

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST Episode #278

"Tracking God"
A New Approach to Deepen Your Faith Journey

Have you ever felt like a failure at gratitude? Like no matter how many lists you make or journals you keep, this whole “giving thanks” thing — maybe it works for other people — but it just doesn’t “work” for you? Today, we’re going to explore a new **deeper** approach that offers you a way to truly see God’s presence — even in life’s hardest moments.

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Welcome to Grit 'n' Grace - The Podcast for Highly Sensitive Christian Women!

I'm your host, Cheri Gregory.

Are you tired of the overthinking, overwhelm, and exhaustion that come with being a highly sensitive person or HSP? Are you ready to stop worrying that something's wrong with you and start understanding and nurturing yourself as an HSP?

Together, we'll build resilience, practice self-compassion, set healthy boundaries, unlock your creativity, and learn to embrace—*not fight*—your

God-given sensitivity.

Let's dig in!

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It's hard to believe that just one week ago, I was at the West Coast Christian Writers Conference where I had the honor of presenting two workshops and the joy of reconnecting with so many of my writerly friends!

I also had an absolute BLAST staying in an Air BnB with several friends who happen to be coaching clients and also Highly Sensitive Persons.

One of those friends was Lori Margo. We set up my podcasting microphone and laptop on the kitchen island in our Air BnB and had THE BEST conversation — which you're about to hear!

Lori Margo teaches women to notice God in the details of their lives, so their faith is strengthened. Lori is a speaker and writer who shares her own story of seeing the surprising presence of God during uncertain times. She now equips women to track the threads of His faithfulness and trust Him in their journey.

Lori is from the central coast of California and married to Eddie, the “cutest guy in the church youth group!” They have three amazing kids and three grandchildren. Lori loves beach walks, going to the movies, and peanut butter! (Not necessarily in that order!)

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Cheri Gregory

Well, Lori, I am so excited to be here. This is something that you and I have been talking about for ... well, I won't quite say years, but many, many, many weeks and months.

So I want to start out this episode with a confession. All right, so this is a true confession from me. And some of our friends who are listening may have felt this way before. But for the longest time, I felt like I was just a total flunky when it came to gratitude.

I bought the books. And I did the journals. And even 10 ...12, years ago, I ran this whole challenge called “30 days of replacing baditude with with God's word and gratitude”.

It seemed to make a difference for a short period of time, and then the magical results that so many people promised that would come if I could just do the right gratitude list ... I never seem to actually have those results.

So I would love to hear your thoughts about those of us who have this experience where gratitude doesn't turn out to be the silver bullet we were promised that it was going to be.

Lori Margo

I relate so much to what you are saying. I felt the same way, and I felt like the Christian good girl thing to do was to jump on the “keeping a gratitude list” train. And I did the same thing, and I had a whole spot in my journal where I would list my 3-5 things every

day that I was grateful for. And there is a place for gratitude. I mean, it does help us focus our thoughts toward things of God.

But I got to where it became this fluffy checklist of a to-do: “I need to look out the window and find something to be grateful for!”

I mean, I'd already listed my family, you know, all those things in life, and now I'm just, I'm grasping to find just something that I got to get down on that list.

And it just became too disjointed.

Because at the same time, life goes on and life is hard. And yes, I'm grateful the sun is shining today, but I'm also hurting in my faith walk, because this is difficult, and **I need to see God in *this*.**

And I am, you know, I'm an HSP, I'm an emotional person, Enneagram 6, and I face a lot of fear. So I found that while it's a great practice, it wasn't growing my faith to make it through something really difficult. And to just acknowledge, “God, this is hard. This is hard, and I need to see you in this situation.” Not just see all these disjointed things out there, but **“God, are you with me in this?”** So I really relate to what you're saying about just keeping a gratitude list *just* to keep a gratitude list.

Cheri Gregory

Since you and I are actually in the same place at the same time, I can see your face and I could see your gesture, and there's an intensity to what you're saying in terms of, **“God, I need to see you in this”** there is something so real about that ... that I don't know that I ever felt that when I was keeping a gratitude list.

I'm in agreement with you: there's nothing wrong with a gratitude list. It can serve a wonderful purpose.

But I think in certain situations, it wasn't the solution, and I kept trying to turn it into a solution.

Now, you mentioned being a Highly Sensitive Person. One of the major qualities that we know about HSPs is that we are **deeply reflective thinkers**. The downside of that is we can ruminate.

But one of the positive sides is that **we are constantly processing things, perhaps at a level of complexity** that other people may not do. And we notice nuances, and I think God understands them.

So we don't need to feel guilty if the “just keep a [gratitude] list” doesn't work.

Now you discovered something that works, either in conjunction or better than a simple gratitude list.

Tell us about that and give us the back story of how this kind of came to be for you.

Lori Margo

Yeah. Well, we were going through a really difficult time as a family. I had already lost my mom to cancer, and she was only in her 40s, and that was a whole walk of faith.

And now my dad got a cancer diagnosis, and it was difficult. And again, he was 91 so he had lived a great, amazing life, and it's still hard.

So as we were going through that, I found myself saying to everyone, "Oh, God has really been with us ..." just that pat answer, "God has really been with us through this. We're really seeing him ..."

And then I had this moment where I was like, "You know what? This is hard. This is a loss. God, have you **really** been with me through this? I need to know, because I'm hurting right now!"

And, you know, here we are, cancer **again** in my family. This is really hard.

And so I sat down, and I just had an old notebook, water logged, and everything else. I just sat there and said, "God have you been with me in this?" And I came up with 33 ways that I could say, "This is God! God, you are with me!" Within about a nine day period, my dad did pass away. 33 ways during the time we knew this was it till his memorial service, **33 specific ways**, "God, you really are with me!"

And it just changed that pat answer, cliché of making sure everybody else is okay, and, and I don't want to misrepresent God in this, but **I had the proof**. I had 33 ways! They were things that I might say them to you, and you'd be like, "How is that God?" And it'd be like, well, **it was such a personal thing for me**. God knows me, and what I needed.

For example, my brother and I haven't lived in the same town for years. He came down the beginning of the those nine days, and I had nine solid days with my brother. I'll never have that again. And we just shared; we were there. It was just my brother and I next to my dad when he passed away. And even that was just a God moment, the timing and that we could be there together.

And so just this personal touch from God. And **with confidence, I could now share**, I'm not just saying, "God's been with us" I could say with written proof, "God, you have been with us!"

So I call that my 33 ways of Tracking God. And that's what that brain dump was. It was my formal start to Tracking God through a difficult situation.

Cheri Gregory

That's beautiful, and I can see how that would be so different from just this random, "Quick! Let's look outside for one more thing to be grateful for!"

Again, if that's really helping someone, we're not here to take that away.

But when it comes to those really nuanced, multiple layers of suffering that are so real in life, being able to notice God at work just feels like it's such a deeper step.

How would you say Tracking God is *different* from a gratitude list?

Lori Margo

It's a way to process your faith. You know it's keeping a journal with some quick notes, some Bible verses, just some things that encourage you during a difficult time.

It changes your mindset.

I talk a lot about Hagar. You know, she's running from Sarah. She's pregnant, and then Sarah mistreats her and sends her away. And I don't think a gratitude list would have worked for her in that situation

Cheri Gregory

Good point, good point.

Lori Margo

Here she was, and the angel of the Lord finds her and calls her by name. She's the only one in Scripture that she's called by name. He speaks her name.

And you have to realize being with Abraham and Sarah every time they refer to her, it was my mistress or your mistress or *your slave*, but God calls her by name. He says, I am "I am the God who sees" and this is a key verse for Tracking God is Genesis 16:13 "You are the God who sees me. I have now seen the one who sees me."

Tracking God is saying, "I know you see me. And I want you to know I see you!" When I have those days where I'm like, "God, where are you in the struggle?" I can even go back to the original 33 ways I saw God, and just remind myself of his faithfulness.

It's just **so personal**. It's **so intimate**. It's not just, I mean, if I went back and looked at my gratitude list, I'd be like, "Yeah, there's a God."

But when I look at my 33 ways God was with me list, I'm like, "There is a God who's so personal that **He revealed himself to me** in this situation — *just like* God revealed Himself to Hagar and gave her hope and a promise and sent her back a new woman."

Cheri Gregory

You know, as I'm listening to you, it's occurring to me — and I'll just say this for any other reforming perfectionists who happen to be listening — I think for me, the gratitude list, it worked at first, because it felt like an accomplishment. “Look what **I** can do! Look how grateful **I** can be! God, do you notice me being grateful over here?” And then it felt like drudgery. It felt like homework, and it got less and less creative, especially the more life got overwhelming.

And so what I'm hearing in what you're saying is it's not about you at all. **It's not about how well you can perform your gratitude task of the day.** It's not about, “Oh dear, I can't go to bed because I didn't find my 3-5 things to be grateful for, and maybe God can't bless me tomorrow if I don't ... (This is just what goes through my head. I'm not saying anybody else thinks this way, right?)”

But what you just described was **all about God.** It was all about noticing Him at work in that very intimate way. And it is very possible that for some people who've done the gratitude list thing and it's worked for them, they're already doing it that way. They're not as performance-oriented or as perfectionistic.

But I love that this is so **focused on documenting what God is doing,** rather than putting more pressure on you to perform a certain way.

Lori Margo

Well a phrase we say a lot in Tracking God is “**Document your faith and watch God surprise you.**” And that's what it is. And another favorite prophet of mine in the Bible is Habakkuk and he starts off ... he has questions, and God's okay with his questions. He's disillusioned, and he goes through the struggle. And then God says, and I think it's Habakkuk 1:5 — He says, “Look, observe, see, be astonished, wonder. I am doing something.”

And that's what I need when I'm struggling with my faith. **I just need to know that God is doing something** and that my faith is in the right person.

And Psalm 139 talks about “You are so intimately aware of me, Lord” — I love that, and that's what Tracking God does for me. **It reminds me that he's a personal God who cares deeply for us in the midst of a hard struggle.**

Cheri Gregory

So speaking of Tracking God, you have a course ... a program that you do called Tracking God 101. Tell us a little bit about that.

Lori Margo

So Tracking God [101] is a course that I teach how to keep a really cool but not intimidating journal (as one of my alumni say) of just **tracking the threads of God's faithfulness in your life.**

And so I teach you some simple tools and techniques.

And again, I don't write long paragraphs in my Tracking God journal. It's quick, concise notes and some Bible verses. We do all kinds of things and I give you a bit of a structure just to get you started.

I give a lot of faith encouragement. Reasons why we do what we do, ways to set up your journal to just help you keep your mindset on who God is in the midst of what you're tracking God for — whether you're tracking ...

You know, I track God for my family. I've had multiple cancer diagnoses I track God ... many pages, "Tracking God through cancer" ... "Tracking God, here we go again, cancer!"

And again, if I was doing a gratitude list through that, I do need that. But at the same time. This is cancer. I've lost my parents.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah

Lori Margo

So it just it helps me track the faithfulness of God, the threads, the connectedness of what God's doing in my life. And again, I'm just always surprised by how close He's walking with me through these different difficulties.

And if I wasn't officially tracking him, I might miss that, and it just encourage ... it's growing your faith. It's **keeping your eyes on Jesus no matter what you're facing in life.**

Cheri Gregory

And I love that intentionality, but it's not about you. The focus is on what God is doing, and you being intentional to have a way to notice it.

Lori Margo

Yeah, and, you know, another thing I always say is, life is hard. Let's just acknowledge that. And again, as an HSP, I have to be able to say, *emotionally*, this *is* hard. But I don't leave it there in capital letters, AND ... **Life is hard, AND God is incredible.**

He's just there in the struggle. And I've come to a point in my faith where, "Okay, God, you know, I'm tracking you in one of my young adult kids lives ..." or whatever, and then you know, as a mom that just your heart is just so emotionally wrapped up in that.

But I'll just say, **"God, if you'll go with me through this, I'll go!"**

Cheri Gregory

Yeah.

Lori Margo

And tracking God helps me know that we're going and he's there, and he's so faithfully there. And he cares.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, you know that word **with** is so important, and so Tracking God allows you to really focus on that **with-ness** that He is with you. Yes. Oh, so good. So good.

All right. Well, you have a quiz ...

Lori Margo

I do!

Cheri Gregory

... that is fabulous. And for my friends who are listening, if you go over to [Lori's website](#), and I'll give you that information in a moment, you can take the quiz and sign up to be on your email list. And the quiz is cool, and then what comes afterwards is cool, too.

So tell us all about it.

Lori Margo

Yeah, the quiz is called, **"What Does My Faith Really Need Right Now?"** And it'll take you maybe two minutes. You just give your first response, you know, if I had to pick an answer, what would you choose? And then out of that, you get in a certain queue for that, that struggle, or what your faith needs right now.

And I'm getting a good response to people who have taken it; they'll email me back and say, this is spot on. And so then you get into an email sequence where you'll receive weekly devotionals from me about faith and exactly according to your answer, "what your faith needs right now" — it's result-oriented, and it'll minister to you for what your faith needs right now. And I love that quiz

Cheri Gregory

Well and I can say I love these emails because I've read every single one of them, some of them more than once because you you are one of my writing coaching clients,

— one of my longest term coaching clients — and then if they sign up for that, if they take the quiz and get on your email list, will they learn more about Tracking God 101 when you open that up for registration

Lori Margo

For sure, they'll, they'll be the first to hear all that information.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, cool, cool. Yeah, and I've gone through the Tracking God 101 course, and I love it. I love it.

So any closing thoughts for our friends who are listening, especially if they're listening during the holiday season. You know, I wanted you to be one of my first guests here, because Thanksgiving is coming up in the United States, and there's all of this pressure to be like, "I'm too blessed to be stressed" ... "It's all joy!"

And for some of us, for us to say that would not be genuine. For some of us who wrestle much more with the tension of "Life is hard, AND God is incredible" what would your closing thoughts be?

Lori Margo

Well, again, back to Habakkuk. His name means to wrestle and to embrace.

Cheri Gregory

Oh!

Lori Margo

That's tracking God. You just read the book of Habakkuk, if you get nothing [else] out of anything I say today. Because it's the story of someone who loves God and is wrestling with what he sees the people doing and what God is not doing, and he's discouraged.

And then you get to Habakkuk 2, and it says, "I will station myself, I'll position myself to see what God is doing."

I love that, and so wrestle and embrace.

And for me, I could cry, because that's what Tracking God is: It's a space that allows you to wrestle with the hard things of life.

And *embrace* ... another meaning of that is *cling*. And it's clinging to God in the midst of a difficult situation.

It gives you permission then to wrestle with that verse in Philippians 4 about "rejoice in the Lord always." You know, when I get a cancer diagnosis, I'm not rejoicing in the Lord. But I can wrestle and embrace what God's doing in my life through that struggle.

And I get to that point where I'm just **rejoicing in who God is** and **His faithfulness to me**, which I remind myself of because I've documented it in a Tracking God journal.

Cheri Gregory

As promised, here's how you can go take Lori's "What Does My Faith REALLY Need Right Now?" quiz — go to LoriMargo.com/quiz.

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Thank you for listening to *Grit 'n' Grace - The Podcast for Highly Sensitive Christian Women!* I hope this episode leaves you feeling encouraged and equipped to thrive!

Be sure to follow in your favorite podcast app and share this episode with a friend!

Now if you're brand new to the whole HSP concept, come take the "Am I a Highly Sensitive Person?" quiz at <https://CheriGregory.com/hspquiz>

And remember: God created you sensitive; in Christ, you are *always* strong.

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Cheri Gregory

So Lori, as I mentioned, you are one of my long term coaching clients, so I'm gonna put you on the spot and ask you: *What has having a writing coach done for you? Why do you keep coming back to have me go through your writing?*

Lori Margo

Well, and it's not just any writing coach, it's you. And so you've just become my safety net, my encourager. You're brilliant, and you just understand — I feel like you understand how I think almost better than I do! And you're just you're easy to connect with, easy to be in touch with, and you're honest and gentle and generous with all your critiquing and your coaching. For somebody who's struggling with "Is this is good enough to put out there?" When I get a Loom video with your comments back, I just feel bolstered, even if it's like all this, things like "Work on this, this and this..." you have a way of generously. I don't want to say praising me, but encouraging me through it, and then helping me get to a new level with it. That's a gift, that's a gift of who you are, and a gift to me in my life.

Cheri Gregory

Well, okay, I'll slip you a \$20 under the table here. No, just kidding.

Well, and it's fun this. I mean, it is so fun for me. And then let me just reflect back to you something that you do that I have just become aware of how much I appreciate.

You'll send me a Priority List. You'll send me a list and say, “Okay, the first thing, the most important thing, is this one ...” because you tend to have multiple pieces going at once. You know, some that are brand new, some that are part way done, and some that are almost all the way done, which is great. I love seeing the whole process and being part of the whole process.

You know, you'll send me this Priority List, and I just only recently realized how *brilliant* that is — that you are that aware of where you are in your processes and **what kind of help you need**.

I'm really intrigued by help these days, because I'm so bad at asking for help myself. The fact that you're able to put that into words is such a help from me as a coach. It also means that I know where I'm needed, but I don't intrude where I don't belong. So I'm not like, massively over helping or taking over or that sort of thing.

You have so much ownership and initiative over what you're doing that it helps me know, “Okay, here's my little lane where I just come in a little bit.

For a lot of us as Christian women, we've never been taught to receive help. We're always the helpers. I'm becoming aware that **being able to figure out the kind of help you need** is also a huge gift. So kudos to you for that!

Lori Margo

Thank you. And my intent on that Priority List is I want to help you, because I tag you all over the place in all these documents I'm working on. So if that can just help you, like, “I know I've got you tagged everywhere, but start here.”

Cheri Gregory

And that's what makes it a great collaboration, is that we we both know where we fit in the grand scheme of things. So, all right, very cool. Yeah.

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If you're a writer — or someone who *longs* to be a writer — did you know that you can take mini-course from me, absolutely free? It's called “**Overcome Procrastination & JUST WRITE! 7 Surprisingly Simple Strategies to Get Your Words Flowing**”.

Just go to <https://WriteBesideYou.com/join> to sign up!