

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another special episode of That Sounds Fun. Let's keep on going with that prayer Q&A. 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. I hope you're able to tune into Monday's episode, the first part of our prayer Q&A along with the conversations we've had in our prayer series up to this point. Hearing from y'all about how much you love hearing from Pastor Pete Greig and Pastor Derwin Gray, Ann Voskamp, Beth Redman, it has meant the world to me. I'm so thankful.

Just like on those episodes, you'll get to hear some thoughts about prayer from a couple of my MiniBFFs on this episode. Y'all buckle up. These are so sweet. Kids, man, you can't beat them. So here are two of my MiniBFFs and then we'll get into the rest of the show.

[00:01:03] <music>

Annie: So let's start. Will you tell me your name and how old you are?

Cash: My name is Cash and I'm seven and a half years old.

Annie: You're seven and a half?

Cash: Yes.

Annie: That half is very important. Cash, one of the things we're talking to a lot of our friends about today is prayer. Will you tell me about when you pray to God?

Cash: At church.

Annie: Oh, do you at church?

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: What kind of things do you say when you're praying at church?

Cash: We pray to God for food, drinks, and people that don't even have a house or drinks or no money or not even drink.

Annie: Oh, wow. So you pray for people who might need some stuff that they don't have?

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: Have you ever prayed for something and God... you've been like, "Help somebody get better" and you've seen Him do it?

Cash: Yeah

Annie: Yeah. Do you ever pray for stuff for your family?

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: What do you pray for your family?

Cash: My dog.

Annie: Oh, yeah. Tell me the story. What do you pray for?

Cash: My dog, my family.

Annie: Do you think your mom and dad pray for things?

Cash: Yes.

Annie: Have you heard them pray before?

Cash: Yes.

Annie: What do they pray for?

Cash: They pray for family, food, drink, house, and other stuff. And I'm feeling like I want to give a portion of an apple in a bag of chips and two drinks.

Annie: Oh, yeah. Like someone you see that looks like they need food and drink maybe on the side of the road or someone... Where do you see them that you want to give them an apple, chips and drinks?

Cash: On your side of the road.

Annie: Yeah. That's really sweet. That's really cool that you pray for God to take care of people and then when you see them, you want to help too.

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: You are the answer to your prayer.

Cash: Because I feel like I want to give a portion of credit card.

Annie: You do? How will that help?

Cash: So they can buy things whenever they want. Because credit cards has like infinity money in it.

Annie: Yeah, that's true. That is very true. That's amazing. What's your favorite thing about God?

Cash: That He heals people.

Annie: He does. He does heal people. You think He hears you when you pray?

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: Do you think He hears me when I pray?

Cash: Yeah. He can hear us right now.

Annie: He can.

Cash: Yeah.

Annie: Right. Child Cashy, you're the man. Round of applause for you. Yeah, Cash. Woohoo. Woohoo. He's the best. Go Doggs!

[00:03:40] <music>

Annie: Okay, my friend, Tessa, what are we gonna talk about today?

Tessa: Pray.

Annie: Prayer. That's exactly right. Do you like to pray?

Tessa: Yes.

Annie: Will you tell me a little bit about what you say to God when you pray?

Tessa: I say stuff about to be safe and to watch over and to say hello to people in heaven.

Annie: Oh, yeah, you do. That's a really great thing to pray. Who do you ask God to say hello to in heaven?

Tessa: Cate and Paisley.

Annie: Are those some of your friends?

Tessa: Yes. Yeah.

Annie: What time of day do you usually pray?

Tessa: At night.

Annie: At night. Like before you go to bed?

Tessa: Yeah.

Annie: Are you by yourself or are you with anybody else?

Tessa: With my mommy.

Annie: She prays too?

Tessa: Well, she listens and close her eyes.

Annie: How do you know that God hears you?

Tessa: I can tell my heart.

Annie: Yeah, me too. Sometimes do you ever pray for your own body?

Tessa: No.

Annie: No. When other people pray for your body to be healthy, you don't pray for your body?

Tessa: I guess I do.

Annie: What is your favorite thing about praying?

Tessa: That we can tell God and everybody else.

Annie: What's your favorite thing about God?

Tessa: That He always keep His promise no matter what, and He made this world.

[00:05:17] <music>

Annie: Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment and 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, hello, 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 falling asleep, our culture seems to shout, "Do more, sleep less and get it all done." But what if we take a breath and remember that we need to take care of ourselves? Therapy is a great way to do that. Counseling has been a lifeline for me, and I think it could be for you as well. That's why I love partnering with BetterHelp.

BetterHelp is customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions with your therapist. So you don't have to see anyone on camera if you don't want to. It's much more affordable than in-person therapy. So you should give it a try and see if online therapy can help lower your stress. That Sounds Fun friends get 10% off your first month at betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

And now we get to continue with our prayer Q&A, which of course means Ashley is sitting here. Hi, Ash.

Ashley: Hi, Annie.

Annie: Episode one of the prayer Q&A, how do you feel?

Ashley: I mean, I'm blown away. I'm still processing. But I'm so grateful. I'm so grateful for people who have walked the journey and are willing to lend a hand and pull the rest of us along with them.

Annie: And I know for our friends listening, both of these episodes... our Q&As tend to run a little bit longer than our normal shows. But there's a couple of reasons for that. It's easier to listen to in chunks.

Ashley: Right.

Annie: And it's a masterclass from these people.

Ashley: Right, right. When else could we get these three-

Annie: Oh my gosh!

Ashley: ...brilliant hearts and minds around the table and to get them to pour into us? What a gift!

Annie: Yeah, I'm so thankful. On this episode, we continue with Carlos Whittaker, Pastor Kevin Queen, and Beth Moore. But also, Ash, you and me are on this one.

Ashley: That's right.

Annie: There's a couple of questions that were directed to us. So after we hear from our guests, you and I are going to answer a couple on this one as well.

Ashley: Right.

Annie: So we are going to jump right into this second episode now. You're not going to hear me introduce them. So I'll just go and tell you what order you're going to hear them. It'll be Carlos is up first, and then pastor Kevin and then Beth Moore. Then Ashley and I—are you ready?—will be after that. So let's finish up some of these questions from our friends about prayer.

[00:07:54] <music>

Annie: Okay, Alyssa asks, "I feel like some people..." This is a fascinating question. "...some people have the quote, "magic formula" to getting their prayers answered and I don't. When my prayer isn't answered, I usually quit praying. How do you change your prayers? Or do you?" Do people have magic formulas? Is there a trick we don't know?

Carlos: I love that she called it a magic formula. Because doesn't it feel like that?

Annie: It feel like it.

Carlos: Doesn't it feel like that?

Annie: It does to me. I'm glad it does for y'all too.

Carlos: No, it does. I think we can get to the place sometimes, especially after a long bout of unanswered prayers where we can look at somebody who has your prayers answered in two ways. Our church does these things, I don't know, once every two months where there's no sermon, it's just testimonies. It's just testimonies. So it's just people telling testimonies over and over.

I feel like when you're in the midst of a trial, and you see somebody that gets up there and tells the testimony on God answering their prayer, it can affect you. Either you can look at it in two ways. One, like, "Oh, my gosh, I can't believe you're answering their prayer and you haven't answered mine yet," or "Oh my gosh, mine is coming." So you can look at it from two different vantage points.

The whole magic formula thing... You know, Jesus does teach us how to pray. He tells us how to do it. So I just think we've got to keep going. At some point I think you will end up with that spark, with that thing, with that moment of like, "He did it. There's a big prayer that just got answered." That's why I love that you journal. I love to journal. Sometimes we just forget. We forget.

Annie: Listen, I need you to know I can't tell the whole thing on here, but I'm in the smack middle of a story. That because I have things written on the wall from 2020, I'm going, "Oh, my gosh, you had me pray that verse in 2020. I wrote it next to the person's name on the wall. And two years later, you're bringing that up again. I only know-

Carlos: You would never know.

Annie: I said to someone this weekend—this is an insane imagery—"I feel like the Holy Spirit breeds hope in to me this weekend from the bottom of my feet out my head over this one thing."

Carlos: Why? Because you wrote it down.

Annie: Because I remember.

Carlos: And you remember.

Annie: Yes. Because He's showing Himself faithful in a way I did not see two years ago.

Carlos: So if you feel like the magic is missing, why don't you do this? Start writing down some of your little prayers. Just start writing them down and start just looking back a month, looking back a few weeks. And I think you're going to quickly realize, "I got the magic too."

Ashley: Right.

Annie: Yes, yes. So I meant to say this to Johnny at lunch but today we're celebrating Johnny's birthday, and we always pray for each other on people's birthdays.

Carlos: Happy birthday.

Annie: He's turned 30. New decade.

Carlos: Let's go!

Annie: And some of the things he was asking, I thought he needs to write down right now where they are. So talk about praying the promise and not the problem. Because I want Johnny to write down all the problems and then have us pray into the promise because he said in a year we're gonna look back.

Carlos: Absolutely.

Annie: So tell us how to pray... I mean, you have a sweatshirt that we can get. You have a lot of merch. Where do we get some merch? Shopcarloswhittaker.com? What is it?

Carlos: I'm sure. You could type it and see if you can find it.

Annie: But that is what you tell us: pray the promise, not the problem.

Carlos: And again, this really came for me out of my season of anxiety and depression when I for so long spent 10 years of my life praying the problem of my anxiety. I was stricken, Annie. And you know, you were with me in those seasons where I was so panic-induced and I was doing all the things I knew how to do right: the medicine, the psychologist, the doctors, the exercise, the food, all the things.

But the whole time my prayers were "God, I'm so anxious. I'm so worried. I'm so overwhelmed. I'm so depressed. I'm so stressed. I'm so all these things." And then when I started looking at just the way Jesus was teaching us to pray and the way He prayed in the gospels, I was like, "This is not how He was praying." So what if I switched to start praying like he was praying and praying the promises?"

Well, what are the promises? Okay, these are the promises. I am not anxious. What am I? I am a son of God. I am the body of Christ and Satan has no power for me for I've overcome with good. I'm of Christ and have overcome him. Greater is He that's in me than he does in the world. I will fear no evil for you with me, Lord. Your word and your spirit, they comfort me. I am far from oppression. Fear will not come near me. No weapon formed against me shall prosper."

What am I doing? I'm praying the promises as opposed to I am anxious. No. Guess what? I may be in a season of anxiety, I will say that, "Lord, can you help me through the season of anxiety." But what I won't say anymore is "I am." Why? Because that's not what I am. That's not who I am.

Let me tell you who I am. And I start declaring these promises and bam, you know what began to happen to me? My anxiety began to shift and leave and decrease. And literally—this is not a fable or like some sermon where I'm trying to make things more hype than they really are—I literally in a day of beginning to shift my prayer went from taking 10 milligrams of Paxil a day to not taking any more. Like it's been six years since I've shifted everything and the anxiety has left.

So I know that was specifically because I was declaring the promises of God over my life. So that's how you do it. Write down the lies and then, man, what a great way to get into the Word. Okay, what does the word say about these lies, about these statements, these "I am" statements that are lies? Go find the truth. Just find the truths.

And how do you pray promises? You just read them. You don't have to memorize them. You will memorize them the more you say them.

Annie: That's right.

Carlos: There's actually a little pamphlet that I used to carry around in my back pocket because I needed it so desperately. It's called "*God's Creative Powers* in you by Charles Capps.

Annie: Can we still get it?

Carlos: You can still get it. It's \$1.99 on Amazon. It's a little thing. Charles Capps I think he died in 1970s.

Annie: Oh, dead guys talk about prayer.

Carlos: Yeah.

Annie: I love it.

Carlos: I think it feels so fluffy when you... The way he wrote it in his super Pentecostal ways, he's like, "Pray the promises over your life. Make sure that the seeds you're planting or whatever..." I mean, I don't even know if he was country or not, but that's how I read him. But what he does is he talks about how you should be praying the promises like you're taking your vitamins every day.

So he's like, "If you're worried about life, pray the scriptures three times a day until you feel better. If you need more finances, pray these promises in your life." I used

to take that out of my pocket every day, multiple times a day to pray the promises. But that was very helpful for me.

Annie: That's great. Let me tell you this. We have a handful of people want to get married, want to have babies, want new jobs, and they are not getting what they want. Yeah. So Courtney's question is, "Is it okay to ask for the same thing multiple times?"

Carlos: Yeah. I think if we go to the Psalms and we look at David, I mean, he was petitioning for the same thing over and over and over and over. He was like super bipolar in his prayer. I mean, honestly, he probably could have been... you diagnosis that if you look at the way he prayed. He would pray one thing, he would pray that thing that he desired and he would pray in a victorious way.

Then the next day he was praying in a defeated way. Then the next day he was praying in a victorious... I don't know if it was days, but definitely chapters apart, you would see it kind of go up and forth. So yeah, I think the simple answer is pray the same thing every day. I do.

Annie: This is Lindsey. "When you have seen the opposite of what you felt like God was saying to you happen, when you see the opposite of what you felt like you were praying or what God said He was going to do happen, how do you get past the offense or doubt that builds up in your heart?" Man, that has happened to me. Yeah? Same?

Ashley: Yeah. I can't have come off of Easter weekend without sitting with Jesus in the garden praying "If this cup can pass... Can it pass?" Knowing how torturous what He was walking into was going to be, He was willing to ask. I love that about Him. I love seeing His humanity in that moment and I also love learning from Him that I want my next breath to be. Like when I ask, okay, but not like, Get me to the place where it's not what I want.

And sometimes I find myself praying, "God, help me want to want what you want." I'm not gonna have to back it even further up. Like, "Help me want to want to want what you want." Because it's just where I am and it's honest, but... Jesus did it.

Carlos: Well, Jesus did it and... You know, as you're talking about that, just about the Easter story, and you think of, you know, going back to the question that we were just asked, you think of the disciples, His best friends who Jesus said, "Hey, listen, I'm gonna be back. Just hang out together." No, it didn't take but a second for... the second He is crucified for them to scatter. Like they scattered in doubts.

If His best friends on planet Earth doubted Him, our humanity is... I mean, we are not Jesus. We are constantly going to have to invoke His divinity through us in

order to really believe that what He has for us is good. And I know it's hard, but we just have to keep at it.

Annie: I mean, that's one of the questions. Lisa asked, "Why is prayer so hard?"

Carlos: I think prayer isn't hard. Maybe the belief in prayer is what's hard. Maybe it is believing that God is good and really wants the best for us. Maybe it's really believing that He does hear us. I think that's really what it is. For me, sometimes, as fickle of a heart as I have, it takes me going like, "You know what, I don't believe anything I'm saying. I don't even believe God. I don't believe God is hearing a word I'm saying. You know what I gotta do? What's the worst song that gives me goosebumps right now? I'm gonna go put that on." Because for some reason, when I hear that melody-

Annie: When Brandon Lake sings it I believe it.

Carlos: When Brandon Lake sings it I believe it. So I'm gonna play that as I pray. Even something as simple as that makes prayer easier. I think, you know, doing it. I do it every morning. I do my daily prayer. I ask God what I should read and then I put on the Upper Room version of *This is How I Fight My Battles*. Because they've got a verse in there that helps my unbelief, that helps me with prayers that says, "There's a table that you prepare for me in the presence of my enemies and my weapons are praise and thanksgiving. This is how I fight my battles." Boom, then they go in chorus. And I'm like, "Oh, geez." When they sing that-

Annie: Let's go.

Carlos: ...I'm like, "Go." So sometimes it takes others. Sometimes it takes people that maybe believe. Sometimes it takes someone else's belief. When we were in the hospital, it was one of the hardest days. It was three weeks in, cancer had been taken off the table and then suddenly cancer came back on the table. They're like, "Listen, we thought it wasn't but maybe now it is again." It was one of the darkest days for us.

And Robson, a good friend of ours, he walks in there and Heather and I are both balling on the sofa and he goes, "Hey, you don't even have to believe today because I'm going to believe for you."

Annie: Wow.

Carlos: And when he said that, I was like, "There it is. I didn't even have the strength to believe in my prayer life in that moment. Guess what? Rob was gonna do it for

me." So sometimes it just takes surrounding ourselves with men or melodies that can help us in there.

Annie: Men or melodies.

Carlos: Yeah.

Annie: And you just mean human?

Carlos: Well, men are melodies.

Annie: Men are melodies is a really interesting concept. That's beautiful. Okay, Parker, back in August of 2021, her best friend lost her dad to COVID. She said, "We along with so many others, along with so many others, prayed that the Lord would miraculously heal him and instead he went to heaven. I have had a hard time with my prayer life after this." Which I totally get. So her sweet question is, what are some tangible ways that she can get back in the game?

Carlos: I think tangibly, first thing, your prayers don't have to go from 100% believing in God to answer the prayer of your father to your prayer not being answered to you coming back and just being like, "God, you're amazing. I just thank you."

I need people to understand that. God isn't scared of our fury and our anger and our arrays that we feel as humans when something doesn't go the way we are. So I would simply say, start yelling, start being angry in your prayer, start.... There's nothing we can say to God that is going to make Him care any less or love us any less. He can help us work through all those things.

So I would just say the first thing, start going back is even if it's just two words that you would never repeat to someone else in public that you need to say, God's like, "Just say it to me. Please just talk to me. Just talk to me. Just talk to me." Just start. Just start. And slowly get back there. Because nothing anyone's going to say is going to make you feel better about losing your father.

Annie: That's right.

Carlos: There's nothing about anything... There's no good in that. There isn't. There isn't like, "Oh, just wait, maybe in five years, you're gonna..." No. It's all bad. It's just bad. We are broken. We live in a broken world. Death is coming for all of us. And that is something that we weren't designed to experience.

Annie: That's what I say every time. I'm like, "It wasn't supposed to be like this."

Carlos: It wasn't supposed to be like this.

Annie: The reason you feel like it wasn't supposed to be like this is because it wasn't supposed to be like this.

Carlos: We will never be able to wrap a bow around that. So just start talking back to God even if it's in a way that you feel like maybe He doesn't want to hear.

Ashley: I feel like I have to talk to you about this a lot—for me, not for you—that idea of we don't feel our way into an action, we act our way into a feeling. That there are plenty of times I don't feel like praying and the rhythm of it is, "Okay, but I have the place I go every morning and I have the spot I sit and have the journal I open."

And asking for tangible things, you know, sometimes I don't love a formulaic prayer guide. But sometimes, for me, it's I'm gonna find a prayer in Scripture and read that as a prayer from my life today. Or from my good ol' youth group days, there was a - what was it? ACTS. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplications. That little acronym. But again, I'm not going to formulize anybody's prayer life, but if you need it, use it. So if I can just write down one reason I adore God, one thing I need to confess, one thing I'm thankful for, and one thing I'm asking for, okay, done.

Carlos: And one thing that youth group gave us that was positive from the 90s... I love that. I heard that and I was like, "You know what? There are some little things that I got out of that, man."

Annie: Yeah, me too.

Carlos: That's so good. There were so many of those little things that I think are so helpful to us, to give us handles even when we feel like we don't have a...

Ashley: It's not like a moment of sitting down with friends and you're like, "We have these conversation cards. Let's read through a few questions and just answer them." Like having something to start things off is sometimes a little Annie.

Annie: Before I say my next comment, I want to say a baseline truth: that God is all good and kind and we are the ones that are flawed, comma, when anybody breaks your trust, you are slow to come back and ask them for big things again or to trust them in big ways again.

Ashley: Certainly.

Annie: In a situation where it feels like God has broken your trust, which I have, I mean, I have said to Him, "I thought we understood each other." I've felt like God has broken my trust many times. If that is a human, you are slow to go back, you do not ask big things at first, you watch them prove that they can be trusted. And then it progresses.

That's what I have to do with God is go like, Okay... Again, this weekend, having that moment of God circling back to your old prayer is after about seven weeks of me being like, "Hey, I can't even talk to you about this because I'm not sure where we are. So I'm going to talk about other things, but this I'm not gonna talk to you about. So just quick sticky note, I'm not talking about this."

I think calling it what it is, that you feel like God has broken your trust or broken your heart and then letting that guide... If it was a flawed person, how would you respond? Luckily, this is not a flawed person, it's God. But you can also say, "You broke my trust."

Carlos: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Annie: It matters. Carlos, finish this out like this. Tell us why we should pray. You should pray because you have access to the God that makes the earth spin and float and the creator of the universe. We literally have access to Him. We have the blood of His son in Him coursing through our veins. We are a millimeter away from seeing the supernatural on a daily basis.

I feel like when we pray every day for little things we're going to begin to realize that we are literally living in a lifetime of a million prayers answered every single day just over and over. There's an exhale I think when we pray that a lot of us don't know that we've been holding our breath for a long time. And when you finally get into the rhythm of praying, you're going to...

When you hold your breath for a long time and you play the tunnel game, when you're a little kid or whatever, you go through the tunnels, at the end... I tell people all the time. That feeling of like huuuh, of that exhale, when you start praying, you're going to realize that you've been holding your breath you didn't even know you were.

So pray because of that. Pray knowing that you're going to be able to breathe again and that you are going to experience miracles like you've never experienced before. I mean, really, just trust me, just do it. You know, start at it. And start asking God for big things... and little things. Just do every day. Every day ask Him, ask Him, ask Him. He's not scared.

Annie: That's beautiful. And the idea that it is a discipline, a spiritual discipline, just like all the others that we love talking about, that the more you do it, the more you do it. So your muscles will get stronger. Of course, it's hard because so is lifting weights and so it's fasting and so is generosity. So all these disciplines that strengthen our spiritual muscles are going to feel hard because you're getting stronger. So don't give up. Do not give up.

[00:27:32] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Indeed](#). I don't know if it's this way where y'all are like it is where I live, but I suspect it might be. The real estate market is wild, and so is the job market. So many places are looking for great hires and so many people are searching for the right spot for their next employment opportunity.

That should make things easier. But right now hiring is a challenge. It's time for a hiring partner that can help you rise to that challenge. That is Indeed. Indeed is the hiring partner where you can attract, interview and hire all in one place. And Indeed is the only job site where you're guaranteed to find quality applications that meet your must-have requirements or else you don't pay.

Finding great talent doesn't have to be a second job. You can hire faster and better with Indeed. Indeed partners with you on every step of the hiring process. You find great talent through time-saving tools like Indeed Instant Match, assessment, and virtual interviews.

With Instant Match, as soon as you sponsor a post, you get a shortlist of quality candidates with resumes on Indeed that match your job description and you can invite them to apply right away. Plus, you only pay for quality applications that meet your must-have requirements.

We get asked pretty regularly whether or not we're hiring. That is a huge compliment. Thank you for asking. And while we aren't currently, my answer is always literally, I put it on Instagram today, when we have an opening it'll be on Indeed. The team members we found through Indeed are seriously awesome. Indeed just makes it easy to hire great talent.

According to comScore, Indeed is the number one job site worldwide, and Indeed delivers four times more hires than all other job sites combined, according to Talent Nest in 2019. So join more than 3 million businesses worldwide, including mine, and use Indeed to hire great talent fast.

Start hiring right now with a \$75 sponsor job credit to upgrade your job post at indeed.com/soundsfun. Offer is valid through April 30th. So go to indeed.com/soundsfun to claim your \$75 credit before April 30th. [Indeed.com/soundsfun](https://indeed.com/soundsfun). Terms and conditions apply. But if you need to hire, you need Indeed.

Sponsor: And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Curology](https://curology.com). Curology is a tele-dermatology company that pairs members with a medical provider who is trained in dermatology, and through the power of the internet, they help you move forward in your skincare journey without ever having to leave your house.

They know that living a full life is more about the journey than the destination and that celebrating the simple wins and sweet surprises along the way helps us stay grateful and focus on the positive. It's why even though changes in our skin don't happen overnight, Curology can help with realistic goals that actually help you achieve clear-looking skin.

When I started using Curology a little over a year ago after hearing about it on a podcast ad, I couldn't believe that just answering a few questions and sending in a couple of selfies could lead to an amazing personalized prescription product being delivered straight to my door. In fact, I got an email today that it is on its way.

My cream helped me address some skin tone and texture issues I was dealing with and I've been amazed at how well it worked. Curology is game-changing custom skincare made for you by a dermatology provider. They'll create a custom prescription cream for your specific goals whether that's tackling acne or clogged pores, skin texture, dark spots, fine lines, or something else.

You start by taking a short little online skin quiz, we love quizzes, and you upload some photos. And if it's a good fit, they'll ship you your formula right to your door. It even has your name on the bottle. It's so cool, you guys. I love the confidence that comes with feeling comfortable in your own skin and I love that Curology offers a free trial so you can try it out risk-free.

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And now back to answering your questions about prayer.

[00:31:41] <music>

Annie: One of our friends asked, "What have you learned that prayer is not?"

Kevin: That prayer is not an escape from reality but prayer is the deepest place of reality.

Annie: Wow.

Kevin: That is not how I escaped from my life, it's how I enter into life.

Annie: Wow, yes. Because often we think prayer will get me out of this. And that's not what prayer is for.

Kevin: It's to enter into the cosmic reality, the eternal reality. So I take my temporary situations and bring them into what is eternally true, into His kingdom, His rule, His reign, His presence, His power. So it's not me escaping from this world. It's me entering into what is real and what is most true, and what's forever true.

Annie: And true or false? Scaled this or something.

Kevin: Okay.

Annie: Prayer is not fast.

Kevin: No.

Annie: Not often, right? In my experience, very rarely is it suddenly right. But there are suddenlies.

Kevin: There are suddenlies.

Annie: Whenever the prayer gets answered, you feel.

Kevin: And oftentimes the suddenlies seem to happen when I pray for other people. Right?

Annie: Oh, wow.

Kevin: So when we pray for other people, when we intercede, you know, there's that moment when somebody's like, "Hey, would you pray for me?" and you pray for them and then the thing happens, "It's almost like-

Annie: It's infuriating.

Kevin: It is. It's like God gives us a blank check for other people, right?

Annie: Yes. I confessed this to my mentor maybe a month ago where I said, "My prayer partner and I have been praying together, the same direction and she's gotten everything and I've gotten none of it." I mean, Kevin, she's gotten everything that we've asked the Lord to do. It's a blank check for her. It is awesome to watch. I mean, I'm talking house, money... I mean, you would not believe how the Lord has poured out on her life. And we have prayed together and I've gotten none of the things we've asked for. So you're right. There's something about like, you know, God answers prayers if you let it be for other people.

Kevin: How are you feeling right now?

Annie: Oh, it's hard. Right? That's what I'm feeling. And you also don't want to be sad because you won't be like, "But my friend is getting everything. I'm thrilled for my friend." She's not getting anything God has for me. It has been a wild journey to dig in and pray so hard for the things we both need and want and to see God just answer all of it. I mean, He has not left one request on the table.

Kevin: And that means you're like an Elijah, because Elijah prayed for rain and it happened. But I think part of that check she's blessed to have a friend like you who would pray with her and intercede for. That doesn't make it any easier.

Annie: Sure.

Kevin: But to know God loves to use you and He loves to use your prayers. I think that part of what it means to partner with God. Because really, that's what we're doing. We're partnering with God. And that's what praying with other people... You know, I think a lot of people struggle with, "Okay, how do I pray for other people? There's a long list." There's so many people in this world-

Annie: There's so many questions here about "how do you pray for other people? how do you make space for it?"

Kevin: I think you're living it. I think we do that as the moments arise with other people. And some of it is planned, like we have a standard person that we meet with and pray and some of it's spontaneous, where somebody's like, "Hey, I'm struggling with this." And where default response would be, "Hey, let's bring this to God together." And it takes courage, right, to step out and step into those moments? But I think that's really when we see some of those suddenlies.

Annie: So many of our friends are asking, "How do I find time to pray for everyone in the churches, in the world? I have so many things I want to pray for? How do I make time for all that?" And other people saying, "How do I keep up with every...? I've told my whole Sunday school class I'll pray for them. I pray for every kid I teach in my classroom. I pray for every patient that I'm a doctor for." How do we keep up with everything we said we'd pray for?

Kevin: I just stop saying that I'll pray for all those people.

Annie: Yeah, quit making promises.

Kevin: You know, oftentimes, if somebody asked for prayer, rather than saying, "I'll pray for you," I try to pray right then. And it doesn't have to be a long prayer, it doesn't have to be profound. You don't have to impress anybody. Remember we're having a conversation. It's a conversation with God and He knows our hearts. But try to enter into that moment of prayer rather than making a lot of commitments that we feel burdened by.

I mean, we just don't see Jesus walking around going, "I'll pray for you." We see Him in those moments, right, of ministry as the needs arise handling those needs. Can we talk for a second like how to do that? Like if somebody says, "Hey, I need prayer on this?" A great question is, "What are you praying for?" or "how can I pray?" or "what do you want?" I mean, Jesus loved that question.

Annie: What do you want? Yeah.

Kevin: What do you want? And so I think sometimes when we ask people that question, then rather than just us having faith for other people, we get to give them opportunity to say in faith, "Here's what I'm asking God for." So I think that's a helpful question. And then when people say those things, then we just say, "Okay," then we pray specifically for that thing that they've asked for. I've found that that's a responsible and a faith-filled way to enter into those moments. And then you can leave that moment. You've given that to God. You've surrendered that to God with that person.

Annie: One of the things we do here at the office is when it's your birthday, we say, "What do you want this year? What do you want from God this year?" And last week, we did it. Fallon asked... I asked a normal question and Fallon followed up and said, "No, no, if you were just being totally selfish, what do you want from God?"

And she wasn't encouraging someone to be selfish. She was saying, "Don't say what you're saying. Say what you really want. What are you praying for that you're not telling us?" And it just opened up something new in our conversation around

the table of the birthday person said, "Well, yeah, if I'm being totally selfish, here's the thing I want." And it gave us direction on how to pray. It was really sweet.

Kevin: It destroys of that neediness into want.

Annie: Yeah, yeah. So here's an interesting question. "How do you pray with a busy full time job and no time to sit for an hour to pray your journal?" You want me to start? You want me to lead with tone? We all have the same 24 hours and we all have busy jobs.

Kevin: Push the day around. Get honest with screen time.

Annie: Get honest with screens.

Kevin: Get honest with Netflix.

Annie: What is it that Tim Keller says? When we all... we act like... What's the quote? Do you know it?

Kevin: Mm-mm.

Annie: You say you don't have time to pray but total up how much you spent on Twitter. Something like check your screen time is what he's saying. Check your screen time.

Kevin: I think if we do an audit of how we really spend our day, we get honest with that, we do have time. And then we just push the day around.

Annie: Is an hour how long we should sit there? Is there a "should" to how long we should pray and read?

Kevin: I don't put that on people. I'd say, 15 minutes is a great place to start. If you can't do 15 minutes, start with 10 minutes.

Annie: Do you separate your prayer time and your reading time?

Kevin: No.

Annie: Listen to me. I wonder if I'm doing that wrong because I don't have like, okay, first I pray and then I read and then I journal. Like I just kind of sit down and go for the whole thing.

Kevin: I think it's all prayer. I really do. I think prayer is keeping company with God. So anything I do in that time in His presence is keeping company with Him. Yeah. So

if I'm singing a song or if I'm worshiping, well, that's prayer. I'm singing my prayers, if I'm reading the Scripture, I'm having a conversation with God, He's speaking, that's prayer. If I'm on my knees just offering up my anxiety and stresses and struggles and quests, that's prayer. If I'm giving gratitude, that's prayer.

So I think anything that happens in that time is prayer. And then my hope is that throughout the day it's just a continuation of that conversation that we start in the morning with, "Hello, God."

Annie: I mean, we literally were looking for something yesterday and I was like, "All right, Jesus, you gotta tell us where his thing is." And sure enough, Kevin. I mean, in a few minutes, it just fell in place. I mean, it was like, "Oh, well, then the move is: thank You, Jesus. We didn't just find that."

Kevin: Right.

Annie: We asked, He answered, so then we get to thank Him.

Kevin: Yes.

Annie: Right?

Kevin: And if you'll build in time at the beginning of your day, and then add to it as you want, add to it as you want, what I found there came a time where I was like, "I'm gonna start going to bed a little bit earlier because, man, I..." So I started to desire that time more than the other time, more than another episode. It was just like, "I'm gonna go to bed so I can get up and spend that time." So God begins to move around the desires of our heart and He begins to add to this, then just start adding to that time.

Annie: Build your calendar and let your feelings follow.

Kevin: Yes. That's good.

Annie: Well, Beth Redman and I were talking last week. One of the things we said is like, we decide who we want to be on Thursday morning Wednesday night after dinner. Like you're deciding who you're going to be or how many shows you're going to start, how long are you gonna stay out, how long are you gonna be on your phone is going to determine for me, it determines for me whether I get up the next morning and am who I want to be in the morning.

Kevin: Right.

Annie: It starts way back then.

Kevin: It's a great word.

Annie: Well, it's because I very much lack self-control. So I got about the highest... You know this. I got about the highest boundaries of anybody. My friends and I joke that the Lord and I have about the short-ish leash between us because He knows I don't have a lot of self-control. So He keeps me tied tight.

Okay, let's do this one more. How do you pray to God versus to Jesus? Do you talk to them different? Let's throw the Holy Spirit too, Kev. Is there "I say this to God, I say this to Jesus, I say this the Holy Spirit?"

Kevin: Okay, let's start here. Father, Son, Holy Spirit is the eternal small group. It is the Godhead Father, Son, Holy Spirit. One God, three persons as He's revealed Himself and as He exist. So we are in that small group. And we can't be taken out. So we are hidden in Christ with God. And Christ in us is the hope of glory. So we're secure in that relationship.

So when we enter into a place of prayer, we just need to know Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Now, when we see from Jesus life, He's having a conversation with the Father saying that you would have this kind of communion. Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. So our God who is in the heavens, who is overall, who's above, all who is with us starts the conversation.

Jesus was also filled with the Spirit of God. And so He's filled with the Spirit. When we know how to pray, we pray in Jesus name, which means we pray with His authority, we pray with His character, we pray with the heart that He's put in us. So do I think we can talk to the Father? Yes. Do I think we can talk to the Son? Yes. Do I think we can talk to the Holy Spirit? Yes.

But when we look at the life of Christ, we see that his life was aimed at this conversation with the Father. Because being a son or a daughter is our identity, it's who we are, and that we would live in that union that cannot be taken away. And from that union, that communion of knowing Him as Father and praying in Jesus' name with His authority.

Annie: I also find with the Holy Spirit, because Jesus said, "This will be your teacher and your comforter," if I'm trying to learn, I'm often saying, "All right, Holy Spirit..." Am I doing that wrong?

Kevin: That's right. Right.

Annie: Okay. Just because I'm like, "Well, if Jesus said, the Holy Spirit's my teacher, then when I'm trying to unpack scripture or learn something specific, I'm saying, "Holy Spirit open my brain. Teach me what I don't know."

Kevin: God is very secure in His identity, in the Trinity. Right?

Annie: Yeah

Kevin: I don't think He's insecure going, "Oh, you talk to Jesus more than you talk to me. Oh, you talk to the Holy Spirit." He is one God. He is one God and He's secure in who He is. I want to fix my eyes on Jesus. I want to be. I think about this way. That Jesus always give glory to the Father. That the Father sends the Spirit and the Spirit points Jesus. Jesus never points to Himself. He's always focused on the Father.

Annie: Jesus never points to Himself.

Kevin: He doesn't. He points to the Father, the Father sends a Spirit, Spirit points to Jesus. So I think with our lives, live filled with the Spirit, keep pointing to Jesus, keep and keep pointing to the Father, giving glory to the Father. And that's why the Spirit exists in our life.

Annie: I have two more quick questions.

Kevin: Yeah, come on.

Annie: The first one is, are we gonna pray in heaven?

Kevin: We're gonna pray in heaven. Are we gonna talk with God? Are we gonna keep company with God?

Annie: I guess so, right?

Kevin: I think that's all of what heaven is.

Annie: That's all we get to do.

Kevin: I think heaven is communion. The veil will be removed. It will be sight. Our faith will be made sight. Our hope will be realized. Longings will be fulfilled in Him.

Annie: So it won't be about getting needs met. It'll just turn to worship because all of our needs are met for eternity.

Kevin: Yes.

Annie: You know, forever freaks me out. I can't really talk about. It's just a really long time. Enneagram sevens, we're not built to stay in one place for a long time.

Kevin: It's a big place. It's a big place.

Annie: But I'm committed. There's a lot of people. I know it's gonna be a long line to hang out with some of them. Peter, Reba. There's people that people have been waiting to hang out with. I'll get to all of them.

Okay, the last thing. You know this about me. One of my big hopes is that our friends listening that one of the shifts they'll make and then I'll continue to make is like, Just don't give up. Let's get to God still asking Him for the things we're hoping for. How do we not give up in prayer, Kevin?

Kevin: I would just pray with other people.

Annie: Yeah, that's how you don't give up.

Kevin: Yeah. I've got a group of guys that I run with on Saturday. And we run together every Saturday that we're in town.

Annie: It has changed y'all's lives, hasn't it?

Kevin: It has.

Annie: It changed John's life.

Kevin: We ran together. There's four of us. We call ourselves the Ginkgo Eagles.

Annie: Wow. The Ginkgo Eagles?

Kevin: Yeah. One day we saw a Ginkgo tree. The leaves came down right when we're praying. And that happens one day out of the year. In one moment out of the day, all the leaves drop. And we're like, "Wow that we get to see this." So the Ginkgo. And then the next time we ran together we saw this bald eagle and we were like, "We're the Ginkgo Eagle." I'm sorry, Annie.

Annie: Listen whatever it takes.

Kevin: That's right. So I got shirts made up with Ginkgo Eagles. So now the Ginkgo Eagle is a running club. But we run together and then we pray. And we pray together for 20 minutes. But even our conversation is prayer. Like we're praying together as we

run, praying together when we finish. But having that consistency of having other people around me, other people praying for me and praying with them for other people, that's... we don't run alone.

Annie: I don't think I want to be the person who at the end of my life, I say God answered everything the way I wanted Him to. I think I want to be the person that says I've been praying for these things for decades. That's who I think I want to be. Because we aren't going to get everything we want.

Kevin: No.

Annie: And that's okay. God's answering. I mean, what is it people say? He's always saying yes, no, or later. Like he's answering. You're just not sure what He's saying sometimes. I mean, is that the goal just to keep going?

Kevin: Mm-hmm. I think in your time with Him, I think... Was it Jack Hayford who said, I pray until my soul kisses heaven? So to stay in that place of prayer until your soul kisses heaven. And then it's like that's where we get contentment. That even when God's not answering that thing like we want, Okay, I have Him.

Annie: He is my inheritance.

Kevin: He is my inheritance. He's my portion. I'm Mary who's choosing the one thing that I'm, "Okay,, I'm making that better choice today. I'm sitting at the feet of Jesus. I'm receiving that from Him." And then I enter into my day with that.

Annie: Wow.

Kevin: Because if I don't do that, Annie, I am scrambling through the day trying to be in control, trying to make things.

Annie: You know who knows that we haven't prayed. Everybody who works with us. Ain't that true?

Kevin: That's true.

Annie: I mean, I don't have to tell them. It's pretty clear pretty quick if I'm coming in anxious or coming in and muscles get stubborn.

Kevin: And God desires our company. So you know who else knows if we don't pray? It's not like He's looking, "Why aren't you praying?" But He desires. He wants. His heart is for us. The God of all the universe desire. That's the most compelling

reason to pray. That God wants to spend time with us. With all He's got going on in the universe, it's like, "I want to spend time with you."

Annie: That's it. That's it. Undeserving of that, aren't we?

Kevin: Yes.

Annie: Let me ask you this. Beth Redman sold out *The Praying Life* by Andrew Murray. So that's hers that she's like, "I tie myself to this one." Is there one that you're like, "Hey, if you're gonna start reading on prayer..."?

Kevin: I mean, I think I'm gonna give you two.

Annie: Okay.

Kevin: *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller. Have you read that one?

Annie: We read it through at CrossPoint. I read through in class.

Kevin: I think that's a great book. Because that book helps us break through cynicism. He talks about the cynicism as a scar tissue that often keeps us from prayers. So that book talks about getting real practical things. Here's how you break through that and build a praying life.

And then there's a book called *Treasury of Prayer*, which is from Leonard Ravenhill, but it's a collection of E. M. Bounds writing. So basically, he condensed... E. M. Bounds who live down in Franklin, he wrote a book on prayer. This is really several books. It's a collection of prayer. And I love when you can condense something that's so... You know, it's like a three-inch thick book. He condenses it down to one and just takes the gold. So I love that book.

And a crazy story about how that book... I thought it was out of print and I reached out to his son. His son didn't know that they had the book rights for Bakers... We don't know who has the book rights. We were able to get that book back in...

Annie: You got that book back into print? I mean, I knew you you gave us copies, but-

Kevin: We were able to-

Annie: You got that book-

Kevin: I'm just saying.

Annie: You got that book back into print and we get it on Amazon.

Kevin: But what I love is this is a message that just helped change my life and the fact that is out there, that it's back into the world.

Annie: The downside of that book is you want to highlight every sentence.

Kevin: Right.

Annie: Make yourself a promise that you will not highlight anything the first time you read it. Because otherwise you'll get stuck on the second chapter and you won't be able to go. So read one all the way through, and then go back and read it and highlight it.

Kevin: Every sentence is amazing.

Annie: Yeah. It's ridiculous. I was like, golly, I can't keep highlighting. I gotta quit. Pastor Kevin, thank you for teaching us today and helping us pray.

Kevin: Annie, thank you.

Annie: We're really grateful.

Kevin: That's true.

[00:51:01] <music>

Annie: Okay, Beth, we got a pile of questions. We were shocked about this. The top three areas people ask questions about were unanswered prayers, and praying out loud were the top two. So let me ask you a praying-out-loud question. We have so many. Sarah says, "Where do you start when you have a debilitating fear of praying out loud?" Which I want to keep reading what she wrote just for our friends listening to know if they connect with this. She says, "My dad always made fun of and ridiculed anyone who was praying. So I suppose you could say I was traumatized by that." Bless her heart.

Kevin: Oh, my word!

Annie: Oh, my gosh. But we've got a pile of questions about "I'm scared to pray out loud."

Beth: Please allow me to rewind just two sentences because I don't want to move too quickly past when we don't get answers. Because one of the things I love to suggest

that people do is keep a list of a lot of the things that you're praying for you are getting answers so much more than you think you are.

What happens is that by the time He's answered, we're on to the next thing. We don't even stop to acknowledge. If we would stop and jump up and down a little bit, you know, we go, "Lord, you did that," it would help concretize in our mind, "Wait a second..." And one of the things that really helps me when I don't get what I'm asking in one way, but ten other things came through than I know my God is being deliberate. So I trust His heart.

So now let's go over to what do we do if we're just absolutely terrified to pray out loud. Let me be so bold. This is my age coming out to me because I'm very, very maternal. Let me be so bold as to say, you know what you don't have to? So you don't have to. You don't have to feel like that makes you more spiritual if you can pray in front of people. Some people are just shyer than others. They're extroverts and they're introverts.

Also learning how to pray comes from listening to it over and over. So you're listening to other people. It helps you build up your language in prayer. But more than anything else, I would say these two things. Remember that the disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." You start right there. You say to Him, and I mean, say it often. Make it one of your regular requests that you are saying, "Lord, teach me how to pray."

Listen, those men were Hebrew men. They had been taught from the time they were two, three years old how to pray. But as they saw Him pray, they knew He knew He was heard. And so they were going like, "Teach us to pray like you pray." So that was a game-changer. So ask Him to teach you how to pray as I have to ask Him to teach me how to pray.

And then secondly, you need a safe group of people in which to do it. And to do it awkwardly. I mean, just say just a sentence. Whatever it may be, just a sentence. And that really is how it starts. It's just being in a safe enough surrounding.

I'm gonna tell you something. Anybody sitting there judging the way you're praying-

Annie: Forget them.

Beth: I don't know what to do with them. I just don't know what to do.

Annie: Yeah. Because to what end?

Beth: I don't know what to do with them?

Annie: How does someone know if it's a good prayer or not?

Beth: Exactly. He's reading your heart. He's looking at your heart.

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

Beth: So anyway, you just hang in there with it. And then when you first get comfortable, you just say a few words. I can't tell you how often I've just had to go, "Lord, scratch that." After I got there and my mouth went like, "I think I changed my mind about that already."

Annie: Yes. Oh, man, I prayed at somebody's birthday party in front of 30 people to bless them in their 27th year and they had turned 29. I mean, I did the whole thing wrong. That's all right.

Beth: You just wanted him to go back and fix that 27-

Annie: That's right. I wanted him to go back. I was prophetically speaking backwards.

Beth: Really backwards.

Annie: Can you imagine? But I'd love your permission. We don't have to. There's nothing about praying out loud that is...

Beth: No.

Annie: If you don't want to do it, you don't have to do it. It's okay.

Beth: No. I love that at my table at my house... Well, this is the main one that will do something like this. Sometimes this will happen on staff. Sometimes I might look at her and go, "Would you lead us in prayer?" She go, "You know what? I think I'll let someone else lead us."

Annie: That's exactly right.

Beth: Because you might feel anointed to do that in that moment and not in another.

Annie: That's exactly right. You may not feel good that morning. You may feel great.

Ashley: I just remember those popcorn prayers of our yesterday years where you were holding the hand. So you just got squeezed, squeezed on by. Just squeezing my hand.

Beth: You know what? Before the pandemic, we could do that. It just really ruined that.

Annie: The pandemic affected our prayer lives.

Beth: It was an important part of praying.

Annie: Okay. Here's a fun question from Scott. He's wondering about your thoughts about couples praying together before they get married?

Beth: Well, I would want very much to know if the guy I was dating has an active prayer life. I would very much want to know that. And that's a good place to tell if there seems to be not an undue familiarity, but a warmth there. Even a warmth more than words, but just a warmth of intimacy toward God. I can't believe I'm about to say this. I'm probably going to turn this a way that y'all are not expecting.

Annie: Oh, I'm ready.

Beth: I do very much believe in praying together. I certainly believe in a husband and wife praying together, although not exclusively. There were things that I need to tell on my husband about to the Lord. So I can't necessarily say those things in front of him. So I have to have my own prayer life and he needs to have his.

Annie: Oh, that makes me so happy.

Beth: But I do believe in praying together. But I want to say something. Prayer is also a form of intimacy. I am so protective of women—I'll let the men speak for the men—but I'm so protective of women that I want to say that I have a little bit of a flag in letting it become a way that a person could get manipulated. I'd like to think that no one would take our prayers and manipulate us with them. But I think that we all know that that's not true.

So I am a little bit hesi... I'm not just going to give that a big huge thumbs up that it become a way of like... Okay, say, for instance, and this could happen either way with either the man or the woman that it becomes how are we going to work this out. Well, let's pray about it. Well, then it's going to be, "Lord, I just know this is your will."

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

- Beth:** The prayer becomes moving them over to your opinion. I don't know. It just can be manipulative and controlling. So forgive me because I know good and well I'm not answering that right.
- Annie:** I couldn't agree with you more. I think that's exactly right. I think it's a beautiful way to learn somebody and to hear their prayer lives and be a part of it. But also I can go, "Hey, Jesus, thank You for Ashley. I ask that she would not need as much money as I pay her this year next year." It's manipulative.
- Beth:** Be more sacrificial.
- Annie:** And you couples, you can go, "Lord, I wish he proposed. I just pray right now while I'm sitting in front of him that he would propose." That's what we can do.
- Beth:** Or I'm going to tag a course with my background. I'm gonna tag it here. But then you're abused and then the person wants to pray with you immediately. Supposedly repent it. They need to confess their sins, ask the Lord to forgive him and you to forgive them. And then like you're left with there's like, "Whoa, I just got myself prayed out of being able to even go say, "What did you just do to me?" So mm, mm.
- Annie:** If I'm hearing you correctly, you're putting up a green flag, a yellow flag, and a red flag.
- Beth:** That is the perfect way to put it. And I'm saying you want to be discerning. I'm gonna tell y'all something. Let me say this. And I want to say this to our brothers and our sisters. If we would walk in the Spirit to some reasonable degree, we would get that creepy feeling about people. And especially, when we get it in prayer, we're "Wait, something about this feels off. Something about this feels manipulative." And you are in prayer with somebody and you flag all over the place about something, I would entreat you to go with your gut.
- Annie:** Yeah, believe yourself.
- Beth:** I really would.
- Annie:** And I also would say... You're both married so y'all know more about this than me. But for me, what God and I talk about in prayer it feels really intimate, and He's the longest relationship in my life.
- Beth:** 100%.

Annie: So any man coming into prayer with me, that is a real deep thing. But I love when we bless the food at dinner. I love hearing him pray over our meal, or praying at church.

Beth: I do too.

Annie: But it's gonna be a long time before me and the guy I'm dating are sitting on the couch praying through something.

Beth: I couldn't agree more. I couldn't agree more.

Annie: Because that means I'm letting him into the most intimate relationship of my life.

Beth: Intimate place of my life. I feel the same way. For a brief intercession, I think that's just fantastic. For intimacy, that's between me and the Lord and that is between him and the Lord. I'm with you on that. I gotta tell y'all something speaking of that, speaking of feeling free to say because this really does go with what we're talking about.

About a year and a half ago, somebody all three of us know and love and love, but he reposted something of the adult child of some very well-known servants of God that are long since with the Lord now posting some of their journal entries. In a book. In a book.

Annie: No.

Beth: And some of it because it was taken out of context, it was meant to sound like there was some real sexual temptation, I mean, towards someone else, but it wasn't followed through... Nothing happened. But anyway was like, "Wait a second."

Listen, it was on a Saturday, I was eating by myself at a restaurant because I was out doing some errands and stuff. I read it on my phone while I was eating. That was on Saturday. I almost could not live till Monday till I got back to the shredder at work. Y'all know I should post back to you later, Annie. I mean, I ripped out pages out of journals, all except for the last 10 years. Huge, huge trash bags full of shredded journals.

And I'm going to tell people why. I am free to speak to my Father in heaven, whether I had a temptation, whether I don't like somebody, I feel bitter toward them, I feel unforgiveness toward them, I don't know why they did that. I feel completely free to speak those intimate things they have. What is in prayer is off-limits to the public. I nearly died.

Annie: I need you to know that in my box of journals, at the top is a \$20 bill and a letter and all my friends know when I die you burn them and you buy s'mores with that. But we burn them. We write books already. You already got published writing from me.

Beth: Shred them. Do it. I feel the same way. I've got my daughters in charge of it. This is exactly where they are because I didn't want anyone to do the last several years. But my goodness, you get to be free with the Father.

Annie: That's right. That's right. So that leads to a really great question from one of our friends who called in, Carly. She called in and asked us this question. I would love to hear your thoughts on this.

Carly: My name is Carly and I wanted to ask you, what was one of your biggest misconceptions about having a conversation with God before you really knew Him personally? And how has that changed as your relationship with Him has grown?

Beth: One of the things that I thought my mind would know better but my heart would misappropriate this over and over is that I sort of saw a difference between God the Father and God the Son. Now I knew they were one but I felt like Jesus was so merciful. And then I wondered if God was mad at me. And this was you have to kind of grow on through, not just past, grow on through it.

But one of the most helpful scriptures to me is in John 14 when Philip says to Jesus, "Will you show us the Father?" And He says to Philip, he said, "Philip, if you have seen me, you've seen the Father." So I remind myself of that over and over and over again with the compassion when it says... Oh, you guys know. You can picture it in the Gospel. It says, "Jesus once more deeply moved..." And Jesus had compassion upon them. You know the way He would touch to heal when He didn't even have to, when He listened when He didn't even have to. Just all the things that make Him the Savior that He is.

And I try to remember who He is, He came to flesh out before us in the gospels, the Father. So that is probably the biggest thing that I don't separate out the three in one to where I feel differently about them. That's poor doctrine. Yes. But more than that it is an interruption to intimacy.

Annie: I have a friend who got saved not that long ago and she was like, "Oh, I love Jesus. I'm still not sure about God, but I really love Jesus."

Beth: Exactly, because that is our tendency to do.

Annie: Yes. I thought that was the sweetest thing. I was like, "Start there, three and one. Start there, He'll fix it. He'll fix it." So many times but during the recording of this and during this whole series, we have just prayed, "God, you go handle your reputation with these people."

Beth: Oh, 100%.

Annie: "I can't fix your reputation with all these people because we're talking about prayer, but you can. You go tell them what to do."

Beth: No, no. But if they feel free... Okay, okay, okay, this goes with the answer here. If they feel free to speak even their heartbreak with Him, to be able to even say to Him... When we've talked about being disappointed with God or maybe mad at God, so often what is underneath that is that my feelings are hurt. And if I can voice my disappointment or my, "Lord, what was that?" If I could get that part up that's on top of it, then I can get down to the tinder part of it, which is, "Lord, why did you do that? Why couldn't you have answered it this way?"

If I'll get back there, and then I'll find that He did not cast me off, the safer you feel. Listen, you're not going to tell secrets to someone you don't feel safe with. So you got to get where you know that you're safe with Him and that you can bring anything to Him. He already knows it so-

Annie: Yeah, that's right. The only person that's surprised when you don't say it is you? He's not surprised. He's not surprised.

Beth: Exactly. Exactly.

Annie: Okay, let's end with this. There's a bunch of our friends, Carrie, Katie, Sarah, Aubrey, they are all saying, How do I stay focused? My brain goes in a thousand directions when I'm praying. So do you have any tricks? Any strategies?

Beth: I do have a strategy and I am going to get to tell it. This is not about legalism. This is just each one of us figuring out what works for us in our relationship with the Lord. But one of the things I do is that by routine now, if it's a weekend and I'm not on the road and I get to sleep in, then I'm gonna get up after sun up. But most of the rest of the time, if it is a workday, I'm going to be out before it's ever light outside.

So one of the things that I do, I do not have my phone with me in prayer ever.

Annie: It ruins it.

Beth: I do not look at it. It ruins it. I do not look at social media or look at anything. What I will look at my phone for I will slip to see did my daughters try to get a hold of me during that? Do they have an emergency? If I got Keith in there and I got my two girls covered, if I don't see an emergency from them, then I set it away.

So I go into my kitchen where my table is and I leave off all the lights except one tiny little lamp that goes straight on my Bible and my journal. It's a very effective thing for me because everything else is gone. The only thing I can see is my coffee cup, my journal, my pen, and my Bible. So that is extremely helpful to me.

I also believe that the further we get into the day, the more distracted we are. So I tried very, very hard. I will say this because people ask me this all the time. Do I have to pray in the morning? Well, of course, you don't have to pray any point you're on be cast into the dark reaches where the worm is never full. That's not gonna happen. That's not gonna happen.

But I will tell you it is to your great advantage to first thing in the day, at least settle the matter of authority. And by that what I'm saying is this. This could be two minutes. This is one of the habits that I have. I slide out of the bed. I would do it for you if I was altogether. I slide my knees down and I go straight to him and go like this on the bed because that's where it starts, then I'm going to go into the kitchen.

But right there to just say to Him, "I am yours. You are mine. I am greatly loved today. Lord, I ask you, I don't want to live by my own power today. I want to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to live according to your will. You are my Lord and I want this day to obey you."

Now that just took me about one minute to say to y'all. But to me, if there's nothing else, if there's nothing else that gets said first thing, be reminded that He is God, that He is yours, you are His and you are profoundly loved. And He cannot make a mistake with your life. So you want to trust Him as Lord because He's the one who knows what He's doing. So with that is really important.

And then keep away social media when you're praying. We have lots of teachers and communicators and writers and pastors listening to us, Ashley and Annie, so I want to say this to all of us. Be very careful not to let your Bible reading your time because it's just going to overtake your study to, "Oh, well, I'm going to put together my message right now." Of course, things happen toward a message. We're jotting down some notes. But we really want that intimacy with God. We truly, truly do.

Annie: The segments when I'm preparing something is when I'm talking to my boss, and my morning is when I'm talking just to my God. I'm like, "One time is the guy I work with."

Beth: Annie, I love that.

Annie: Because I'm like, I'm gonna set right our personal relationship and our business relationship.

Beth: That is profound. I get that entirely. I get that entirely.

Annie: I mean, a lot of our friends work with their spouses and you have to eat dinner and not talk about work. And then other times you need to eat dinner and talk about work. So, man, the Lord do that as well. Okay, was it same true when the girls were little? Is it different with tinies?

Beth: Oh, yes. But I want to say one more thing about staying focused. And I can't believe I forgot this because this is one of the things that I try to most often say to people. Use your scripture reading as dialogue. I can't say enough. This is what will help you stay engaged. In my prayer journal, I keep the first top of it... The first half of it I call interaction, then intercession.

Interaction is where I'm interacting with the word. I'm reading this and I'm saying to the Lord, "Oh, that is so good." Or I'm saying like, "Lord, I have no idea what that means." I'm talking about Him. I figure that through His Word, he's talking to me, and then I'm talking back to Him. If you do that, you'll be far more awake in prayer. This is not something you're doing apart from Him. I mean, right with Him. He's speaking to you, you're speaking back. You're talking to Him. Sometimes I'll look away from my journal and out into the den and I'll say to Him, "You're right here with me. You're closer to me than my own skin."

So now let's go back to the littles. Absolutely. Now I'm gonna tell you something. God meets us where we are in our need and in whatever condition we're in. He is not without understanding. He knows the responsibilities He's given us in that given moment. He knows if someone's going through chemotherapy and they have such a chemo-fogged brain that, I mean, all they can do is say, "Lord just help me. You know my heart here." They can hardly get a clearer word out.

Again, one of the things I still believe with that mom with a house full of kids, try as hard as you can to take that minute or two to get down on your knees, settle that matter of authority. Give Him the day because He has given it to you. But one really big helper you can take your time as your time comes.

And with moms of infants, I'm going to say over and over again. Listen when they nap, you better nap as you possibly can. You better nap. There's time rocking whatever it may be. One of your best friends is going to be music. I believe it with all of my heart that when you are nursing babies, rocking babies, you're up with a sick child, whatever it may be, even if you have just one headphone, when you're one of your earbuds in that you have on some worshipful music that just keeps you present.

I think one of the questions was how do we pray without ceasing? Well, if we're thinking that prayer is only conversation, well, it would be impossible. We have to sleep. We work. We eat. We do those things. But if it means that I live in this open life, like when God said to Abraham, he said, "Live before me." That's what praying without ceasing is, is living before with an awareness I recreate before Him, I laugh, I play, I garden before Him, I read Scripture before Him, I raise my children before Him. But there's just that open communication with Him.

Annie: That's beautiful. You did a training that I loved on Instagram about prayer. And you showed that we could download off of your blog. Can we link to that on our prayer page?

Beth: Yes, absolutely.

Annie: Okay. I would love for everybody to read it. Oh, you already got it?

Ashley: Yes.

Annie: Yeah. AnnieFDowns.com/prayer is all these resources. So we'll add all that to it. Praying God's word is already on it but we'll add... Because you're praying God's word-

Beth: Annie, I have to ask you a question. I have to ask you a question. Do you know—I wonder if anybody else does this—Amanda and Melissa and I, all three refer to you as Annie F?

Annie: No, I think that's very special with y'all and I. I mean, some people do but it doesn't mean like it does when the Moore's girls do it.

Beth: I thought, "I don't know if anybody else just say what we say. Well, you know, Annie F. said."

Ashley: I love that so much.

Annie: I'll take it. I'll take it. Listen, call me whatever you want to call me, Beth Moore. You can call me whatever you want to call me. Thank you for making time to do this today. That is so generous of you.

Beth: Oh, I had a blast.

[01:17:00] <music>

Annie: I mean, Ashley, all these people, how about those three guests?

Ashley: Oh, they're incredible.

Annie: I learned a ton in this one.

Ashley: Same.

Annie: I mean, this whole week has been unbelievable.

Ashley: Yeah.

Annie: I'm just so grateful.

Ashley: I know.

Annie: I love it. I mean, have you felt like hearing these conversations have changed your thought process in prayer or changed how you pray at all?

Ashley: Oh, yeah, haven't stopped thinking about them.

Annie: Really?

Ashley: Yeah. I'm not sure I can identify specific takeaways at this moment but even just the, you know, when something is at the forefront of your mind, then you notice. So just the exercise of focusing a little bit more on it has me noticing the times that I probably need to pray that it might not have been my instinct at that moment. So just a little more intentionality and a little more maybe hunger

Annie: Me too.

Ashley: ...to be in more constant communication with the Lord.

Annie: Well, let's take a quick break. And then when we come back, you and I are going to tackle some of the questions that people put in and said, "Annie..."

Ashley: Sounds like a plan.

Annie: "...well, you answer." So let's do those when we get back from this break.

Sponsor: You guys, I'm just interrupting one last time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Athletic Greens](#). We're interested in doing anything we can to support our health, especially when it's convenient and delicious.

Well, what is Athletic Greens, you ask? In one scoop of Athletic Greens mixed in cold water, you're absorbing 75 high quality vitamins, minerals, Whole Foods sourced superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens. Here are all the things that special blend of ingredients supports. Your gut health, your nervous system, your immune system, your energy recovery and focus. My gracious!

AG1 contains less than one gram of sugar, no GMOs, no bad-for-you chemicals or artificial anything while still tasting so good. It's got a fresh green flavor with a sort of a tropical finish and it's lifestyle friendly. Whether you eat keto, Paleo, vegan, dairy-free, or gluten-free, you are all set.

Athletic Greens has over 7,000 five-star reviews and is recommended by professional athletes. Which, listen, if you're gonna listen to somebody about what to put in your bod, listen to the pro athlete. It's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition especially as we finish up this cold and flu season. Just one scoop in a cup of cold water every day, that's it.

To make it easy, Athletic Greens is gonna give you a free one year supply of immune-supporting vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. All you have to do is visit athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Again, that's athleticgreens.com/soundsfun to take ownership over your health and pick up the ultimate daily nutritional insurance.

Sponsor: I have one less amazing partner to tell you about that you guys love, that I love, Thistle Farms. Since Mother's Day is right around the corner, PS Mother's Day is right around the corner, I wanted to share the most beautiful gift idea with you. It's the luxurious candles, lotions, essential oils, and other products that the women at Thistle Farms make.

If you're not familiar with Thistle Farms, it's an incredible organization that helps women survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction to heal through two years of housing therapy and education all free of charge to the women. To fund their mission and to provide meaningful employment that leads to economic independence, the women survivors hand make Thistle Farms beautiful products.

Okay, I recently heard the story about Jennifer who's a Thistle Farms graduate and I was so moved. While she was stuck at dangerous cycles of abuse and addiction on the streets of Nashville, Jennifer chose to make a heart-wrenching and brave, and selfless decision to release custody of her seven kids. One of the gifts she's received since coming to Thistle Farms is that she has reconnected with every one of her kids. I can't even tell you how many lives have been similarly changed because of the work of Thistle Farms.

You can live on the moms in your life and lift up other moms and other women like Jennifer by gifting from Thistle Farms this Mother's Day. On thistlefarms.org, you'll find all their candles, body products, home textiles, and gift sets. And because you're my friends, you also are invited to use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout for 15% off your purchase. Again, that's thistle farms.org and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN for 15% off.

Annie: Ash, how about Beth, Kevin, Carlos?

Ashley: Ah, I mean, so much to reflect on. So much. I just... yeah, I clearly don't have words.

Annie: I think one of my favorite things about these shows, these Q&A ones, and I hope people are doing this, is listen at your own pace, take your time. These don't have to be finished today.

Ashley: Take it in chunks.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, do it in chunks if you need. I hear people saying to us that they're doing that since these are a little bit longer. But you know, these aren't going anywhere. These are different than our normal shows. And we want people to use them as they need them.

Ashley: Come back as needed and begin again as needed.

Annie: So there's a couple of questions left, right?

Ashley: That's right. Questions actually that either are directly asked to you or are aspects of prayer and prayer life that you have a lot to teach us.

Annie: I don't know about that.

Ashley: I do because I know how much I've learned from you.

Annie: Well, same. I'm gonna throw some of these back to you. Okay, let's bust through some of them.

Ashley: Here we go. So one friend said, "I keep a prayer journal. Some may say that's not really praying, but I feel it is. I pray without writing it down, too. So what do you think?"

Annie: Absolutely, I think that's prayer.

Ashley: I too.

Annie: I mean, King David wrote down his prayers and Isaiah. So much of what we know in the Bible about how people pray is because someone wrote it down. We only know the Lord's Prayer, because Matthew wrote it down.

Ashley: Sure.

Annie: So I think it's absolutely 100%. I need to write down my prayers at times because it slows me down.

Ashley: Same. I don't know that it slows me down. I write pretty slowly. But it definitely helps me stay focused.

Annie: Yeah.

Ashley: How do you practically keep up with a prayer list? Actually praying for all the people in your circle and what is going on in their hearts and lives on a regular basis?

Annie: Beth Redmond and I talked about this a little bit. I've talked about it in a couple of shows. And in my real life, I've shown it on Instagram. I'll tag it again today in my stories. But I actually have big sticky notes hanging on my wall in my house. I have a room where I always sit and read and pray the mornings I do that. And I have it hanging on my wall, big sticky notes. I don't show it on the internet because it's all my friends and family's deepest prayer needs that they share with me. So I can't like, "Look at this."

But what I did show is what it looked like before I started the one for 2022. So just a big sticky note on the wall, writing people's names, writing their needs. Also, if you watch the movie War Room, she gives a really beautiful visual example of how to put your prayer needs of other people in front of your face.

Ashley: I think I learned about this from JP, from Jonathan Pokluda. But it's in the book *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller. Prayer cards... like get the little index cards that are on a ring and write someone's name at the top and anything you're praying for them, be it a verse, a specific request, a need, hope for them. If you keep those with you, you can bust through them sitting in the car rider line or you know-

Annie: And no prayer is too short.

Ashley: Right.

Annie: You don't have to say a certain amount of things. A Bible study I was in, we had one of those divider things for notecards. Do you know like a plastic thing with a cover that-

Ashley: I used to keep receipts in it.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, it's like a receipt holder. And we had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And in each thing you prayed for different things. So on Monday it was family, on Tuesday it was friends, on Wednesday it was the world, on Thursday it was our church.

Ashley: I love that.

Annie: So then on Mondays, I was always praying for family. So every card was a family person. On Tuesday I was always praying for friends. On Wednesday I was always praying for stuff going on in the world. And of course there were other times... when the war between Russia and Ukraine started you pray that day.

Ashley: Sure.

Annie: I mean, it's not like, "We'll pray that on Wednesday." But you're right, having little cards. If you don't have a place like you have a wall, if you don't have a place, note cards are awesome.

Ashley: Yeah. Another friend, Melissa, actually asks, any tips for calming my mind? My mind tends to wander and I lose focus.

Annie: I lose focus all the time. I keep a stack of sticky notes on the table where I sit and read and pray. And I don't bring my phone in there, if I can help it. You remember a couple... when we talked about... I think it was with the She Reads Truth girls. When we were talking about Lent, we talked about having a chair to put your phone in. One of our friends mailed me a chair, a tiny, tiny chair. So I'll show a

picture of that today on Instagram too. But I have that little chair on my table, and I put my phone in that little chair. And I play Lectio 365 from there.

But with those sticky notes, what I do for my first three minutes while I'm sitting there is anything that's on the front of my brain, a grocery list, something for work that I don't want to forget, I just jot it down on a sticky note. So I do have original brain dump. And then I start reading and praying and as things come to my mind, I just write on the sticky note. I don't want to forget it. I don't think God loses interest in us praying if we have to stop and write that we don't forget artichoke hearts.

Ashley: I think about the times that I sit and talk with close friends. I mean, you and I sometimes I'll be like, "I've got three things I need to tell you." And I'll hold three fingers up because I know I've got those three things. Our conversation wanders because we know and love each other. And so we may follow a rabbit trail and then come back to the second thing.

Annie: That's right.

Ashley: Our friendship, our communion with the Lord is not unlike a wandering conversation with a friend. So taking some of the pressure off for our sweet friend, Melissa to... Yes, I do think it honors the Lord when we come to Him with focus and intention. And I think He knows us and loves us and so He likes a wandering conversation with us too.

Annie: I mean, in every podcast I record, I have a piece of paper in front of me so that I can write down things that come to my mind during the podcast. Sometimes it is to ask the person and sometimes it is "don't forget to tell Johnny to cut this one part of... Or go back and fix this thing that you said in a meeting before this." I mean, I think the best way to respect the other person in the meeting, including in prayer with God, is to have an opportunity to dump the things that distract your brain.

Ashley: Sure. That's awesome. Our friend Crystal asks... and I love this question. I'm really excited to hear what you have to say to this. I feel like I'm really good at praying for others and situations in the world. But how do I pray for myself without feeling selfish?

Annie: I mean, I feel like you should answer that because an Enneagram two versus Enneagram seven.

Ashley: No, I'm right here with crystal and curious how would you lead us in that one

Annie: A verse that comes to my mind is... There's this verse that says, "You will prosper when the city you live in prospers." So there is something about you benefit when

the things and people you pray for benefit. When God moves in other people's lives or in other people's stories, you actually get pulled along with that in some ways. That's what Scripture says. "When the city you live in prospers, you prosper."

So when we see cranes in Nashville, I call it revival and I call it prosper. And I think it's good. And the traffic, whatever. Okay, so praying for yourself. Well, to me, there is no one who can help me as much as God can help me. So to not bring the things I want and need to the one who can actually help is just going to frustrate me. It's not going to frustrate anybody else.

One of the reasons I write things on the wall is because I got in such a habit of only praying for things I cared about in my own life that I realize I wasn't balanced. I think the opposite can be true as well. That you are only praying for other people and you aren't interacting with God about your own life at all. So make it a balance thing I think.

I think if you can tell yourself like, "I sure spent time praying for my family today..." What is it that Fallon always asks on people's birthdays here? Well, the first question I always ask and then I'll let you say, my question is, on your birthday, I asked, "What do you want from God this year?" And then say what Fallon says.

Ashley: And then Fallon says, "If you're being selfish, what would you ask God for this year for your birthday?"

Annie: And then we pray for both things.

Ashley: Right. Right.

Annie: We pray for both things.

Ashley: Because what I know to be true, even though I don't always feel it, is that hoping and wanting and meeting for yourself is-

Annie: Not selfish.

Ashley: No, it's not selfish.

Annie: It's not selfish at all. You would never look at a friend who's asking you for help. If you called me, Ashley, and said, "Hey, I just cannot pick up both the girls today. Can you help me?" I would not go, "That is the most selfish thing." Right? Of course not.

Ashley: Right.

Annie: A friend who said they had a need to you, you would never call them selfish. You would say, "Of course let me help you."

Ashley: Exactly.

Annie: So treat yourself the way you treat your friends. And that includes in prayer.

Ashley: That's good.

Annie: Or your children. Because a lot of moms will do anything for their kids and nothing for themselves. And that includes the prayer. So if you would do it for your kids, do it for yourself, because you are loved even more than you love your children.

Ashley: Thank you for that. We've got a Vox audio question here. And we actually don't know this friend's name. But here we go. "Hey, Annie, my question for you is what is the thing that you find yourself praying about the most? And why do you think that is?"

Annie: Huh, what is the thing I found myself praying about the most? Well, currently, there's medical stuff in my family that I pray about a lot. There is... I'm trying to look at my wall in my head. We have a friend here at the office who was looking for a place to live, a place to work. Like he just needed God to provide everything. And that was front and center. And then the Lord did. So I got to write "answered" across new job and "answered" across new home. That was awesome.

I pray for our work. So this is a great one to call the selfish one. I pray every day for every person who works here. Now, I own this company and I co-own That Sounds Fun Network. So is it selfish for me to pray for our company because I own it? I don't think so.

Ashley: No.

Annie: Because the only way we make the impact that we're desiring to make is if God's wisdom leads us and God tells us what to do and guides us in how to do this well. So every morning, every morning I pray through every person and I pray through every big decision we're making and small decision we're making. So I pray for the office every day. I pray for our church every day. Sometimes more intensely than others based on what's going on.

And then selfishly I pray about my relationships. I mean, almost every day, I'm asking God for clarity in dating or for hope in dating or for marriage. I have spent 20 of my years asking God to answer that prayer for me. And I still ask.

Ashley: And I'm gonna push back on you because you preface that by saying selfishly.

Annie: Oh, I did?

Ashley: It's not.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, I did, didn't I? It's not selfish. That's what I want. I mean, we talked about a lot I want to die asking.

Ashley: Right.

Annie: So I pray in that vein. Either when I'm in a thing, I'm asking God for direction and for clarity, and for how to do this well. When I'm not in the thing, I'm asking God to bring along the right next thing. When the thing is ending, I'm grieving. I mean, wherever I am in the relationship cycle, I am praying for that.

Ashley: Well, and that's a perfect segue to this next question from Leslie. How does prayer look different for you in different seasons? Happy, sad, angry, determined, stubborn when you're hearing from Him, when you're not, when you're writing, talking out loud, banging your head, on your knees? When do you love it and what do you do when you're not loving it?

Annie: I don't know that love and not love are the right words. I think it's like or... I don't know that I ever love praying. I know that sounds weird. But I mean, it just isn't like I just like it. I love talking to God. So I guess I do love it. It just isn't one of the disciplines that I like... I don't know. Maybe I'd love it. Do I love it? Do you love it?

Ashley: I think you love it.

Annie: Oh, okay. I'm just like, I guess we just leave this in. But I'm like, maybe I do. I mean, I am very committed to it.

Ashley: Yes, for sure.

Annie: I'm very committed to it.

Ashley: A thing that you say a lot is that we make space for the things that matter to us.

Annie: It matters deeply to me.

Ashley: For me, I think of loving something and it mattering.

Annie: Do you love prayer?

Ashley: I want to answer that honestly.

Annie: Me too.

Ashley: I'm in an interesting season with the Lord right now. We're having lots of conversations and none of them are easy. But we're having lots of conversations. So I think I do love it. All right. I at least know I need it.

Annie: Okay, I probably love it. I make tea every morning. So it steams for six minutes. I've put my water on to boil and I do my dishes. When the water boils and I steam it for six minutes, I pray out loud for those six minutes. So that's a discipline I have. I walk up and down my hallway praying out loud for six minutes for whatever is on the front of my mind.

Then I get my tea and I go sit in my chair. And then I'm praying in my mind or I'm journaling is usually my rhythm. When we're here at work, we pray out loud. I mean we did today. Something messed up today and we prayed out loud as soon as we knew it messed up and asked the Lord to intervene.

But like even this morning when I was listening to Lectio 365, they're reading something and at the very end it says, "And now something something, the Lord who loves me says..." I always say it with them. "The Lord who loves me says..." And I think I said out loud, "I love you too," or something like that. I responded in quote, "prayer." Or I said, "I know you love me." I responded verbally when the Lectio 365 app read that to me.

And when they were reading Psalm 34 out loud, I said, "Yes, yes, that's exactly right. That's how I feel too, God." And I've been in Psalm 51 a lot because my sin is ever before me. So I just had been reading those verses out loud and being like, "Oh, that is how I feel God." So it's all of those. But I'm not in an easy prayer season, either.

I mean, Kevin, and I talked about it today of I've watched someone else get everything that we prayed for and me getting none of the things we prayed for as I understood what I wanted, right? I recognize that all the things that blah, blah, blah, I recognize that God has arrhhh... all that stuff.

Still, the things we were asking for directly she got and I did not. And I have had... I mean, it has been a wrestle fest about that. I also think my journal duded out on me today, by the way. I've got probably 20 pages left and I think it's done. I think it's done.

Ashley: Okay.

Annie: I haven't written well in it in three days, so I'm like, "Okay, it's done. It's done." Everything I can do in the journal has been done. Every time I start again, I don't write a lot of words. I need a new journal.

Ashley: So it's interesting to me that you call that a dud?

Annie: No, no, everything that's in there is great so far. It doesn't duded out now.

Ashley: Oh, okay. Okay. It's clear to you that it's all done?

Annie: Yes. This is expired. Even though there's 15 pages left, I just want people to hear me say, I'm letting it go. Our friends can't see me making the sign language for all done but I am. Because I'm also thinking as I look back at Leslie's question, just to make sure we actually hit it-

Annie: You want to make sure you actually said something that helped.

Ashley: Oh, I'm not an interviewer, so I'm just double-checking myself. I'm thinking about different seasons. And I am thinking about, there was a season of my life where I was a mom to a little bitties , and prayer looked like anytime I was in the car I would talk out loud to God because the baby couldn't talk yet and up in the middle of the night nursing or changing diapers. And then not maybe not really all that frequently otherwise. Because-

Annie: Out on walks like when you push the strollers. So I was a full time working mom.

Annie: That's right.

Ashley: So I didn't have that type of margin in my day.

Annie: That's good for me to hear because I love walking when it's hot. I'm a hot-

Ashley: You're a crazy person, but great for you, great for you.

Annie: We're walking into the season where I will do some stomping around the rich neighborhood next to my house and pray outside.

Ashley: But the season that... Like when I was in college, I mean, pages and pages and pages of journals a day were prayers.

Annie: Man, when I worked for our campus ministry, part of being on staff was praying an hour a day in the prayer room. I fell asleep every dang day, every day. No fail. And the Lord was the kindness about it. I didn't sleep for the whole hour but every day I fell asleep part of that.

Ashley: So our last question is from Carly. And it says, "If God is all knowing, and already has a plan of what is to happen in our lives, what is the point of praying? If someone is sick and is going to die, why pray for healing? If something bad is already planned to happen, are our prayers going to prevent it from happening?"

Annie: Read me the first question again.

Ashley: "If God is all knowing and already has a plan of what is to happen in our lives, what is the point of praying?"

Annie: Well, I think for starters, all of our friends and teachers who have been with us in these two shows have told us that prayer is about connection, it's about relationship, it's about expressing what you need and what you want, and it's about aligning your heart with God's will. And that is why we encourage so much praying the Lord's Prayer: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, you also know how I feel about this question.

Ashley: I do. Yeah.

Annie: I believe prayer changes the heart of God at times. Oh, I think all the time our prayer moves God's heart. I think sometimes our prayer moves God's hand. I have scripture backing for that. I mean, when the king who didn't want to die and God gave him 15 more years... I mean, I am not making this up out of nowhere. There is scriptural backing for God changing His mind.

Jesus tells two stories that I get so lit up about this. Jesus tells two stories very clearly about where He says, "I am going to tell you this parable so that you pray and you don't give up." And one is the persistent widow. She keeps going to the judge until the judge changes his mind.

The other is a man who goes and knocks on his neighbor's door in the middle of the night because he needs something for the people that are staying with him and the neighbor won't get out of bed and won't get out of bed and won't get out of bed.

And the guy keeps knocking and the neighbor changes his mind and gets out of bed. I think Jesus wants us to pay attention to that.

Oh, Lord, I do not know why things happen the way they do. I don't understand how God answers. I go into every nine one one prayer for healing, for change expecting God to listen and consider me and consider what I'm asking for.

Now, I'm also listening to Pete Greig's book called *God on Mute*. In fact, I'm on chapter eight. The whole thing is about why God doesn't answer prayers. And chapter eight is called God's World. And one of the things he's talking about is what does God do on a day where a bride prays for no rain and a farmer prays for rain? He can't answer yes to both of those people. Right?

Ashley: Right.

Annie: And how God has set up the world that He doesn't intervene. Because of what He set up, there are times that He lets the weather be the weather. So sometimes he doesn't answer our prayers because He doesn't intervene on certain things, because He can't answer everyone's prayer. If I'm praying to marry that guy and she's praying to marry that guy, only one of us is gonna get to marry him in the religion we subscribe to.

So I don't know how or why God answers the way He does. I will spend my life approaching prayer like what I say to God may affect. So what do you think?

Ashley: I don't know that I approach prayer with quite the tenacious faith that you do. I'm a lot more prone to accept the natural order of things or the brokenness of things. I probably give up too soon. Just in all honesty I also expect prayer to change me much more often than I expect prayer to change God's mind. I expect that as I talk to Him and as I hear from Him, it's gonna be that that molding thing that He's done to me and for me my whole life, where it's like, okay, I kind of hear Him kind of smiling, shaking His head like, "Okay, I hear you and I know why you feel that way and I know it's best. So I'm gonna give you what's best even..."

Annie: I think you might the spectrum which is really important, where you pray and expect God to change you and are available to God changing the situation. I pray and expect God to change the situation and I'm available for Him to change me.

Ashley: I love it.

Annie: And everyone listening probably falls somewhere on this spectrum.

Ashley: Sure.

Annie: And I think that's beautiful. Because I am available. I try to end with "but not my will but yours." In all things, I try to end with that. But I do expect Him and I to... I do expect... well, you know the Message version of the parable of the talents?

Ashley: Mm-mm.

Annie: In the end, the guy who has done right by the talents, what God says is, "From now on, I want you to be my partner." So I just think the longer we pray and the longer we're in relationship with God, the more His sovereignty always wins. But our involvement is important. So I'm always like, "So I've got this idea. And I don't know what you think but here's what I'd like to see happen. And you let's talk about it." I don't know, I may be off on that. It's the same as you and me and Beth picturing such totally different things when we pray.

Ashley: I know. I love it.

Annie: I love it.

Ashley: It's also why I asked you to pray for stuff for me because I need to borrow from your faith sometimes.

Annie: Well, it's also why I need you to pray for me too to be okay when things don't change because I get brokenhearted really easily when things don't change. Thank you for asking those. Thank you, friends, for all your questions.

Here's how we're going to end today's show as we did with Episode 1. I'm gonna pray for us. And then Carlos has prayed for us as well. So if you will get yourself in a comfortable spot, in a spot where you can receive. If you will pull over your car, stop the treadmill for just a second or stop us until you're done on the treadmill, if you're trying to hit a time, hang on in the grocery store till you get back in the car. I just want you to be where you can receive from Carlos and from God as we both pray for you now.

Lord, thanks for Ashley and for her thoughts on all this. Thank you for Beth and Carlos and Pastor Kevin. Thanks for Johnny and Jenna making the shows possible. God, these two episodes have meant a ton to me. Thank you for our friends who've asked all these questions.

God, you know our heart. Our heart is that our friends listening would experience you in their prayer lives wherever they are on the spectrum between me and Ashley as we tend to be on the two ends of this, God. Here's what we overarching they

believe: that you are who you say you are and that you will do what you say you'll do, and that Jesus taught us how to pray.

So even right now, God, we will just pray that. We will pray the way Jesus taught us to pray for Matthew 6. This is in the NIV. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lord, let us be people who forgive. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, that's what we asked for. So would you do that in our lives? Would you teach us how to pray? It's what the disciples asked. And so we're asking too, teach us how to pray, teach us how to pray. And would we have eyes to see you answer. I believe you're answering all the time. I just want to have eyes to see it and to see your kingdom coming and your will being done is not my will. So God we also mirror what Jesus said of not our wills, but yours be done. That's what we want the most, God.

So thank you, thank you, thank you that you've even given us a way to talk to you. Oh, my gosh. I mean, we are the only people with a Living God. And we are just so thankful. We're so thankful. So thank you for prayer. And teach us how to pray. Help us to be people whose prayers are effective. Let us run from sin and run toward you, God. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ashley: Amen.

Carlos: Holy Spirit, we are grateful that you are here, wherever it is here is, wherever we are listening to this, Lord. Even in this room we're grateful that Ash, Annie, and I rock n roll in your presence. I'm just going to be very specific in asking that you be very clear today. Be very clear. Be like a magically—somebody used that word today—supernaturally clear to questions that the listeners may have had, prayers maybe that they have asked decades ago, weeks ago, whatever it was. Will you be clear in answering something today?

Holy Spirit, I'm not scared to ask that you do that? Will you open our eyes to see, to slow down enough, to lower the volume of life enough to be able to actually hear when you answer. So I just ask that today be a day when somebody that is listening to this begins to pray in a way where literally earth is going to quake and shake underneath their feet because the power of God and the power of your presence is going to not only flood their lives but flood their home, flood their environments, flood their relationships. And may today be that supernatural day where things begin to shift.

Oh, Holy Spirit, will you just show us? Guide us to exactly what it is we must pray today. And will you be clear? For it is by the blood of the cross, the power of the resurrection, and the authority that you've given us in your ascension that we pray these things. Amen.

[01:48:44] <music>

Outro: Oh, friends, gracious, what a gift Carlos is! What a gift that this whole Q&A week has been! Thank y'all again for your questions. I just can't tell you what it means to me when y'all are willing, with your name attached or not, to ask what you're really feeling. Our hope is that the shows and this whole bunch of shows have really helped you. They have helped me.

Hey, be sure to follow Beth Moore, Kevin Queen, and Carlos Whittaker on social media. Tell them thanks so much for being on the shows and answering our questions. And listen, this is the first time we've ever done a month-long series like this so we'd love to hear... I mean, generally, we just want to hear what this has meant to you and any improvements we can make.

So there is a really short survey we would love for you to fill out. I just want to know that we're making stuff that matters to you all and that this is the direction you were hoping we'd go when you asked us to talk about prayer in the Epiphany episode in January. You filled out a survey then and this is what you'll want to talk about.

So genuinely, I just want to make sure it's what you want. And we want to know how to make it better. We want to know your favorite parts. So the link is in the show notes below and we're just going to use your responses to help us shape any future series like this. So it would just meet a lot of y'all take like four minutes and do that so that we can know where we can be better, what mattered most to you, and anything you want us to know at the end of this whole series on prayer.

Hey, and don't forget, Anniefdowns.com/prayer has a list of books, a list of movies, a list of sermons, a list of songs, a list of all the other resources that you have told us about that our guests have told us about that we've collected up all around prayer. So head over to Anniefdowns.com/prayer, if that will be helpful to you.

Also, on our Spotify account, I'll link to that here in the show notes too, there are tons of playlists we've built. If you want to listen to all the Q&A episodes. They are all there together from Q&A with Santa Claus to singleness to a Q&A about indigenous people groups and the Gospels. So they're all there together. We got a lot of playlists over there we've built for you if you want to listen through a list of podcasts.

If you need anything else from me, you guys 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 and that is it for us in this TSF prayer series. Thank you so much for helping us shape it, friends. I can't wait to hear your thoughts on it and do it again. We would love to keep doing these kinds of series.

So y'all go out or stay home do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is Jon Acuff is arriving at our office in 10 minutes to talk about his book Soundtracks with our team since we just finished reading it. If you have not gotten that book, I highly, highly recommend it. It has really shaped not only what we think in the office, but how we talk about what we think in the office and how I talk about what I think in my life. So I'm really grateful for it.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday. Get ready for this. Walker Hayes, Mr. Fancy Like is in the studio with his best friend and co-author Craig Cooper. Y'all are gonna love this conversation. We'll see you guys on Monday. Have a great weekend.