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Outro: 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 for you, a great month in store for you as we are spending the month of April talking about prayer. A lot of different voices, a lot of different points of view. It is going to be beautiful.

And just as a quick reminder, next week on Holy Week, between Palm Sunday and Easter, we will not be releasing any shows or recording any shows because we just kind of turned our focus to that week. But this week we've got some great shows.

So usually at the end of the episode, I tell you what sounds fun to me, but I can't wait today. I've got to tell you now. What sounds fun to me is hanging out with my friend and your friend, Shauna Niequist for a That Sounds Fun Live Pop-Up Show. Surprise! It's happening on April 28th at the Franklin Theatre in Franklin, Tennessee. You can get all the details and grab your tickets at Anniefdowns.com. It's really limited seating. It's a really fun surprise event and we hope you'll be able to join us on April 28th.

Before we dive into today's episode, I want to take a moment and share about one of our incredible partners, [Epic Will](http://EpicWill.com). When you're young-ish and relatively healthy, the idea of needing an estate plan is one that seems to stay on the to-do someday list. But having a plan in place for things like your financial power of attorney and advanced directive is really a way to invest in your legacy and be intentional about the story of your life.

Epic Will is the easiest and most affordable way I know of to create an estate plan. The expert team at Epic Will has developed an efficient and user-friendly platform that helps you think through things like who you'd like to make financial decisions on your behalf and who you would trust to care for your children.

In a few simple steps, it also helps you designate who your belongings go to and create your advanced directive so that no one is left making tough healthcare decisions on your behalf without knowing your wishes. Basically, epicwill.com empowers you or you and your spouse to make these important decisions all with the guidance of people who truly know what they're doing.

Besides the exact help you need creating a will, my other favorite thing about Epic Will is that their team loves to give back to single moms and orphans. In fact, they provide single moms with kids under the age of 18 with access to a free will, providing them with the security that they're covered and have one less thing to

worry about. And they're donating 10% of their proceeds to organizations helping orphans find a home.

Epicwill.com has built the most comprehensive self-guided early estate plan for you. And as little as five minutes and for less than you'd spend on a trip to Target, you can create an earliest estate plan with Epic Will. Go to epicwill.com and use the promo code TSF20 for 20% off. Again, that's epicwill.com and use the promo code TSF20 for 20% off. Get the peace of mind that comes with knowing your belongings and your family and your legacy are protected.

All right friends, since we are starting a whole month on prayer, I'm really excited about the shows, the conversations, the Q&A, everything that this series includes. And you know I don't want to do a series on the podcast without including some of my MiniBFFs. So on each episode, including right now, we're going to hear a little bit from some of my MiniBFFs about their prayer life. So here are some thoughts from one of my favorite MiniBFFs, and then we will be back with today's conversation.

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Annie: So we'll start by, will you please introduce yourself?

Audrey: Hi, I'm Audrey Warren.

Annie: And how old are you?

Audrey: Twelve.

Annie: Twelve years old. Audrey, do you pray every day? Do you pray some time every day or every other day or once a week? Or what are your rhythms like?

Audrey: I pray every night before I go to bed.

Annie: Do you?

Audrey: Yeah.

Annie: But with your family or by yourself?

Audrey: With my family?

Annie: What kind of things do you pray for?

Audrey: We pray for people that don't feel good, like people in our family just to have a good night of rest and a good day tomorrow.

Annie: Do you think it matters?

Audrey: Yes.

Annie: How come?

Audrey: Because talking to God is good.

Annie: Have you seen God answer prayers that you've prayed before?

Audrey: Yes.

Annie: Can you think of one? Is there one that comes to mind?

Audrey: One time one of my great grandparents wasn't feeling too good. I think she fell. And then we prayed about it for like a week and she got better and is doing good.

Annie: Ain't that amazing?

Audrey: Yes.

Annie: I remember when I was in third grade I prayed for my mom's headache to go away, and it did. And I was just like, "Oh, God heals people." It's wild. When you ever think to pray for your mom or your dad, what kind of things do you pray for them?

Audrey: Just that they'll do better and they'll have an easier time. They already have to deal with so much.

Annie: You do too, though.

Audrey: Yeah.

Annie: When you pray for yourself, do you pray that you'll have an easier time?

Audrey: Yeah, definitely.

Annie: When you feel stressed or anxious about something, do you ever think to pray then? Or are you kind of like, "God help me?"

Audrey: Yeah. I'm kinda like that. I just always beg. Just like, "Please help. I need help."

Annie: I mean, when you pray like that in those begging moments, do you feel like He helps?

Audrey: Yes.

Annie: What does it feel like or look like when you feel like God's answered that prayer?

Audrey: Well, when He helps, it feels like you have someone you can trust and help you out.

Annie: For our friends listening, if you were to help somebody who is new at praying and you were to kind of give them a tip, because some of our friends listening are brand new to prayer, what would the tip be on prayer?

Audrey: Well, you don't have to do it all the time. You can just do it like once a day or once a week, and then He'll probably most likely answer and you'll be good.

Annie: That's beautiful.

[00:06:13] <music>

Annie: Today on the show, as we kick off this prayer month, I get to talk, y'all, I can't believe it, I got to talk with Pete Greig. He's the founder of the 24-7 Prayer Movement. And I thought he'd be the perfect person to kick off the prayer series. He's a pastor from across the pond in England, a bestselling author, and an international authority on prayer. I mean, 24-7 Prayer Movement has reached more than half the nations on earth.

I was so, so excited to talk to Pete. He's a bit of a spiritual hero and his newest book, *How to Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People* is just so helpful. It's a follow-up to his earlier book, *How to Pray*, which I highly recommend, and it's just so instructive and accessible. It's a great resource on prayer. We are honored to have him with us today. So here is my conversation with Pastor Pete Greig.

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Annie: Pete, thank you so much for being on That Sounds Fun today.

Pete: Oh, it's a joy to be with you. Thanks for having me.

Annie: Oh, man, as I told you before we started, I feel a little bit... when people say, "How is it having celebrities on the show?" It's people like you that I'm always like, "But do you know I get to talk to Pete Greig?" So just thank you for making time.

Pete: Oh, you're so kind.

Annie: It's true. I gotta tell you first. Lectio 365 is part of my every day.

Pete: Oh, wow. Wow.

Annie: It's my morning devotion. It's what helps me fall asleep at night. I don't know how it started. I just know I'm a beneficiary of it. So can you back up and talk a little bit about the app and the whole process of Lectio 365?

Pete: Yeah. Lectio 365 is going crazy. We didn't ever think it would get this big but it's just kind of gone around the world now. I did one of those Bible in One Year devotionals, and it was great. But if I'm honest, there were a lot of days where I was just trying to get through the chapters. And if you'd ask me at the end, I wouldn't be able to tell you what I'd even read.

I had this moment of, "Is this really what it's about? And I started to crave what would it look like not to try and read three chapters a day, but maybe just one verse a day and marinate and go really deep in that?" Of course, that is the ancient way of reading the Bible—the Lectio Divina, the slow imaginative reading.

So we thought, "Let's put a little app together. Let's read just a few verses twice. Let's have a kind of liturgical rhythm to it, and let's explore the six practices that are at heart of the religious order that I'm part of." And yeah, it doesn't sound very rock'n'roll, does it? But it's amazing.

I got a story the other day from someone. You know, she's a frontline nurse, the heart of the COVID thing. And she said, "My one moment of peace at its worst was just listening to Lectio and then I'd be working like a 20 hour shift or something, dealing with people dying, but I take those 10 minutes." So yeah, it's been cool. I'm so glad it connects with you.

Annie: Oh, man. I mean, sometimes I'll do it as I'm really laying down and trying to turn my brain off. And there are evenings... I mean, I can feel it in me almost. ... There are evenings that make me cry. The evening ones are so tender and so thoughtful that it feels like you're being cared for at the end of the day. And whether you've had a good day or a bad day, it just is very calming.

Pete: Yeah. Well, what most people say to me about the night prayers is they never listen to the end of it.

Annie: I never hear the end of it.

Pete: You could announce the Antichrist and we want to know-

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

Pete: But we're asleep by the end.

Annie: In fact, I heard on Valentine's Day they made a point to say, this is Pete's prayer on Valentine's Day. Tell me a little bit about that prayer that you wrote. Do you remember it?

Pete: Oh, Valentine's, it's just insane, isn't it? I don't know, it's kind of so painful for many people. And I was thinking a lot about what it's like to be on Valentine's Day if you're, say, an old man missing your wife or if you're a single mom buying yourself flowers knowing no one else will. I don't know.

I wrote a prayer a few years ago just for that. And basically it's a prayer... I get people complain about this. It's saying, "God, I am not praying today for the people who are loved up, and leaking pheromones everywhere. They're going to be all right."

Annie: They're going to be okay. That's what it said. They're going to be okay.

Pete: "I don't care about them. I care about that old man staring at that black and white photo remembering his wife and worrying that he's forgetting his wife." You know, what's his Valentine like? So yeah. And that prayer has just been used all around the world. Because I think we're all trying to find the language, aren't we, to connect with God in the midst of these real moments of life?

Annie: Yeah. I mean, when you said that the teenager would make their bed and clean their room just to be helpful to the single mom, as I told you before we started, we're starting today a whole month on prayer. So that is what we're talking about. I mean, the disciples said to Jesus, "Teach us how to pray." So we're asking Jesus this month to teach us how to pray.

One of the things I learned from that prayer, and I would love for you to talk about, is the simplicity of when you talk to God you can just say what you actually mean. You don't have to say fancy words. You can say, "Please let the teenagers make their beds tonight."

Pete: Right? Because God made us, so He is not impressed. He sees us sitting on the toilet. So why on earth do we try and pretend to Him? Jesus specifically told stories to say, be real in prayer. Remember the one of the Pharisees praying all the right

stuff and the tax collector is just there all snotty in the corner, saying, "Have mercy on me. I'm a sinner." And then Jesus turns and you imagine Him kind of winking at the Pharisees in the crowd. He goes, "Hey, who do you think went home heard by God?"

And elsewhere He says, "Learn to pray like a child." We always say the three keys to prayer: keep it simple, keep it real, and keep it up. Simple as that.

Annie: Keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up. Wow.

Pete: Yeah. Don't get too complicated. Keep it real, be honest with God. And the Bible is more honest than the church. The Bible is full of crazy... There's stuff they didn't redact from the scriptures that amaze me. Like Peter trying to talk Jesus out of dying on the cross is still in there.

Annie: Jesus calling Peter the devil.

Pete: That's not encouraging.

Annie: Right.

Pete: It's not encouraging if you call me a devil-

Annie: Right.

Pete: ...but Jesus call me the devil. And then keep it simple, keep it real. So sometimes your prayers will be angry. I remember someone in a prayer room in Missouri. She came out of the prayer room and this church had been praying around the clock for weeks and weeks and weeks, and she came out she said to her pastor, Gary Smith, she said, "I've spoiled everything. I've broken the chain of prayer." He said, "why? What did you do in there?" She said, "I didn't say a word of God. I just cried."

Annie: Oh gosh.

Pete: And he just said, "Darling, that's the best kind of prayer there is."

Annie: Yes, yes.

Pete: So keep it real. And then keep it up. Frank Laubach who was a great educationist, American missionary, I think the only missionary ever to be featured on a US postal stamp-

Annie: Oh, wow.

Pete: ...he tells this great story of... He says sometimes prayer is like chucking rocks in a swamp. And people look at you like you're crazy. Every rock just sinks without trace and it feels like that. But if you keep chucking rocks for long enough, eventually you'll get a path and you'll walk through. So keep it simple, keep it real. And then just keep chucking rocks in the swamp. And again, Jesus told stories saying, "Don't give up praying one prayer too soon."

Annie: Yes. I think a lot about the persistent widow. I think a lot about the knocking on the door in the middle of the night. I just would be interested if you're willing to talk about, do you think prayer changes God's mind?

Pete: That's a big one.

Annie: I know. You could say, "Annie, I don't want to..."

Pete: No, no. I think there's a bandwidth within the Word of God that He is open to persuasion. I think there are some things. You know, you're never going to persuade Him to, you know, I don't know, make your football team win against another team or something. Sorry. But I think there are things and there are examples.

I mean, there's Hezekiah in the Bible, who's totally going to die instantly. And he prays and gets another 15 years. There's that cool story of how Abraham intercedes for, you know, if there's just kind of 12 righteous people, there's six for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and God keeps coming down.

So there is evidence in the Bible that when we talk with God, it's a genuine conversation. And I love that. I read a story that Jimmy Carter when he was president of America sat in the White House and still ran the tennis rota. It was like he was the leader of the free world and he was still running the tennis rotor.

I don't think God's like that. He's not like a helicopter parent hovering. He doesn't have opinions on everything. So there's a lot of space for us to go in and have a conversation with Him. Of course, the emphasis is "God, you know, I'm not trying to get you to say amen to what I want. I'm trying to learn to say amen to what you want." Jesus says that's how miracles happen when you pray to align with His will. So it mostly matters what God wants. But I think we can feel free to say, "God, if you don't mind too much, I'd love you to do this

Annie: That's right.

Pete: In one of my books I tell, you know, my wife nearly died many times. She was very, very, very sick, chronic illness. And I remember there was a night when I

thought she was definitely going to die and I fought with God. I fought with God. And I remember I was sobbing.

A guy came around to see me, we started praying, and I just forgot he was even in the room. It was me and God. It was like Rocky Bilbao. I was just fighting. And I said to God, "I'm not proud of this, but I'm just being honest with you." I said, keep it real. I said, "God, I don't care what your will is, I want my wife to live. I want my kids to grow up knowing who their mom is. I don't ever want to point out a photograph and try and tell them what she was like. I'm not interested in Christianity right now. I'm interested in you helping my wife to live."

And after she came through brain surgery and she's alive today, and we're incredibly grateful, I started feeling really guilty that in my garden of Gethsemane, instead of praying like Jesus, not my will, but your will be done, which is what we're supposed to pray, I basically said to God, "Not your will, but my will be done."

And I kind of lived under the guilt of that for a while that I'm just not that holy. You know, God's so kind. He just kind of took me aside one day and He just said to me really gently, not an audible voice or anything else, just gently but I just sensed Him saying, "I love that you prayed like that. I love that you love your wife like that because I love it too." So keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up. And sometimes keeping it real won't look pretty.

Annie: Just for our listeners to know, we're minute 12 and I'm already teary. So this is going to be fine. It's going to be fine. You're going to get to deal with my emotions as we talk about prayer. I said to a friend recently, "I just don't know how people do life without prayer." I don't know how you do this without knowing that you can talk to God about things.

Pete: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. I mean, all the research says that almost everybody does pray. It's amazing how an atheist commit to praying.

Annie: Right.

Pete: But also, I had this moment... A little fast forward a little bit from my wife coming through brain surgery and I was suddenly primary carer for a seven-week old baby-

Annie: Holy cow.

Pete: And it was hard. He was waking every two hours through the night.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Pete: I was terrified. I was meant to be leading a global prayer movement and didn't think my prayers could even save my wife. It was horrible. And we had no money. It was crazy. And I was trying to work out how to be dad to this beautiful little boy. And then he got chickenpox.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Pete: And I'm like, "God, are you kidding me?"

Annie: You are like, "Am I Job here?"

Pete: Oh, you know, those little itchy pink spots all over his eyelids, everywhere. And then I have friends who said to me, "Oh, it's a good thing he's got it because he'll have immunity in later life." I just felt like kicking them.

The thing is that little boy, his name's Danny, he couldn't obviously understand. He couldn't talk. He didn't know this is not how life will feel for the rest of my life. Right. He certainly couldn't understand the principles of immunity. All he could do was let his dad pace up and down the landing holding him until he fell asleep.

And there are things in all our lives we cannot understand because our brains aren't big enough. But we can still trust. We can still allow the Father to love us through those seasons. And the weird thing is that Danny is now a young man. And guess what he's studying at university? He's studying immunology.

Annie: No.

Pete: He's studying COVID in his lectures. So he now knows more about immunity than me. But back then he couldn't. One day we'll know but right now we don't. And in that season, I remember going to hospital one day, Sammy was back in hospital. I was so depressed. Like, what do you say to your wife when she wakes up again in hospital? And I said the world's worst thing. Like, I'm meant to be a pastor. I'm so proud of being a pastor some time. I just said to her, "Babe, maybe there isn't a God."

Annie: Wow.

Pete: We cried out to God last night for your seizure to stop and it didn't work. And don't tell me God's trying to teach us something through it that He couldn't have told us through the previous 50 seizures.

And she looked at me and she said, "Pete, thanks for proposing that particular worldview to me right now. Actually, if I get rid of God, it won't help. It just means I'm a highly evolved animal and my suffering is of no consequence and I might as well die out of the gene pool."

So no matter how hard it is to trust in God's love when you don't understand and you're hurting like hell, it's easier to go through those things with God's love than without them. You know, if you're an atheist, you still have bad stuff happen to you. You just don't have any hope in the midst of it.

Annie: Yeah, any hope.

Pete: So yeah, just to land where you started me, yes, to be able to pray, you know, what a friend we have in Jesus, that thing to be able to walk and talk through life, through its highs and its lows with God is an unbelievable privilege. I don't know how people really cope without God.

Annie: Even when my prayers don't get answered the way I thought they would, Pete, I still think, "Where else would...? I mean, what Peter said, right? "Where else would I go? Where else would I go?" Because in my disappointment, the person I want to talk to you most about my disappointment about my prayers not being answered is still God. I still like, "You're the one I'm frustrated with and also I don't know who else to talk to you about this."

Pete: That's the book of Psalms, right?

Annie: Right.

Pete: It's like, God, this isn't fair. Where are you?" So again, it's this thing of being real with God in prayer and not trying to pretend. There is so much pretending in the church. We turn up and "how are you?" "I'm just fine." I long for the Community of Christ to be as honest as the Bible is about how wonderful and how difficult life can be. And prayer is that place of authentic, just standing as we are before God. I can tell you a lot about that.

Annie: Oh, well. I'm learning. I'm learning. I love learning about it.

[00:24:08] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [KiwiCo](#). As seasons change from winter to spring, welcome to spring, there is just so much to get curious about what causes the weather to get warmer, why do flowers bloom. It's the perfect time for new discoveries.

And KiwiCo it's so awesome about celebrating kids' natural curiosity and sparking a love for lifelong learning. They deliver monthly science and art projects that let kids of all ages, from MiniBFFs to grownups, explore different steam topics each month. We're talking rainbows, the rocket ships, and everything in between.

Some of my friends just did the paint pouring crate with their nine and 11 year old daughters and had the best time. Every single thing they needed was supplied in a box and they said they love talking about complementary colors and watching how the paint colors mixed and swirled. They're even using their finished creations. That's gift.

Do your part to encourage your children to be innovators and creative thinkers. They won't believe what they can build and accomplish with KiwiCo. And you'll love seeing their confidence grow. Give them the tools to learn new skills, build new experiences, and make new connections in the broader world.

Step into spring and celebrate the season of discovery with a KiwiCo subscription. Get 30% off your first month plus free shipping on any crate line with the code THATSOUNDSFUN at kiwico.com. That's 30% off your first month at kiwico.com, promo code, THATSOUNDSFUN.

Sponsor: And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [ZocDoc](#). No one knows what you're looking for in a doctor better than you and no one's better given you the tools to find the perfect doctor than ZocDoc.

The people who created ZocDoc found the major pain points in health care, all the things that weren't working, and they just said, enough, and they made booking a great doctor surprisingly pain-free. Finding and booking your doctor who's right for you doesn't have to be a major hassle. Right? Will they take your insurance? Understand your needs? Be available when you can see them?

Well, with ZocDoc, the answer can be refreshingly pain-free, yes. And you can focus on doctors who are in network, putting you on the path to see the doctors who are right for you and will actually take your insurance. No more wasting time without the network providers.

ZocDoc is a free app that shows you doctors who are patient-reviewed, takes your insurance, and are available when you need them. You can read up on local doctors, get verified patient reviews, and see what other real humans had to say about their visit, so when you walk into the doctor's office, you're set to see someone in your network who gets you.

Go to zocdoc.com and choose a time slot and whether you want to see the doctor in person or on video. And just like that, you're booked with an appointment that works with your schedule. Every month, millions of people use ZocDoc, including me. It's my go to whenever I need to find and book a doctor.

And the chaotic world of healthcare, let ZocDoc be your trusted guide to find a quality doctor in a way that is surprisingly pain-free. Go to zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun, and download the ZocDoc app for free, then start your search for a top-rated doctor today. Many are available within 24 hours. That's zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun. [Zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun](http://zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Pete.

[00:27:15] <music>

Annie: We have a book suggestion list and your book *How to Pray* is on it. We also have on it, *How to Hear God*, the new book that just came out. I would love for us to talk about that a little bit. Because again, to me the other thing that I was very privileged in growing up in a home and in a community that taught me how to hear God very early. And so again, where would I go? I mean, who else would I listen to? And how do people do it without Him?

So will you talk a little bit about where prayer and hearing God meet? Because it really is one dance, right? It's not two separate things.

Pete: Right. I mean, prayer is conversation. So we have to learn not just how to run Amazon kind of wish lists into God's prayers. We have to learn how to actually stop and listen to Him. Kind of a real relationship. So it's this two-way conversation.

Now, the tricky thing isn't asking. We're all really good at that. "God, help." It's learning to listen. In this book, I talk pretty clearly and strongly about listening to God and the different ways in which we can learn to do that. And the good news is we can all grow in our ability to listen to God, we can experience more of His guidance, more of His presence in our lives.

Annie: In that, in the hearing Him especially in *How to Hear God*, you use the story of the walk to Emmaus-

Pete: Exactly.

Annie: ...to kind of explain our ability to hear from God. Why is that the one that jumped out to you? That would have never been what my brain did. So I was fascinated when I was reading the book.

Pete: The story of the road to Emmaus is honestly one of the most beautiful, gorgeous stories in the whole Bible. And what fascinates me is how much it tells us about how we grow in a real relationship with God. So in the book, I trace that beautiful story and look, first of all, at how Jesus doesn't just turn up and say, "Hey, I'm Jesus, I'm risen from the dead." But He comes alongside the couple as they're talking.

So I think one of the first things we struggle with in hearing God is we think He's going to speak through a megaphone. We think it's going to be audible voice. And mostly He whispers. I think Richard Rohr says, "God comes to us disguised as our own life."

Annie: Really?

Pete: And that's my experience. And let me just say on that piece, it's weird how weird we get about God considering by definition, He created normality. So it's so strange that we take what we consider normal and then say God has got to only be in the abnormal. So if He breaks His normality, that is what He inhabits.

Annie: Wow.

Pete: So one of the ways we learn to hear God is by learning to have, as Jesus said, ears to hear in the normality, in the reality of life. Then the next thing in the Emmaus road story is unbelievably Jesus takes... We reckon about two to three hours on a Bible study.

Annie: Yes, the whole way through.

Pete: I love the Bible, but I've got loads of friends who are like into Bethel and Hillsong and all that stuff. And if you said to them, you're about to have the most powerful encounter with God you've ever had, there'd be like, "I'm ready." And then if I said, "It's going to be a three hour Bible study," you just watch how they'd be so disappointed.

I think we've got to rediscover that even though Jesus is supernaturally present, resurrected from the dead, greatest miracle of all time, He still chooses to speak through the Bible. So at this point, all kinds of Bible Church people are like, yes, hallelujah. But here's the bit. He reinterprets the Bible. Because it says He explained from the Law and the Prophets right through about Himself.

So He teaches us... This is what theologians call the Christological hermeneutic. He teaches us to read the whole Bible in the light of Himself. That changes how you

read those side passages in the Old Testament, some of the bits in the Pauline epistles, and so on. If you read the Bible with Jesus' glasses on, it changes everything. So again, that's another key learning to hear God. Does it sound like Jesus? Does it look like Jesus? Does it smell like Jesus?

And then notice how He comes into their home. By the way, clearly, this is a couple. It's a married couple. But all the paintings are depicted as two men. Basically, there's crazy sexism out there. Otherwise, whose house was it? They invited Him into their home. They were commuting from Jerusalem. So they invite Jesus in. There's that hilarious bit where it says He pretended he had somewhere else to go.

Annie: Yeah, that He was going to keep going.

Pete: I love that. He's risen from the dead. Where's he going? He's got literally all the time in the world.

Annie: That's right.

Pete: Literally. There's something about Jesus that's so kind of sly and sloppy, and playful. And it makes you wonder, did He appear to others who just never knew it was Jesus? And eventually these are the ones who invited Him in?

Annie: Wow.

Pete: Let's remember to invite Jesus into our homes, people.

Annie: Right.

Pete: And then it's in the sharing of a meal that, as He lifts the bread, and they presumably see the scars, they go... It's like the penny drops and they go, "It's Jesus." And then this is hilarious. The second... Imagine this in a movie. The second they recognize Jesus, He kind of goes, "Bye."

Annie: He just disappeared or did He get up and walk out?

Pete: You get the impression He just disappeared.

Annie: Right, which is wild.

Pete: Which is pretty frustrating. And He could have done that anywhere along the line and they'd have gone, "Okay, this was not just another person." But He's taking

them on a journey to teach them about Himself. And then they say, "Didn't our hearts burn within us?"

Here's the summary. In this whole story, you've got the evangelical emphasis on hearing God in the Bible. Yes. You have got the charismatic emphasis on the prophetic encounter with the resurrected Jesus. And then you have got the contemplative emphasis on the burning heart, on that inner voice, that still small voice of recognition.

I am sick and tired of Christianity that just says you got to choose one of those and reject all the others. I want it all. This is a big hug of a book that says, "I want the Bible, I want prophecies, dreams, visions, and I want to learn to be still and contemplate and experience the still, small voice of God. I want it all because I just want to learn to know Jesus better."

Annie: And this is what makes the Bible incredibly fun is you got all of that from one of the stories and one of the chapters. Like it is the deepest pool we can dive into because it's unending what we can pull from stories.

Pete: Yeah. That story is loaded. It's such a great story that some really boring theologians have said they think it's made up. Too good. Like what kind of a cynical view of the world do you have to have, that if something is that beautiful and that meaningful that you think it's not true?

Annie: Right.

Pete: Actually, in the book I explain I think pretty convincingly why it has to be true.

Annie: Oh, great.

Pete: There's lots of reasons why... You know, if they were making it up, they'd have thought of a name for both of them, not just one of them. Because they're making it up. They would have been walking somewhere interesting like Jericho. They wouldn't be walking to Emmaus that is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible.

So there's a whole bunch of reasons that we can assume that this was a historical encounter. And when we hear about a church that grew up in Emmaus. So you can't tell me that they didn't meet in that house around that meal table.

Annie: Right?.

Pete: Imagine going to break bread and drink wine around that table and telling the story again, and again. I mean, it's just so cool.

Annie: It's so cool. I loved in chapter two where you talk about the idea that even a resurrected Jesus depended on Scripture as the ultimate. Will you talk about that for a second? Because even in what you're saying now, like, if any of the Bible isn't true, none of it is true. But if any of it is true, all of it's true, like the whole thing is true. So will talk about that for a second about even resurrected Jesus was talking about how infallible scripture was.

Pete: I think it was George Gallup said that the Bible is the bestselling and least read book in America.

Annie: Yes.

Pete: I do believe that we need to rediscover the Word of God in the Scriptures, the word of God in Jesus Himself, and the word of God in the prophetic. All three of those words.

Annie: Yes.

Pete: And the Word of God in Scripture is the foundation of faith. It's the objective reality. Dreams and visions, these things are subjective. I mean, it could just be the bad [chelly?] from last night. But the word of God endures forever we're told.

So the Bible is kind of the context for our relationship with God. And with Lectio, we started talking about that at the start. One of the joys of that is just taking a few verses and really just kind of soaking in and allowing a phrase to come out at you. So the word of God is living, it's active. It's not just there for good theology. It's there as a conversation starter in our prayer lives.

Annie: You talk in the book as well about our ability personally to hear God is affected by how we feel about ourselves. And I don't know that a lot of people would make that draw. So will you talk about our belief about who we are and how God made us really affects our prayer lives and our ability to hear God?

Pete: Yeah. The thing is hearing God isn't just about good theology. It's about psychology. The theology is God speaks. Genesis 1, God speaks. John 1, Jesus is the Word of God. So good theology, we can all know in our heads that we have a God who is not distant or moved, but a God who communicates, God who speaks.

So why do we struggle to hear? That's not actually about theology. That's about psychology. And the truth is that we all process information in different ways. For me, for example, when I proposed to Sammy, my wife, who I love to bits, we've been married I don't know, 27 years now, the day after I proposed I was terrified. I

was so scared. I started to wonder if I made the biggest mistake of my life. Not because I didn't love her just because I think I was just having that male comment thing.

She was happier than she had ever been and I was terrified and couldn't let on. And I went to see someone who said, "Pete, it's okay. Just hang in there. Life doesn't come with an orchestra. It's not that."

So we got to be careful because different people respond to the same stimulus in different ways. It's not that the thing is wrong. It's the way that different people process stuff. Some of us are visual in the way we primarily process data. Some of us are very auditory. Some of us are kinetic.

And a lot of the material on hearing God doesn't talk enough about that kinesthetic and accountable. What that means is some of us will encounter God through doing stuff, not just through seeing something or hearing something but to actually engaging physically with that. And we see that in the Bible.

Annie: Yeah, the walk into Emmaus.

Pete: Yeah, exactly. Jesus riding a donkey, He never says, "I've got a picture of a donkey."

Annie: That's right.

Pete: He never explains it.

Annie: That's right. I have not thought about the kinesthetic side. The prophetic side I'd love for us to talk about for a minute and all these. My prophetic life kind of operates in pictures the most. So what I find myself doing often in prayer is I will see the thing that I'm praying, so I have a picture to pray toward. Or if I'm praying for someone, I'll be like, "Oh, I'm just going to tell you what I see and you can tell me what to do with it."

Will you talk about that move for it? Because a lot of our friends when they're praying, they're seeing things or they're seeing words or... What do we do next? What's our next move after we see a picture or we're walking and something happens or we see a word?

Pete: Well, in 1 Corinthians the apostle Paul says that prophecy. And that's kind of what you're talking about. If we were going to use the super religious word we say you're receiving visions. The prophecy is for edification and encouragement. The first thing I always ask is, okay, this thing I'm seeing is this going to encourage

someone? Is it going to build them up? Or is it going to terrify them, freak them out, and pull them down?

You wouldn't believe how many times people have come to me and said they've got the word of the Lord for me. And I feel like someone has dropped something really heavy on my head. I'm not saying God doesn't sometimes challenge us. But I would say, if you're new to this stuff, start with the easy stuff. Is it loving? Is it encouraging? Is it kind?

If it's crazy directional, you know, you need to move to another country or quit your job, maybe don't deliver it as the word of God. Maybe you go to them and say, "Hey, how are you feeling? What are you thinking about the future?" Just engage common sense. That's the first thing.

Annie: That's the thing we don't do in prophecy is no one engages common sense when they think they've heard the Lord.

Pete: The number one gift God wants to give charismatics is common sense. No question about it.

Annie: That's right. I am the chief. I'm the chief of them that need it.

Pete: And then obviously, you want to measure what's being said against the Bible. Is this in line with scripture? Is it in line with the character of Jesus? Does this sound like Jesus? Is it kind of thing He would say or do?

If it is a big directional kind of thing, then you may want to even just run it past somebody else. So, for example, we've had several situations in our church where, you know, one party in a marriage had been unfaithful, is committing adultery and it's revealed in dreams, exposed. The same is exposed. But you don't want to stand up on Sunday and say, "You're in sin." But you might say to the couple, "Hey, let's get together for coffee. How are you guys doing? How's your relationship?" And you just use a bit of common sense.

If the picture is you see someone laughing and joyful and you know they're having a hard time and you think I'm just going to go encourage them that the joy of the Lord is your strength, and though you sow in tears, your requests shouts of joy, and that this season will pass and the joy of the Lord is your strength. And can I pray for you about that? Listen, is it encouraging? Yes. Is it edifying? Yes. Does it sound like Jesus? Yes. Is it crazy directional? No. Go for it. Even if it's not God, still done good.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. I mean, even if it's not God, you've still been encouraging. When I was growing up, especially in college, I went to University of Georgia, and was part of the Wesley Foundation and the campus ministry really trained us a lot on how to hear God. And they were always like, "No dates, mates, or babies."

Pete: That's good. Give me that again. No dates-

Annie: No dates, mates, or babies.

Pete: That's really good.

Annie: So if God told you someone's mate, you're not right. Don't say it. Don't say it.

[00:44:10] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one last time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Raycon](#). Raycon is a great way to shake things up in this new year because their wireless earbuds are the best way to bring audio with you. And no matter how much you shake things up, literally, no matter how much you shake, you know they aren't going to fall out of your ears. My Raycon literally, y'all, never fall out of my ears no matter what I do or where I go.

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And now back to finish up our conversation with Pete.

[00:47:21] <music>

Annie: Well, you tell a story in the book about when you use the British officer and the word Glasgow.

Pete: Oh, yeah. That's amazing.

Annie: Will you tell that? It's a beautiful story.

Pete: The title on this book is *How to Hear God* but the subtitle is *A Simple Guide for Normal People*. There are a lot of stories in there that will fry your noodles. Just incredible stories of God speaking because I want to inspire people. There's no point in depressing people.

Annie: That's right.

Pete: But I want you to know that we can all do this and it's not weird. Half the time when I'm involved in some kind of miraculous revelation moment, I just think, "Oh, my goodness, Christianity is true. I want to get saved again."

Annie: If I weren't saved, I get saved over this.

Pete: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I get saved almost every day. There's a few I just pretend but most days. But that story was definitely a get saved again moment. I had been speaking on Philippians 2, humbling ourselves, that God will raise us up and I invited people to stand—it was a tough call—if they felt they needed to humble themselves in some way. And a lot of people stood.

One particular guy stood and I knew he was quite a senior officer in the British Army. I saw someone who I didn't recognize came and prayed for him and I saw that he started weeping. So at the end of the service, I went up to him and I said to him, "Are you okay?" And he told me the most amazing story.

He said, "Pete, the reason I stood is because I'm frustrated in my career in the army. I feel like I've been passed over for a promotion. And I just knew I had to say to God, you know what, you're my commanding officer. If I don't get promoted in the world's eyes, I'm doing this for you." So that was his act of humbling himself, right?

This complete stranger he didn't know, I didn't know came and prayed for him and said, "I've got this phrase for you. I don't know what it means. 'Glasgow is irrelevant.'" You know where Glasgow is, right?

Annie: Yes.

Pete: Because you used to be in Edinburgh in Scotland. It's the other big city in Scotland. So he said, "Glasgow is irrelevant." What is that? He had no idea what it meant. And this army officer looks at me and he starts weeping again and he said, "Pete, what that guy didn't know and what you clearly don't know is in the army, in the British Army, all deployments, all payments, all promotions are driven through an administrative center in Glasgow, Scotland. And therefore it is shorthand, University in the British Army, you say, "Glasgow is sending me here," or "Glasgow gave me a pay rise," or "Glasgow wants to see me."

So this guy who doesn't know what that phrase means, comes up and says, "Glasgow is relevant" to a man who's in the army. He's not wearing uniform, and is saying, "I'm going to humble myself because I'm not being promoted." Now, that would be a cool story if it stopped there. But it doesn't.

Because a few days after that this man was being stationed to Iraq and he was going to be there over Christmas. This is Christmas before last. So obviously, it was a difficult time. And he said to me, "It's great, because I now know that I'm going to Iraq over Christmas but I know that God is with me because of the way he's just spoken to me at church."

On their military base in Iraq, some of you will remember this moment because it was in the news all around the world, missiles were launched—it was the joint UK and US base—and landed on this particular base. A few days before that moment, my friend, the one who'd received this prophecy had been called into the office of his commanding officer there in that military base in Iraq. And the guy said, "You've caught my attention, I want to promote you." And he got a double promotion. It bypassed Glasgow because they were on the frontline, so you can do that. He got a double promotion.

So the officer in charge when those missiles landed in Iraq was this officer who had been double promoted. He said, "I felt the peace of God. I knew exactly what to do. I knew God had put me there. I knew God was going to protect me." And he said, "I was able to lead funeral services, I was able to speak peace to people because I knew God had put me there."

So it was a lovely little moment. Just an ordinary church service, but God speaking to a man who humbled himself. Glasgow is irrelevant. Within a matter of two weeks, he's got a double promotion bypassing Glasgow, and therefore something that we all read about in our newspapers, the person who was in charge that day had been raised up by God for that moment. Amazing.

Annie: It's amazing. The book is full of stories of the normal people of everyday hearing God, how you can do it in your prayer time, and how you can do it for others, but also stories like that. And in every chapter, Pete, you included what you called a living word. Like you have a historical figure at the end of every chapter that kind of embodied what you wrote about that in that chapter. How did you pick who was going to be in the chapter?

Pete: Well, I wanted to make sure there were many women as men, and I tried to make sure that at least half were not white. That was one thing I did. So you've got great black heroes of the faith, like Augustine of Hippo. People don't realize he was North Africa. One of the greatest intellects and theologians of all times.

People like Sojourner Truth, you know, free from slavery, or escaped from slavery, really bought out by The Quaker couple. And that's his encounter with God, hears God, and ends up as one of the great kind of emancipating figures in American history, but actually people trying to dumb down the extent to which... I mean, she

received that name, Sojourner Truth, in a revelation from God. Another one is George Washington Carver-

Annie: Peanuts.

Pete: He uses the peanut but he said, "I got that from God. God spoke to me." And then there's others like Julian of Norwich, the great British nun, who, after going through personal tragedy just lived this contemplative life. And she was famous for saying, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." She was the first woman to write a book that was published in the English language.

Annie: Wow.

Pete: So what I tried to do with those different heroes of faith, there's a number of them is, is firstly, I want people just to know these really cool stories. Secondly, I want people to understand it's normal to hear God. Because we live in a culture that tries to say you're wacko if you claim to hear God.

Listen, the most influential, the most intelligent, the most respected, even in world history, the majority of them would claim to have heard the voice of God. So it is normal. What's weird is those who claim to go through life without hearing God. Can you imagine anything more tragic than having the ability to hear God which each of us does and living your whole life without listening to the living Word of God? What a tragedy? What a wasted life that would be?

Annie: As the founder of 24-7 Prayer, you have effectively... I mean, half the globe uses Lectio 365, right? I mean, it's like half the countries use it. I would love for you, as you're starting out our month of prayer, will you just kind of give us some encouragement about why should we pursue hearing God? Why should we pursue a deeper prayer life, particularly, in this month of learning?

Pete: You are made for relationship with God. Your heart will be restless and tell you are walking and talking with God every day like Adam and Eve in the garden. Listen, as we grow in prayer... And by the way, we can grow in prayer. It's like a skill. Like if I want to get good at tennis, I'm not going to come to you and say, "Could you pray for me to get a better serve?" I just need to go out and practice.

And what people are often not honest about is just there are skills that we can actually develop about to do with being still, to do with the way we read Scripture. That helps us to grow. And I find that exciting because it means we can all grow in this unbelievably exciting way. And as we grow in prayer, we see more miracles, we process a lot of our pain and our disappointment and miracles, we know more of

God's peace, we experience His guidance, and the whole of life becomes a conversation with Him.

One of my thoughts on that is this. Before there was any sin or sickness or suffering in the world, there was Adam and Eve and God. So what did they talk to God about? Because most of what we talked to God about is problems. They must have just talked to God about nice day-

Annie: The animals, the weather.

Pete: And then one day for all of us who know Jesus, there will be no more sin or sickness or suffering in the world, but there'll be you and God. So you better have something other than problems to talk to Him about.

Annie: Wow.

Pete: So my invitation in these two books is how do we learn to walk and talk with God in the details of our day, to practice His presence in normality, to hear Him in ways that don't involve kissing your brains goodbye and just enjoy a real living relationship with Him. So it's a simple guide for normal people.

Annie: I'm so grateful. Well, listen, I can't thank you enough for making time for this. I mean this. You have taught me so much about prayer from a distance-

Pete: Oh, thank you.

Annie: ...and getting to have a conversation means a lot. We have one final question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Pete: Oh, I love lighting fires, making big bonfires with my friends, and sitting out, you know, drinking hot chocolate. We have a house just near the ocean. So I love going down with my good friends and my family, plunging in the ocean, sometimes getting a bit cold, coming back, sitting by a fire, you know, maybe some music's going, someone's playing guitar. That's me happy. That's me having fun.

Annie: Are y'all on the East Coast?

Pete: We're on the South. Sammy and I live half our lives on a riverboat.

Annie: On a riverboat. Yeah, I read that.

Pete: ...in Guildford just outside London, and then the other half on this island called the Isle of Wight. And it's just off the south coast of England.

Annie: Do you have a Premier League team that you love?

Pete: Yeah. Well, they were Premiership. I support a team called Portsmouth.

Annie: Oh, I like Portsmouth.

Pete: Because we used to live in Portsmouth and it's a real rough team. But it's Football and is a game with a foot and a ball. Therefore, it's rightly called football.

Annie: I don't disagree with you. I'm very American, so I'm an Arsenal fan. We were all one at the top five but Arsenal has been breaking my heart for years. I should have never done it, Pete. I should have gone with Liverpool or something else.

Pete: No, Arsenal is the proper team. That's a good team to support.

Annie: They're fun. They're in and out of the top. But I'm learning a lot about God by being an Arsenal fan too.

Pete: Good for you. Arsenal forever.

Annie: That's right. Well, thanks again for doing this. I really appreciate it.

[00:59:53] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't he just the best? Oh my gosh, what an honor to get to chat with him? What a great way to kick off our month. Be sure to grab your copy of *How to Hear God* and *How to Pray*. I think you'll love both of them. And follow Pete on social media, tell him thanks so much for being on the show.

Get ready for a very, very awesome month on the podcast. You guys, we are going to learn so much together. And I'm so thankful for how he kicked us off.

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 and I will do the same.

And today what sounds fun to me is I'm eating sushi for dinner so I'm very excited about that. So that's what sounds fun to me. Y'all have a great week. We'll see you

back here on Thursday as we continue our prayer series with one of my favorite pastors, Pastor Derwin Gray. Will see you all then.