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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store. Thanks again, y'all. Just thank you, thank you for your kind words about the Epiphany episode from last week. If you haven't heard it yet, go back and listen, it'll kind of tell you how this year is going to go. But y'all have been incredibly kind in response to that.

By the way, if you haven't had a chance to fill out our podcast survey, just a few questions that won't take you long, we would appreciate it so much. You can find the link in the show notes and it will help us be sure that we are serving you the best we can with the show.

Rumor has it there's a drawing for a prize for those who complete the survey and enter. Someone's going to get a \$250 gift card. Might as well be you, right? The survey link is in the show notes below.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to share about one of our incredible partners. This podcast is sponsored by [BetterHelp Online Therapy](#). We talk about BetterHelp a lot on the show. And this month we're discussing some of the stigmas around mental health.

No, you don't have to wait until things are basically unbearable to pursue connecting with a therapist. No, therapy doesn't mean that something's wrong with you. And yes, taking care of our mental health is just as much a part of normal life as going to the gym like we do for our physical health or showing up for church for our spiritual health.

My counselor has helped me so much through various seasons in my life. I highly recommend having that person you can process with and who can help you with tools to cope with what you're dealing with.

BetterHelp is customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions with your therapist. So you don't have to see anyone on camera if you don't want to. It's much more affordable than in-person therapy and you can be matched with a therapist in under 48 hours. Give it a try and see why over 2 million people have used BetterHelp Online Therapy.

This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp and That Sounds Fun friends get 10% off their first month at betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show I get to chat with my friend Jenn Johnson. She's half of the duo who founded Bethel Music her, and her husband, Brian Johnson. She's a phenomenal singer and incredible songwriter and worship leader.

Plus she has a new book out called *All Things Lovely*. It's incredible. I cannot wait for y'all to hear a shout about it. She also is the founder of Lovely by Jenn Johnson, a lifestyle brand intended to inspire, equip, and engage women of all ages to thrive.

Oh, I love her so much. I love her book. I cannot wait for y'all to hear her heart and hear more about *All Things Lovely*. So here's my conversation with my friend Jenn Johnson.

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Annie: Jenn, welcome to That Sounds Fun. I can't believe it's taken this long. I'm glad you're here.

Jenn: I have been looking forward to this.

Annie: Oh, girl, me too.

Jenn: Oh, my gosh.

Annie: I cannot wait. We're going to go there. Okay, we are starting with you're the new president of Bethel music?

Jenn: Yes. It is a whole new world. It is wild, amazing, exciting. So, Brian, my lovely husband has been president now since the beginning of Bethel Music, and I've been right there at his side. I've worked mainly in events. That's kind of my jam is I'm a writer and a pastor, honestly. I just love people. I love gathering people and loving on them. And then I'm a musician and all those things. But yeah, just real integral of the heart and soul of the company. But yeah.

So now we've swapped roles and now he is on our board, advisor, all the things but I am president. So it's very exciting and a whole new world.

- Annie:** What does that mean you tap into your own self as far as your leadership. How does that change what you have to ask of yourself?
- Jenn:** For me right now it's a lot of learning, you know, a lot of digging in and kind of finding out what's been happening that I didn't know about with contracts or different things.
- Annie:** Oh, sure.
- Jenn:** So I'm just on learning mode on a big part. So it's exciting, but it could feel overwhelming, but I feel such a sense of God's peace in it. I didn't want to do it if I'm vulnerable, which I always am. I was very excited to do lovely things. But Jesus spoke to me and said, "I need you to do it even if it just for a season." So I don't know if it's nine months or nine years or 100. I don't care. I know Jesus will lead me. And I love this group of humans obviously. We've been running Bethel Music and worship for 20 years now.
- Annie:** Oh, my gosh!
- Jenn:** 22 actually. 22 years since we were handed worship at Bethel.
- Annie:** Wow.
- Jenn:** So it's been a wild ride that I wouldn't change for the world. It's come with glory and incredible things. And it's come with hardship and sleepless nights and a lot of tears. But it's incredible because we've been able to change the world. I think to be able to get who God is to people is amazing. And what better than that, to help people hear God and know God? I mean, duh.
- Annie:** Right.
- Jenn:** But yeah. I mean, it's really exciting for me to dream and think. I have so much passion for every person on our team and even just other people that I'm like, "Wow, God is all over you. How can we help you?" That's kind of my biggest heart and desire is just to get the songs, and then just to love the church, to build the church.
- So anyway, I'm excited. But yeah, I didn't see it coming. But it feels very peaceful and right, even though I feel, as one of my songs says, beautifully in over my head.

Annie: I do love that song. What is it about worship? What is it about having... I mean, because there are times, whether I'm singing at church, or whether... Like when I got up this morning, I said to my Alexa... I don't want to alert everyone's Alexa in the whole world. But I said to her, "Play worship music, play Bethel music for me." What is it about putting music on just in your life that really allows the Spirit to do something? What's the math of that?

Jenn: Oh, man, the presence of God just changes everything. I laid in bed this morning before I woke up and there's this father-daughter duo that I'm obsessed with. He's just a pastor and his daughter, and they just sing together. And I just laid in my bed and just listened to one of their little worship sets that they had recorded that was just on their Instagram and just cried.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: Because the presence of God, just the constant, just people singing the faithfulness of God, of who God is in His Word and by His Spirit, that changes everything. And when we worship and we praise, we invite the presence of God to come... He's with us always, but when we invite him, you know, it's just incredible the tangible presence that we can feel around us, strengthening us, and speaking to us.

So I think worship is a multifaceted word. I don't think one thing describes worship. I like to think of it as so many things happen when we worship. Like I had this vision one time. God was in heaven and He had this huge mirror, like a reflector. And as we would worship, the praises would go up and he would absorb them like, "Yes, I am good, holy, wonderful, awesome."

And then He'd also shout it out over the world, like, "Yes, I am." And it was like as we would sing to Him, He would always also declare His name as this prophetic word over the world of like, "Yes, this is who I am."

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: And then also, the other thing that was happening in the picture is our praise would hit this reflector and shoot back to Earth and He'd say, "And so are you." Because we're made in His image. And when we worship Him we become like Him, right? Which is His heart. It's not this egotistical thing. It's like a dad who you want your kids to like... you know, it's this beautiful Father's heart.

And so I think so much happens in worship. I think that some worship is musical. But I think ultimately, worship is a lifestyle. I think it's changing diapers. I think it's your attitude. I think it's every aspect of our life, not just something musical.

But I think the power of worship in music is stunning because it can change the atmosphere in a moment, it can pull you out of depression as the Spirit of God plays over you in a melody. Even it doesn't have to be a lyric, just the sound of melody. We watch David in the Bible do it with Saul. You know, to deliver even just with music, maybe not even words. So it's powerful in so many different ways.

Annie: I feel that. I mean, I can feel that in my house. If I'm schlepping around, like if I can feel there's something, if I can't get out of my head, or if I can't get... "motivated" is not the right word. You don't have to be motivated in your house every day. But I can just tell when I feel weighed down. That is one of my first go tos is just put music on and worship, particularly, put worship music on and then reassess in 30 minutes. Reassess in 30 minutes is kind of my move.

Jenn: That's your next book title.

Annie: Oh my gosh, right? And we talk a lot here about halt, hungry, angry, lonely, tired. So after my 30 minutes, I gotta go through that. Am I hungry? Am I angry? Am I lonely? Am I tired? Or what are these things affecting me? But I'm more clear-headed when the presence of God is a part of the invitation I've made.

Jenn: Yes, absolutely. I think that that just changes everything. And especially, I think it's powerful to listen to worship music, but it's like a multiplied power to actually worship. And actually go, "Oh God I give you..." I love that even the Bible is so clear, like, "Lift your hands." Why would God be so into hands? That's what Nathan Pinocchio said, like, "What is with God and yadah? Why does He like hands?"

But I think that it's almost this physical sign of surrender. It's this physical sign of like, "I give you my life. I give you my problems. I give you..." So there's power in our body actually taking a posture of worship and worshiping. It says, "Sing unto the Lord." Don't just keep it inside.

So I think that listening is super powerful. But then to go even further, it's like, "Oh, God, I glorify Your name. I magnify You. I lift my hands. I do all the things." That's another layer of the whole package.

Annie: So when I taught at church in December, when I taught at CrossPoint, I was teaching about not worrying about your future. And afterwards, Jenn, after I was done teaching, I said, "Okay, we're going to sing *God, I Look to You*." And I said, "It does not matter what you feel, we are going to sing what is true and your feelings will catch up." And that song that yeah, it's yours, isn't it? Didn't you write it? Am I making that up?

Jenn: It is mine. Yeah, it's mine.

Annie: It's incredible.

Jenn: Thank you.

Annie: I mean, we have accidentally sung it every week of this series. It is really interesting. But I mean, that's the kind of song that when your feelings aren't there, your words and your worship can be there.

Jenn: Yes. And you know what's funny about that song, is when I wrote it, it used to just be this little song that I sing in the car to the Lord. Very honest, vulnerable song. And I would say, "*God, I look to you* because I am overwhelmed." And that was my song, right?

And the Lord spoke to me in the car almost audibly—I could tell you where I was in the freeway—and He said, "If you keep singing that you're going to stay that way." And I went, "What? No, thanks." He said, "Flip the lyric." "*God, I look to you*, I won't be overwhelmed."

And it changed my life, honestly. It changed the lyric but more importantly changed my life of a declaration of, "Yes, this is how I feel but more importantly, this is who and what you've called me to be. It's not overwhelmed because I'm never alone. And you will lead me and you do guide me by your Spirit and your word." So I flipped it.

And so then, later down when I wrote it, it was actually just a spontaneous moment. I was sitting at the piano before worship on another day totally disconnected. And I was just having a moment. You know, you go into church or speak or do anything and you're just trying to get yourself together, you're like, "I am not in a mood right now. Okay?"

I was not in a mood to lead worship. I was grouchy and angry and kids were tired and snot on my shoulder, baby poop. Who knows? And I just sat down at the piano before we started worship and I just started worshipping and I just sang, "I will love you Lord my strength." And that little chorus just kind of came out. And then we led that little chorus in church and it was just this beautiful moment we were like, "Wow, there's something on this."

And then later down when we were actually writing, we put those two together. I think it was Brian probably, he's so genius, who said, "Well what if you put the 'God, I look to you' verse with 'I love you Lord, my strength,'" and then magic. I think it's Brian.

Annie: It is. It is magic.

Jenn: so the magic is all Brian.

Annie: Okay, that makes me want to say in your book, *All Things Lovely*, you tell the story of you and Brian meeting and y'all falling in love. Will you tell that to us? Because when I read that I could have fallen out... I mean, almost texted you in the moment, like, "I'm going to make you tell this whole thing on the podcast." It's so interesting, Jenn. Will you tell it to us?

Jenn: Yes. So I fell in love with Brian when I was about 12 at a summer camp. And his family-

Annie: Camp crushes. Listen, camp crushes.

Jenn: Powerful, powerful.

Jenn: I was a summer camp junkie, this girl. I mean, literally one year I went to kids camp as a counselor, Junior high camp as a counselor, attended high school camp, went to family camp, and even snuck into my grandparents' senior camp because I was a junkie.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, I love it.

Jenn: So camp junkie over here. But I love just the wildness that camp was. You know, just the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit touched me for the first time that I can remember at a summer camp as well. But I fell in with Brian when I was 12 at summer camp. And you know, I just thought it was a cute crush. He's playing

football with his shirt off with his brother out in the field, and I was like, "Lord, I'll take that one."

His sister is four years younger and became a friend of mine because we were camp buddies together. But they moved to Redding from a different part of Northern California to take over Bethel. And then when I was 17, my family moved to Bethel to go to school ministry, and my parents and I both went to school of ministry, and we reconnected. But I was no longer 12. I was 17. So he realized I existed, which was very nice.

And so it became more of a crush too, like, Wow, this is a possibility. And so we spent the summer kind of hanging out in group scenarios. And at the end of the summer, it got real obvious that I couldn't think about much other than him.

And he was also a very cute worship leader. So he would be leading worship, and I would be trying to focus on Jesus and I couldn't. So I went into our prayer house on the campus, and I just said, "Okay, Lord, I'm either marrying him or I need you to take these feelings away." And didn't hear anything back. I think God was probably like, "Oh, this girl." He does that a lot with me. Total dad.

So I walked out of the prayer house to our main campus and Brian was walking out the door, and I was like, "Hello." And so kept my cool. And he said, "Hey, can I talk to you at my office for a minute." And I was like, "You can talk to me for the rest of your life." I didn't say that. But that was what my heart was saying.

Annie: Yeah!

Jenn: So we went to his office and he kind of basically poured his heart out. And he kind of said, "Hey, this is crazy but I just think that you are somebody that is incredible and..." The words just were like... who knows what he said. But basically, "There's potential here and I think you're amazing. And do you want to be together?" And I was like, "Yes, but I need to go pray about it and hear Jesus say yes, because I do want it but I need his yes." And so that's kind of where we left it.

And I went home and prayed. And for a couple of hours just worshipping, praying. Vineyard CD was on.

Annie: Oh, let's go.

Jenn: One of my favorites of all time, Vineyard. And Jesus spoke to me and said, "Ya, Y-A." I'll never forget it. It just hit me deep. And I had a vision of my whole life playing out. And I just saw the faithfulness of God in every dream beyond my wildest dreams coming true. And I just laid on my bed and just tears streamed down my life, because I saw the faithfulness of God unfolding in my life. And 22 years this April, I am living that vision that I saw when I was 17.

Annie: No way!

Jenn: Beyond my wildest dreams, beyond my wildest dreams is my life.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: Yeah, 22 years this April. And he is the man of my dreams. And I adore him with my whole heart.

Annie: And then y'all got engaged like 10 days after that conversation, right?

Jenn: Yeah. So that's the part that really gives people a choke. That was day one of dating, and then we just freaking knew. We just knew. And it was really supernatural because our parents both prayed about it and they all four were like, "Yes, this is the Lord." In those 10 days as a 17-year-old, it was crazy the peace level, especially for my poor, sweet mom, who I never saw that one coming. I'm like, "This has to be Jesus that she's peaceful about this."

Yeah, 10 days later, he asked my parents in the middle of it and got a ring. And in the middle of worship, we're getting ready to lead worship, I'm on the keyboard and Brian's like on the guitar and he's like, "Just start to start yourself up for the Lord before we start." And I'm like, "Yes, God, we just..." And then he goes, one more thing before we start worship, and he pulls the ring out, he goes, "Jenn, will you marry me?" in front of like thousands of people as we start worship.

And I'm like, "Oh, yes. Yes, I will." And I come over and he puts the ring on and we kiss and then we go right into worship. And that's just been our life.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: Good way to start a marriage, I think.

Annie: Right. I think so. I mean, there has to have been... Now, you know I'm not married yet. But all my friends who are married-

Jenn: Yet!

Annie: Yet. I always say "yet." I just wonder about the hard days. Was it that Y-A from Jesus that makes the hard days manageable? It's one of those of like, "I'm obedient at this point. On this day, what I have is my vows and my obedience."

Jenn: Yes, yes. For us, we have had an amazing marriage. We have five kids. Three bio, two adopted. And yeah, I mean, marriage has been amazing. We've been able to do so many incredible things with Bethel Music and... long list. Like our house and our family. I mean, we're just really...

But we've been through the fire. I mean, especially relationally to do what we've been able to do, you know, for one, for big starter like when we... So we get married and I'm 18. Just had turned 18 in a week. And then within those first few months of marriage, Brian's dad who's the head of Bethel turns over worship to us as an 18-year-old. And it was an existing team led by Brian's aunt and a lot of his family. So it was like, we were thrown into the deep end of leadership in like a takeover that involved family. So that was super fun.

Annie: Everybody was really cool with it. It was really low stressful.

Jenn: Oh, yeah. Yeah, for sure. That was, again, just changing something to kind of figure out your own vision and working with people and loving them and pastoring. It's been a lot of free model.

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, [Redeeming Love the Movie](#). If you're like me and can't get enough of being swept away in a beautiful love story, look no further than the *Redeeming Love Movie* that releases all over the country on January 21st.

This movie is based on the international bestselling novel by Francine Rivers, who I have been on good authority will be gracing this pod with her presence on Thursday. *Redeeming Love the Movie* is set during one of my favorite eras of history—you know this—the California Gold Rush of 1850.

It tells a story of Angel. She's stunning, she's sought after, she's got a storied past, and she's on the verge of giving up her hopes for freedom. Enter Michael Hosea.

And then the dance of love and shame and communication and grappling with the past, though shame causes Angel to want to run away, Michael won't give up on finding her. And as a result, Angel discovers there's no brokenness that love can't heal.

This movie stars Abigail Cohen, Tom Lewis, Nina Dobrev, Eric Dane, yes, and Famke Janssen. *Redeeming Love* is rated PG 13. So think about that when you're making your plans. And it premieres January 21 in theaters nationwide. Get your friends or your book club together, make a date with someone special to go see *Redeeming Love*. For more information or to find tickets to a theater near you, visit redeeminglovemovie.com. Again, that's redeeminglovemovie.com.

Sponsor: And I have another amazing partner to tell you about, [Modern Fertility](http://ModernFertility.com). What if I told you you could get important fertility insight without going to the doctor really, without even walking out your front door? Well, I suppose you do have to walk to the mailbox. But you definitely don't have to wear hard pants, you do not have to wear hard pants for this process.

It's the exact needs the makers of Modern Fertility wanted to meet when they created this test kit. It's an easy and affordable way to test your fertility hormones at home with a simple finger prick. Mail it with a prepaid label and you'll get your personalized results within 10 days.

You'll get insights into your hormone levels, your ovarian reserve, aka how many eggs you have compared to other women your age, and other important fertility factors. The results go deep into what every hormone means. And you can also talk one on one with a fertility nurse to review your results and options for next steps. I was fascinated by the process and my conversation with the nurse who read my results with me.

Traditional testing with your doctor can cost over \$1,000. But Modern Fertility will provide you with the same info for only \$159, a literal fraction of the price. And if you go to modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun, you can get \$20 off your test. If you have an HSA or an FSA, you can put those dollars towards Modern Fertility.

If you want kids today or maybe one day in the future, clinically sound information about your body can help you make the decision that's right for you. Right now Modern Fertility is offering our listener friends \$20 off the test when you go to modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun. That means your test will cost only \$139 instead of hundreds or thousands it could cost at a doctor's office.

So get \$20 off your fertility tests when you go to modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun. Again, that's modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun.

And now back to our conversation with Jenn.

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Jenn: So the book is full of remodeling because it's been my whole life in one aspect or another since we've been married. And even back to my childhood, like my parents were always renovating on the physical parts, fixing up, or doing all these things. So the theme of renovation has been my whole life. But so we were given the worship team and then had to renovate that.

And then as we've been building and change and all this stuff, to grow what we've grown and all the things, it's come with a price. So there are a lot of hard days. There's a lot of hard conversations. I would just say that, like in any marriage there is, that's not unusual. But counseling and wise people in our life that we have run to no matter what wall we have hit has saved and changed our lives and our marriage because that's one thing we've committed to is help.

And we got premarital counseling, and that was great. But we've got counseling since then. Like Brian had his counseling meeting today and we both had our marriage counselor last week. So being committed to counseling and getting help, whether it's our parents, or our pastor, or a counselor or inner healing, that's been massive. That's how we've gotten through it all. And our marriage is stronger now than it ever has been because of that.

Annie: Let's talk a little bit about the book, *All Things Lovely* because all throughout it you're writing about this. I mean, one of the things I love about you is you just tell the truth. I mean, throughout the whole book, you're like, "Not only am I going to tell you what's in my pantry, I'm going to tell you about how important counseling is in our lives."

Jenn: Yeah, yeah, 100%. Because you can't separate it. I think a lot of people are like, "Oh, this is my spiritual life and that's what matters is me reading my Bible and praying and being a good person." It's just not the whole, it's the part. But it really is spiritually, emotionally, and physically that we are a person and that we are a Christian.

So we can't like have gluttony be leading our life and then work everything out spiritually, or emotionally. I love the Bible says "run a good race." And to run a good race, you have to physically prepare, you have to eat conscious. And I think taking care of ourselves spiritually, emotionally, and physically is really the goal in God's heart for us.

Annie: Talk a little bit about your house. Because as you're building this, I think it's really interesting because one of the things I want to do to start our year is let's talk about building our physical homes like where we live, let's talk about building our body, let's talk about building our spiritual life. Talk a little bit about how working on y'all's house as you are writing this.

Jenn: Yeah. We bought this piece of property with a crappy little shack on it like nine years ago, and we moved from this nice neighborhood we were renting a house in. And we only were renting because we really needed a break because we have reno'd every house we bought.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Jenn: I think it's like the first house that we bought since we were married. Like we bought our first house when we were eight months into being married and it was a fixer-upper. So we've just lived fixer-uppers most of our marriage. We've lived in two new homes. One we bought, one we rented. But other than that, we've just been for 22 years of renovation.

Annie: Oh, my gosh.

Jenn: We had a few years off in between. But this house that we're in right now is so beautiful, but it has come with blood, sweat, and tears because the property was so... It was like an overgrown forest, blackberry bushes everywhere growing up with a little house, floorboards. It looked haunted. And I don't believe in that. But that's what it looked in the natural. My best friend was like, "Oh, God, what have you done with your life?"

But we had so much vision of we really wanted land and we wanted to build a place that people could come to, to get away from it all, and to retreat and to eat together and be together and pray and worship. And we thought it would be mainly for our worship team. But God has just expanded our vision of gatherings.

As the years have gone by we've had the most incredible gatherings for years and years and years, people from all over the world, so many diverse groups with one common goal, which is Jesus. And so it's just become this thing beyond our wildest dreams yet again, as we do peace and God will expand our vision. We're done officially and it's really dreamy. But my God was it a lot!

Annie: I mean, it's just-

Jenn: Speaking of counseling.

Annie: Right. I'm just amazed because you have very kindly invited me out there and I had no idea that that wasn't the house that was already there. Y'all built the whole house?

Jenn: Oh, if you look in the book, there is a page that shows what the—let me see if I can find it—what the house looked like before. Here it is. This is what the house looked like before.

Annie: Oh, my gosh! Will you say the page number so that people that have the book can just go look at it, too?

Jenn: Yeah, it's page six and seven. And it was this little blue shack with like wood paneling and nasty, nasty carpet and things growing up. It was built in like the 40s or 50s, I think.

Annie: Oh, my gosh.

Jenn: And it had been like dormant and it had just been sitting there for years until we got it. But it really was such an incredible... I write all about it in the book. But it was such an amazing journey of God working in our hearts as we bought the property. Like it was so parallel and obvious how God was key to us, it became stupid, like hilarious. Like, "Oh, yeah, we're going to tear down this wall. Oh, yeah, right. Then we're going to tear down that wall and we'll redo it. Cool. Cool. Cool."

So it was kind of like, "Oh, what's going to happen next? And that's going to be prophetic for what God's going to do in our life." I mean, it's just been silly. It was crappy undertaking though. I think we started in like 1,800 square feet or 2,000 maybe. I don't think it was even 2,000. And now it's like 8000, something. I don't know.

Annie: I mean, it's incredible. Tell me why y'all went for dark instead of light on the inside. Because there's so many windows?

Jenn: Yeah. So we kept expanding. And for our great room, which was the last thing we did, we took the house, cleaned it up, so we could live in it and not get disease. We had three little kids at the time. And then we kind of expanded one side and then kind of moved, expanded to that, expanded another side, expand to the front. And then we had to move out for a year for them to blow out the back to have the great room expand.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Jenn: So yeah, it was honestly crazy. But God just kept going. And then "What if we...? What if we...?" So it became this. But it's been such a gift, because again, now we can host things and people can feel so comfortable and relaxed with their hair down and just have a safe space where they can, you know, just get healing and find community.

And even with our work team, you know, they come over every month, our whole team goes over just to worship and pray together and be community, I think, that's huge. So it's been fun. Now, we've got Airbnbs, we've got like... It's very nice to reno something and not live in it. So it's been fun.

Annie: When it was happening, were you thinking, "I need to write a book about this." Like, did you already have *All Things Lovely* in your mind?

Jenn: No. I've wanted to write a book for years, honestly, but never felt the green light from God to do it. And didn't know exactly where I would start writing. I have so many things I'm passionate about that I didn't really know what I wanted to tackle first. I mean, worship kind of seemed like a no-brainer but didn't really feel like I had a one lane. But I felt like God gave me to greenlight. Actually, right before COVID, I signed my book deal.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Jenn: And I had no idea how I was going to write a book because our life is a freaking zoo. So with all the children and the house reno and the label and then we're artists, worship leaders, and we're on staff at our church, that's just what I can think of right now.

Annie: You tour? Are you a touring artist?

Jenn: Yes, I have a few things going on. But I had no idea how I was going to do it but I just knew God gave me the green light. So I was like, "All right, well, I'll sign the deal. And then hopefully they'll be, give or take, 10 years that I can write."

And then the world shut down. So I was like, "Okay, I see you God. Okay." And I can be home and cozy and snuggle my needed up to baby and write this book out because travels get... You know, so God's pretty sneaky when he tells us to do things. So yeah, it was just amazing.

And my best friend is the photographer. So that's very helpful. And so during COVID, she just kind of came over and moved in, in a big way and we just shot the whole book. I think her photographs are probably 90% of the photos in there are hers.

We're already in a second edition mode because with printing and delays in China and all the things, there's a few fast ones they pulled on us with some photos that are... So we're in second edition mode to make it even better than it already is which I'm excited about.

But we had so much fun shooting it. It was so much work. To get food to look right it's such another world. Like she's a professional photographer but we were both on the craziest learning curve of all time because what we found out is that people who shoot food freaking cheat.

Annie: Like everything. I know.

Jenn: Everything. So all these are natural. Everything in that book that you see we ate. There is nothing that was like cropped up with hairspray or like any cheating things.

Annie: Well done.

Jenn: So that's a feat in itself because we started watching commercials or different things on how the food... and people... like there's toothpicks in pancake pictures and like just... anyway. So that's all.

Annie: I need you to know that your truffle popcorn recipe is a life changer.

Jenn: It's so good. It's so good.

Annie: It's so good. It's unbelievable.

Jenn: Truffle salt is my best friend. I love them.

Annie: Yeah, it's very. I need to make that line of merch. Along with your lovely sweat suits, I need to do "truffle salt is my best friend."

Jenn: You know what else I have? My other t-shirt line is God is a foodie because He's always at banqueting tables. Jesus was in homes eating with people. He's multiplying food, wine. Jesus is a foodie. I'm sure.

Annie: I'm 100% with you. I'm 100% with you. When you are thinking about 2022, when our friends are grabbing this book, I'm thinking like, man, we're in a couple of weeks where we're like, "What is my year going to be like? What does God have for me this year?" Talk to me about why hospitality matters. Why does how we take care of our bodies matter? Why does our spiritual growth matter? Like what do you see coming in '22?

Jenn: I think this book is really timely even talking to my friends about when it came out, even in the year and the month because I have wanted to write it for a long time, but you know, when I started focusing on what I wanted this book to have, it really started to shake down to four main pillars. And that's heart, hospitality, home, and health. Those are the four big ones in my book.

So I think it's a really prophetically time book in this hour of the fact that, hey, past couple years, God has reduced us as humanity, right, like to simple things and what matters. And been beautiful time of simplifying to think as a good sauce, that a reduction gets boiled down and simmer down to the good stuff.

And I feel that if you really let the Lord have his way, then that's the process that He has for all of us in this wild time we live in. It's a fine production. But these four things: heart, health, hospitality, and home, all are... like I got in the how if your house or your life is in chaos, your car's a mess, your house isn't organized, that chaos also happens internally as well. So chaos reflects chaos and magnifies it.

And so we have to pay attention to our life in a holistic viewpoint. Which the word 'holistic' kind of has a negative connotation to some people. But if you really just

look up the definition, it means that it's not just one part or the other, it's the whole thing, right?

So physically, it really matters that we eat healthy and take vitamins and exercise and drink water because our health depends on it. And we can't pray for cancer to go away and then smoke a six pack day. It doesn't make sense.

Annie: It's not congruent.

Jenn: It's not congruent. So we really have to live our lives congruent and really take a full view of what's going on in our life, whether it's emotional pain, you know, there's no coincidence. If you watch Disney movies, every witch or bad person in the movie, it's bitterness, or jealousy, or resentment. And it actually can towards their physical body. Now, we're not using Disney as any form of theology in any way for everything that-

Annie: The Lord can use anything. The Lord can use anything.

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [Art of Tea](#). Okay, y'all know this about me, but I love a good cup of tea. The warmth of it and the ritual of it, how it fits in my morning routine, even the way the waiting for it to steep forces me to slow down. I mean, I don't love that, but you know, it's good for me.

Well, whether you love tea like me or you're trying it for the first time, the absolute best teas from around the world are at [artoftea.com](#). Taking care of ourselves is important and drinking tea is a great way to improve your health. Tea is well known to reduce free radicals in your body and I think a warm cup of green pomegranate tea just puts you in a good mood. I know it does for me.

So let me encourage you to take a step to better health, physical health, and mental health right by checking out the amazing assortment of teas at [artoftea.com](#). And if you're new to tea and aren't sure what you like, you can take their tea quiz. Y'all know how I love a quiz. Take their tea quiz for a personalized recommendation. How fun is that?

Upgrade your tea collection this year by going to [artoftea.com](#) and you'll get 20% off your order. Use my promo code THAT SOUNDS FUN. That's [artoftea.com](#) and the promo code THAT SOUNDS FUN to get 20% off. Prepare to fall in love, my friends.

Sponsor: And I got one last amazing partner to tell you about, [Chime](#). I've got a great idea. Why don't we kick off 2022 with a better checking account? Listen, one with no monthly fees, Chime is an award winning app and debit card and they have no overdraft fees, foreign transaction fees, monthly fees or service fees.

With over 60,000 fee-free in-network ATMs at many locations like most Walgreens or CVS or 711, well, you can also get a delicious coke iced. You know it. You can access your money when you need it and where you need it. You can also send money to anyone even if they aren't on Chime fee-free for you and no cash-out fees for them.

So make some good decisions in 2022 and join over 10 million people using Chime. Sign up takes only two minutes and doesn't affect your credit score. So get started at chime.com/thatsoundsfun. That's chime.com/thatsoundsfun. Banking services are provided by a debit card issued by the Bancorp Bank or Stride Bank, N.A Members FDIC.

Eligibility requirements and overdraft limits apply. Overdraft only applies to debit card purchases and cash withdrawals. Limits start at \$20 and may be increased up to \$200 by Chime. See chime.com/spotme.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Jenn.

[00:39:54] <music>

Annie: I said to some friends the other day, Jenn, I was saying to my mentor, actually, I said about a story where I'm kind of living a little bit more wildly in faith than I feel comfortable with. And I said to my mentor, I said, "My biggest concern is my reputation with myself. My own reputation, not even what other people are going to see happen. But what, I want to not lose my own reputation with being able to hear the Lord for myself." And she said, "No, we're leaving it all on the field, and we're going to let God handle it."

She was like, "All you're doing is obeying the best you know how. Your reputation is intact, even with yourself." And I thought, Man, that's what we need, people who jump out in faith. We need people to say, "You're actually doing the right thing. You won't drown on this. God will catch you for trying."

Jenn: Exactly. 100%. I mean, you have to look at all the pillars of Bible. Noah, I mean, can you imagine character and the reputation that was on the line with that man? They thought he was mad? Not just like, "Oh, you're doing something interesting. I wonder..." Like flat out "You are flipping crazy."

So that's the kind of faith that pleases God. It's the stuff that goes, "Man, if you said it I believe it" as a great Maverick City song says. He either said it and we're going to believe Him or He didn't, and so we've just got to go for it. Right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jenn: But I think for me, it really comes back to that scene in *Narnia* as a little girl watching Lucy follow Aslan when nobody believed, but she knew it. And she knew his voice. Like we have to know His voice, right? We have to know His word and we have to know who He is. But we have to know the Spirit of God as a friend, as a Father. That's who leads us and guides us and helps us get through life, helps us hove it. Like did you get vaxxed or not? "Whoa, did she say it?" Oh, my gosh, yes, I did. But guess what? This is between you and the Holy Spirit. Period.

And there's so much that we're looking for answers for leaders or for people or presidents or governments to tell us what should we do. Oh, no, sorry. Newsflash. That's the Holy Spirit in our life. So by His word and by His Spirit He's leading us. And we can't just go, "Well, it's in the Bible and that's all we're going to read." No, no, Jesus wants to speak to you today about what's going on in your life. Today.

Annie: How do you hear Him, Jenn? Help us. If one of our friends listening is new to hearing God, what are some practices to hear Him in your own life like that?

Jenn: Okay, so, first of all, the number one practice is reading the Word of God, getting word of God in your heart and praying when you read and saying, "God, give me a heart to understand this. Let my mind and my spirit understand this." Even if we're like, "Well, why would I read, begot, begot, begot? It's in there. It's important. It's in there. Read it and ask Him to reveal to you.

So ask him to speak to you in His Word. Even the parts that don't make sense or don't feel relevant, it is relevant cover to cover. Genesis to Revelation, it is relevant every letter. So ask Him to speak to you His Word.

And then ask Him to speak to you by Spirit. "God speaks to me. What should I read today? Oh, I'm at Target and I just feel like I can say to that lady behind the counter

that she looks beautiful today." All right. "Hey, you look beautiful today. The end." It's that simple.

It doesn't have to be this crazy thing like following His voice. He's going to lead you in what's good. And He's going to lead you to do things that are in alignment with His word, and to encourage people and to strengthen them and edify them. So practice when you get a thought in your head, say, "God, give me the mind of Christ. Give me your mind. Give me your thought. Help me to see people and things how you do."

And then from that, pay attention to what you're passionate about. Pay attention to what you're feeling and what you're thinking. "Hey, there's that person that you could choose. Okay. Just be aware of what God is speaking to you in and through. It could be a color, could be a situation.

And then risk. You know, risk doing what he tells you. Accountability is always great. If you have a word for somebody, I highly suggest not coming guns blazing with like, "That saith the LORD."

Annie: Right.

Jenn: Pretty risky. I don't recommend it. But saying something to someone like, "Hey, I'm practicing hearing the voice of God and I just felt this." You know, whatever it is. "And I just want to submit that to you. It feels right, great. It's not flashy."

But if a human on the planet walked up to you and said, "Hey, I'm practicing hearing the voice of God and I think your shoes are cool," or I think that you might want to call your mom back." That's even a humble way. Like who wouldn't hear that, right?

Annie: Yes. You're going to love this. I picked up a word someone has given me. They wrote on a piece of paper this morning in my time with the Lord. I won't tell you the whole story here but it is wild how the Lord just took me on like a wild goose chase this morning to this piece of paper. So the word is so spot-on for today. Someone gave it to me in April and it didn't make sense. I said to my mentor this morning, "This was my daily bread. Like the Lord sustained me today."

But in the word, the girl had said, "Here's what I see." And then I Googled it and this is what it means. And I was like, "No, when you're giving somebody a word, don't Google. Just hand it to them."

Jenn: It can get weird fast. It can get weird fast.

Annie: That's right.

Jenn: True story.

Annie: But we just have no idea when we're hearing God and getting the chance to say, "Hey, I'm sensing something or I'm seeing a picture, or I keep hearing this one word if it is not that thing that's going to set someone free or heal them in the instant. I have been wrong before. I have been and never gotten feedback in the moment. But this girl gave me that word in April, and it came to pass right now.

Jenn: Yes, exactly. That's what I think is amazing about the Lord. We see that throughout the Bible, right? There's a lot of prophetic words, if you will, throughout the Bible that are four different times and different ages. And God can speak to you any way He wants, right? The most crazy thing that happened to me years ago, I was reading The Message Bible. I'm in love. I grew up with King James-

Annie: You did? You grew up with King James?

Jenn: And NIV. Those were our translations.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: So that's who I was built on as a little girl. And I love the NIV. I know it more than any other translation, for sure. But then as I got older, I started reading The Message, which I think is a really creative, poetic, beautiful way... To me, it's not necessarily a translation. I just love how it puts things beautifully.

I've also read The Passion, which I really love very much as well. My favorite thing is Bible Hub. If you type a verse in, it shows you like all the different ways that the verse is. NASB. I like NASB a lot. Anyway, I just love the way that different translations say things.

But I love that throughout the Bible you see prophetic words that you can grasp. And maybe they are for today or for the future. But one of the times has reading The Message Bible and Brian and I really needed a getaway. And a friend of ours is like, "I feel like you need to go to Hawaii." And I was like, "Well, I feel the Lord on that."

- Annie:** I will always receive that word if anyone wants to give me that word.
- Jenn:** Yes. Clearly, I have good friends. But when he said it, I was like, I could feel it deep in my spirit like we need to go to Hawaii. We had just done an album and gone, you know... And so I was in bed and Brian was brushing his teeth, and I kind of like plop the Bible open randomly. I'm like, "God, just speak to me. Should we go to Hawaii?" Like it makes so much sense but it doesn't financially. So I popped up and I looked down in The Message Bible and it said, "God is your island getaway."
- Annie:** Oh. No!
- Jenn:** Yeah. Yes. And I shall... "Baby, we're going to Hawaii."
- Annie:** Totally.
- Jenn:** And we did and it was incredible. It ended up being amazing. The album did really well, way more than we paid for a trip. Let's just say that. But all that to say God is speaking to us about everything in our life in His voice and His word and via people.
- I've had people share words with me that they've felt from God. My favorite is this though. Are you ready for it? My most incredible prophetic word I've ever gotten from anyone on the planet was from a third grader.
- Annie:** No.
- Jenn:** Twice. Okay. So my daughter's class, they go to Bethel Christian school, and they're really incredible. And I don't like Harry Potter at all, but if it were redemptive and beautiful, this school is kind of like Hogwarts for the supernatural. And I'm here for it. Okay, this is a side note. They're going to be Like, "Oh, God, this girl. She's going for it." Okay. Yeah, no surprise.
- Annie:** You're welcome to be here, Jenn. I wanted all of Jenn Johnson in this conversation. You are always welcome to be all the way you with me.
- Jenn:** I love it. Here we go. So I think the world is enamored... was with Harry Potter because they are so desperately hungry for the supernatural. And what breaks my

heart is that that is what they see versus it being the school the supernatural for children, which I have a dream that one day we would open.

But for now, Bethel Christian School is pretty amazing. They have math class, and then they're soaking in the presence of God worship, and they have you know how to prophesy class. It's unreal. And then math and English, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Jenn: So in the supernatural, they're being led in the Word of God to do great things because that's what Jesus called them. Kids don't have a junior Holy Spirit.

Annie: That's right.

Jenn: All that to say I'm in the third-grade class, and for Mother's Day, they bring the moms in one by one and pray and prophesy over them as their Mother's Day gift, which is incredible.

Annie: That is so sweet.

Jenn: So I go in and I'm like in it. I'm traveling and I'm trying to be a good working mom. I have a lot of mom guilt. I don't say anything to these kids but I had just come off a conference and I had to go on a trip that I hadn't planned and I was just feeling a lot of mom guilt. And I walk in and I sit down, don't tell them anything, like they're a little third grade hands on me and they're praying, they're like, you know, some key words like "You sing good. You're pretty." Just really sweet.

One little guy puts his hand on me and he goes, "I just see you're like a honeybee and you have to go pollinate or this world won't be beautiful."

Annie: Oh, my God, Jenn.

Jenn: "You have to go..." When he said, "You have to go," I started sobbing. I mean, sobbing. As I literally came off the stage at our church into the classroom and then had to go to the plane. "You have to go..." And then the other little kids are like, "You pollinate with love and joy of God." The rest of the words were honestly just a blur because the word of the Lord for my life in that moment could not have come more clear. And I just felt odd smiling and having like, Gosh, you could go.

So I'm a mess. I get on the plane. And it's amazing when God speaks to you sometimes you can forget 30 seconds later when emotions in reality, you know, kind of sneaks up. So I'm on the plane and it's a long flight. I think Australia or something. Kind of zoning out to me and he was praying on the plane, you know, and it just all waves hits me and I forget the third-grade moment. And I just started crying again. I'm just so sad to leave my kids.

And I look up on the screen, the Lord says, "Pay attention. Look what you're watching." And so I kind of zone in and kind of pay attention to what I had been zoning out to. I have been watching probably for an hour, I had been watching a show on bees and cross-pollination and how it changes the world.

Annie: Jenn! I love that stuff. I mean, did you start crying again?

Jenn: Sobbing. The stories had to come on me. I was crying so hard.

Annie: Oh, my gosh!

Jenn: I think that's the stuff to me. I mean, the other one was the next time my daughter was in a third-grade class—they're three years apart—I sat down and I literally walked into the session in my car telling the Lord this, "God, there's too much on my plate. What do I need to take off my plate? There's too much." That's what I had been telling Him. "God, speak to me. What needs to go? I'm feeling overwhelmed."

So I go in and sit down. Get this. Third-grader goes, "I just did a picture of a huge plate of fruit. The fruit is falling off the plate. There's so much fruit piled on. The fruit is piling off the plate. And I'm like, "Yes, tell me what do we take off? The grape?" So he was describing this little picture, and then he goes, "You think you need to take fruit off the plate?" He goes, "But God just made your plate bigger."

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Jenn: I told you. And waterworks, I'm sobbing because God is kind and He speaks to children and He speaks everywhere. If we just listen, He's speaking in everything and everywhere to lead us and guide us because He loves us. He's obsessed with us. He's never left us. And His voice is right there.

Annie: That's it. To me when I'm thinking about 2022 because this is our first conversation, this is my first time really thinking... Not you're my first conversation but our first conversation of the year for the podcast. This is my first time thinking about 2022

spiritually, really, just because I haven't really processed it yet. And I'm thinking, What if at the end of this year, I can hear him better? What if that's my only goal is I want that scripture in Isaiah, whether I turn to the right or the left, I'll hear a voice? In my ears, a voice will say, "This is the way, walk in it."

I think we always skip over that ears part and we just go, "Well, hear a voice." I'm like, "No, no, He says, you'll hear a voice in your ears that says this is the way, walk in it."

Jenn: Literally one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible is that.

Annie: I love it. In December, we had a Catholic priest on, Father Mike Schmitz, and he said, "Without the Bible I wouldn't be me." And I feel a version of that about hearing God's voice. Jenn, I don't know who I would be if my parents and my leaders as a student hadn't taught me how to hear God, if my pastors hadn't continued to teach me that, if this wasn't an active part of my spiritual discipline.

Jenn: Yes, 100%. And that's it, right? It's discipline. It takes practice. To do anything else in life, it takes practice. Like you have to practice. And in order to do anything well, you have to fail. There's a movie called *Meet the Robertsons*. The cartoon called *Meet the Robertsons*. It's an old one, but I'm an older mom now, I guess. I am about to turn... wait for it. I can't even say the words. I can't even. I am going to turn 40.

Annie: Yeah. I was about to say, "You're not even 40 yet. What are you talking about?"

Jenn: I'm excited. My life's only gotten better year after year. So I'm just hoping that that continues-

Annie: Listen, I'm 41, and it has been the best decade. What God has done in 40 and 41 makes me ready for 50. Because I'm like, "What You have done in two of these, I couldn't have dreamed of." So come on up. Come on up. Change that tens digit. Come on up.

Jenn: I am excited, and I'm going to party. It's going to be so fun.

Annie: You're going to love it.

Jenn: I'm so expectant for what God's doing. I think this book is such a timely book because I think it's really going to help people. There's a scripture that says, "Put

your house in order" that I talked about in the very beginning of the book. And I think it's so important for what God has for His people in 2022 and in future. We have to be ready for it. And that takes discipline, right?

And it's not a romantic word. It's not a lay on the floor, and no, just worship, and everything's going to be fine kind of a word. It takes discipline in our lives to go where God's called us to do. It takes discipline to hear His voice, it takes risk. And it's not downplaying worship. That is a massive part of it.

But it really does take intentionality. And I honestly almost called the book Intentional because that is the militant posture we have to take in our emotional life. One of the things that changed Brian and my life last year was we did a course called The Connection Code. They are a couple based out of Nashville. And if you haven't taken Connection Codes course, it's an Ecourse online, they also do one on ones, but it changed our marriage, our parenting, and our relationships with our kids, I mean, with our friends.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: Yes, single-handedly. I'm always like, Okay, what can we do to get healthy emotionally, physically, or spiritually? I'm constantly on a journey. And I think that it doesn't come from a place of perfection because perfection doesn't exist. The only one perfect is the Lord. We will leave that job to Him. But in wanting to live excellent before the Lord and all things, doing all things for the Lord, it does take a lot of intentionality.

And I think that God could have started the whole Bible with the garden growing supernaturally. But He didn't. He started humanity with intentionality needed and cultivating. It wasn't even like, "Oh, you're going to plant and you're going to reap, and that's going to be amazing." Nope! You got to pull weeds. If you want to grow anything, it takes intentionality.

So I think that God is very smart because He gave us a model right out of the gate of "hey, marriage, a man and a woman together, great idea. Also, the only way children can happen, great idea, family... and your children, and their children and all the children. The song of 2020.

Annie: That's right.

Jenn: So I think that He gave us such an amazing bang, Hey, here's how to thrive in life, get married, have kids, and cultivate and grow things in your life emotionally, physically, spiritually.

I think another massive core value that I read about in the book as well is community and is the love of church. Kari Jobe, who is a very close friend of mine and I were having a talk a few years back. And we were talking about all of the people in the worship or music industry, who most of them are close friends.

And we were just kind of talking about how there were people doing okay, good. Then there was a group of people that were thriving. Some of them are single, some of them were married, some of them had kids. There was a common thread in every single person that was thriving. They were planted in the local church.

Annie: Wow. Wow. Jenn!

Jenn: Hmm. I'll let you think about the math later.

Annie: The other thing is not all those churches are perfect. They weren't all planted in perfect churches. They were planted in churches that have problems, in churches that are struggling, but they were planted in a church.

Jenn: Exactly. And under leadership, which I think is one of the... I think one of the biggest... I don't like to give any credit to the enemy because he's an idiot. Usually, it's a lot of just humanity not so the enemy. It's people being dumb a lot. People being dumb, the enemy getting credit, I'm like, "You didn't do that. Ew." Or me.

But I think that one of the biggest secret assignments of the enemy is to get us to hate leadership and to devalue leadership. Because if he can devalue leadership in your life and you think you can run your own life, then he's helping you to remove you and be scary. Don't recommend it.

But the thing is, is that the church and leadership is God's idea. And so I love that the Bible says, "Love correction." Well, that's a tough pill to swallow. But if you're going to be corrected by someone, you have to give them a place in your life of leadership.

Annie: Wow.

Jenn: So I think that there's a lot of concepts in that that I could talk about all day long. But back to the thriving, it really is beautiful that the Word of God says those who are planted in the house of the Lord flourish. And really that's what it comes back to is people that are planted in a house.

And it's really easy to know if you should be at a church or not. You just ask Jesus, "Am I supposed to serve here?" And then if the leadership fails you, if the worship team is terrible, if you know, you put in whatever bothers you about church comes along, doesn't change anything because God called you there.

God called me to Bethel. I happen to love it. It's a zoo. I got a long list of discrepancies. 20 years, I could rattle off to you and tell you why I could be bitter. Sure could. And 100 more of why people could be bitter with me. But it doesn't matter because I love these humans and God called me here. So it's very clear where I should be. So the love of the church is a huge-

Annie: My lean toward on church is you're probably supposed to stay where you are unless the Lord is very loud about you moving on.

Jenn: And He'll let you know. Just ask Him. Just ask Him.

Annie: He'll tell you. I just think the day I get unhappy in a church situation is not the day that God's going to tell me to go somewhere. That's kind of not how the math goes. Right? There's something about sticking around. There's just something about sticking around unless obedience is leaving.

Jenn: Exactly. And here's a real topic is church hurt. Church hurt is real. There is some messed-up stuff that has happened in the disguise of the name of Jesus, and it's just messed up. And accountability is a huge thing, and obviously is a biblical step process to how we deal with things. So I would never condone abuse, I would never condone someone's staying in an abusive situation or relationship at all. However, I think the topic that we're talking about is offense.

Annie: Yes, that's good. That's good.

Jenn: If you want to talk about offense and offending people, well, we all do, and we all have and we all go forever because we're humans. But I think the intentionality of how do I work through offense with people is really important. Things that I think been pretty killer are having people, you know, not have the courage to talk to leaders about pain that they're experiencing.

If I could encourage people who want that, it would be, Hey, before you leave a church, before you X, Y, Z, talk to the person about what's going on inside of you. Tell them how you feel. Start there. And then if you don't get anywhere, bring in some elders, bring in some other leaders to have a conversation. But don't just leave because something's weird and you feel... you know? Like be intentional to stay where you're planted because the grass really isn't greener on the other side of fence. Almost never.

Annie: Yeah, almost never is greener on the other side. Where you work and where you put your hands, that's where it gets greener.

Jenn: That's it. Gardening.

Annie: Gardening. Oh, I mean, the beginning of the Bible, that intentionality. Okay, Jenn, I've taken up plenty of your time. You are so lovely. Will you please come back? Because I have like... For starters, why do you not have a podcast about all this? Why are you not doing an All things Love in a podcast?

Jenn: My team is in the works. I know.

Annie: Okay, we'll just keep talking about this because I'm like, this is a whole show. Each of these sections I want to listen to you talk about this for a very long time.

Jenn: That's encouraging. Thank you.

Annie: I just want to keep bugging you about this.

Jenn: Well, my team is also bugging me as well.

Annie: Please.

Jenn: And I've done actually more podcasts around this book than I've ever done before. So I definitely feel a grace. And I love it. I've done some wild ones. It's been so fun.

Annie: Yeah, it's really fun.

Jenn: It's fun to talk to friends as well, too. It makes it easy.

Annie: Jenn, the last question we always ask because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what you do for fun. What sounds fun to you?

Jenn: Eating. Eating.

Annie: I know. Listen, you fed us so good when I was at your house. I just was in heaven the whole time.

Jenn: Oh, my favorite thing to do is eat delicious things with people I love. We live about three hours from Napa because Jesus loves me and I'm a foodie. Redding has like one kind of okay restaurant. So it's really sacrificial for Jesus to call me to Redding.

Annie: Yes. Oh, my gosh.

Jenn: I'm probably going to have to open my own restaurant one day.

Annie: I'm kind of surprised there hasn't been like a Bethel five-star restaurant, that God hadn't called a restaurant tour into Redding yet.

Jenn: Yes, exactly. I've been praying it in but I just might be the answer to my own prayer.

Annie: Oh, what if you are the answer to the prayer?

Jenn: You never know.

Annie: I mean, those pizzas that Brian make-

Jenn: So good.

Annie: So good. Will you please tell everyone about the cinnamon pizza?

Jenn: Yeah. We are obsessed with the Ooni Pizza Grill. So we love to make these. There's an Italian dough that we get here in bulk. It actually looks really big. I love really nice bougie things but I also love a great deal for a great product. That's all in the book as well.

But we make these pizzas and they're so good. San Marzano tomatoes, all the toppings like ham, bacon, candied jalapenos from Trader Joe's. So we have extra pizza dough. And so my husband, who is a total dessert lover, he puts cinnamon

and sugar and butter on the pizza crust just to try it because he'll put cinnamon, sugar, butter on anything and eat it. But it was so magical that we were freaking out. So now every time we make pizza we make cinnamon sugar pizza in the night. And as you know, it is life-changing.

Annie: I didn't know, and now I know. I mean, I did not know before that. And I was like, what? You were walking around and you were saying to us, "You don't have a choice. You have to eat this."

Jenn: I hope we had said it a little nicer, but it's true.

Annie: No, it was nice because you knew the truth. We can't hold back when we know the truth.

Jenn: We can't. We can't take that from people.

Annie: That's right.

Jenn: I'm like, "You have to. If you don't want to, you don't have to, but you also have to."

Annie: Yeah, that's it. That's it.

Jenn: We do all these secret retreats in our house, which is like the funnest thing. And so I would say other than food, what's fun for me is throwing retreats and just loving on people and watching iron sharpens iron and watching the kingdom of God unify the global church.

I love the church. And I love all the expressions of the church. I love that you just had somebody who is Catholic on. I love the Church at large. I don't think Bethel has anywhere close to the corner on the market. We are part of the body of Christ, probably the armpit. Nowhere near the head.

So I love the body. I love what God's doing in the churches. One of my favorite verses for 2020 was God speaking to me, "Come up here..." It's Revelation 4. "Come up here and I will show you or I will instruct you what to do next." And I think that that's the call of God for all of us personally is like Jesus is going, "Come up here. Get up on my lap and let me show you how I see this, what I'm saying." And I love that it's in Revelation. Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Annie: The church.

Jenn: I love that God hides Himself in the Church, the capital C at large so that we find Him in each other. He hides Himself in humans so that we can find Him like an Easter egg hunt. He doesn't hide Himself too, because He's punishing us or make us chase Him. He hides Himself because it's fun to find Him. And you're like, "Oh my gosh, look at you in that person. Look at you in this color. Look at you."

God is so kind and wonderful. It's why the world's enamored with Santa Claus, right? Because it's like this wonderful Father who gives gifts. And you're like, "It's what He says. That's God."

Annie: We have one of those. We have a real one of those. Yeah, that's right. That's exactly right.

Jenn: We see these glimpses of who God is in the world and human. So anyway, come up here. That's our journey and that's our invitation in life. So yeah. But food, people, Jesus, and-

Annie: You do it really well, Jenn. We have been friends for a while, but not forever, but long enough that I felt so deeply loved by you and Brian in how you have been hospitable with your places, but also just with your friendship. I mean, I've felt invited in from the beginning. And that is a real gift.

Jenn: We implore you.

Annie: I am thankful.

Jenn: We're thankful for you.

Annie: I can't wait for our friends to read *All Things Lovely*. Even in this conversation, I'm going, Man, I want to sit down this week and read through the whole thing and then make some real intentional decisions for my year. So it feels like it can be a bit of a guidebook for me in 2022. I'm excited about that.

Jenn: Yes. Well, I love you. Thanks for having me. I'll come back anytime and hang out.

Annie: Oh, we will have you back. Don't you worry about it.

[01:09:21] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? Okay, her book, *All Things Lovely*, is so good. You're going to absolutely love it. The four sections, I mean, really I'm using it and I think you can join me in. I'd love for you to join me in using it to like shape your year a little bit. I've flipped through it a lot.

So *All Things Lovely* by Jen Johnson, make sure you get a copy. And make sure you follow Jenn, tell her thanks so much for being on the show, how much you enjoyed it, and what stood out to you and mattered most to you.

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 to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is being outside in the not snow in the Knox snow. In the Knox snow. Nashville has been having some snow. I would like to be outside in the Knox snow. So that's what sounds fun to me.

Y'all have a great week. And remember we will see you back here on Thursday. We're back to our old, tried, and true Monday, Thursday rhythm with the lovely Francine Rivers. Y'all have a great week. We'll see you Thursday.