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**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store.

But before we jump into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to tell you about one of our amazing partners [Cru](#). It's no secret around here that we are big fans of the Bible. Y'all God's word just changes me. It does. You're going to hear Trillia and I talk about it.

But imagine for a second that you couldn't get a Bible or that you couldn't hop on Amazon and have one sent to your house, that you couldn't afford one, or that you aren't even allowed to have one. With all this going on in the world, we're more and more aware. But honestly, sometimes we can forget that there are people, lots of people around the world who simply can't get a Bible. That's why we're so excited and honored to partner with Cru.

Cru is one of the largest evangelical organizations with over 25,000 missionaries in almost every country. Cru is giving Bibles around the world to people in their own heart language and sharing the hope of Jesus. But here's where they need your help.

For only \$21 a month, you can provide three people with Bibles each and every month. And when you sign up to provide three Bibles at a monthly gift of \$21, Cru is also going to provide meals for five hungry families through their humanitarian aid ministry. And as a thank you, you'll get a free copy of my book, *That Sounds Fun*.

Just text FUN to 71326 to help today. Imagine just how much this gift could change someone's life. So text FUN to 71326. That's F-U-N to 71326 to help now. Or visit [give.cru.org/fun](http://give.cru.org/fun).

**Intro:** Today on the show I get to talk with my friend Trillia Newbell. Trillia is a Bible study writer, a prolific author, a speaker at conferences and retreats. She spent seven years serving as the Director of Community Outreach for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission for the Southern Baptist Convention. And she is currently an Acquisitions Editor for Moody Publishers.

I love the work this woman does, and I'm excited for you to get to know her too. So here's my conversation with Trillia Newbell.

[00:02:12] <intro music>

**Annie:** Trillia, long time for you to get on the podcast. I'm so sorry. Welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Trillia:** Well, I'm so honored. So excited to chat with you. We've seen each other a ton and we've talked about it but now we get to.

**Annie:** I know. You know what's funny is there's two ways people end up... everybody knows the rule. You either have to be my friend or someone I want to be friends with. So we're already friends. We've been friends for a decade or something. I don't know. A very long time.

But the other way is like if someone has something releasing or if people just keep saying someone's name to me over and over again, I'm like, "Fine, fine. I will get you Trillia, everybody." So you need to know that you are highly requested to be on the podcast.

**Trillia:** Well, that's very kind of your friends.

**Annie:** I know. I think it's really sweet. I was like, "Hey, everybody, I've got it. Just pump the brakes. She's coming." I also like catching you right now kind of in-between. You have a release coming for kids in January. But are you writing right now? Are you teaching right now? What are you working on when you're not releasing a book? People don't really hear from us in the middle of the seasons very often.

**Trillia:** Not at all. Actually, it's so funny because you just get busy serving, doing the thing. So it's interesting. I feel like I'm always writing. So yes, I'm writing. But did you know I'm an acquisitions editor also? So I work for publishers.

**Annie:** That's right? I'd forgotten. Oh, we're going to do that. We're going to tell everybody what you're looking for.

**Trillia:** I know. It's so much fun. As a result, I find myself doing a lot of ideating with other authors and reading their books, which is an absolute joy. So I'm doing a lot of that. Who are you acquiring for? Will you remind me?

**Trillia:** Moody Publishers. So I work for Moody.

**Annie:** That's right. So very smart authors.

**Trillia:** That's funny.

**Annie:** It is true. It is true.

**Trillia:** I would like to say they are.

**Annie:** Yes, they can. Every publisher is known for certain things. Moody is one of the ones to know. You may have a PhD behind your name, you may have a lot of years behind your name, but those people are smart over there.

**Trillia:** That's so funny. Well, it's a joy. We have a wide gamut of different authors. I think they're smart.

**Annie:** Yes. For people who don't know, acquiring editors are the ones who meet with authors first, they meet with agents first to kind of either authors to pitch the book or for you to say, "How can we help ideate?" like you said. Tell me about the spot you have in kind of shaping the publishing industry.

**Trillia:** Oh, that's such an interesting. Well, I mean, there's a few things that I'm... if people were requesting me, they probably know I'm a black woman.

**Annie:** Yes, dear everyone, I am a white woman, Trillia is a black woman. So those are some stats you cannot see.

**Trillia:** So, I do think that that helps shape. I really believe that. Although I do acquire broadly, I have been pretty intentional to look for other black women in particular and see where I could elevate their voices. But obviously not just... if you look at my list of people, it's very diverse. And I'm so excited about that.

But other ways I think I can shape is my various life experience in general knowledge in the industry. I'm an author. So I think I kind of have a pulse. And I speak around the country. I feel like I have a certain pulse on what people are yearning for, what they're desiring, where their pain points are in the industry where we all felt needs, but really pain points.

**Annie:** The language.

**Trillia:** So those are, I think, other unique ways that I can, I believe, help encourage and shape. At least Moody. I don't know about the industry.

**Annie:** I'll tell you the industry. I think you totally shape it. I mean, I think acquiring editors, the things that people outside our industry may not realize is really the acquiring editor is the gate. That is who decides what books get published. And so y'all really are the shapers of... I mean, you and I shape it as authors, of course, because it's my book. But if everybody says no to my book idea, it didn't probably have an out via through a traditional publisher.

Okay. So our friends listening who are thinking about being a writer, why should we try traditional publishing? Or when should we try traditional publishing over self-publishing?

**Trillia:** Oh, that's a very good question. Okay, so it all depends. So you ask why and when. I'll start with the when. I think if you have an idea, it's always great to pitch it. Just pitch your idea? I don't think it's a problem to pitch. I would say that one of the things that's often good is to test your idea with your audience. So either through writing on a blog, or through Instagram, or starting a newsletter. There are things that you can do to start that I would encourage anyone to do. And it kind of tests, okay, do you have a readership for this? However-

**Annie:** I did that with *Let's All Be Brave*. My booklet, *Let's All Be Brave*, I practiced about maybe three concepts on my blog to see what people would respond to. And the one that they latched on to, I thought, "I do have a whole book of this."

**Trillia:** Yeah, yeah. I think that's so wise. I don't know about you, but I love writing, but I'm not writing for my health. I'm writing to serve people.

**Annie:** That's right. That's right.

**Trillia:** So it's good to test things to see what will actually serve others.

**Annie:** That's right. What is a good use of your time!

**Trillia:** What is a good use of your time and their time!

**Annie:** Right. And the acquiring editor's time.

**Trillia:** All the time, everyone's time.

**Annie:** So I would say practice those things and see. However, you can always pitch an idea without pitching a book, which I would highly recommend, to an agent or an editor, or a friend who is a writer, so that you can see if you're onto something.

Self-publishing is great. You can do that. However, I am a fan of traditional publishing. That's what I've done. And I think you're going to be tested well in that and you'll have kind of an accountability and editorial help. There's so much that is beneficial that it's hard for me to push self-publishing.

However, when in doubt... I mean, I know some self-published people who will not come to traditional publishing because they've had great success-

**Annie:** Totally.

**Trillia:** ...and they like the freedom.

**Annie:** And they like the system they've built of the editor they have and the designer they have and the typesetter they have. My theory with people, Trillia, is I've always been like, If you've got one book in you, and you're never going to want to write again and you have \$10,000 that you can invest and getting it on Amazon, self-publish it. But I'm with you. Always shoot for seeing if this is a mass-market kind of book that might have a shot that would help a lot of people.

When people say—I would love for you to respond to this, Trillia—"If it helps one person." Respond to that place.

**Trillia:** That's really interesting. I've probably said that phrase. "If it just helps one person." I think some of that is people trying to just stay encouraged with writing because it can be lonely and hard.

**Annie:** Totally. Totally. It can be. It is. Full stop.

**Trillia:** It is.

**Annie:** It is lonely and hard. Why the Lord ever asked me to do this job where I have to sit by myself quietly to get my job done is insane.

**Trillia:** Yeah, exactly.

**Annie:** It is so He can part the seas.

**Trillia:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And most books don't make bestseller lists. Most don't. And praise God for those that do, but most don't. So you have to be encouraged to

just keep being faithful while a smaller number of people read your book. So I think that's part of why.

However, no. I mean, the goal is and the hope is that many people will read and benefit from this book. Can I say something else?

**Annie:** Yes, say all the things. What our friends don't know is you and I are recording on Friday afternoon, we are loosey-goosey. They are getting us talking the real deal about this industry and about writing. So you can say what you want to say.

**Trillia:** One of the things that also, if we're talking about sayings that are not helpful, is-

**Annie:** I'm going to make a list of things that aren't helpful. I submitted "if it only helps one person," and I absolutely don't believe in that. And what would you like to submit? What's another phrase?

**Trillia:** It's not so much a phrase but an attitude. So many people are afraid to promote their books.

**Annie:** Oh we need to talk about this.

**Trillia:** I like if you're going to have, you're going to spend a year investing all that time. You have publishers who are investing money in that work, you've got editors, all these people, you better talk about your book. You better tell people about it. It is a stewardship issue.

And so many people get caught up in the "Oh, I don't want to be self-promotion." Absolutely. We don't want to be about ourselves. But we want people to read and be encouraged with the work that we do. And so I want to encourage everyone listening. If you've written anything, unless you really are writing a journal for yourself, you have written it so people can be encouraged. Tell them. Tell people about it.

**Annie:** One of the things my publisher said to me with That Sounds Fun when we were starting this new deal—I'm with Ravel and Baker—is it is their job to help the book get in front of strangers, it is my job to make sure that people that I'm friends with know it exists. That's all they're asking you to do. They're not asking me to tell the world. They're asking me to tell the people who have already chosen to listen to me and be my friend.

I also really think the things you write... I mean, Trillia, I will say this about your books far before I'll say about mine, but they really are a gift from God to us. And the only person who stewards that gift at the beginning is you. And so I'm the only one who can tell people about the gift God's given me through the writing. Someone else can't do that at first blush. They can once it's out. But you're right. I'm like, Tell people about your books. I can't know the book is going to change my life if the author never tells me.

**Trillia:** Yes, amen to that. And thank you for the encouragement. And I feel the same about you. And it's just such a blessing. But yes, I do think—and I'm glad that the way you framed this—it's a gift. It's a gift from the Lord.

In my experience, I can't tell you how many people have read something that I wrote, and they were ministered to. They were going through cancer, a cancer diagnosis, and fearful and they were ministered to. I'm like, "It's worth that, to tell people about it." So yeah. So that to me is a hang up that I understand. But I also think, if I can be so bold, Satan doesn't want you to tell the story.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Trillia:** So I think we can be hindered by this fear of self-promotion not to actually tell people this stuff that needs to be out there and that could be a gift and a benefit. So there we go.

**Annie:** Also, my Friday afternoon self wants to push on this a little bit more and say the other reason we don't want to tell is we don't want to feel the rejection personally.

**Trillia:** Oh, yes.

**Annie:** If someone else is marketing our book, or if someone else is... well, then but if I'm telling you to read the book, and you don't do it, then I have to face that personal rejection. So I'd rather say I'm not a self-promoter than be vulnerable with the work that I've put in two years into.

**Trillia:** 100%. And I have wrestled with that in my own heart. It is scary. It is scary.

**Annie:** I only know those sentences because they live in me.

**Trillia:** It is absolutely scary to push, send, to push, you know, post or whatever. And you overthink it. I overthink so many dumb things that I'm like.... my husband, he's like, "Why are we still talking about this? Just do the thing." But I can overthink things.

And so absolutely, I think rejection and that fear of rejection hold so many of us back. It holds me back. I have to pray and submit it to the Lord because it's scary.

**Annie:** And Trillia, I did a deep dive on your Amazon life today. You've been releasing books. Particularly you wrote a book about diversity in 2014.

**Trillia:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Was that your first book? When was your first book out?

**Trillia:** It was my first book. It was.

**Annie:** Okay. That's why I thought I remembered that being true. So not only are you writing books that no one else can write, you're literally writing books that I cannot write for my seat as a white woman.

**Trillia:** Hmm.

**Annie:** Right?

**Trillia:** Yeah.

**Annie:** So if you don't tell me about it, how am I ever going to learn and grow in that way, too?

**Trillia:** Well, that's so encouraging. I hope everyone listening who's thinking, "Wait a minute, maybe I don't have anything to say" really evaluate their life and think about that.

**Annie:** Yes! Yes!

**Trillia:** Because you are right, there are certain things that I can say and experiences that I have that not everyone has. So I'm grateful that the Lord allowed me to take that step of faith. And that was a big step of faith.

**Annie:** Gosh. It was the middle... Yes, say it.

**Trillia:** I mean, now everyone's got to talk about. But then I remember I was one of the first females in my circle of whatever that was talking about it that was published. Now, people were talking about it that was published from a Christian perspective.



**Annie:** And it was in a very white world.

**Trillia:** Yes. You said what you can say tiptoeing around.

**Annie:** You don't tiptoe around that. You were one of the first black women speaking at a lot of white conferences.

**Trillia:** Yes.

**Annie:** So you're also one of the first black women published in a way that was put in front of a lot of white women.

**Trillia:** 100%. So it was really interesting and hard, and lonely. And I remember moments being in a hotel room by myself crying because I just experienced some kind of racism. It was just very difficult. But the Lord met me in new ways. And talk about selling books, that book didn't sell very well at all.

However, the Lord opened other doors for me to speak in ways that I don't think I would have. And I obviously wouldn't have written *God's Very Good Idea* or *Creative God, Colorful Us*, these other things that the Lord has allowed if I didn't take that step of faith. But no one wanted to talk about that then. So that's why I didn't move. I was like, "No one cared about diversity and the church."

So it's really interesting. But I'm really glad that Moody actually took a chance. It was a chance, chance because no one knew me. It was my first book. I had just written maybe a couple of articles. I was a journalist at a local paper.

**Annie:** Yes, I remember.

**Trillia:** And so it was such a chance, and I'm so glad that they were so kind to do it.

[00:19:33] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hi friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, [Modern Fertility](#). Did you know that a simple finger prick can unlock a ton of insight into your reproductive health? I'm talking egg count, menopause timing, whether or not your hormone levels indicate conditions like thyroid disorders, or PCOS, all things that are good to know whether or not kids are in your future.

That's why modern fertility was created. It's the easy and affordable way to test your fertility hormones at home with a simple finger prick. Mail it in with a prepaid label and you'll get your personalized results within 10 days. It's super simple. They've made it quick and relatively painless.

Traditional testing with your doctor can cost over \$1,000, but Modern Fertility gets you the same info at \$159, a fraction of the price. And if you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun), you can get \$20 off your test.

Also, if you have an HSA or an FSA, you can put those dollars towards Modern Fertility. You'll get insight into your hormone levels, how many eggs you have, and other important fertility factors. The results go deep into what every hormone means, which I think is really helpful and you can talk one on one with a fertility nurse to review your results and options for next steps. If you want kids soon or maybe one day in the future, then having this clinically sound info about your body can help you make decisions that are right for you.

So right now Modern Fertility is offering \$20 off the test when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun). That means your test will cost \$139 instead of the several hundreds or even 1,000-plus dollars it could cost at a doctor's office. Get \$20 off your fertility test when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun). [Modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Trillia.

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**Annie:** This may be a hard question but you have it in you I believe. What do you love about the racial reconciliation conversation going on amongst women in the church? And what do you not love about the racial reconciliation conversation going on particularly amongst women in the church?

**Trillia:** So that's an interesting question because I speak to both men and women about this topic so I've got to think for a second.

**Annie:** Oh, you can give us the men. I was trying to give you an easier... if you have a neutral... I was trying to make it easier because I was thinking about conferences we used to be at. But if you've got a mixed... I mean we have guys and girls listening so I like it both.

**Trillia:** Okay, yeah, yeah. So I can talk in general because I'm actually in general for this audience for this topic.

**Annie:** Yeah, great.

**Trillia:** I'm encouraged that it is happening. We are in this conversation. It's not something that you have to force people to talk about. Everyone is trying to figure this out. Everyone. Which goes into the negativity part. Whether it's aggressively in error or not, we are having the conversation. When I was having this conversation, there was so much apathy. People just did not care.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Trillia:** It was like dragging people to talk about it. Like, "This is important. Have this conversation." Where now it is so important. And most people, most people want to have good-faith conversations, desire to love each other. I really do believe that.

Where it's difficult is that we are on some crazy topics that I think are complete distractions that no one even knows what they mean. Like CRT. I don't think most people know what that means. And so we're having these conversations with no clear definitions and there are academic tool. No one knows what they mean but they have deep, super opinions about it.

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Trillia:** So it is interesting, but also difficult because it takes us way off. Okay, I'll say it this way. We can't talk about just foundational things because we're trying to figure out something that we don't know anything about. So it's made it so difficult to even... Do you know what loving your neighbor mean? Let's just talk about what that means.

**Annie:** Right.

**Trillia:** What is that command? But we can't even have those foundational topics because we're talking about so many other things that it's really, really difficult. It's difficult. However, I have a lot of hope.

**Annie:** I do too. I have more hope than I've ever had about it too, honestly. Because I'm like, Man, it is always hopeful when you can't get away from a sin pattern that you're in. So it doesn't feel good, but if God won't let you get away from the thing, that's helpful, because that means good is coming.

**Trillia:** Absolutely. We're facing ourselves in ways that we weren't facing ourselves before, which is very good.

**Annie:** Did you ever play Carmen San Diego? Do you remember that computer game?

**Trillia:** I never played it, but I know the name.

**Annie:** So what ends up happening is you go down a trail and you fly to an airport, and you get off the airplane and they say, "You've come to the wrong airport, no one's here." And you're like, "I followed this trail this far to end up at the wrong airport?" And sometimes I think that's what we do with this conversation-

**Trillia:** 100%

**Annie:** ...is we spend so much time on these little nuance pieces, and we get on the plane, and we fly over there. And then all of a sudden, you're in Cairo and you're supposed to be in Moscow. And it's like, well, you did all that work to end up in Cairo and you weren't even supposed to be there in the first place. Right?

**Trillia:** I think you're exactly right. It's so interesting. However, like you, I'm really glad that you... the good thing about this is that we're getting on a plane.

**Annie:** That's it. That's exactly right. We're at least in the game.

**Trillia:** We're getting on the plane.

**Annie:** That's right. That's exactly right.

**Trillia:** And so that is so much better than apathy. Apathy is terrible. It is so hard. You cannot get people to care.

**Annie:** Right.

**Trillia:** I mean, you can but it's so hard. So for people to actually care one way or the other is helpful.

**Annie:** When you started writing for kids, when you wrote *God's Very Good Idea*, which we've read for Mini BFF Book Club, we read it really early in Mini BFF Book Club on a Monday night and people loved it.

**Trillia:** I didn't know that.

**Annie:** What made you switch to... not switch. What made you start adding in writing for kids and young adults?

**Trillia:** I haven't switched. Most of my next stuff is for adults. But I started writing for kids because I taught a Sunday School lesson on the topic of race in imago dei (the image of God) and the response of these kids, I was like, "Oh, maybe there's something here." So I pitched it to a publisher and they agreed.

But I never intended to write for kids. It wasn't something that I was thinking of or seeking. It was because I taught a Sunday School lesson and their response was just so sweet. And I thought, "If I can help equip parents in any way, and help give to the little hearts of kids, then I'm going to do it. It was obviously a need that I didn't realize. And the Lord was very kind to allow that.

**Annie:** What's the good and talking about imago dei, talking about racial justice, talking about our differences to kids?

**Trillia:** Well, I think part of it is that they are trying to figure out their world. And so it sets a foundation of, Hey, where do you get your identity? You are loved by God, you are made by God, and no one can take that away from you. So it gives them that foundation. But then it's not about you. Look around, your friends are also created in the image of God, they are also valued by the Lord. So what does that mean for how you treat them?

And so those kind of foundational truths, if every heart was captured by that, how the world would be changed! And so it's so essential and important that they get those kinds of foundations of how they view others and how they view themselves, most importantly, how God views them and how God views others, I think as early as possible so that they can love.

And you asked about differences. Because difference is good. It's good. We have so made difference a strange thing. But difference is good. Yeah, it's like, "What?" But because it's good, I want kids and my kids to know that early on and to see that they don't have to be... not only should they not be scared of difference, they can enjoy difference, they can engage difference, they can learn, and they should learn from those who are not like them.

**Annie:** My first kid's book, *What Sounds Fun to You?*, comes out this month. And in the writing of it, even in the working with the illustrator, I kept thinking, "What can we

put into kids now almost below the level of what we're actually saying of like, Oh, yeah, that kid's book I read told me that on the playground there are lots of ways to have fun. So maybe that person is cool, too." Right?

**Trillia:** Yes. Yes.

**Annie:** So try and do some of that work.

**Trillia:** Yeah. So helping them understand that people are different and have different gifts and ideas. So for them to be able to see, "Oh, well, that person loves soccer, and that's okay. But what's fun to me is piano, and that's okay." That I think is good. And it also is freeing, isn't it, to know that we don't all have to be the same, That we don't all have to have the same likes or what I find enjoyable doesn't have to be the same as what you do, Annie?

**Annie:** Though we both love Nashville. So we share a lot of things.

**Trillia:** Yeah, we do. We do. But it's good to, I think, instill those things in kids early on. Because we are so created differently. And that's good.

**Annie:** I mean, I spend my life talking to adults about what they think is fun. And so often it starts with the shaming sentence. Like, "Well, you may not think this is fun, but" or "I don't know anybody else is going to... I don't know what you're going to think about this," or "this is dumb" or "this..." And I just feel like, oh, yeah, if we can teach kids that they're allowed to love what they love, then in 30 years I'm not going to have shaming conversations with adults about fun.

**Trillia:** That is so interesting. Gosh, oh. I think that we have... Gosh, Annie, I'm going to interview you for a second.

**Annie:** I don't have time to write a book. You cannot acquire anything right now, Trillia.

**Trillia:** Now, about your book... That's hilarious though. I wonder if we as adults do carry up sort of shame. Like we have to always be laboring. Everything has to be about self-sacrifice and hard. And I think theologically, we've also, at least in my circles, we have made fun... we've got to be serious. I wonder, have you experienced that? Have you seen that, that there's a sort of you're not taking life serious if you're not-

**Annie:** Especially Christians. You are not doing your Christian life right if you're too silly, or if you're having too much fun, or if you prioritize fun, or if you think about fun. It's been very fascinating. So that's one of the reasons the kids' book matters so

much to me is I'm going like, When mom and dad sit down and read that, they're going to be reminded that when you were nine, you didn't have to think about fun, it just happened. It just happened. We just did it.

We hurrying home from school to hurry home through homework so that we could have fun. And now we don't ever prio... we don't ever. That's a strong statement. A lot of people don't prioritize it very often.

**Trillia:** Yeah, yeah.

**Annie:** In a similar way, in a much, I think, less important way, what I'm modeling with fun is a lot of ways what you're modeling with diversity and loving your neighbor well. Because you're going like, "Hey, I don't care what age you are, you're going to run into a book where I'm going to tell you that, that there is a diversity to be celebrated here."

And you're doing it around how we were created and our skin color and where we've come from. And I'm taking the sneaky Jesus route of "Let's talk about fun, but I'm going to point you to Trillia and I'm going to point you to Beth Moore and I'm going to point you to Jesus. But you think we're just talking about fun because you pick this up and target, but I'm going to sneaky Jesus you."

**Trillia:** "Sneaky Jesus you" is the best thing. I think it's also one of the sweeter ways to reach a broad number of people is so that people... And God has created us, He created everything and He created it for enjoyment. So I'm really glad that you wrote and that you're writing it for kids so that kids can learn to enjoy and to have fun and engage with whatever it is that is around them.

But you are right, I wrote different age groups because I think all the kids need to learn and know because they're going to be dealing with certain things throughout their whole lives.

**Annie:** Right. Right. That's it. Hopefully this conversation will never go away because we will always be advocating for someone that is not being treated the way they should be treated because of something about them. Wherever it is.

**Trillia:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Annie:** We have had a pretty rough week at work, so this morning, one of our co-workers kind of shared this verse with us. And I want to say it, you know it, but it's Romans 12:12, where it says, "Rejoice in hope, endure in suffering, persist in prayer."

We can talk as specific or not specific as you want to. People have been very unkind to you because of some of your work. I mean, there is a very public story of you being treated unkindly because you're black and had us all... the Joan of Arc in me was ready to jump through my computer screen. I mean, just so you know. All of us-

**Trillia:** I saw it. I saw it. You're very kind in supporting me. I was like, "Oh, so terrible."

**Annie:** It was awful. It was awful. But when you think about that scripture where it says, "Rejoice and hope, persist in prayer, handle affliction," I know that what you might have to say is my life isn't as hard as someone else's. Everybody starts with that. So we'll assume that there are other people have pain I know. But how has that scripture come to life for you in your work and in your life?

**Trillia:** You know what? It's interesting. Because I'm talking about Romans, Romans 8, I have been leaning to. And just knowing the promise that God will never leave or forsake me, and that God has for me, and that He is with me allows me to do Romans 12. To persevere, to pray, to rest in Him, and to have hope.

I have that hope because He wrote in Romans 8 that He's never going to leave or forsake me.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Trillia:** I'm not ultra spiritual. So I'm not going to say that every day I wake up and I'm like, "I'm great."

**Annie:** If that's ultra spiritual, none of us are that.

**Trillia:** Oh, right, right, right. But I am leaning on Him. I have cried out. For several years now I've felt a cleaning to the Lord that I've never felt before. And a lot of it is due to this kind of mean... not mean evil. It's evil.

**Annie:** That's right. You can say that.

**Trillia:** I was going to say mean-spirited, but no, no.

**Annie:** It's just actual evil. It's actually evil.



**Trillia:** It's actual evil. I have hope because every day I wake up and I sense the same nearness. He draws near to the brokenhearted, and it seems palatable to me. It's something tangible. I feel it. I sense it, I know it.

And also, because you had mentioned the cliché, I don't suffer as much as or... you know that everyone says, I do think because I am surrounded by love in general it helps. I think if I were doing this alone, it would be very difficult. But I'm not. I'm surrounded by people who love me. I really do think we need people, we need each other. I don't know how anyone survives without some people, their people. That I think helps me as well.

**Annie:** What is your prayer life like?

**Trillia:** What is my prayer life? That's a great question. Well, I pray. I feel like... gosh, this is going to sound so-

**Annie:** Don't judge your prayer life. Don't judge your prayer life. It's yours.

**Trillia:** No, I just like I'm desperate. Especially I just think this season and these last couple... I think my prayer life maybe about five years ago would have been like, "Thank you Lord for..." You know, just a little... I feel like this last several years there's been a desperation in my prayers.

And I like to pray the scriptures. So I'll pray Psalm 23 and cry out through praying the scriptures. But a lot of it is, "Lord please have mercy." I prayed that just the other day. I just pray for mercy for the world, for different things that my family is experiencing. So there's just a lot of just crying out for desperation.

I've kind of taken the "pray without ceasing." I don't have a "this is my prayer closet time." I pray throughout the day, pray when I see certain circumstances, whether that's good or bad, whatever. But that's how I pray. I pray throughout the day rather than like I'm going to go in my prayer closet for an hour of prayer kind of thing.

[00:40:15] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners [KiwiCo](#). Since summer has come to an end, our minds are turning to fall, festivals pumpkin patches, which naturally sparks creativity for the costumes we pick, to the recipes we bake, and the decor we put

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And now back to our conversation with Trillia.

[00:42:00] <music>

**Annie:** 2021 has been the year where I've done a lot of stomping prayer. I've done more like getting out there and saying the things and stomping around my neighborhood. I mean, my neighbors must think... I actually don't walk in my neighborhood. I go walk in the rich neighborhood. So they're like, "That girl who moved in, we don't know who she is, we don't know where she lives, but she stomps around here."

**Trillia:** Okay, that's really funny.

**Annie:** Their windows are so much more fun to look in. And so I go walk in the rich neighborhood. I mean, I just think it's important to "pray without ceasing" thing. It is just a constant conversation, isn't it? I mean, it is just saying to the Lord, like, "I've got one more thing to say to you and I'm listening."

**Trillia:** Yes. I do. Again, I'm stuck in Romans 8. But I just am so grateful that in Romans 8 there's a part where Paul writes about how the Holy Spirit will intercede and groan with groans so deep when we don't have words. And so there have been a lot of times where I'm like, "Lord, I don't know what to say. This feels so heavy. This feels so beyond. It is beyond me. But it's not beyond you." It's not beyond Him.

**Annie:** That's it. That's it.

**Trillia:** So this again is the desperation. That's what I have felt. So yeah, it's a relationship. I do sense a lot more of a nearness. Like He is my friend. He is a friend. And so I can go to the Lord as my friend and talk to Him. He's my Savior, He's holy, all of the things.

However, I am so grateful that He draws near and that He's a friend, and that He says in the Word He's a friend. So it is, I think, binding, is about relationship.

**Annie:** Man, the Romans 8 I can't quit, that I don't know how I'd never read this until a month ago is 24, says, "Hope that is seen is no hope at all."

**Trillia:** Hmm.

**Annie:** And I was like, "Oh, I'll be right there if you need me. I'll just be right there until I totally understand that because hope that is seen is no hope at all." And I was like, "Oh, that's it." I always want hope to be this easy thing I can buy at a grocery store. And it just isn't. It never is. When you see it, it's done. When you see it, you've got the thing.

**Trillia:** Absolutely. It's interesting because hope isn't a promise. I'm thinking of Hebrews. Hope isn't a promise, right? So hope is about those things that are unseen. We hope in the promises of God. We hope in that what He says is true. I think that's really interesting. And we have to look at that translation because I don't think I've seen it that way.

**Annie:** Same. I was like, "What is this? How have I been a Christian for this long and I've never seen 'hope that is seen is no hope at all'?"

**Trillia:** Okay. Can I just say something to what you just said?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Trillia:** Because it's so important. One of the things that I love about Christianity is that we are never going to exhaust the Lord. We're always going to be learning. And so it's so great to read the scriptures and to look and be like, "Wait, I thought I had read that."

**Annie:** Yes.

**Trillia:** Anyway. So I think that's so encouraging, one, to remember, but two, to say out loud is that you've been a Christian your whole life and you see something and you're like, "What does that even mean?" I love it.

**Annie:** Yes. Also, I think I do exhaust the Lord sometimes just so you know, in a different way. I do think He finds me exhausting. Jesus said, here's a story about praying and not giving up, exhaust Him.

**Trillia:** Exhaust Him. Yes, yeah.

**Annie:** I'm sorry I don't remember where this is. But I think it's in Psalms where... I'll look it up. It may be in Jeremiah. I'll look it up. But it says, "Give God no rest..."

**Trillia:** It sounds like [inaudible 00:46:18].

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. It says, "Give God no rest until He does the work." And I was like, "Oh, okay. I can give Him no rest. I know how to do that. I know how to exhaust God."

**Trillia:** And you see that in the Psalms. If it's not in the Psalms, I'll be surprised. Because-

**Annie:** My Bible isn't right here beside me. I'll look it up.

**Trillia:** Neither is mine. But you do see that, that they're asking and asking and asking. I'm grateful that we can.

**Annie:** It doesn't hurt my feelings that He can get exhausted with me. Right? Oh, it's Isaiah. It's Isaiah 62:7. "Give the Lord no rest until He finishes His work." So you better hear me praying and chilling around like this: "Lord, you said, you said for me not to give you any rest. So I'm back. Your girl is back." I can't tell you how many times I say, "You said," when I'm praying. I mean, it's what you said. You pray the scripture too, right?

**Trillia:** Yes. That's so good. Yeah, absolutely. And who is it...? Well, wouldn't it have been Moses—probably—who said, "Don't destroy them because..." Yeah, it may not be Moses. "...because you said you wouldn't." Is it Joshua, Jeremiah? Who is it?

**Annie:** The story is right. That he says to God, "You're the one who said you would destroy them? Why are you changing your mind now?"

**Trillia:** Yeah. And so He has mercy. So anyways, all that to say, I think reminding the Lord of His own promises is an absolute appropriate thing and good thing to do. "This is what you said. You said this in your Word."

**Annie:** "You said." I'm telling you, when I get to heaven He's going to be like, "Everybody, I'm taking another Sabbath because she's done. She finally got up here. I do not have to." I wear Him out. But I'm okay with it. I'm okay with it because that is... I said to someone the other day that the more I persist in prayer, and the more it feels like God, and I have to argue over things, the closer He feels.

**Trillia:** I agree. I think so. And there's a newness there when you're in a relationship. I think you mentioned relationship. When you are able to speak plainly and clearly and not pretend like you have to be buttoned up. He already knows. He already knows. And so that to me is something that helps me as well. Like there's nothing hidden before the Lord. He knows. He knows my needs, so I can cry out. I don't have to pretend.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. We don't have to. Man, the pretending in prayer feels like... I don't have enough hours in my day to pretend in prayer. We got to get stuff done. Right?

**Trillia:** We got to get stuff done.

**Annie:** We got too much to get done. I'm in the room where I read and pray in the morning. And so I have all these big sticky notes of what I pray for other people-

**Trillia:** That's so great.

**Annie:** ...hanging on my wall. Because otherwise I just pray for myself. So if I look at their names, and if I don't look at what they, you know, hanging up there. But it's just such a constant reminder of, like, "God, I believe that prayer is..." And I wrote this down from *War Room*. That may be *War Room*. It said, "Victories don't come by accident. Prayer actually shapes the future."

**Trillia:** I'm so glad you said that. I think I've said that about 15 times. "I'm so glad you said that."

**Annie:** No.

**Trillia:** Often I think we minimize the effectiveness of prayer because we don't believe it's an action. We think we have to do, do, do, do, do, and we don't stop and pray. So I think it's so important that we are people who pray into.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. That's exactly right.

**Trillia:** It's an action.

**Annie:** Yeah. Okay, Trillia, we could do this for another hour and I would be so happy. This is going to start their Monday great, this is ended my Friday great. This is exactly what I want to do. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we cover?

**Trillia:** Gosh, I don't know. I do think it would be good for people to know that I have a chapter book on race for kids called *Creative God, Colorful Us*. And so if they have older kids... because I think it's really, really, really important for us not to stop at when they're fun, and it's sweet. We got to keep going.

They're about to enter the hard conversations there. I'm in an interracial marriage, and I remember when my kids came home and talked about the civil rights movement and they were learning things that we had already taught them but it clicked. And they were like, "You, mommy and daddy couldn't drink out of the same fountain? What?"

So I really believe it's so important that we start instilling these things and keep instilling those things. I just want people to know that that's available if you want your kids to get engaged in the word and keep talking about it. Because they need to because they're about to experience some real-life things.

**Annie:** It's a great chapter book. Is this like third, fourth grade reading? Is it middle school reading? What is *Creative God, Colorful Us*? It's 8 to 13.

**Annie:** Perfect.

**Trillia:** A 7-year-old can definitely grab it but they're going to need to be able to read. Some families have read it together as a devotional because it's-

**Annie:** Oh, it's got activities in it. I mean it's colorful on the inside. It looks like a really cool devotional book that has a really important purpose.

**Trillia:** Well, I pray it does.

**Annie:** That's beautiful. Trillia, thanks for making time to do this today. I'm so grateful. What a dream! The last question we always ask, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you?

**Trillia:** Right now what sounds fun is getting on my bike and running... I live in Franklin so we have a lot of country roads. It is absolutely gorgeous. It's rained for two weeks.

**Annie:** It has. It has rained for two weeks. I'm going outside after this too.

**Trillia:** So I get on my road bike and go in the country and just ride.

**Annie:** Do you listen to anything? Or do you just not?

**Trillia:** No. I do sometimes it all depends. Sometimes I listen to books, sometimes, often music. But a friend of mine encouraged me not to listen to anything once and I started doing that. And it's so free because there's so much noise all the time. And to just be in God's creation without any noise and distraction because no one can read to me is really great.

**Annie:** Yeah!

**Trillia:** You're like, "Amen." So I've actually started not listening to stuff.

**Annie:** Wow, okay. I'm not quite that good yet. I'm still walking and running with music or podcast or something. But I try not to make it work. Like I'm not editing, I'm not scanning through a show to see if we want them on the network. It is me just listening to something that makes me happy and lets my brain think.

**Trillia:** You know what, that's funny that you said that because most of my audiobooks are random. Something you probably will laugh at and not expect that I'm about to say. I have downloaded like a bunch of - what do you call them? Young adults-

**Annie:** Yeah, YA.

**Trillia:** ...diaries. What do you call that?

**Annie:** John Green stuff? Have you read all the stuff that John Green writes? I love them.

**Trillia:** I have no idea. I will look it up though.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah.

**Trillia:** It's just so brainless. I need that. Every now and then, especially on a plane or something, I'm going to do something completely and totally brainless. And it's wonderful.

**Annie:** When I was sick, some friends brought me magazines that were super trashy magazines that I would never bought myself and I was like, "This is heaven. This is so great. I'm just going to read it and not care. It's the best."

Oh, Trillia, you're such a gift to us. I'm so glad I'm on the plane at the same time as you. I'm really grateful for the work you do. If there's ever anything we can do for you, I can do for you, you're always welcome back here.

**Trillia:** Well, you can add me to your prayer wall.

**Annie:** With pleasure. I will do it. Absolutely will. I promise. And I will pray every time I see your name. It's one of my favorite things to go like, "Hey, maybe they need to know there's someone's praying for them today."

**[00:55:16] <music>**

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? Oh, she's brilliant. Listen, that Friday afternoon show on a Monday is good stuff. Hey, make sure you're following Trillia so you could be the first to know about the beautiful work she's doing. Tell her thanks for being on the show, and check out all of her books for all sorts of ages of friends.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), all the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun. And I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is going to watch the Nashville soccer club play tonight. I'm excited about that.



You guys have a great couple of days. And we'll see you back here on Wednesday with my dear friend Kailey Dickerson. See y'all then.

**[00:56:04] <music>**