

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

**Annie:** Hi Friends! Welcome to a special episode of That Sounds Fun. You know these Q&As. Here we go. I'm your host, Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store. Thank y'all so much for all of your kind words about these episodes in April. I'm so glad you're loving these conversations in our prayers series.

If you haven't had the chance to listen to our first few prayer episodes, I'd really encourage you, go back and do that. I mean, Pastor Pete Greig, Pastor Darwin Gray, Ann Voskamp. And what did I tell you about Beth Redman, y'all? I know. I know, right?

And just like on those, you'll get to hear some thoughts about prayer from one of our MiniBFFs on this episode, too. It's the sweetest thing, right? Well, you've already met this MiniBFF a couple of weeks ago when she was on the podcast. So here's one of my MiniBFFs, Shelby, who you know and love. And then we'll get into the rest of the show.

**[00:01:08]** <music>

**Annie:** Okay, tell us your name.

**Shelby:** Shelby.

**Annie:** And how old are you?

**Shelby:** Eleven.

**Annie:** You're 11. Will you tell me a little bit about what you pray about?

**Shelby:** I pray about what's ever on my mind. I like to pray about things that are going on in the world. Like right now Russia invading Ukraine, and two of my friends in my grade have lost their moms to cancer recently.

**Annie:** Really?

**Shelby:** And so if they have a hard day, I like to pray for them and just ask the Lord to help me be a good friend to them and help them and their families through this tough time.

**Annie:** Oh, that's so sad. Were you praying for their moms when their moms were sick?

**Shelby:** Yes.

**Annie:** This is kind of a hard question. But when you're praying for stuff like that and then the healing looks different than you thought, right? Like you were praying that the mom would be okay. What do you say to God when the mom doesn't get healed the way you thought it was gonna happen?

**Shelby:** I just say that I know He has a plan and He's in control and whatever happens is what He knew was going to happen from the moment that person got sick.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. And how do you pray for your friends? What kind of things are you asking God to take care of for them?

**Shelby:** Give them peace and comfort and help them know that He is with them. And make that evident because sometimes, I even admit this, that sometimes when that kind of thing happens, it's something you don't like. And it feels like we know it's His plan but sometimes it's questionable. So I ask Him to help them and me understand that it is His plan and He knows what's going to happen, and He is in it for the long run.

**Annie:** That's right. Do you feel like you've ever heard God talk back to you?

**Shelby:** Yes.

**Annie:** What kind of stuff has God said to you before?

**Shelby:** He has just answered in many different ways. And sometimes it's not immediately. And even if He doesn't answer I know that He heard it.

**Annie:** How do you know?

**Shelby:** Because He's there and He... Like my teacher said, when you pray, you close your eyes and you don't always have to close your eyes, but it's like you're talking face to face with God. So even if you don't think he hears it, He does hear it.

**Annie:** Yeah. Shelby, something I think is really special about you is you believe what's true. Yeah, it just like lives in you. Yeah, you just like know. So for our friends listening, if you are giving advice on how to pray, what to say to God, how would you give advice for someone who wants to pray more?

**Shelby:** It is something that everyone should do, I believe. But it is pretty much is how we talk to God. God is in control of everything, so if there's ever anything you need from Him, just ask Him for it.

**Annie:** What are you praying for our friends in Russia and our friends in Ukraine?

**Shelby:** To keep Ukraine safe and help Vladimir Putin or whoever to realize that he's not doing the best thing.

**Annie:** Right.

**Shelby:** It might seem good to him, but it's not good to everybody else who's losing their homes, and some of them losing their lives.

**Annie:** Yeah. That's very similar to what I've been praying too. I've just been asking God, like, "Open his eyes, Open Putin's eyes to what is really going on." Right?

**Shelby:** Yeah.

**Annie:** What else in the world are you praying for? Is there anything else that's got your mind right now?

**Shelby:** Well, just whatever happens that day. If something happens, like if somebody is mean to them, like what the Bible says, "Pray for those who harm you." If somebody's rude to me, I just pray that God will give them a change of heart and open their eyes.

**Annie:** So you're not saying, like, "Lord, smash a pumpkin on their head." That's the other option.

**Shelby:** Sometimes I will maybe in that moment if they offend me or say something rude, I will kind of think something that is unkind. But in the end that's not the right thing.

**Annie:** You're right. Yes, I know Shelby. We don't want pumpkin smashed on people's heads. You're right. You're right. You're teaching me.

**Shelby:** That would be fun to see sometimes.

**Annie:** Sometimes it would be fun to see.

**[00:05:33] <music>**

**Annie:** 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](#). We all know that feeling when we consider ourselves stressed out, right? It's heart and

mind racing, fight or flight instincts coming on strong. And our bodies tell us we're stressed in other ways too, like headaches and sleep troubles and more.

Stress shows up in all kinds of ways. I know it does for me. Definitely dealing with the headaches occasionally and cravings and just falling asleep to escape. And in a world that's telling you to do more, sleep less and get it all done, this is your girl AFD reminding you and reminding myself that we need to take care of ourselves. And therapy is a great way to do that.

You've heard me say again and again but my counselor has been an awesome advocate for my mental health. And I want you to have someone like that in your life too. I think BetterHelp can help you find that person.

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. And it's much more affordable than in-person therapy. So give it a try and see if online therapy can help lower your stress.

That Sounds Fun listeners, our friends get 10% off their first month at [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](https://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun). That's [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](https://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun).

And today's show is a little different than a typical show. For starters, hi Ashley.

**Ashley:** Well, hi.

**Annie:** I love when you're in here with me.

**Ashley:** I love being here.

**Annie:** Every Q&A episode we've done... Let's talk through it. We've done singleness-

**Ashley:** Yeah. Sabbath-

**Annie:** Sabbath, fasting-

**Ashley:** And gospels, reading the gospels.

**Annie:** And reading the gospels. The Sabbath one is actually on YouTube. So we'll get it over here one of these days. But you're always my partner in crime in all things, but also in our Q&A. So thank you for being here.

**Ashley:** Thank you for having me.

**Annie:** You're welcome. So Ash, as you know, instead of just one guest today, we're very lucky. We got a pile of them.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** Yes. We got so many questions about prayer. Oh, my gosh.

**Ashley:** And such good questions.

**Annie:** Yes. So we gave everybody the opportunity to submit questions for a prayer Q&A. We were going to do one episode, and then there was just too many questions that were too important. So today and Thursday, you guys are getting Q&A episodes. It was just there were too many good themes. This is a two part episode now. And so you'll get us today and again on Thursday.

So our guests are pastor of the pod, Kevin Queen, who y'all know and love, Beth Moore and Carlos Whittaker. So Kevin Queen is my pastor here in Nashville at CrossPoint church, Pastor of the pod, and one of the most consistent teachers in my life when it comes to prayer.

Beth Moore is an incredible Bible teacher and author and one of my very favorite Twitter follows. She is the president of Living Proof Ministries, a Houston-based Christian organization, which she founded to teach women to know and love Jesus through the study of Scripture.

And our buddy Carlos Whittaker, author and the host of The Human Hope podcast here on the That Sounds Fun Network. His prayer life is one that I've gotten to see up close in real life, and I am better for it.

Ash these three, why?

**Ashley:** I mean, what a dream!

**Annie:** Right. I mean, I'm just so thankful that when these questions come in, there will be some that you and I talk through.

**Ashley:** Sure.

**Annie:** But when these questions come in, there are experts really that we can invite in. And I'm really, really grateful. It means a lot that they've chosen to spend this time with us and lend their voices.

Here's how it'll go, friends. For today and Thursday, you'll hear a portion of my conversation with each guest, and then we are going to pray at the end of each show. So that is what you got. You got Pastor Kevin, Beth Moore, and Carlos coming up. So here is our prayer Q&A with Kevin Queen, Beth Moore, and Carlos Whittaker.

**[00:09:19] <music>**

**Annie:** Pastor Kevin, pastor of the pod.

**Kevin:** Annie.

**Annie:** Welcome back.

**Kevin:** Come on. Thanks for having me.

**Annie:** I mean, I apologize that we didn't even see you in 2021.

**Kevin:** Well, I was standing outside the building. I did have a lot of time. I was just waiting.

**Annie:** "Let me home."

**Kevin:** Just waiting. I'm just gonna say, when we have our prayer time in the green room and there's a group of us that pray, you always take the lesser seat. Like you take the seat in the back of the room, and I'm like, "Annie, get up here. Get up here at the front." So, I've been in the lessor seat out across the street from the building and I'm just grateful to get that invite.

**Annie:** I take the seat of the person who doesn't actually work at the church, who's just in a volunteer capacity. But I'm grateful.

**Kevin:** But you do come and pray. You do come and pray on Sundays. And that means so much to have you in that time of prayer. And that is a great segue to what we're talking about today. How about that?

**Annie:** How about that? Look at you, podcaster. Let's go. Kevin, I want you to start if you don't mind. Will you just give us what prayer means to you?

**Kevin:** Yeah. Prayer for me is like oxygen. It really is. It is life. So I don't want to just be a person who pray sometimes. I want prayer to be like oxygen every single day, where it's just living in communion with God.

For a lot of my life I knew that I had union with God because of salvation. You know, I grew up in a church where I prayed the prayer to receive Christ to begin a relationship with Him. I might have prayed that and grip the back of a pew every single Sunday. But it wasn't until I understood the communion with God.

So that union with God cannot be broken. But that communion with God, that's what I treasure, is what I want. I want to live in that place of just communion with Him. So it's conversation with God. It's listening. God is keeping company. That's the definition of prayer that I love is keeping company with God. There's a lot of different ways to do that. But it is life.

And I love to help other people enter into that place because it is so... and I know it's the same for you because it's so important and so life-giving for me. That if I can help other people take one more step toward that, then I can't think of a better thing to put time toward.

**Annie:** So we have a page, [anniefdowns.com/prayer](http://anniefdowns.com/prayer) that has a bunch of resources. And across the top, they can click books or sermons or movies or podcasts to listen to. So many of the books are ones you've recommended to me over the hills. Over the hills?

**Kevin:** Over the hills.

**Annie:** Over the years. I was about to say like Leonard Ravenhill. That's what my brain was doing. So I love reading people talk about prayer. Like I love books on prayer. I think it's just a fun thing to read anybody's testimony.

So you said something that leads to one of our first questions. One of our friends, Meg said, "Is there a certain prayer you have to pray to, quote "officially be saved"? I've heard so many conflicting things." And she said, "Your girl is confused." So did Jesus say, "Pray this thing and you'll for sure go to heaven?"

**Kevin:** No. The scripture that comes to mind is Romans 10:9. It says, "If you declare with your mouth that Jesus Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." So I think what was created, I think it was around the time of Charles Finney, is part of that revival and that move, was this idea of a sinner's prayer that would be prayed.

Basically, it's just helping put into words that scripture, that truth of placing your belief in Christ. It's a helpful way to help somebody come to that place. But I think there are people who made a decision to follow Jesus that that never prayed-

**Annie:** That never prayed the "right sentence," quote-quote.

**Kevin:** Right. So I think it comes back to the heart. And that's really what Jesus came for. He came for our hearts, He came to give us a new heart. So yeah, whether it's a certain prayer or whether it's just your heart's desire, saying, "Jesus, Jesus save me. Jesus, I give you my life" or "Jesus, I want to follow you."

**Annie:** I love that. I like to remind myself when I'm on stage, and I'm offering a prayer for people to commit to Jesus, I can't screw that up. Because all they have to do is confess with their mouth that He is Lord and believe in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead and they're saved. It is on me.

**Kevin:** That's one reason I think baptism is so powerful. Because we make those vows. But baptism is like the ring. Baptism is the public moment of saying, "I'm putting my Christ." So I can go back to that moment until I've prayed a prayer thousands and thousands of times, but I'd go back to that moment saying, "No, I've given my life to Jesus."

**Annie:** That's good. So we're kind of splitting up all these questions people have sent in in some buckets. And I have learned so much from you on prayer that I kind of wanted you to handle some of the nuts and bolts of the buckets. So we're gonna do some of the like, what does prayer really look like? What is the discipline? What does the practice look like?

We had Beth Redman on last week talking about a life of prayer. What does it look like when it just invade your life? So one of the questions, I mean, multiple people, but I'll read Shannon's. There's three or four people said, "What postures of prayer? Does it matter how we move our bodies or hold our bodies? Does it matter when we kneel? Does it matter when our hands are raised? Why does it matter what we do with our bodies? Does it matter what we do with our bodies?"

**Kevin:** I'll speak personally. And part of this, Annie, what we're talking about is a mystery. So part of it is it's a mystery that the God of all creation would invite us into relationship, invite us into conversation, that he would speak to us and want to hear from us. So...

**Annie:** It's not quite as black and white as fasting, a fasting conversation of like, "Here's when you start eating, here's when you stop eating. There's mystery to prayer."

**Kevin:** And it's deeply personal based on truth and the revelation of God in Christ. So when we think of postures and even thinking about postures of Jesus, that there were times where He lifted his hands when He's praying and there are other times where He bows down, He kneels down. So even in Christ as He's approaching



communion with the Father, there are times when He gets away from everybody else and withdraws. So I think it does matter what we do with our bodies.

I'll share a personal. When I'm praying, oftentimes, I am slouched on the couch. I sit back because I need to remind myself that I'm resting in the arms of the Father, that I'm resting in the arms of God. So even that song, there's a song, *Lean Back*, that just talks about that. That's the posture oftentimes when I'm just spending time in prayer and I'm just resting. Because I'm Type A and I'm driven and I want to get it done. So that's the posture.

But then sometimes it's, you know what? There's stuff I need to surrender. So I'll go and I'll get on my knees in that same spot down at the couch, but I'll turn different position. The other day I was reading through the story of Mary and Martha. I'm Type A but I wouldn't say I'm a busy body. But I'm very driven.

So sometimes I'll say, "Well, I'm not like Martha." But then I realized in that passage that I am like Martha in that she was in the kitchen making preparations. And I can be in the kitchen in my own mind. In my own imagination, I could be making sandwiches that Jesus didn't order. And for me, it's called worry and anxiety. You know, it is like in that moment, I realize, No, I might not physically making sandwiches-

**Annie:** But I'm working on something.

**Kevin:** But I'm working on something constantly in the future in my mind.

**Annie:** Yeah. Interesting.

**Kevin:** So for me, I sat down. The posture of prayer that day was like Mary. You know what I'm saying? I want to be like Mary. I want to take that posture. She's got this one concern that's greater. And I'm like, "Jesus, I want to sit at your feet" in that posture.

So oftentimes, when I'm reading the scripture and just keeping company with God, I'll listen through the Scripture and go, "Okay, what's the move God that you want me to make?" Where I'm telling my spirit, I'm telling my soul, I'm telling my heart the posture that it should have. And our bodies help us with that. So sometimes it's open hands, sometimes it's lifted hands. I don't necessarily want to do in public what I don't do in private.

**Annie:** I don't want to do in public what I don't do in private.

**Kevin:** Right. So I don't want to lift up my hands in public worship if I'm not lifting up my hands in private worship.

**Annie:** That's good.

**Kevin:** I don't want to be kneeling down... Because then it's a show, right? I want to live a life privately that's congruent with who I am publicly. And so private prayer helps us to maintain that kind of congruence and that kind of consistency.

**Annie:** This morning I was reading Ezekiel 44. And I sit in my same swirly chair, criss-cross applesauce every day, same blanket over my lap. I very rarely change position in my home life of prayer. Sometimes I walk. In my six minutes when my tea is getting ready, I'm pacing and praying for whatever is first on my brain that day.

But this morning, I read Ezekiel 44:28. And this is in the CSB. "This will be their inheritance: I am their inheritance." So that just sent me off in prayer. That just launched me into, yeah, you're my inheritance. And for the people I'm concerned about, be their inheritance, right? When they don't have anything else, right?

So I think you're teaching us a really good thing about in your morning time... And you and I both did this today. The thing we read launched us into the prayers we needed to pray.

**Kevin:** That's right.

**Annie:** And that scripture is speaking to us about how to pray.

**Kevin:** Right. We're letting God's words guide our words, guide our heart. And then when our hearts don't line up with God's word, we're asking God to help us with that.

**Annie:** Help me.

**Kevin:** I mean, I found in prayer a lot of times is I don't know what to say, right?

**Annie:** Yes. Oh, man, so many people. We were getting there. So keep going.

**Kevin:** But the gift of Scripture is you know the heart of God, you know the mind of God, you know the will of God through Scripture. And then you also get in the Psalms, you get this honest, just, you know, gut-level wrestling with sorrow and lament and pain and suffering. So it teaches us how to wrestle through, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Kevin:** It teaches us how to walk through the hard places, and how to... And I love how in the Psalms it ends at that place of life and exultation and truth and hope. So really Scripture is our gift when it comes to prayer.

**Annie:** So Mariah asked a question. She said, "Does God need details or is the Lord's Prayer enough?"

**Kevin:** I think the Lord's Prayer, when the disciples asked Jesus, they were like, "Hey, would you teach us how to pray?" So I go back and I go, That's the one thing they asked Jesus."

**Annie:** I quote you saying this all the time. It's the only thing they asked Him to teach.

**Kevin:** It's the only thing they asked. Because I think they heard that, like we were talking about communion, they were like, "I want to be intimate with the Father like that. I want what Jesus has there." And so they were like, "Would you teach us how to do that?"

So I think that's the most important first prayer. Well, okay, we talked about salvation. But they said, "Jesus, would you teach us how to pray?" And from that place then we take the life of a student, and we're all really in kindergarten. We are all just entering in.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Kevin:** So, Jesus, would you teach us? So you know the Lord's prayer He gives us that as a gift. He gives us that as a model. He gives us that as a snapshot, a picture. "Let me show you how to pray." And I think that's a great place to start. But then I think there's also, does God need the details? No, He wants the details.

**Annie:** Oh, say that.

**Kevin:** So he wants-

**Annie:** Even though He knows?

**Kevin:** Peter says, "Cast your cares on me." That's what he says. He says, "Cast your cares on Him for he cares for you." So I think that truth, that if it matters, if we're carrying it, He's like... There was a time when I was trying to really grow in prayer and the consistency of prayer. I really struggled with the discipline of daily prayer. And I really struggled with distraction. So I had a little post-it note where I would write down like... Gosh, I mean, it felt like there were squirrels in the attic every

time I'd sit down. So I was just like, "Oh, I'm gonna write down those things on a post it note."

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Kevin:** And I started writing down, you know, okay, I need to go visit my grandmother who's in nursing home. Okay, I need to get new tires on the car. Anytime some detail came up, I'd write it down. And I was filling up post-it notes with details of things that were distractions. And then it occurred to me, I thought those things were distracting me from God. But I was like, "No, this is the business of casting my cares on Him."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Kevin:** And inviting God into the details of our day. Because if it matters to us, it matters to God. I don't think it necessarily means that it matters to God as much as it matters to us.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Kevin:** I mean, because sometimes-

**Annie:** Because He just knows more. He sees me more.

**Kevin:** He knows more. And our value systems can get out of whack sometimes. Like mine.

**Annie:** Maybe for you.

**Kevin:** I'll just say for me.

**Annie:** Speak for yourself, pastor. (both laugh)

**Kevin:** But I think for us to be able to even write down some of those things in the details, we're giving those things and surrendering those things to Him.

**Annie:** One of our friends, Sarah, is asking, "Is there a proper form that we're supposed to use when we're praying?" I mean, you're saying, no.

**Kevin:** I don't have a proper form when I go talk with my earthly father. I'm blessed to have a great relationship with my earthly father.

**Annie:** Right. Big ups to Frank.

**Kevin:** I mean, we've got a great relationship over the years. And in the benefit of that I've just learned there's not really a formula. I just pick up the phone-

**Annie:** Because there are people who talk about doing confession, and then... and I think maybe... because you always say, "Have a place and a plan."

**Kevin:** Those things can be helpful, but I think if you're looking for a place to start, I think those things can be... Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication.

**Annie:** A-C-T-S. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Will you talk about what each of those are? Is that the Lord's Prayer? I don't know.

**Kevin:** It's a great question.

**Annie:** Let everybody open up the Lord's Prayer, you just sort it out yourself.

**Kevin:** Right. But I think adoration is giving God praise. Confession is confessing our sin to Him, confessing our weakness, confessing our brokenness-

**Annie:** Worries.

**Kevin:** Worries, yeah. Confessing those sins to God. Thanksgiving would be, make a list of the things that you're thankful for.

**Annie:** Speak of that every day.

**Kevin:** Every day. And then and then supplication would be, okay, what are the things that you're asking? Like, we talked about intercession? What are the things that we're asking God for? I'll just tell you, I've struggled with formula, but I have found formula helpful as a guide. I don't want to constrict it to those things. But I think if you're looking for a great place to start, those things can be helpful.

Can I tell a quick story? There was one time when I was with a family... This is one of my best/worst stories. I was with a family and it was a really hard time. They had somebody in the hospital and there was a lot of anxiety in the room. And the grandmother looked over and we were all standing there and she said, "Would you lead us in the Lord's Prayer?" And I was like, "Yeah."

And I began "Our father," and everybody began to pray, "Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done..." And then I drew a blank. Annie, I couldn't remember the Lord's Prayer. I was a pastor. I've been a pastor for like 5 years and I couldn't remember the Lord's Prayer. So I look up on

my little help. And granny, she came through, she came through and she helped lead us through it. But I realized, like, "You know what, when we were charged with anxiety, it's hard to pray."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Kevin:** When we're charging anxiety, it's hard to remember. When we were charged with anxiety in the room, it's hard to connect. And sometimes we need other people to help us pray. And sometimes we need other people who know how to pray to help us pray. Because we learn how to pray by praying with people who know how to pray.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Kevin:** So I think it's okay to say, even as a pastor, "I need help right now." So even people who are listening say, "I need help." That's what disciples were asking Jesus. "We need help and learn how to pray."

I went out to the car, I was so angry at the fact that I forgot and I bit my steering wheel. I've never done that before, but... And I had to drive around with those teeth marks on my steering. Somebody else is driving that car right now.

**Annie:** They are like, "What happened that day?"

**Kevin:** But I remember I'd only been a pastor for maybe five, six years, but it was the anxiety that kept me. Anxiety keeps us from prayer. But that prayer is that place where God wants to bring His peace. And sometimes we need other people to help with that.

**Annie:** Because that's one of the overarching themes of all these questions—we got hundreds of questions—is people are worried they're doing it wrong. But I think they're worried they're doing it wrong because they're not getting the answers they're expecting. So you think, well, if God's not answering the way I thought He would, then I must be doing something wrong. Is that true?

**Kevin:** I think it's helpful to think about prayer as a relationship. There are things that I've been praying for for years, I mean for decades, that I just haven't seen. And I have to remind myself that prayer is not an ATM. It's a potter's wheel.

**Annie:** It's a potter's wheel.

**Kevin:** And that God is forming me, He's shaping me.

**Annie:** Man, I hope this is a bowl. Come on, Lord. This is a bowl, right? This is a bowl, right? And then the sides start going up and you're like, "Oh, no, it ain't a bowl." It's a candlestick. I didn't think it was gonna be a candlestick holder." Right?

**Kevin:** Yeah.

**Annie:** The ATM thing, I hear you. I just don't know a lot of people who go, "I'm mad because God didn't give me exactly what I wanted. It seems more that people say, "I prayed and I thought I was in line and this did not go the way I thought it would." So potter's wheel is a better... For my heart, I connect a lot with that.

**Kevin:** And then as we grow and discern the voice of God, there are some times where God will give us something to pray for and we'll have a deep sense, okay, this is something that He wants to do. So I think like praying in His will. A lot of prayer is trying to-

**Annie:** How do we do that?

**Kevin:** ...how to dig through. We're trying to dig through our own will to find the will of God. And so a lot of us just we're in the same box and we're digging through to try to discern and try to find His will. And then it's also Jesus said, "Pray in my name." So what does it mean to pray in His name? What does it mean to pray with His authority but also with His character?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Kevin:** Right. So it's like we're trying to dig through and discern like, Okay, what is the character of God in this? What is the will of God in this? And it takes time. Pottery takes time. ATM doesn't take much. We want the ATM. We want the instant results-

**Annie:** That's right.

**Kevin:** ...but it takes time in His presence.

**[00:27:53] <music>**

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Chime](#). No one likes waiting on a paycheck. Truth be told, I don't like wait no much of anything, but especially not money you've earned and double especially not when you got bills due.

Good thing, there's Chime. Now you can get your paycheck up to two days early with direct deposit. That's up to two more days to save, budget, pay bills and

generally just feel good about your money situation. But Chime is more than just about getting paid early. It's also an award-winning mobile app, checking account, debit card, and optional savings account.

So what are you waiting for? Hopefully not your paycheck. Get started with time today. Apply for a free account. It takes less than two minutes. You can get started at [chime.com/thatoundsfun](https://chime.com/thatoundsfun). That's [chime.com/thatoundsfun](https://chime.com/thatoundsfun). Banking services and debit card provided by The Bancorp Bank or Stride Bank, N.A., Members FDIC. Early access to direct deposit funds depends on the payer.

**Sponsor:** And I've got another amazing partner to tell you about, [Epic Will](#). There are a few reasons that my friends I've talked to give for not having a will. One said they don't really have much stuff that would be quote-unquote, "worth leaving to anyone." Another said she started crying every time she tried to think about who would care for her children in her absence. And one more said it's something she's been meaning to do, but she just hasn't gotten around to it.

But y'all, having an estate plan is more than all that. I mean, it includes the things of course, but it's truly a way to be proactive and intentional about your legacy. It's a way for now us to be good friends to future us. And it's a way to keep our loved ones from having to make really difficult financial and health decisions for us without knowing our wishes. So take it for me your big sister-ish friend AFD, you need Epic Will.

Epic Will is the easiest and most affordable way I know 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 be your financial power of attorney and who you would trust to care for your kids. In a few simple steps and also helps you designate who your belongings would go to and create your advance directive.

Basically, [epicwill.com](https://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. When the gals here at the office sat down to log on to Epic Will, we found it was really helpful to have a buddy to talk through these things like organ donation and financial decisions with. So grab a friend and get this taken care of together today.

And I love this. That the team at Epic Will is dedicated to caring for single moms and orphans. In fact, they provide single moms with kids under the age of 18 access to a free will and they donate 10% of their proceeds to organizations helping orphans find their forever home. That's what you're supporting when you use Epic Will to create your will.



[Epicwill.com](http://Epicwill.com) has built the most comprehensive, self-guided earliest state 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 state plan with Epic Will. Go to [Epicwill.com](http://Epicwill.com) and use the promo code TSF20 for 20% off. Again, that's [epicwill.com](http://epicwill.com) and use the promo code TSF20 for 20% off. Get the peace of mind that comes with knowing your belongings, your family, and your legacy are protected with Epic Will.

And now back to our conversation on prayer.

**[00:31:05] <music>**

**Annie:** Beth, thank you for being here.

**Beth:** I could not be happy to be here with you two girls today and with those that are listening in or watching. I'm very, very happy.

**Annie:** We're excited about it. I'd love for you to just first of all say how prayer matters to you.

**Beth:** Well, it is the basis, it's the most formal way of communicating with someone that you love or that you want to love and want to know. When I think about my husband, Keith or I think about my daughters, Amanda and Melissa and I think, Okay, cut out all language between us, there's still a lot that we have. But our way of making one another understood is through communication. It is going to be through language. It's God's way. He spoke and things were. So His way is often through words. So that is going to be the meat of that relationship with God. So I mean, it truly is the lid on the ditch for me.

**Annie:** Yeah, wow.

**Beth:** I mean, it is like you remove prayer and God doesn't move. But at the moment you remove prayer, then for me, you have just removed or I have removed, rather, the lid over that pit and I am going to walk straight in it. Sooner or later I'm going to. And it may look a different way than it looked in my 30s. Or it may look a different way than it's ever looked in my life. But it will be a pit. I will go in that ditch. I just will. So that's the heart of it. That's the meat of it.

**Annie:** When people talk to me about my spiritual disciplines, I'm always like, "Y'all I understand the walls are so high because of my inclination to fall. I'm not disciplined spiritually because I'm good at this. It's because I'm the weakest of us.

**Beth:** No, it's the absolute truth. I have had one thing that I've brought to the mix, everything else has been God. One thing I bring to the mix is desperation. And I seem to always have it.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Beth:** If it's not for this reason, it's for that reason. So it's just that that keeps me in it because I am always facing some kind of challenge, some kind of problem, I got something I've got to overcome, or something I'm just not up to that I've got to do. And so it's just a constant thing. I don't know where I would be or where I'd... Oh, the fumbling around I would do in the lack of leadership. So yeah, it's the only way for me to stay between the ditches, I promise you.

**Annie:** Same. Okay, let's jump into some of our questions from our friends listening. Shelby is asking, "Am I supposed to pray to God or Jesus or both? And how do I know?"

**Beth:** Yes, yes. I may think of God in a more benevolent way than some people do. But I just have a hard time thinking He's gonna, "Oops, you broke the rule." Let's always go to the Word of God and see. The most formal and most consistent way that we see New Testament prayer, we're New Testament believers. That doesn't mean we don't have all the songs to go by, all the Old Testament principles and language and verbiage to go by. It just means that we're praying in the name of Jesus. So that's what's really different for us.

So the most common way, of course, there's nothing common about it, but the most familiar way in New Testament scripture is to pray to the Father in the name of the Son. But there are also times, like I'm thinking of Stephen in the book of Acts, Stephen speaks straight to Jesus. He said, "Lord Jesus..." He speaks straight to Jesus.

**Ashley:** Oh my gosh.

**Annie:** Never thought about that.

**Beth:** Yes. Yes, He does. And there are other times, you know, you think, if the Holy Spirit is the one who is teaching us, He's the one reminding us of what the Father has said, and He's the one we're hoping to be filled with the Spirit, then it's also appropriate that we're going to often whisper, "Holy Spirit, empower this. I don't want this to be in my own strength. I want this to be yours."

So what I love to remember is it's three in one. So to address one is to address all three. And I just don't think that we're going to somehow fail at it if we are going to

God in the name of Jesus. But just technically, yes, that most of my prayers are going to be: Dear... I'm going to start very often with Abba, my dear Abba, and very often I'm going to close it up with "in the name of Jesus." So that's the most common fit.

**Annie:** A lot of these questions, Beth, multiple people use the language magic formula, because everyone thinks there's a thing I'm not saying and that's why I'm not getting what I'm praying for.

**Beth:** Well, that's exactly right. And the thing about it is that what we find about prayer, the more we grow in a relationship with Him. And none of us have attained it. We're just all, you know, walking and taking one step at a time. But that prayer is far more about access than it is about answers. It's that you are in the holy presence. That you literally have a straight line of communication to God that you can go boldly.

When Hebrews 4 says that, it means with complete freedom of speech. Therefore, that tells me, Annie and Ashley, that I don't have to worry I'm going to mess it up all the time.

**Annie:** Right.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Beth:** Because He said, "Come to me in boldness," a word that in Greek means in complete freedom of speech.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Beth:** I might groan, I might have no words to it whatsoever. I might just sit in complete need and agony and pain before the Lord and not a word is coming out. It may be, as our friend says, you know, liquid worship. She says she just sits there and doesn't have a single word for the Lord. She just has tears streaming down her cheeks. So it's all just that communication and communing with God in fellowship with the Son and the Spirit.

**Annie:** I mean, a lot of our friends... I'm looking at a question from Emily, I'm looking at a question from Angie, a question from Jessica, I mean, people want to know if prayer changes God's mind.

**Beth:** Oh, I just love that question.

**Annie:** Me too. I love talking about this.

**Beth:** I do too. I do, too. See, we know that prayer is never a waste of time because it is something that we are taught to do, told to do by God over and over again. We have the precedent more than I even know in my mind how to go through and count of times in Scripture where prayer was the agent that God used to bring about the change.

He's wanting us to ask. We wonder like, Why would He do that? He already knows what we need. Jesus says, "Your Father in heaven knows what you need." So if He does want, why should we even ask? Why does He say that ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find?

Because I'll—bring this back—every single time ladies, He is bringing us back over and over to engagement. Remember, that's what He is after. He is after interaction between us. He is after engagement. So we're asking because it puts us in that dialogue with God. So there is that process.

And we are told over and over and over and over again, we are shown it in story, we are told it in narrative and we are commanded by God to bring our prayers, bring our requests. And we see Him move so often. There are a number of times we do not. And that is when we live in that mysterious place of trust.

I heard Christine Caine say... Just about a week and a half ago, we weren't at an event together. And I loved what she said. She had turned us to Acts 12. So I'll ask somebody to look this up later. And she talks about, of course, that the Apostle James has just been beheaded. And then Peter is in prison and they're planning to do the same thing with him but the church is earnestly praying for his release.

So she says, "How do we live in that balance between James being beheaded and Peter being released from prison? That you know they prayed against the martyrdom of James." She said the question is going to be, can we live in that tension and continue to believe my God is good, He is sovereign, He knows what He is doing, and He knows what I am asking?

Now, I love where we are told, and I always will do this... We're going to get to this sooner or later in our conversation, so I'll say it now. I'm going to first pray the desires of my heart. I truly am. I think that there's everything right about that. But the Word of God says to the psalmist in Psalm 37, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart," think about delighting in the Lord. I love to pray that He'll give me delight for Him because delight changes the way you pray. Because the joy that you have in Him is going to make you less apt, it's gonna make me less apt to pray for something that's just, you know, for my own lust.

Now, I don't mean for my own desires. I think there's a very big difference between lust and the desires of our heart. And He very often, in the development of relationship... and I want to say too many of our sisters and brothers, relationship with God builds just like any other relationship. When my toddlers were first talking to me in their little broken sentences and using all the wrong words, I still thought they were delightful because they were talking to me. And I would often know what they meant. And I would have to laugh later that this is the way they said it.

Why would we think our Father in heaven would not be the same way about us? That He doesn't know okay, we're just learning the language of prayer? We don't really know. We think about what we prayed for and just shudder to think, "What if He'd given it to me?" But He tells us He is profoundly affected by prayer. And we must believe that and believe it to the last breath.

**Annie:** One of our friends Kristen asked, "What do you picture when you pray?" I love what you're saying of like we start with the desires of our heart, we pray toward that. So what are you picturing in your mind when you pray?

**Beth:** I love, in John 11, when we are told that Jesus, He looks up. Do y'all remember? Okay, let me open it real quick. John 11, He's about to raise Lazarus from the dead. And of course Martha is just already worried that he's gonna stink and there's all that going on.

It's going to be in 41 and 42 of John 11. It says that He looks up, He raised his eyes and say... So I'm very often... It depends on whether I'm writing or not. But very often I like to look up because I love that Jesus is looking up. And I love that he knows exactly what He's looking up toward. And two, He knows exactly how it looks. And he says, "Father, I thank You that You've always heard Me."

So okay, we don't know what the face of God looks like. The three of us, nor any of our listeners even know what the face of Christ looked exactly right. But here is what I love to do. I love to just think of His feet. Go with me here because I'm going to sound ridiculous.

Think with me in Ezekiel 1 when we're getting a glimpse at the throne room of God, and it says that he see the pavement at the bottom of his feet. And we're told a little bit about what that looks like. Well, I always think, Okay, I love to picture that I am at the feet of Jesus. And I don't know exactly what they look like, but that's where I like to picture myself in. That I'm right there. That I'm like Mary of Bethany, I'm seated at His feet or I'm like Mary of Bethany, I'm laid out at His feet. Just that I'm right there.

So I don't always picture anything, but if I'm going to really, really zero in, I am picturing the throne. And so I'm picturing sort of the bottom of that chair, that lofty chair and I'm picturing those feet. So I'm probably totally off there but it just gives me something, that closeness, that something to envision that somewhere close to a description in Scripture.

**Annie:** Ash, I'd love for you to answer this too.

**Ashley:** I want to hear your answers as well.

**Annie:** When I'm praying, I am picturing whatever I'm praying for happening. I'm watching the scene of what... So I'm picturing what... I should be looking at Jesus.

**Beth:** Annie, I love that.

**Annie:** I love that too.

**Ashley:** You are a futurist. You have a vision for what you hope for.

**Annie:** What do you picture?

**Beth:** Annie, I love that.

**Annie:** Yeah? Okay, I think I'm doing that.

**Beth:** Okay, Ashley, you?

**Ashley:** I am often picturing words. Like words that would be in my handwriting. And other than that, the other image... It's not unlike you, Beth. It's a lap. My earliest memories of my dad are of him sitting in his rocking chair in the sitting room, the one without the TV, reading his bible in the evenings. He was not a morning Bible guy. He was an evening Bible guy. He probably still is. I need to ask him.

So frequently, he would just welcome me to come sit in his lap with him while he read. Before I could read he had read *The Pilgrim's Progress* out loud to me.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Ashley:** And I was transfixed, like hanging on every word. But that type of, even without words, comfort of that togetherness, that type of lap.

**Annie:** Man, I'm so glad we're talking about this because that is three very different visuals.

**Beth:** Very, very, very different.

**Annie:** Oh, interesting.

**Beth:** And I don't think all three of them very much have their place. But I think one of the things that Ashley and I are both talking about that's so important is proximity. That I do picture that I am before the throne. That there is no distance. That because of Jesus, there is no distance between me and the Father to whom I am bringing my petitions. And I think that is incredibly important.

And then, Annie, what you're talking about is that prayer of faith. So you're picturing, by faith you're picturing that this that you are asking is in the process of happening. And I'm gonna tell you something. Don't think I'm not going to be trying all three of these.

**Annie:** That's what I'm thinking. I'm like, "Jesus tomorrow morning, get your feet ready because I'm coming. I'm coming to look at your feet."

**Beth:** "I'm coming for your feet."

**Annie:** At your pedicure.

**Beth:** And I've got a picture that is happening.

**Annie:** That's right.

**[00:47:11] <music>**

**Annie:** Today with us, Carlos Whittaker.

**Carlos:** Hey.

**Annie:** Hey.

**Ashley:** Hey.

**Carlos:** Hey, guys.

**Annie:** Thanks for joining us.

**Carlos:** I was thinking to myself, I don't think I've seen your faces since we were in Florida together live on a stage.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, I think you're right.

**Carlos:** I was saying inappropriate things. Did those things ever make it on the podcast?

**Annie:** They are coming. It's coming in July. They're gonna hear everything in July. Well, not everything. They're gonna hear a lot of the show in July. Thank you for doing that. That was so fun. Oh, my gosh, it was so fun. Carlos, I want to tell you an interesting thing of why you're here.

**Carlos:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Is we got all these questions in and there were maybe three big themes that happened. One of them is what I really want to talk to you about. The other two were covering, one was about praying out loud and another theme about how to pray, just some how to pray. And then what do you do when God doesn't answer?

So we're talking about in the office... And Ashley, you pick up from there. We're talking about the office...

**Ashley:** Well, and I said, "You know, it's like how Carlos says, 'You pray the promise, not the problem.'" And then I kind of stopped and was like, "Gosh, I mean, I can't think of a more specifically transformative lesson about prayer that I've learned than what I've learned from you and watching you practice it.

**Carlos:** Sure.

**Ashley:** I mean, you and Heather live that. So I said that and Annie was like, "Well, I think maybe we should ask Carlos to join us in this."

**Carlos:** And here we are.

**Annie:** And here we are. When did prayer change for you?

**Carlos:** That's a great question.

**Annie:** Thank you.

**Carlos:** I think maybe the last iteration of prayer changing for me. I think prayer has changed for me every year throughout my journey as a believer. The last major reckoning of my prayer life came, I think, when my daughter was in the hospital, when Sohaila was in the hospital in 2019.



That was one of my prayers went from praying for other people, praying for maybe problems in my life or things that I could ultimately control with my behaviors to I have zero control over the situation. So that's when it changed for me. For those that don't know, my daughter was... she ended up in Vanderbilt Children's Hospital for a month, a little less than a month with an unknown illness. We had no idea what was happening. We didn't know what to do.

That was when I really shifted my prayer to what Ash was talking about. From, I'd say the first four days she was in there, there were overwhelmed groaning, which I think is it biblical. I think we can do that. I think David shows us that he groans in his prayer. But my prayer shifted from all the problems that we were facing to, you know what? What is the promise and the promises that God has for Sohaila, her life?

And I just begin to declare those things. I just begin to shift how I prayed. And I started praying the promises instead of praying the problems. And that for me was ultimately when my prayer life changed.

**Annie:** Because God answered in the way you were hoping He would.

**Carlos:** Yeah. So I would say in two ways it changed. a, it changed just because I was reminding myself on a daily basis what the promises were.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Carlos:** So I would say that my prayer life changed even before it was answered in the way that I had hoped. So I think that's important for people to hear is that my prayer life changed me before Sohaila got out of the hospital. Things were shifted before whatever answer that I was looking for came. So I think that's the beauty of prayers. Had a different result happened, your question is before Sohaila got out, I was changed.

**Annie:** The experience changed you before the answer.

**Carlos:** Yes. And so yes, it changed me. And then it also changed me. And yes, like I did see, I feel like God come through. Again, I get very protective of people, even your listeners that are listening to this going, you know, someone's probably listening to this going, "Well, of course."

This is a big problem I have with the way Christians talk about prayer. When something happens that we hope for, it's, "Oh, won't He do it? Whoa, you know." But then when something happens that we aren't hoping for in our prayer, it's well, "God works in mysterious ways."

**Annie:** Oh, right. Oh, right. I know.

**Carlos:** Here's the only caveat I would add to that is I just wish that we would say God works in mysterious ways when He does answer the prayers. Because we save that for when we don't understand. But the truth is He's still working in mysterious ways when it ends up happening the way we want it to happen. So yeah.

**Annie:** That's a perfect lead. Ashley, one of our friends sent in an audio question that I would love for Carlos to answer. "So I know some people who have a prayer list. So when they're spending time with God, they pray through that list faithfully each day. And I know other people who they only pray when God like put something on their hearts. So I've always kind of been with that because I like the faithfulness and prayer. But I feel like my prayers feel the most powerful when I am led by the Holy Spirit. So is there a balancing thing? Or does it depend on the person? I'm just kind of curious whether we should just be led by the Spirit or faithfulness in it or a mixture?"

So I would love for both y'all to answer this. Is it a list? Is it when the Holy Spirit tells you to pray? Is there a right answer?

**Carlos:** I think the answer is yes. I think it's both. For me for the longest time, I would say and maybe in my maturing in my prayer life, for the longest time it was petitions and requests. I think that's how we learned to pray. When I was young, when I was a child, it's like, ask God for something or... So it was a lot of asking, which is biblical, which is asking and waiting and hopefully hearing.

I think as I've grown in my prayer life I've realized that that's just one part of it. For me, there has to be daily consecration. There has to be this. And for some people, it may feel ritualistic. But again, you and I both know John Eldredge's daily prayer. I have formed that into my own thing. Heather has helped me with that and my wife. Heather, my wife. I just said that in very confusing ways.

So now I have this daily prayer that I pray every day. I almost can say it without even reading it anymore. I mean, it's a good 10 minutes long, where I'm consecrating my day. I'm not asking God for anything. I'm just really surrounding every aspect of what I do, the boundaries of my kingdom with His will and His goodness and all the things. So I consecrate my day.

Then I move and I shift into the prayer and petition part, the asking. But for me, it takes both. And for me I feel like my day is just set up... before I asked Him for anything, I just set the day with that consecrating prayer. How about you, Ash?

**Ashley:** I agree that it's both. So much of my prayer life is kind of breath by breath throughout the day. Not that God's ever not involved in my day. But there are so many times that I'm like, "Okay, Lord." As I'm making decisions and as I am just walking through the day, those moments feel like a friendly conversation where I feel like that's as much the Spirit prompting me and being like, "Hey, I'm here. What do we need to talk about while we're doing this?"

But then yeah, there is a time in my day where I sit down and I do... It's not exactly a list, but it's definitely like a set-aside time that feels like faithfulness.

**Annie:** Yeah. I mean, I have them written on my wall. I have three sticky notes that tell me who do I pray for every single day that I'm sitting there. Every single day.

**Carlos:** I love how she was... Actually, it felt like while she was asking that question, that was something that Holy Spirit probably was ready and is ready to help her with. It's like those moments. It's like, "Am I supposed to do the list? Am I supposed to ask specific?" It's freaking awesome. This is like the moment to hear and ask Him because I think that is what we should be doing every day. Asking all day long. "Which way should I pray today?"

**Annie:** Yes, that's beautiful. So this is a question from Kayla, Carlos. "Is there any topic you don't ask God for direction in?" She said, "I tend to think most of my problems are too small for God to have interest in or time for and only bring Him the big stuff."

**Carlos:** I sometimes think I'm a crazy person for asking God everything. Asking God about everything. Perfect example, yesterday morning... When we're recording this, yesterday morning was Easter morning. We're at my house. Well, my kids are now 19, 18, and 16. It is just as traumatic on Sunday morning to try and get the entire family out to get to church. Now, it's like, "Are the boyfriends riding with us? Who's riding with you?" You left me. I thought..."

And my truck was parked at the end of my driveway. Every other vehicle that belonged to the other 27 people that were in the house was in front of my truck and they could not get out. The last second when people are ready to get out, I'm like, "I'm leaving in 10 minutes. Dad, I need you to move your truck." I can't find my keys. We're desperately looking for my keys." I literally asked Jesus, "Jesus, where are my keys?" I ask Him everything.

**Annie:** Me too.

**Carlos:** So I'm not talking about big things. You got to be asking Him the little things too. Why in the world would God only care about the big things in our life? He cares

about the tiny... He cares about where your keys are? So yes, to answer the question, I ask Him about all things.

**Annie:** Rachel asks, "How do I pray like I know God is listening?"

**Carlos:** How do I pray like I know God is listening? Well, I mean, I'll just answer this as vulnerably as I've ever answered a question. Sometimes I pray and I don't know if He's listening. I think it's okay to have to come with doubts. I think it's okay to sometimes pray and wonder. I'll even get to places... I mean, here I am, Carlos Whittaker, a 48-year-old man that has... You know, I talk about Jesus every day on the internet and podcasts and books and things. There are moments I wake up sometimes as close to atheist as I've ever been in my entire life. Like, "Wait a second, is this whole thing a facade?"

**Annie:** Me too. Me too, Carlos.

**Carlos:** "Is this actually real?" Carlos, you have to remind yourself every day. As a Christian, I believe that there was like a human being that walked on the earth that was murdered, was dead, and three days later got up and walked out and is now in heaven. I'm like, "That is crazy talk." So there's moments where I don't believe. Lord help my unbelief, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Carlos:** So yeah. I mean, there's the long answer to a short question.

**Annie:** That's great. This is Zoey. "Does it make a difference praying out loud as opposed to in my head? Does it still count? And can God hear me?"

**Carlos:** Oh, it's a great question. I love that question.

**Annie:** It's an incredible question.

**Carlos:** Gosh, so good. Well, yes, God can still hear you.

**Annie:** In your head or out loud?

**Carlos:** In your head or out loud. But for me—again, now we're talking about how I am reacting as a human and my tendencies to my relationship with God—when I say something out loud, there's more oomph to it. There's something that deposits it deeper maybe in my ethos when I say something out loud. I mean, I don't want to get super down some theological rabbit trail here. But we've got to remember that God can hear our thoughts, right? Because He's God.

But the enemy, okay, the enemy is not God. So, as I am battling, sometimes when I'm praying with warfare and praying against things, I say those things out loud because I don't want to give the enemy and maybe think dark things in my life. I don't want to give them the same ability that God has. They can't hear my thoughts. So, therefore, I will say these things out loud if I'm gonna banish them out of a roof. I'm gonna, you know, again, we're going into some warfare to talk. But I say things out loud when I'm praying so that the enemy can hear me.

**Annie:** Our words have the power of life and death is what Proverbs says. It matters. We can kill some stuff.

**Carlos:** Let's go.

**Annie:** ...with our words in a good way. Sometimes I think we only teach that the life part is the only part that's good. It's like no, no, it's great that we can kill things with our words. Not each other. But we can kill curses with our words.

**Carlos:** Yes, we can.

**Annie:** We can kill discouragement with our words. So that's good. That's really good, Carlos. So we have got pages of questions. So the big chunk that I would love for you to speak to are unanswered prayers. Listen, me too is the first thing I'll say. I mean, you too, Ash?

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** You too, Carlos?

**Carlos:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Johnny? Yes. Every one of us have unanswered prayers. So of all the sections we can talk about, we are most expert on not getting what we ask God for, honestly.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** So, Rachel, "Why does it sometimes feel like my prayers hit the ceiling?"

**Carlos:** I don't know, first of all. Can I say that?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Carlos:** Can it be okay that we say "I don't know"?

**Annie:** Thank you. Thank you.

**Carlos:** Okay. So it's... I think it was Rachel.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Carlos:** I don't know why sometimes your prayers feel like they hit the ceiling. But I can speak to when my prayers have felt like they've hit the ceiling. For me, when I am not in a habit of my daily prayer, when I have come out of rhythm with how I'm communing with God on the little things in life and I'm only asking God for the big things, at those times is when...

Because let's be honest. If we're really paying attention to Holy Spirit, and we are having this conversational intimacy with Holy Spirit, and we're speaking to him all day long, asking him little things, I'm going to get yeses and nos all day. When I'm just coming to Him with, gosh, I quit my job and I'm like... there's the big one. Right?

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Carlos:** I haven't developed my muscle on my daily hearing yeses and nos. So for me, when I feel like my prayers are hitting the ceiling, for me, that's mostly like big things. It's mostly like big, unanswered things that I've been waiting a long time for. When I get into the habit of asking every day, "Lord, Chick-fil-A or Chipotle? Which one? God, Where's my keys?" Lord, what Scripture should I read? Lord, what does that have to do...?" And I start to hear him every day answer those things, guess what? I feel like the vault in the ceiling is lifted in my prayer life.

So now I'm not as concerned that I'm not hearing about the big thing because I am hearing about little things all day. I don't know if that makes sense.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Carlos:** But when I said it, that's kind of like we're at fault.

**Annie:** I feel like John Eldridge taught me. That like when he talks about and writes about asking God where to go on vacation, and if to go on vacation. So I've been, "Is that what you want me to go? How do you want me to spend that?" You know, like, thoughtful about that. The other thing that comes to my mind, Carlos, is our feelings get to ride but they don't get to drive.

**Carlos:** I love when you say that.

**Annie:** And I feel like a lot of the connection with unanswered prayers is what we feel. And our feelings don't always tell us the whole truth.

**Carlos:** Right. Right.

**Annie:** And so even if you feel like God isn't listening, that isn't what gets to win.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Right?

**Carlos:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Does sin play into it? Can our sin keep God from hearing us?

**Carlos:** Oh, do we have a phone of Theologian?

**Annie:** Phone a friend?

**Carlos:** A theologian, Annie. I mean, I don't know. I don't think I'm to the point where I can necessarily answer that question with maybe the authority that somebody smarter and that study the word more has it. But I mean, again, if we're just talking about our own kind of personal antidote, yes. My sin has definitely gotten in the way of me hearing from God. I mean, if I just-

**Annie:** For sure my sins have gotten in the way of me hearing God. No question about it.

**Carlos:** At least my sin has. If I go back to like the Los big sin days, 2007 to 2010, or little sin days, like all of them are getting in the way, which is why again in my book *Kill the Spider*, I have written out the daily prayer that I use, there is a part of that daily prayer where I am repenting of my sins. And I feel like that does maybe open up the breezeway and the conversation in the channel, because I'm getting rid of that stuff on a daily basis.

**Annie:** This is Psalm 66:16-20. I'm gonna read The Message version.

**Carlos:** Okay. Oh, you're gonna read the cool version.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. I think this one part is gonna help us understand. One of our friends sent this verse in. Aleta sent this verse in. "All believers, come here and listen, let me tell you what God did for me. I called out to him with my mouth," so out loud-

**Carlos:** Let's go.

**Annie:** "...my tongue shaped the sounds of music." That's beautiful. "If I had been cozy with evil, the Lord would never have listened."

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** "But he most surely did listen, he came on the double when he heard my prayer. Blessed be God: he didn't turn a deaf ear, he stayed with me, loyal in his love."

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** "If I had been cozy with evil, the Lord would never have listened."

**Carlos:** I mean, that's pretty sharp. That's it. So to me, I think you're right. I think what I've experienced most is my sin keeping me from hearing God. And what David said is "if you're cozy with evil." And I'm not sure any of our friends are cozy with evil. You guys say a lot of little yeses to get to a big yes that had you cozy with evil.

**Carlos:** Cozy with evil. Wow.

**Annie:** He would never have listened.

**Carlos:** Wow. Strong.

**Annie:** Keep us from that, Lord. Only the Lord can keep us from that, right?

**Carlos:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Josie says, "I've been praying for my brother to know God since as long as I can remember." I mean, Carlos, if we've got one, we've got plenty of people saying there is someone I'm praying for to know God, to be healed, to not suffer anymore. When you're praying for someone... This is Josie's question. When praying for someone over years and years with no changes, what's my next step?

**Carlos:** I mean, that's where I'm at with my brother. So I hear that and I feel that. It's been solid, for sure, about six years of my list that I've got in my... You know, my brother knows this. So Eddie, if you're listening to the podcast, I prayed again for you today.

**Annie:** He's very handsome.

**Carlos:** Yes. Yes.



**Annie:** I know he has a wife for sure.

**Carlos:** He's got the most beautiful green eyes. And I pray for Eddie every day. It's been six years running and I'm not going to stop. There's a man named LeRoy Eims who taught me... I was in college when I heard him at this conference. He was like 87 years old at the conference. And he said, "So many of us are 18 inches away from heaven and hell. We know it in our minds, but we don't have it in our hearts." I'm like, that was super [unintelligible 01:08:11], right? But something else he said at 87 was that he prayed for his brother for 60 years before his brother accepted Christ.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Carlos:** So did God answer that prayer?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Carlos:** Did it take way longer than LeRoy wanted us to see?

**Annie:** Sure.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Carlos:** Just keep praying. Just keep going.

**Annie:** Just keep praying. My theory is, what have I got to lose if I pray until I die for someone? What have I got to lose? What do I have to lose if I quit? I can't measure. I don't want to know. I don't want to know. Right. But that does not feel good.

**Carlos:** No. of course, no.

**Annie:** What are your thoughts?

**Ashley:** I can't find it very quickly. But isn't there a passage in scripture that says to keep praying and don't give up?

**Annie:** Yeah. You know me about the persistent widow. Jesus says, "I'm going to tell you a story that is going to tell you why you should pray and not give up." I mean, that is what he says. That's how he intros the persistent widow.

**Ashley:** I mean, the Lord uses perseverance in a lot of areas of our life, but I think perseverance and prayer, specifically to form our character. So there's an answer. Even if it's not the answer to the request that we're presenting and persevering with, there's an answer that God cares about who we are and who we're becoming as we petition Him.

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

**Carlos:** In the obedience there's stuff that's happening. As the great theologian, Garth Brooks, says-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Carlos:** There it is. You're about there. Sometimes I think God... Now, listen, I'm not quoting scripture here. I'm quoting a man just as deeply flawed as me who actually though in this chorus... I'm just telling you I read this course all the time to people. "Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers. Remember when you're talking to the man upstairs? Just because He doesn't answer doesn't mean He don't care. Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers."

And I think to myself, what are those gifts of like now if I look back at things I prayed for that I'm grateful I didn't get? Oh my gosh. Like, I loved you, Julie B-

**Annie:** Listen, I was gonna say I've got a museum of men that the Lord was... a gift of unanswered prayers. But with Heather Whittaker, Lord have mercy. Thank you, Jesus, for not answering the way I wanted you to answer.

**Annie:** And I think part of Josie's question, praying for years and years with no changes, we actually don't know. We don't, right? We don't know how God has redirected a path on a ride home so that there wasn't a car wreck. We don't know what's happening when our friends we're praying for laying down to go to bed at night, what's going on in their mind? We don't know what they've been protected from. And so our prayers are doing something.

We are talking here about our MiniBFF podcasts. We are talking about like, when we get to heaven, maybe the Lord will show us a chart of here's the trajectory if you didn't do that, and here's the trajectory because you did. But we're not going to know that now.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** We can't see that now. And so keep praying and then ask Him to show you the chart later. He'll show you the chart later.

**Carlos:** "Could you please show us the chart? Annie said that you've got a chart. While I was down there, she said that. So can you show it to me, please?"

**Annie:** Dear man upstairs,

**Carlos:** Dear man upstairs, Garth and Annie have completely changed the trajectory of my prayers.

**Annie:** It's one of these two things.

**[01:11:56] <music>**

Wow, you guys, wasn't that incredible? Pastor Kevin, Beth, Carlos, just amazing. We've got a couple more thoughts for you and some really important prayers after this quick break.

**Sponsor:** But I want to tell you real quick about one of our incredible partners, [Nutrafol](#). 30 million women are impacted by weakened or thinning hair. It's so many of us. If that's something you're dealing with, know this. You're not the only one. There is a solution that you can trust to deliver results.

Thousands of women including your girl AFD over here have taken back control of their hair with Nutrafol. With many users raving that the supplement not only helped their hair but gave them more confidence too, Nutrafol offers two targeted formulas for women that are clinically shown to improve hair growth and thickness with less shedding through all stages of life.

Nutrafol supports healthy hair growth from within by targeting the five root causes of thinning: stress, hormones, environment, nutrition, and metabolism. Areas we all deal with challenges in from time to time, right? In a clinical study, 86% of women reported improved hair growth after six months, more than 1,500 top doctors recommend Nutrafol as an effective and high quality solution for healthier hair.

And as the powerful ingredients bring your body back into balance, you could also notice improvements in your overall well-being. Things like more restful sleep or less stress and better skin and nails. Yes, please. You can grow thicker, healthier hair and support our show by going to [nutrafol.com](#) and entering the promo code TSF to save \$15 off your first month's subscription. This is their best offer anywhere and it's only available to US customers for a limited time. Plus free shipping on every order. Let's go. Get \$50 off at [nutrafol.com](#). That's [nutrafol.com](#), promo code TSF.

**Sponsor:** And I've got one last amazing partner to tell you about, [Shopify](#). Did you hear that? That sounds fun. That my friends is the sound of another item being sold on Shopify. That's our all-in-one commerce platform to start, run, and grow your business.

Shopify gives all of us business owners and entrepreneurs the resources that used to only be available for big businesses. So upstart, startups, and established businesses alike can sell everywhere. Synchronize online and in-person sales and stay up to date on all of the numbers.

There are just so many amazing possibilities when it comes to scaling your business. I love how Shopify has the tools and resources that make it easy for any business to succeed. We've been using Shopify as our main eCommerce selling platform for over three years now and we love it. That's right. If you bought a Chai Day Friday Mug or a book from [shopanniefdowns.com](#), that was through Shopify.

They make selling our products online so easy. We love all the tools they give us, from tracking our inventory and sales to adding apps and customizable templates to our store for the best possible customer experience. With their ever-growing suite of channel integrations and apps, you can reach customers online and across social networks including Facebook, Instagram, the old TikTok, Pinterest, and more.

And they provide tons of insights as you grow with detailed reporting of conversion rates, profit margins, and all the really important data you need to keep making the best decision for your business. More than a store, Shopify grows with you. There's virtually no limit to the possibilities powered by Shopify.

So go to [shopify.com/soundsfun](#), all lowercase for a free 14-day trial, and get full access to Shopify's entire suite of features. Grow your business with Shopify today. So go to [shopify.com/soundsfun](#) right now. [Shopify.com/soundsfun](#).

And now to finish up today's show, I've asked two of our guests to pray for us. Here is how this is going to look. You've already heard part of the conversation with Pastor Kevin, with Beth, and Carlos. On Thursday you'll get to hear the rest of it and some of the prayers then.

But for now, why don't you find a place and a time where you feel really comfortable. Maybe you take a little second and pull over if you're driving or step off the treadmill. Maybe set the dishes down, set the laundry down, set yourself down, maybe sitting on your bottom, maybe sitting on your knees, maybe criss-cross applesauce, maybe you want to lay down in the bed for a second. But I would just love for Pastor Kevin and Beth to pray over us now.

**[01:16:13] <music>**

**Annie:** Pastor Kevin, will you end by just praying for us to pray? Will you just pray that we'll pray?

**Kevin:** Yeah, I would love to do that. Father, thank you that we can know you in that way as you are our perfect Father and you are full of love. You always think of us and you desire, you desire us to know you and to know your love as Jesus knows your love. And Jesus, you prayed that for us. You prayed that we would know the Father, that we would know the Father, and we'd have oneness as you have.

So right now I pray a prayer of oneness. I pray a prayer of communion with heaven. God, I pray that hearts would be open. Even listening to this podcast would be a prayer of saying, "Jesus, would you teach me how to pray?" So, Jesus, we're all coming together and we're saying, "Would you teach us how to pray? Would you take us deeper into what it means to know your heart?"

God, I pray that you would pour out a spirit of prayer and supplication over every person listening. Like the disciples were saying, "Teach us how to pray." Lord, I pray that we remove any religious baggage, we remove any anything that we're carrying that we shouldn't be carrying into this. We walk into this. And I pray for just an activation of conversation and of listening.

Lord, I pray that we would have eyes wide awake, wide open to see all that you're doing, and that life would be as under prayer. That it would be oxygen. That we'd be able to look back and say, "Wow, God, you have done a thing, that you have made me, you've built me into a person of prayer." And there would just be an ease on it. That there would be an ease on it.

Would you put desire toward that time. Desire in the mornings. God, would you put desire toward that time and desire throughout the day to pray and to be people of prayer? It's in Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

**Annie:** Amen.

**[01:18:14] <music>**

**Beth:** Lord, what a joy it gives me to pray for all of these listening and watching and just tuning in, God. How I thank you for your great mercy over us. That you look at us with such eyes of love and you cherish your children, Father. You say to us, Lord, that if you being comparatively evil parents know how to do good things for your children, how much more does your Father in heaven?

You love us, so you're tender-hearted toward us. And you think that we are precious. And sometimes you think that we're funny. You love being with us. So, Father, I would ask you, first and foremost, that please teach us how to pray. Teach us how, Lord. That it would be so pleasing and that it would be fulfilling. That we would delight in you. That it would be something over time, Lord. I can remember what it was more. There are times that it's still very much discipline instead of delight. That I can remember, Father, the big shift over where you began to make it something that I felt like, "Oh, I can't miss that. I'm going to miss something. I'm going to miss something if I don't have a time of prayer."

And Father would you give us that? Cause us to hunger and thirst for it and to feel the satisfaction of it. Father, that even when we don't, nothing's going to shake on the table in all likelihood. We're not going to hear the thunder clap. We're certainly not going to levitate. All of these things that we're having to discern in the Spirit that you are with us and that you heard us and that you love us. And that we'll grow that appetite, Father.

The thing about you, Lord, is that the more we get more of you the more we want of you. I just love that about you. So would you do that, God? Would you have mercy on us? Make prayer one of the most fulfilling, delightful things in our lives? And I would ask you, God, I would ask you to increase our faith. Because you do.

Whether we like it or not, we don't get to make the rules. And one of the things you do say, you can answer anything. You can answer the most doubting prayer, Lord. You answered the prayer of the church to release Peter. And when they did release him, they didn't even believe he was there. Knocking on the door, Lord, you can do anything.

But the way that you love it is for us to come to you in faith. And so increase our faith. And then when we don't get what we ask, help us, Father, to be able to get over that, to wrestle it through, to get through it, and think, "Lord, even if..." I must say this, Father, so that somebody can really hear this into their core. That when we don't get what we ask, we get you. When we don't get what we've asked, Father, we can say, "I will not let go until you bless me."

Now, maybe, Lord, you're not going to give that healing the way I wanted you to. And maybe you're not going to bring this about that job opportunity. Maybe I didn't get that. But I am going to say this. I am not going to let go of you until you bless me. That that blessing would come in another way, Lord. I just ask you Father, would you just be a delight to them? Be a delight to me. Help us, Father. Grow us in it. Father, we just continue to look with amazement that there really is no mastering it. You are the master. Our job is not to go master you somehow. You are Lord and master and we are yours.

So thank you, Father, that you are incapable of sinning against us. You're incapable of tinting us to sin. You are incapable, Father, of doing us wrong. So grow us in trust, grow us in faith, and grow us in love for the very name that is above every name and that is the name of Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.

**Annie:** Amen. Amen.

**[01:22:24] <music>**

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, wow. Wow. Okay, this episode was so good. And it is half of the questions that we are going to answer. But go ahead, be sure to follow Beth Moore, Kevin Queen, Carlos Whittaker on social media and tell them thanks so much for doing this. And get ready for more, more, more coming on Thursday.

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, do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is getting ready for that Thursday episode.

Man, I'm thrilled about this week. I mean, I just love these experts coming in and helping us. So y'all have a great week. I hope you pray a little more, a little different today than you did before you heard this show and before this month. I know it's changed me. We'll see you back here on Thursday as we continue our prayer series with part two of this prayer Q&A. See you guys then.