

# Grit 'n' Grace — The Podcast

## *Episode #218: What to Do When Your Life is Dismantled*

**Cheri Gregory 00:00**

Well, Amy, throughout season three, we've been talking about various spiritual disciplines.

**Amy Carroll 00:04**

Yes, we have and today we're focusing on resilience in the midst of heartbreaking circumstances.

**Cheri Gregory 00:11**

Okay, well, I'm going to confess that resilience is not my favorite word. I know we've been talking about it ever since we started grit and grace. But I love how our guest today Sheri Rose Shepherd shares how God has brought her through a what she calls a dismantled life.

**Amy Carroll 00:30**

Yes, this is not a happy Skippy episode, but it is an important episode and share rose shares with us the lessons from her experience in super practical ways that you can use today.

**Cheri Gregory 00:43**

Well, this is Cheri Gregory.

**Amy Carroll 00:45**

And I'm Amy Carroll,

**Cheri Gregory 00:47**

and you're listening to grit and grace, the podcast that equips you to lose who you're not love who you are, and live your one life. Well,

**Amy Carroll 00:56**

today, we're talking with Sheri Rose Shepherd, author of ***Beyond the White Picket Fence: What to Do When Your Life is Dismantled***. For the past 30 years, Sheri Rose Shepherd has been in full time ministry as a best selling author, speaker to 10s of 1000s each year and the founder of his princess ministries,

**Cheri Gregory 01:14**

you know, what I think really set Sheri's book apart is the number of crisis situations she addresses.

**Amy Carroll 01:21**

You know, I think we can all think of at least one person in our life that we think how in the world did they survive that there's been this like string of things that happened, I think about a friend of mine,

when we were young moms, I have a friend that died of breast cancer I've shared about her on the show before. But as tragic as her loss was, it was so magnified and her husband's life because she was actually his third wife before he hit his 40s his first wife had died. Linda has his last wife had died. And in between, he had married a woman who was a con person who had taken every dime he had. I mean, it was it was this string of events that would have flattened anyone, but I got the privilege of watching him walk with Jesus through that. It was just amazing. And it wasn't that he was amazing. It was that Jesus was amazing in it.

**Cheri Gregory 02:19**

So you know, Amy, after everything that we've gone through over the last year, I think many of us know more than one person now who's been through multiple crisis and loss situations. And you know, for some of us, that person may be the person in the mirror.

**Amy Carroll 02:34**

Absolutely. Well *Beyond the White Picket Fence* is for us today. It's it will engage, empower, encourage, and educate you

**Cheri Gregory 02:43**

And I so appreciate Sheri Rose Shepherd's leadership during a time that so many of us have felt, frankly, like we've been floundering.

**Amy Carroll 02:51**

Sheri Rose, your new book beyond the white picket fence shows readers how to heal in a time of crisis. So what led you to write such a book?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 03:02**

Well, when I was going through the last five years of losing my family, losing my health, I was in my own personal shutdown, if you will lock down for four solid years from illness alone, and heartache. And I was trying to find some answers of like, God, where are you in this? How do I get through this, and I parked pretty much in the book of Job, because I felt like I'd walked through everything he walked through all at once. And I have a really good friend that has a degree in counseling, and she said, I've never walked through someone that walked through seven crisis at the same time. In my practice, she goes, so this is a heavy hit. Wow. So I felt like there wasn't enough practical information, how to walk through something. So what I did is I broke down not everything. I walked through this lots of walkthrough stuff. But as you can see the chapter titles, you know, betrayal are a diagnosis of a disease or death of someone you love me, I just kind of took you through everything. And I felt like I wanted to see what Jesus had to say, on how to respond or what was in the Psalms. Like one thing that I learned, this is just a big thing. But I am a Jewish believer, and I'm pretty passionate for God. And when I got saved, I lost my Jewish family for 10 years for my faith. And so I really learned how to walk with God's family and embrace God's family as my family. But one thing that I learned or didn't learn was how to cry when God spoke to me and he took me those who so would tears Ripa songs of joy. So I would use the word almost like a band aid to not have to feel pain to not have to see the wound if you would. Fascinating. And what I realized is the simplicity and the gift of tears, like when people say, Well, how do you get up I said, I learned when I asked the Lord what to do. I started reading the songs how

David was a man after God's own heart. He would pour out His pain. He'd even say, How many more nights Can I cry? So the things that God helped me with is one, learning to process my pain, not by band aids, scriptural band aids, but by actually living the scriptures. What does God say to do when you're grieving? What does God say to do when you've been betrayed? Like, how do I personally, processes and then the thing that God showed me is only surround yourself during dark seasons with people that can lift you up. Because that isn't the time to deal with toxic people. That isn't the time to deal with dysfunctional people. When a lifeguard is drowning, he can't save anybody. He's need someone that can save him. And that was humbling for me as a leader, like, wow, I thought it's gonna put me in a position where I need to ask for help. And put me in a position where I need to block people and delete people and politely and I would be very polite about it. I would just say, right now I'm in such a hard season. I'm just I'm very limited to a very small inner circle until I can find my way out of this. Yeah, I didn't say you're toxic, and create more problems.

**Amy Carroll 06:09**

It's good to have that permission, though. We appreciate that.

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 06:12**

Well, I think you can be really kind to people about it. I don't think you should ever be dishonouring I don't think you should even let things get to a point where you're going to push people out, you know, be wise, look at the fruits of the friendships, look at even if their family relationships, Jesus had you kick him over family, there's a sense of loyalty that is to the Lord first, and be careful, like it says, mourn with those that mourn. So if someone hasn't walked through what you walk through, I would suggest you don't get their advice, because I want to be trained. If I'm going to war I want to retain someone's already been to war. And I want them to train me and ones that are already persevered. I want to be trained by those people.

**Amy Carroll 06:50**

Do you find it's the other people who are quick to offer their advice?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 06:55**

there is but a lot of it's our fault. Because we have we are women and we talk about everything we feel to anybody that will listen, if you open your mouth to the wrong people, you've opened the door to their mouth.

**Amy Carroll 07:08**

Hey, listen, we need to pause on that a moment.

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 07:12**

Okay, let's build on that for a minute. Let's build on that. Okay, everybody listening right now, the people you don't want to speak in your life or the people that you don't trust to speak in your life or the people that you're like, please understand, you will give up the need to be understood and stop trying to get them to understand let it go, right.

**Amy Carroll 07:29**

Oh, this is good.

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 07:30**

Just be quiet and then only speak to those that have been through something that can bring to you a richness to help pull you out. They've already been there if their child died and your child died if their husband left them for another whatever they are they walk through a cancer battle. Those are my suggestions. Don't talk to me. You want to talk in your life

**Cheri Gregory 07:52**

Sheri Rose, I noticed you brought up the word "bandaid" a couple of times. So I'm wondering if you could share with our friends who are listening, how could they tell the difference in their own lives between true healing and what you refer to there as just kind of putting a bandaid on? How can we tell?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 08:06**

Well, so I'm hurting, I'm hurting, I'm hurting. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, you know, I'm gonna be healed. He says that he's close to the brokenhearted. That's a band aid, as opposed to how do I get close to God when I'm brokenhearted? And how do I get healed when I'm brokenhearted? Where's the practical application in the Word of God that gets me where I need to go. And if you can't get to that place, or you can't find that place in the word, then you got to get to someone like this book, where you can look up portrayal. And you can also use this book more like a manual for a friend that's going through something too, because I do the story. And I do, what can I do? What can God do at the end of each one of these, because there's a lot of things that only God can do. And then I want to encourage anybody that's listening, going through suffering, which I'm sure there'll be many at this point in life, but is that every season of suffering has an expiration date. must remember that there's a season for everything. And every season of suffering has an expiration date. But you got to do the practical things to get there. So it isn't just time that heals. Because time can make it worse. If you end up keeping that bandaid on and you don't change the band aid and you don't put disinfected in it and you just keep the bandaid on for four years, you're gonna have a horrific infection.

**Amy Carroll 09:25**

Wow. That's powerful.

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 09:27**

Yeah. And there's horrific infections of the soul right now. Because many people don't give us permission to process. They're not sensitive. They don't have the gift of empathy and mercy. You really do want to process with someone and then once you've gotten over one thing, I want to encourage you at the very beginning people I didn't love and trust and I still love and trust and I walked me through everything, but they would want to know details. And what the Lord showed me is don't give the devil very much attention because every time you repeat it you will live in. So once that you've gone through some therapy if you need it or a friend that counseled you through it and You cried it out, you've worked it out. When people ask you what happened, here's what I want to say to you as a 60 year old woman that has been through hell and back, ask them very politely. Do you mind if I don't relive it? That shuts down their curiosity. No kidding. Because anything that someone is walking through, you should be

asking them not what happened. But what you can do. Because what happened is selfish. That's my curiosity. I want to know the details.

**Amy Carroll 10:28**

So you've just taught us how to address other people. How can I help you rather than ask them for their story?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 10:35**

Yes. Or when maybe they don't know how, because like, people would ask me like, I don't know, I was numb, I completely shut down. You know, like, I couldn't feel any more anything but pain. And I would just for over a year, every day, I was like, Lord, please just take me home. I've served 25 years, I've remained faithful. I don't have any desire to rebel against you. I just want to go home. And I remember sitting with a cancer doctor and him saying, you don't want to get healed, do you? I said, I don't want to go home. I have not. And he said, so what we're dealing with with you? Isn't a cancer better? We're dealing with a broken heart. Wow. I said, Yes. And the Bible says a man can withstand sickness, but who can withstand a crushed spirit. So what I did in the book, in the opening, I give you enough to know I've walked through hell and back, but I didn't give you any of the devil's details in my introduction, and I won't, because I don't want Satan to have glory. You know, I think sharing a testimony, I would love to groom people on how to share a testimony. And one of my favorite things would be say, find a five minute way to talk what you walk through and give the other 40 or 30. Whatever the church gives you, whoever is listening, what God did through it all.

**Amy Carroll 11:51**

Sheri Rose, it's fascinating to me, because you tell us that white picket fences were not originally created to represent the American dream, but instead they symbolized pain and sacrifice. So tell us about that. Isn't that crazy?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 12:06**

Yeah, I was surprised. But I'd already had the title thinking the white picket fence is what we all think it is the dream. You know, the dog that doesn't poop. kids that don't cry, you know, all those things. You know, we all have our vision of what our life is going to turn out like, right with that white picket fence. And then I met someone in the military said, you know, the white picket fence has nothing to do with an American dream. I said, What do you mean? He said, in World War Two, they ran out of ammunition and back then wealth was represented 100% by a wrought iron fence. And what happened was they gave up dismantled if you will, like the book dismantled your life dismantled wrought iron fence, and put up a white picket fence to say we stand and fight for and we'll give up what's valuable to us for our freedom. Wow, are full picture I know. And I thought how good of God, that I would get the real story on the white picket fence before the manuscript was turned in. That's phenomenal. It blew my mind. Because I thought, wow, does that to find the real white picket fence, I have fought the good fight, I have kept my faith I have finished my race.

**Cheri Gregory 13:16**

That's an amazing symbolism that that will be fun to unpack, too.

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 13:21**

It helps so much.

**Cheri Gregory 13:23**

Sherry Rose, you mentioned your divorce ... after your divorce you and your ex husband decided to forgive each other and yourselves for the pain cause. So first of all, wow. And second of all, how has this helped you?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 13:35**

I went against my dad's blessing marrying Steve, and my pastoral covering. They both said, Don't walk down that aisle, you have a call of God on your life back then I didn't know where to call God, man. I was too new a Christian. And it's going to come with great pain if you marry this man. And I didn't listen, and I walked down the aisle anyway. And then I got pregnant or honeymoon, I probably would have held the marriage, you know, six weeks in. So 25 years, I would say God, you have to do something like I don't think I can survive one more day in this. The Lord, I think used a crisis and cancer and everything, too, if you will expose everything. He has a way of using crisis to expose who we really all are, in all that about, and it was a rough couple of years during the divorce. But as I was fighting every day for my life, and really thought I was going to go home to be with the Lord if that original of this cancer diagnosis they gave me eight weeks five years ago. So I was very aware of every day. Yes, Steve ended up meeting someone and got married to someone that I really do. Respect and like and I've felt for me, though, I needed to move on and even though he kind of wanted to make things right, not get back together, but do whatever he could to help me with his new wife. I felt like it was very important for my healing to leave Egypt permanently, no matter how nice Pharaoh was acting, I felt like I needed a I forgave Pharaoh. But I needed to leave Egypt for me to be able to even have a chance to get healed. So we had a final talk. And he said, What can I do, because he really loves me as a good friend. And I said, I know you're not gonna like what I'm gonna say, but I'm going to ask that you and your wife, even though I know, she likes me a lot, too. And I said, I'm just going to ask you both. If you could, please never call or stop by, give me like three or four years to start my new life like you've started yours, to find my new normal to find my new foundation to build from something new. And there was a lot of tears between us, but there was a closure. And he's, he was really heartbroken. That was my request. But he respected it, there was a lot of tears. And he said, before we hang up, I want to validate and give back to you everything I stole from you for 25 years, and God filled his mouth with everything you could think of, in a beautiful way. And so now the only thing I remember, is that final conversation, and it just was a close, and I let my children know, you know, in which they wanted us divorced, they hated me for staying married, there was a lot of bitterness my children had towards me for putting up with things and not leaving sooner. So I let them know. And it changed my relationship with my children for the best when I said, I've had a final close with Steve. And I've asked him not to call me or text me. You guys have your own relationship with your father. And I'm gonna just not be in the mix of any of that. I've always been the one that helps everybody put their pieces together, right? Mom, mom's do that. And the piece that came over me after that conversation, and then the respect that my children had for me after that, because I didn't leave with bitterness. I didn't leave with anger, I didn't leave slamming their father. You know, it was just like, it's over. And I want to move on, too.

**Amy Carroll 17:04**

Beautiful, that leads to another question that is so appropriate here, which is what's the difference between a bitter heart because I'm listening to you, I don't hear a trace of bitterness, which is extraordinary under the circumstances. So what's the difference between a bitter heart and a broken heart?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 17:20**

Well, that's always what I've shared with people that a bitter heart really wants revenge, and justice. And well, not justice, God will always give justice but revenge, you know, I want you to get yours. You know, I hope this happens to you kind of thing or you feel what I'm feeling. And that just eats away at you as well. Because what happens is, you become like your enemies without realizing it. And so it's kind of like Star Wars and Star Wars, the whole storyline is to get Luke Skywalker to give into his anger and turn to the dark side with if you could even justify righteous anger, which there is such thing as righteous anger, and that's a good anger. But a broken heart is you're never going to feel happy. If your daughter was raped, you're never going to be happy with your husband. But your there's going to be times where your heart is still broken. where a lot of Christians that are not skilled in the word, even pastors that aren't very skilled in the word have said in appropriately to people, that means you haven't forgiven or you will still be hurting. But those of people that have never had their daughter raped, those of you that never had their husband walk away, tell it, those of you that have never walked through it. So they have this prideful, insensitive, inaccurate description of the Scripture, because there's nowhere does it say that you will not have the broken heart. Now he says he's close to you. And I think that as you learn to cry out to God, like I did, you do get healed. And then the tears are farther apart. They're not every day, maybe they're every third day, then they're every week, and then you start doing what I'm doing. You wake up and go, Wow, I have joy, but not because I got back what I lost. But because I got back to God and my foundation of who he is and who I am and getting back to him and not being controlled by people but being controlled by the power of God. I would walk alone and walk through everything I walked through all over again, just for the joy that I have now that is not based on circumstance.

**Cheri Gregory 19:20**

So Sheri Rose, you mentioned as we were getting started another door that opened unexpectedly, you shared about your childhood with your mom, and that she's now back in your life. Could you fill us in on a little bit of that and how you got to this place?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 19:35**

Yeah, I take care of her every day she lives with me. God showed me even though I'll never have a mom to love me the way I need that nurture want that nurturing he's anointed me to love. And so I've become the mom and showed her God's love and she knows now knows the Lord and she's in her 90s she'll probably passed fairly soon and she is fighting cancer herself. I believe that the most beautiful thing that probably came out of this to be on Honest is my parents divorced and I was nine. And I always wanted to, I wanted to sit at a dinner table with my mom and dad without fighting and screaming and tempers. And when I was alone and with cancer, they both stepped up and said, What can we do? I need you to love each other, because you're all I have left. And so now, once a week, my dad drives down from San Diego, and they have breakfast with me and I make them breakfast and they sit at the dinner table in my little apartment, and I'm like, wow, I never thought I would see that. A picture of

redemption. And then my mom the other night, she came in, and my mom doesn't know how to say I love you and affirm you. And it was about a month ago, she came in and she said, I'm, I'm so sorry, I wasn't the mom you deserve. And I'm so blessed. You're the daughter I don't deserve. And she said I used to I used to think my life was a waste. But then I think how many lives you touch. And I realized because of you I my life's not a waste. And so it was just a very beautiful moment of tears. And there's a part of us that you have to understand that redemption is so much better than revenge. You might feel good for a moment to see some of their hurt you get theirs, but you don't get redemption ah and redemption last a lifetime.

**Amy Carroll 21:15**

Okay, so obviously, we could talk to you for hours. I wish our listeners could watch our faces as you're talking because we're both crying. And these are powerful stories. So obviously everybody needs to buy the book. Give us some closing words. Sherry rose, what do you want our listeners to know more than anything?

**Sheri Rose Shepherd 21:35**

How do I say this? I wrote the book his princess love letters from the king. And I kept praying the Holy Spirit whispered to me, I love you too. I think that sometimes we make faith harder than it needs to be. So here's what I really want to leave you with. If his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and something you do is making you feel heavy, His grace is not with you for it do something else. That's number one. Or it's just not the season for you to be doing it. But barely pay attention if his burden is light and his yoke is easy and you feel heavy say God what is this isn't a heartache? Is it me operating out of a calling that's not mine. And that's exhausting and exasperating me. So really know that God loves you too. And he wants to take care of you to not just you take care of everybody else. And I'm an enneagram to for people that know the enneagram. And I think everybody's more important than me, everybody's need I'd give them my oxygen mask and your last breath. And now I'm realizing No, it's okay to put my oxygen mask on first. And I feel like women all over the world need to hear that. It's okay to even tell those you love your own children. You know, I need a break, I need an hour, I need a day or I need a week. You know, God loves you too. And he wants you to experience what you give to everyone else. And then the last thing that I really learned, because there were so many situations in mind that were just so many lies that weren't true and stuff. And God showed me I said how do I get out from under this? You know, like how did Joseph get out of being thrown in prison saying he raped the daughter right? And so Lord should be give up the need to be understand and all hooks of the enemy come out. And that did it for me. That did it. I was like, that is the root of this. And then once I gave that up and trusted God, every single thing came to the light. And every person made things right with me and totally cry their eyes out. Like I can't believe that I abandoned you. I can't believe I do that literally all I could say is God used it to free me from needing anyone but him. And for that it was worth it all.

**Cheri Gregory 23:44**

"God used it to free me from needing anyone but him."

**Amy Carroll 23:49**

Wow. I mean, what a powerful statement. We know that we were made to live in community. It's not that we don't need anyone else. And she wasn't saying that. But to be at that point where we're



dependent only on God that's an amazing place to be and worth all the hard things that she had been through.

**Cheri Gregory 24:09**

So true. We wanted to just share with you the table of contents for beyond the white picket fence just to give you a sense of the various crisis situations that this book will help you through or somebody that you know and love. So chapter one is beyond betrayal. God helped me rise up, redeem and rebuild from the ruins of my life. Chapter Two beyond forgiveness God show how to forgive what I can't forget and live free from bitterness so I can be blessed.

**Amy Carroll 24:38**

Chapter Three is beyond shattered god help heal my broken heart so that I can love so that I can live and love without fear again. And chapter four is beyond shame. God give me the grace to forgive myself for what I've done.

**Cheri Gregory 24:53**

Chapter Five beyond motherhood, God give me endurance to every tear test and trial with my Children chapter six beyond the diagnosis guide, I was happy and healthy. Why did you let this happen to me?

**Amy Carroll 25:07**

chapter seven is beyond temptation. God helped me to walk away from what I want to do before it's too late. Chapter Eight is beyond fatherlessness. God heal me through this abandonment and help me to know you as my Heavenly Father

**Cheri Gregory 25:21**

and chapter nine beyond here and now. God helped me love and live driven by eternity until you return for me one day,

**Amy Carroll 25:31**

that's just a rich list. And as Sherry rose told us in the interview, she tells lots of people's stories in these chapters and so we'll all be able to relate

**Cheri Gregory 25:40**

and she also said that she sees this book as being a sort of a guidebook that could not only be read once, you know to get the whole big picture but to pull off the shelf on a regular basis as you know, you or I are going through one of these situations or again somebody that we know and love

**Amy Carroll 25:55**

such a great resource.

**Cheri Gregory 25:56**

Well friends, We sure hope you've enjoyed listening to Episode 218 of grit and grace, the podcast as much as we've enjoyed making it for you.

**Amy Carroll 26:05**

And we want to say a big thank you to Sheri Rose Shepherd, author of Beyond the White Picket Fence: What to Do When Your Life is Dismantled and her publisher Salem Books for making this episode possible. So check out our web page today at <https://gritnegracethepodcast.com/episode218> — there you'll find a transcript the link to Sheri Rose Shepherd's newest book Beyond the White Picket Fence: What to Do When Your Life is Dismantled, and a link to Sheri Rose's website.

**Cheri Gregory 26:34**

If you're not yet a member of our Facebook group, we would love to have you join us just search for grit and grace the community and you'll find us

**Amy Carroll 26:42**

next week we'll be processing what we learned from Sheri Rose Shepherd, author of Beyond the White Picket Fence: What to Do When Your Life is Dismantled

**Cheri Gregory 26:50**

for today, grow your grit,

**Amy Carroll 26:53**

embrace God's grace.

**Cheri Gregory 26:54**

And as God reveals the next step to live your one life. Well,

**Amy Carroll 26:58**

we'll be cheering you on. So TAKE IT!