

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #160: How to Step Into Your God-Created Best

Amy: Cheri, I saw a meme the other day that is so perfect for today in North Carolina.

Cheri: Do tell.

Amy: Well, it said, I know hell is hot, but is it humid?

<Laughter>

Okay. Do not email me. I know that is not good theology or even funny in an external perspective, but can I just say it is both hot and terribly humid today in North Carolina? It's terrible.

Cheri: I am so sorry. I grew up in southern California where it can be 100, 110 during the summer, but we always say, but at least it's a dry heat. I never used to know what that meant until I visited your fair state and I immediately thought, where are my gills? I need gills.

Amy: Exactly. My friend said it's where we wear the air.

Cheri: Oh my word. You probably don't want to know that it's about 70 and we have a light dusting of fog that will burn off as I suffer for Jesus on the central California coast.

Amy: As you look out your picture window at the back over the Pacific Ocean? I know, I know.

Cheri: Well, this is Cheri Gregory.

Amy: I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri: 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: So, We are again featuring our section of *Exhale*, Love Who You Are today. Can I just say that I love your chapter 12?

Cheri: Aww, thank you.

Amy: I love this chapter so much because it is rich teaching about Jesus, our shepherd. Some of the things that I highlighted in the chapter reveal the obstacles that I've faced as a reforming perfectionist and people pleaser. When people ask me to show up as just me, that's so scary. That's what you talk about in this chapter. I think there's this fear that others won't accept me. There's also a level of mistrust.

One of the things that I realized early in my speaking days is that I was really struggling with being authentic. The picture I had is I would walk on stage and zip up. I knew I wasn't being my true self. I started thinking, why is that? I thought, well, it's totally self-protective. I don't trust that the audience will like me. If they don't see the real me, then I don't have to be worried about that. If they don't like me, who cares? They didn't see the real me.

Then I thought where do I take this off the stage into my everyday life? I think it's often, especially if I'm walking into a new room of people, I'll feel that zipping up, and I have to really fight that.

Cheri: So interesting you should use that term self-protection because that is literally the exact phrase that I have been wrestling with over the last few weeks. I'm like, when did I become so self-protective? I really resonate with that zipping. For me, it's like a shield, like, and it comes out of nowhere. Whhhup! And everything bounces off of it. It's just like boom! It's almost like racquetball. Did you ever play racquetball in the ... When was racquetball popular, in the 80s?

Amy: I used to play racquetball in college. It's just a scary sport.

Cheri: It's what?

Amy: Such a scary sport. That ball's flying around that room.

Cheri: Exactly. That's how I picture self-protection. Boom! Things are just flying off. I'm sorry. I interrupted you.

Amy: No. Well, there were a couple of quotes that I highlighted that I think really address this situation in my life with fear and mistrust and how it causes me to self protect. You said there are villains in our lives whose goal is to sacrifice us to get what they want. In contrast, our shepherd's goal is to sacrifice himself to give us life. Whoa!

Cheri: Beautiful.

Amy: Then you said to love who I am, I must trust his call. I thought, oh, that's the key. Fear and mistrust is replaced when my confidence and trust are in Jesus. My problem with fear and mistrust is I put too much confidence in other people, but when they're in Jesus, I can be safe. I don't have to self-protect.

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Cheri: I love it. Well, one thing I think is hard for those of us who are reforming perfectionists and people pleasers, or at least it's confusing, is that although, and I even think I said it this way, one call fits all because God calls us to be one flock with one shepherd, the way God leads me, it may look quite different from how He leads you and how He leads each one of our listeners. Years ago, God had me in a season where He was leading me to be content with whatever was offered to me. I wasn't ... If I ordered soup at California Pizza Kitchen and it came and it wasn't hot, I was to just eat it and enjoy it as best I could rather than send it back for hotter soup. Yet, I had a friend, and He was clearly leading her to speak up for what she needed and not just what she needed, but what she wanted.

It seemed like we were going in opposite directions because we were doing opposite things. How could ... Which one of us was right? Certainly one of us was listening to God wrong, right? But what I finally realized was it wasn't about what either of us was doing in comparison to each other. The key is we were both listening to the Holy Spirit's leading, and because we were obeying and following God's leading, we were actually moving closer to him.

Amy: Oh wow!

Cheri: It had nothing to do with what we were doing in terms of each other. If we had gone out to dinner, we may well have done opposite things in terms of me eating my cold soup and her sending hers back. I think that's really hard, especially for women. I think we get caught up in feeling like connectedness requires sameness, but it doesn't. As long as we are following God's leading, we are still being a part of one flock with one shepherd, even if the exact way we're doing it looks different.

Amy: That is so good. I mean one of the things I've been processing so much this year is that there are no formulas. Now, don't get me wrong, there's truth with a capital T.

<drawn out laugh>

That's in our Bibles. I don't want to try to make like everything is gray, but there are no formulas. That's tough 'cause, man, a perfectionist wants a formula. I just love one plus one equals two.

Cheri: Well, and of course, in the illustration I just gave the reason God wanted me to eat some cold soup for a season is I had gotten too demanding. I had gotten too entitled, whereas my friend had not been speaking up for herself and it was becoming dangerous. She had become too accommodating.

Amy: Wow.

Cheri: God was leading each of us to grow in the areas He knew that we needed to grow in to become closer to Him and more like Jesus and that's what it was all about.

Speaking of Jesus, in chapter 13, you unpack Jesus' healing of blind Bartimaeus. I just was struck by how you express that when Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" it was actually a clarifying question because earlier Bartimaeus was saying, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me." You point out that the word mercy could be translated as alms. Jesus, in effect, was asking, "What do you want from me? Do you just want money, alms, or are you seeking something more?"

As I was rereading it with highlighters in preparation for today, it hit me. I'll bet you Jesus still asks that same question. When I am in full-blown perfectionist mode, and I'm praying for everything to turn out right, I am willing to bet Jesus is asking, "So Cheri, do you just want to look good or are you seeking something more," or if I've gone into people-pleasing mode, and I'm praying about my relationships, I bet you he's asking, "Do you just want acceptance from other people or are you seeking something more?"

Amy: Yeah, that chapter is so stunning because he actually asked that question twice and it's the only place recorded in scripture. "What do you want from me?" Can you imagine having Jesus stand in front of you and basically give you carte blanche? "Ask me for anything you want," but, man, what we ask for is everything, isn't it?

Cheri: It is.

Amy: It reveals so much about us. The sons of thunder asked for sitting at his right hand, and Jesus basically patted them on the head and said, "You don't know what you're asking for."

Cheri: I would love to tell myself, oh, if He asked me, I would do better than they did. I'm like, oh no, I know myself pretty well. I'd probably ask for something dumb.

Amy: I think I put in that chapter like, well, I've always wanted a convertible.

<Laughter>

It's so interesting because this idea of more is ... when he says, "What do you want from me?" And we're like, well, I want more of something if Jesus is offering, but what do we want more of is the question. The human more is not so great usually. We'll ask for status or stable finances or a position or the relationship we don't have yet. It's so often much less than what Jesus could give us. I mean, His more is defined so differently than our more that He can give us more peace or more God-centered confidence or more good works that have been ordained ahead of time for us and the satisfaction that comes from that. Maybe the idea of the highest good is what we need to think about

when Jesus says, "What do you want me to do for you?" To really consider ... I mean, I can't help it. Aladdin just came out. If you get three wishes from Jesus ... Sorry.

<Laughter>

You probably should edit that.

Cheri: No, I was going to say, if He gives you the convertible, you can put a little fish symbol on it. Wouldn't that be a good compromise?

Amy: That would be awesome. Hey, with a convertible, I could have a speaker and preach while I drive. I mean ... gosh, this has gone downhill really fast... the highest good, the highest good, Amy.

Cheri: Well, in chapter 13 you give some very practical steps for discerning what God wants us to do. And illustrate them by sharing how your Next Step Coaching Services was born. Tell our listeners the story.

Amy: Well, I'd just gone back to teaching for one and a half miserable years. I don't know how else to say it. I mean, I ... listen, when I say that, it's not because I think teaching is miserable. It had been my life's calling earlier in my life. I mean from the time I was an itty bitty little girl, I wanted to be a teacher and being a teacher for the years that I was was like the delight of my life. So when I went back to it and it was so miserable, I'm like, what is happening here? It really was plan B. I needed to make a little money and that was like an easy way to do it. That's what I had always done before.

I was on a road trip with my friend Holly and she was asking me, "Hey, how are things going with the Proverbs 31 team?" I was like, you know, it's just the best. I mean, if I have a problem with this, I ask so-and-so. If I have another problem with this, then I get Micah to coach me. If I get ... I went on and on about all the women on our team, and how they were helping me because they were more experienced and farther down the road. Holly goes, "I wonder what women do who are in ministry by themselves?"

There's this long pause and she goes ... because she knew that I was frantically searching for something else to do besides teaching at that point. She goes, "Maybe that's your job."

Honestly, it's the strangest thing. I always describe it as an audible click. It was like all these random pieces in my life suddenly came together. I could look back. I think I talk about looking back, and I could see my teaching experience because coaching is just another form of teaching. I could look at my present and know that teaching in a

classroom with children was not what I was called to do anymore, but surely there was something else. Then I had this vision of the future to look ahead. Going through those steps, I kind of had all the pieces floating around, but they hadn't come together until that moment when the new calling for the new season of my life became apparent.

Cheri: What you didn't know then was that at some point, through Next Step, a blond from California would show up at your booth at She Speaks and say, "Hey, I'd like you to coach me."

Amy: Right. I hadn't even put that piece together 'til you just said it. That's how we met.

Cheri: That is how we met. The reason I wanted you to share the story is because I just love how aware you are of the past and the present and the future pieces all coming together and just want our listeners to pray that as we all think about our calling and what God is leading us to do as a part of that calling.

I love the fact that you were so aware that even though teaching in the classroom was your call for a time, that something shifted, something changed for a season. I know that many of our listeners are in a season of change, in a season of transition, which especially for those of us who are recovering perfectionists, it's scary to not know for sure what's coming next. I just love that you give some very practical guidance for that.

Amy: Well, and in that season of waiting for all your pieces to click together, because I was in a long season of that. If you're in that season, the story of blind Bartimaeus is the first thing Jesus said is, "Come." I've said, our highest calling is to be near Jesus. While you wait for him to send you out, because he called Bartimaeus to Him and then he sent him out. While you're waiting to be sent out, just be close to Jesus.

Cheri: You have an amazing devo with Proverbs 31 that's on this very topic and we'll be sure to link that in the show notes.

Amy: That's great.

Cheri: All right. What's the scripture that you've paired with this episode?

Amy: Well, I had to go back to your chapter where you talked about John 10, verse 11, "I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Oh my goodness. He's so trustworthy.

Cheri: What strikes me every time I read through John 10 is how much our shepherd cares for us and all the work he does for us. The three things we do: we listen, we get to know his voice, and we follow him. Listen, know, follow, listen, know, follow. Then He does all the rest. It's amazing.

Amy: So amazing.

Cheri: Yeah. What's the bad rule that we're breaking in this episode?

Amy: Well, really, we've been talking about all these self-protective layers the last couple weeks, and I think the bad rule, for last week, too, and this week, is I'm desperate to belong.

Cheri: Yeah. I resemble that. What's the truth? What's the fact we can focus on instead?

Amy: We belong to God, so we belong together. Those were from your chapter. I just love those so much because that really, when we give up the fear and the mistrust and we step into confidence in God, then we do belong. He just takes such good care of us as the shepherd.

Cheri: The grit for me in all of this is once we've discerned what God is leading us to do, for me, it's stepping out in faith and actually doing it. For me, it's so much easier to plan and plan and make lists and buy office supplies and wait until the right time, Amy. Waiting until just the right time is very, very important because you never know what could go wrong if you didn't wait 'til the right time. Even helping other people can be an avoidance tactic or so I've heard. What's the grace for you in all of this?

Amy: The grace is, really for me, trusting that I already belong, that my shepherd has already made me a part of his flock, part of his family. That phrase from your chapter just rings around in my mind so much, one flock with one shepherd. We already belong.

Cheri: We hope you've enjoyed episode 160 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

Amy: Hop on over to the website, [GritnGraceGirls.com\episode160](http://GritnGraceGirls.com/episode160). There you'll find our transcripts and this week's Digging Deeper Download.

Cheri: We want to give a special shout out to one of our amazing Patreon supporters, Tonya Kubo. Tonya, we so appreciate you being a Grit 'n' Grace growth partner.

Amy: Now I want you to go mark your calendars right now and join the Grit 'n' Grace Girl's Facebook group, because our Exhale groups launch party is going to be on Wednesday, August 28th at 5:30 p.m. Pacific time and 8:30 p.m. Eastern time.

Cheri: For today, grow your grit, embrace God's grace. When you run across a bad rule, you know what to do. Go right on ahead and break it.

Amy & Cheri: Break it!

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Outtakes

Amy: As I went through the chapter again today, I did some highlighting, re-highlighting, and there were a couple of things that ... I don't know what I'm talking about.

<Laughter>

Okay. Alright. Let me go back.