness. That burden. Well, then the second type of fresh out of amazing girl is the one who, she's amazing and I'm not.

Stacey

Oh, comparison.

Cheri

I can hardly say that without giggling. So you had this interesting phrase. You said, Christ-controlled comparison can lead to imitating a life that pleases God. Unpack that for us. That's intriguing.

Stacey

Well, that story came out of the story that I shared about my daughter. My oldest daughter is a dancer, and it was a really unique situation where they were dancing in a studio that didn't have mirrors at first, so she would just watch her instructor, her mentor, the woman that she learned from. And everything was great, everything was wonderful, but they moved into a studio that had mirrors. And suddenly she started watching all the other girls who didn't look like her, who didn't quite dance like her, and it just crushed her spirit. And as we were talking through that story, I thought, you know what? When God puts people in our lives that we can imitate that are walking with Christ that we can look at their walks, and say there's something about that person that I want to imitate, because I see Jesus in her. Hopefully, it's a woman or someone that's a little farther down the road from us. But often what happens is we tend to look at the people that were running beside, and we're like, "Oh, what she has is so much better. She's doing it better, and therefore that must mean I'm doing it wrong, and so that comparison can destroy us, but if we look for things in other women that show Christ. Instead of trying to be like her, we want to be like Christ instead. I think that's where the freedom comes. And in that story I talk about Leah and Rachel, two women who, oh my word, girlfriends compared each other left and right. It ended up in a lot of brokenness. And God redeemed it, of course, because that's what he does. But I think as women, this is, I think, one of the number one lies women believe is comparison. I see that in my life, in my girls' life, in the women I lead, such an important part of the conversation and definitely a way to fresh out of amazing for sure.

Amy

Well number three is: I feel like my dreams have died. And you encourage us to pour out our hurting hearts to God, even if we're admitting that we're mad at him and that is really hard for people pleasers. We're used to trying to bring cheerfulness for everyone. Why is it so important to be honest with God?

Stacey

Well, I think part of it is that he knows everything anyway. I think it's part of being honest with not only God but with our own heart, just that moment of surrender, is that we have to realize that we have a loving and tender father who loves us so much, and (He) wants to take our broken places, and he wants to birth something new out of it. And in that story about Hannah, we see her just broken before the Lord. And it was in that moment that God met her and began to do a work in her life that she couldn't even imagine what he was going to do to her story. She thought it was done, that my story was over, that there was no hope, and God entered that place. And I think once we pour it all out and we come, I think that's the moment of really coming to the end of yourself, that's where God has that amazing, beautiful. That's where he begins, right? So it's such a good word for all of us to realize that sometimes when our dreams die, it's not because we've done anything wrong necessarily, it's because God has a bigger story. He wants us to live for him.

Amy

Oh that is so good. So number four is liar, liar pants on fire. I love that title. People pleasers often believe others too readily and give others too much authority in their lives. So what's one of the biggest lies that you see women believing?

Stacey

Well, we talked about comparison. That's definitely one. I think one of the lies that women often believe is this: that other people are doing better, more important things. I'm not. I don't matter. What I'm doing isn't good enough. I think we often accept the labels that we think. Now, I'm not saying that people say this. We think people are thinking of us. We think people are going, ah, well she's this or she's that. And the enemy gets in our brain, and says, "Hey, this is what other people believe about you, so it must be true." In the story, in the chapter, it's about the woman at the well who is hiding in the middle of her life, because she had some things in her life that were hard. So she was hiding, and when she encounters Christ in the most beautiful, probably one of my favorite stories in scripture. Where she encounters Jesus, and he just one by one takes down those lies, and shows her truth, with truth he takes down those lies. I just think, as women, we have got to go to truth when we're believing lies. And I think we can even ask friends, "Hey, what lie do you think I'm believing?" And she'll tell you. I think you might've just told each other the lie! I feel like Cheri just said, "Hey, maybe this one." I think that we need to do that for each other, with grace and gentleness, and truth, for sure.

Amy

That is such great advice about having friends in our lives that tell us what lies we're believing though. There's a lot of grace in that. And Cheri and I do do that.

Stacey

Start that with coffee and chocolate, and you'll be fine.

Amy

It's part of the intimacy of a relationship. It's terrific.

Cheri

So the fifth type of fresh out of amazing, girl, is when you've lost your song in the valley of bitterness. Now, this podcast is for reforming perfectionists and people pleasers and then those of us who are highly sensitive people. And one thing about HSPs is that we tend to notice more, we feel things, more deeply; our highs are high, our lows are lower, and we tend to get told to just suck it up, buttercup. Now you share in fresh out of amazing about a sudden unexpected loss that you experienced, and so, could you share with our listeners how Jesus met you early on in that season of shock and grief?

Stacey

Yeah. What's really interesting is when I first started exploring writing *Fresh Out of Amazing*, I really didn't know what the book was about. And I'm not even kidding, the week I sat down to pray through it, I got a call that my dad had passed away suddenly. He had battled cancer for 5 years, but he had a pulmonary embolism and died suddenly. So it was something we weren't expecting in the framework of fighting cancer. We didn't anticipate this kind of goodbye, and so it threw me into a tailspin of grief. Very early on, one of my pastors said to me, he said, "Stacey, just don't lose your song." I remember thinking, 'cause I'm a worship leader, as well. And I remember thinking, I'm not gonna lose my song, like, what does that mean? But as I dove into that pit of grief that is so common when you lose someone you're really close to. I couldn't find it. I couldn't find the reason to sing and rejoice in the middle of that. And the Lord was so tender with me. He was so gracious. He let me sit in that grief, but didn't leave me alone. Like Jesus met me in it, as grief's patient friend. He suffered with me and sat with me in that. And I remember when I got back from my dad's funeral I sat down. I have this big oversized chair that I meet with the Lord in. It's kind of my place to meet with him, and I just told the Lord I have never been more fresh out of amazing than I am right now. Here I am supposed to be thinking about this book. I can't write this book. I don't care to write this book. I don't want to do it. And the Lord, I promise you, whispered in my heart and he said, Stacey, I'm so glad you finally realized this, and now is going to be my opportunity to minister to you. I'm going to show you how amazing I am. You don't have to be amazing, because I'm already amazing. And so that is where He led me, which is the second part of the book, to the book of Habakkuk, which is another really strange, strange place for the girls to go. But that book is working, marched me through the early days of grief and pain. I think in the grief process it just exaggerated a lot of the grief process and feelings of overwhelm that I had. It was like it magnified it, and I was able to see through scripture how God can walk us through it and show us. In the end, we worship him because he's amazing, not because we are, but because He's worthy. And even if we suffer loss or our dreams die or we're not as famous or as special in other's eyes as maybe someone else is that God is the one that we worship. And he is worthy of our worship, and we can trust in that and that can be our song. So that was just how the Lord walked me through that, and

that became the second part of the book. And even since those days of grieving God has continued to reaffirm that message, and I love talking about Habakkuk. And I love telling what God did to that crazy little book in the Old Testament and my heart. That's one of my favorite parts of the story as well.

Amy

That's one of my favorite books of the bible. Definitely my favorite book in the Old Testament, so that's great. Can't wait to dive into that. But you've got a new book coming out! So congratulations. Tell us a little bit about it.

Stacey

Okay, when I wrote *Fresh Out of Amazing*, one of the things that I fell in love with was writing through scripture. There's a ton of different bible stories in *Fresh Out of Amazing*, and I just fell in love with it. And when I looked at what I could do next I was like I want to write through a book of the bible. I just want to take a book of the bible and just see what it says and write through it. Like not come to it and go I want to say this, but I want the book to tell me what to say. And so, the year after I wrote *Fresh Out of Amazing*, I did book one, it's called the *Girlfriend's Guide to the Bible*. And it's on the book of Hebrews, which is my favorite book of the bible, and so that one is called *Is Jesus Worth It?* That came out last fall, and then this fall the second book in that series is the *Girlfriend's Guide to the Bible*, and is called *When Grace Walks In*, and it's on Ephesians. So it is book 2. It really is like a girlfriend commentary almost. You can read it as a stand-alone. You can study the book of Ephesians. It'll take you through 7 weeks of study, and it is just God pouring out his love and grace on us. I mean I love Ephesians; it's such an encouraging book. So it's coming out in September, so September 4th.

Amy

We can't wait. We can't wait to see it. So what closing words of encouragement do you have for our listeners today, Stacey?

Stacey

I think about my story, and I think what God has woven into it is, first of all, there is so much mercy. I think that the lasting message that God gave me as I wrote *Fresh Out of Amazing* is tell the fresh out of amazing girls that there's mercy. And that He sits on the throne of grace, Hebrews tells us, to give us mercy and grace in our time of need. And so, I just want to say if you are in a place where you are fresh out, like you feel like you need to be amazing, and you are fresh out that we have a God who loves us, who is full of mercy for you and the season that you're in. And I think also the other thing I would say is don't be afraid to share your story. The stories in this book are deeply personal to me, but what I've seen God do is to take that story, and birth a bigger story that he wants to use in the lives of women. It's okay to share your come out of hiding story. It's okay to be vulnerable, 'cause that's where people connect with us. I would just say if you're in that place, tell a friend, tell a sister, tell your bible study, gather a group for coffee, and just know that God meets us in those places and does work that we can only dream or imagine.

Cheri

Head on over to gritngracegirls.com/episode121.

Amy

There you'll find this week's transcript, our digging deeper download, the bible verse art, and an explanation about how to enter this week's giveaway of *Fresh Out of Amazing*.

Cheri

If you've enjoyed this episode of Grit-n-Grace, would you leave us a review on iTunes? You'll find instructions on the webpage for this episode.

Amy

And make sure that you join us next week, when Cheri and I will be processing together what we learned from Stacey.

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 and Cheri

Break it!

Outtakes

Stacey

I love coauthoring. You feel like you have someone running with you, and you're never alone. I mean writing is so lonely. The best about that is you only have to write half the words. It's half the words...

Amy

Yes, indeed.

Stacey

Or if your coauthor is wordy, it's less than half!

Cheri

Well, we're competition in the wordiness department.

Stacey

I'm excited for you guys.