

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #157: How to Stop Meddling and Start Truly Helping

Amy: Uh, Cheri, you know how I put a high value on candor, right?

Cheri: Yes. You're the one who taught me about candid conversations.

Amy: But usually I'm not so confrontational [...]

Cheri: Okay, I'm not sure I like where this is going [...]

Amy: Except this morning I just want to know why you're all up in my business.

Cheri: Uh oh. [Laughs] Okay, what have I done? [Laughs] I feel —I feel like I'm being held accountable for something I don't even know about.

Amy: [Laughs] You weren't even present for! I know! But you're dumb Chapter 6 is messing with me today!

Cheri: Ohhh. So something I wrote last year I am now being —okay, this isn't blame, okay so. Maybe I'll just embrace that I'm being a wise, supportive friend from the pages of our book. And so I'm glad I could be there for you Amy. I'm really glad I could be there for you. [Snorts]

Amy: I'm really sorry. So. [Laughs] There you go.

Cheri: [music intro] 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: So Chapter 6 [...]

Cheri: [Chuckles] All right. Well, first of all, see, I have right now, at this moment in my life, I have nothing but happy thoughts about Chapter 6 because as we were preparing for this episode I was thinking back on the fact that you actually helped me develop the material like five-six years ago—

Amy: That's true.

Cheri: —I think it was 2013. I had just done a two-month study of Genesis 27, and I remember when I started it. I just kind of dipped in and kind of met Rebecca. Like, I knew the story—I mean, I'd learned the story with flannel board, flannelgraph, as a child—but I remembered I

kind of dipped into and my first thought was, “Well, I am so glad I am nothing like her. She is a hot mess. This woman has issues!”

Amy: [Chuckles] Right.

Cheri: You spend two months really immersed in something like that and I came out saying, “Oh my, goodness. She and I have so much in common.” Then you and I worked together, ‘cause how do you take a hard lesson that has really hit home and then stand up in front of women and say, “Hey, I have a hard lesson for you and I’m going to spend the next forty-five minutes pointing my finger at you.” So [...]

Amy: Exactly.

Cheri: So we developed the ‘Rebecca monologue’ where I was able to kind of talk from her perspective. I don’t remember right now, but I drew like thirteen or sixteen different lessons from her as a meddler. Like, the opening line of the monologue was, “My name is Rebecca, and I never meant to be a meddler.” So yeah, that’s kind of my associations with Chapter 6 right now. Tell me why you’re not happy with me about Chapter 6 right now.

Amy: Well, Chapter 6 is beautiful and absolutely one of my favorite chapters in the book except it’s messing with me today. The title of Chapter 6 is *You’re Not Really Wonder Woman So Breathe a Sigh of Relief*. It really deals with the difference between helping and meddling.

Cheri: Mm.

Amy: Can we just say that having adult children will boil this—adult sons and daughters—will boil this lesson up like nothing else. Because it is one of those areas that when they’re little we have a lot of control. You know, I was thinking about my little dog, Hilde—my little miniature Dachshund. She was so small that if she misbehaved, I just picked her up and moved her.

Cheri: [Chuckles]

Amy: Which meant that I didn’t ever really make her behave. Not good ‘dog-mom’ material. [chuckles] I’m really not. But with my children when they’re little you sort of had the same approach. They’re small; you have a lot of power, and you kind of move all the pieces and control their lives quite a bit. Well, as we know, we both know, well, that kind of ends. [Chuckles] They leave home, and it’s so difficult sometimes. Both of my boys are in huge life transitions—

Cheri: Mmhmm.

Amy: —Nolan, my youngest, has just gotten married. He’s job hunting. My oldest is about to jump into a national tour; so he is literally going to be homeless, although he will be sheltered

for a time. I just have so many moments right now when I'm dying to take over and fix things and in quotation marks "help."

Cheri: [Giggles] I love it. I love that image. Of course, I didn't have a small dog, but with Shatzi I just crated her. If there was any problem whatsoever, I just stuck her in the crate, and she was okay with that. But, you know, the door was shut and everything was—do you ever have moms of younger children say to you, "I can't wait until mine are older and it gets so much easier?"

Amy: Oh yeah. And really, I don't blame them. I felt the same way when my kids were young. You just find out, as they get older, that every stage brings its own challenges. Now the challenges are not my kids' challenges—they're doing great—it's my challenge to stop trying to control things.

Cheri: [Giggles] Yeah. Mm.

Amy: I just want to say to people: listen, *Exhale*, the book—I mean, I'm just so proud of it and I really do love it—but if you only need one thing, you need page seventy-two. On page seventy-two, Cheri, has put together a chart that tells the difference between helping and meddling. Cheri, I am not lying when I say that I pulled out the manuscript, now I'm pulling out the finished product of our book multiple times a week—no joke—and turning to page seventy-two to look to see 'am I helping or am I meddling?' It is one of the most helpful tools in the book! So people should buy it—even just for page seventy-two.

Cheri: Well, you've been telling me this—

Amy: Sure!

Cheri: —and Annemarie was home this weekend. She just graduated with her Master's degree and she's looking at PhD programs, and she wanted to talk some things through with me. So I'm like, "I should be like Amy and I should look at page seventy-two"—which I wrote, but even I need to be reminded.

Well, we asked a couple of our interns—one of them is a current intern and one is a former intern—What has God been teaching you about helping others? Here's what Iris Bryant of 'irisbryant.com' had to say:

Iris: As it relates to spiritual gifts or taking a spiritual gift assessment, I rate high in the gift of hospitality or the gift of service. In ministry, that's beneficial because a lot of times I find myself working behind the scenes and helping, assisting, and serving others. In the marketplace, and even at home, that gift of hospitality or serving can often be confused. I have found myself moving from the role of 'a helper' to 'the helper', where I'm trying to change people as I help or guide or serve and that is not how that role was intended to be fulfilled. That is not the purpose, or how that gift should be in operation. So I have to be very mindful that I'm not called

to change anyone. I'm not called to provide my help when it hasn't been asked for. I can be a helper who is guided by the Helper, and if I keep that attitude, I can't go wrong.

Cheri: And here's what Amanda Davidson of *A Wife Like Me*:

Amanda: Serving and helping people in the past, for me, has really been either reciprocal or obligatory. Before I was a Christian, I would only want to help people if they had already helped me or if there was a pretty good chance that they would do the same in return.

Then after I became a Christian, I felt like this whole concept of serving was just something that I was supposed to do and that I should be doing it and I should be doing it with a happy heart. That wasn't the case. Serving people actually became an area of where I felt guilt, and I felt like I wasn't doing something right as a Christian because I'm not happily serving the people around me that God has placed in my life.

God has really taught me, and continues to teach me and remind me through Second Corinthians in Chapter Nine, just what His heart is around this idea of service. Paul writes in verse 12, he says, "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people, but it's also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God." He has just blown my mind that if serving is rooted in anything other than thankfulness to God for who He is then serving just feels weighty. Serving, just in response to who God is causes others to praise Him, and it becomes a gift, scripture says, from God to you when you actually live that out.

Amy: I just love what Iris said and what she thought about being a helper to The Helper. Capital T capital H; in other words that we become helpers to God. That perspective is going to help me so much that there's this layer between me and the person I think I'm trying to help. And that layer is an essential layer and it's God himself. So if I put myself behind God and say, "Okay what is God doing here, and how can I follow along and be part of that?" That changes the whole equation!

Cheri: Oh yeah. Instead of doing what comes so naturally to us—which to reforming people pleasers and perfections—is running ahead. See the need; fill the need. See the need; fill the need.

Amy: Mmhmm.

Cheri: Rather than see the need; "pray-cess" it, look for what God is already doing. I love that. I love that whole concept. Well, and talking about being all up in somebody's business Amanda stomped all over my feet. What she said about serving others as an expression of thanks to God I—woah—I have tended to serve others as a way to get people to be grateful for me [chuckles].

Amy: Oh, ouch!

Totally opposite. Or to even up the score, you know, like, tit for tat. So, clearly we need to move on now and talk about God's transforming power because in Chapter 7 you kind of wrap around. Chapter 1 of *Exhale* is all about "Can we change?," and then Chapter 7, you wrote about becoming women who "flip our flops." What do you mean by that?

Amy: Well, as much as I love your idea of competent mistakes, we know, because we're human, we are going to have flops, we're going to make mistakes and failures and downright sin that have to be adjusted. So in this chapter I look at Peter—and I just am so in love with Peter—and I cannot get enough of the stories of his denials of Christ and how Jesus reversed it.

Cheri: Mm. Mm. Mm.

I just can't get enough of it. There's one scene in particular that I'll just take a little bit of teaching out of that chapter that I was studying in the section where he had had his third denial, and he was clearly near where Jesus was because the scriptural account is that Jesus turned and looked at him. As I was studying that I began to wonder, "Well what did Jesus' face look like?"

Cheri: Mm.

Amy: Now, I know what my face would look like if someone had betrayed me and denied me.

My face would be maybe disgust or anger, or maybe shock, and hurt and betrayal. But Jesus—who is a picture of God himself because he is God himself—he has to be true to himself, he has to be true to his character, his nature, who he is. So I know and you can know for sure, too, that Jesus looked at Peter with love, compassion, mercy, and grace. What an amazing thing?

For those of us that are in the midst of change and we have this fear of failure going on, we learn to embrace competent mistakes, things that actually help us move forward. But when we've really and truly blown it and we need to know it's going to be okay, we can know for sure it's going to be okay because we have a savior who looks on us with love and grace, compassion and mercy.

Cheri: Mm. I love that so much. That's such a contrast to what you've talked about in the past where you've had that fear of the stick.

Amy: Yes! And now, we had an anonymous caller that left a message for us, Cheri. Do we really have an anonymous caller?

Anonymous Caller: Hi Amy. I have a question for you specifically. In Chapter 7 of *Exhale* you say: "When we need deep change, we repent, receive grace, and start fresh." So — theoretically speaking, of course, what would you say to one of your listeners who has over-committed ... repented ... received grace ... but that "start fresh" part doesn't feel possible because she still needs to fulfill all those commitments?

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Amy: Ohhh! An anonymous caller who sounds suspiciously familiar.

Cheri: Could you just answer the poor girl's question, Amy?

Amy: [Laughs] You are so sneaky. Well, my big question is: does she really have to fulfill those commitments? That's the big question in the end. Sometimes, yes. In some situations God is going to call us to just absolutely follow through on our word, because He cares about our word and our integrity, and how that glorifies and reflects on Him. But I do believe that there are times that God will tell us, "No, I want you to step out and step back."

I had this happen recently with a church situation. I had made a commitment, a new leader came in and I had actually reaffirmed my commitment to her. That night in the kitchen my sweet husband who has the gift of piercing questions [laughs]. . .

Cheri: [Laughs]

Amy: He said to me, "Amy, do you think you have anything positive to bring to this situation?"

Cheri: Oh! Oh, Barry! Oh my word!

Amy: Uh, yes! And the thing was he said it and like batted his eyelashes at me so it wasn't like, I knew that he knew that there was an answer to that question, but he didn't say it so mean. And I looked at him and said, "No, I have nothing positive to bring to this situation."

Cheri: [Chuckles] Yeah.

Amy: So in that moment of clarity I knew that not only was God releasing me to step away, but I should step away. I was actually doing harm by following through on my commitment. Doesn't that sound weird?

Cheri: No.

Amy: But it was hard for me. Cheri, can I just tell you that I have responsibility in my top five. I could not think of the last time I had not met a deadline, followed through because to me that is like the ultimate failure, and I felt like a quitter. I looked like a flake, I felt like a flake, and it felt really, really bad to step back. But I knew that in that situation that God wanted me to step back. So I wish I had a clear answer like "do this" or "don't do that," but the truth is we just have to seek God about these things.

Cheri: Well, what I think that this anonymous caller [coughs] will take away the most from this episode is that even in the midst of this situation where she [clears throat] feels like the repentance is possible and the grace is possible but is questioning that fresh start. I think the questioning of the fresh start goes back to, "What's the look on Jesus' face?" To realize that's

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not a look of condemnation. It's not a look of "Here you go again, have you not learned a thing?"

Amy: Right.

Cheri: But that it's still a look of grace and mercy and constant acceptance. You know one of my favorite sayings, I don't know whom it's attributed to, but God will never say you're more trouble than you're worth. So that's incredibly comforting, as is the scripture you selected for this episode.

Amy: Well, in the cursed or blessed—depending on what day it is—Chapter 6, [laughs] you talk about trust, and so I thought trust is really where we have to go whether we're trying to decide about helping or meddling or if we have actually painfully flopped in a situation. So Proverbs 3:5-6, so familiar but so beautiful, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit him and he will make your paths straight."

Cheri: Mm. Mm. Mm. So, so good, and I'm sure that anonymous caller really needs to marinate in this verse and probably some of our listeners as well [chuckles]. So what's the [...] I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You can all say Nerdy Girl has gone beyond dorkdom and that's perfectly fine. Okay.

Amy: [Laughs] Is it so bad that we get so tickled with ourselves, Cheri? I bet the audience is rolling their eyes at this point, but we are tickled!

Cheri: [Giggles] Okay. [Clears throat] Getting serious now. What is the bad rule for this episode?

Amy: The bad rule is: I must fix anything that's broken. And that was actually the bad rule for your Chapter 6, but I thought it applies to Chapter 7, too, when we have our own flops. So when we think we have to fix anything that's broken, whether it's somebody else or us, we have fallen off the path.

Cheri: Mmm. Absolutely. So what's the truth the fact we can focus on instead?

Amy: I must rely on my Redeemer. Redeemer is my favorite—I say it and I tear up instantly—it's my favorite name of God. He is the Redeemer. He is the Redeemer of other people's flops and mine, so I don't have to try to fix everything. [Chuckles] She said and recorded and repeated. [Chuckles]

Cheri: [Chuckles] Oh my goodness, but you know what? I think this is the kind of thing that some of us need to be reminded of, or remind ourselves of sometimes as often as every day or every hour, and that's just part of the growth path that we're on. So what is the grit for you in all of this?

Amy: The trust! The trust. If I really trust God it is going to translate into a very specific action for me that is going to require tremendous amounts of grit and it is: keeping my mouth shut!

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My adult sons [laughs] God's got this, and they do too! Yeah. We could have a whole episode, again, on adult children, but really that's the grit for me. And the grace for you, Cheri?

Cheri: Oh you know, especially just as I'm really reflecting on the scripture you chose. The commitments that I'm busy trying to figure out, and figure out that, you know, do I have a fresh start? One of the reasons I'm still having angst about them is because what I keep coming back to is I need to relax into them and just rest in God, and trust Him to help me sort them out. I keep wanting to figure them out myself; I keep wanting to get them all fixed by myself.

So the grace for me is: that I can do exactly what the title of our book says. I can exhale. I can not be so worried and so uptight. I can trust that He's going to guide and just take those steps one by one, rather than having to know the big picture, the big solution and figure it out myself. And again the grace is reminding myself, "What's the look on Jesus' face?"

Cheri: [music outro] We hope you enjoyed episode #157 of Grit 'N' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

Amy: Make sure to visit our website gritngracegirls.com/episode157. There you'll find this week's transcript and our digging deeper download.

Cheri: If you are one of our faithful patron supporters, thank you so much for making this podcast possible! And watch your inbox this week for a very special email from us.

Amy: And if you haven't bought *Exhale* yet, um, page seventy-two. You need it for your refrigerator.

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: If you only need one thing, you need chapter seventy-two in *Exhale*. So, Cheri, put together this chart –

Cheri: Page seventy-two. You said chapter.

<Laughter>

Amy: Oh! Page seventy-two. On page seventy-two, Cheri, has put together a chart that tells the difference between helping and meddling. Cheri, I am not lying...