

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I hope you had a great Mother's Day. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store.

But before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment and share about one of our incredible partners [BetterHelp](#). Life can be overwhelming, as we all know, and many people get burned out without even knowing they're heading in that direction. Burnout can feel like a lack of motivation or feeling helpless or trapped, fatigue and detachment. And not the benevolent kind of detachment that John Eldridge teaches about.

We have the statements "rest hard" and "play hard" on the walls in our office in addition to "work hard" because we really believe that keeping these rhythms helps us all prevent burnout. And another way we guard against letting overwhelm get the best of us is through therapy. I'm eternally grateful for the ways my counselor has helped me process the overwhelming seasons over the years. It's honestly something I feel like everyone can benefit from.

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

That Sounds Fun friends get 10% off your first month at betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show I get to talk with my friend Kirsten Watson. She's a mom of seven and wife of author and retired NFL player Benjamin Watson. They are both Georgia Bulldogs. You've heard him on the show. Go Dawgs. Sic 'em.

After finishing at Georgia with a marketing and Spanish degree, Kirsten worked for a Fortune 500 company and then in the nonprofit sector aspiring to one day run her own company. Now she's the CEO of a family of nine and the Executive Editor of Mom Life Today. With Benjamin, she founded the One More Foundation and together they cohost *Why or Why Not With the Watsons*, one of my favorite podcasts.

She consistently and understandably gets this question all the time, how do you do it all? And that's why she wrote her new book that released last week called *Sis, Take a Breath: Encouragement for the Woman Who's Trying to Live and Love Well (but Secretly Just Wants to Take a Nap)*. I thought she was the perfect person to

help us celebrate, honor, and encourage all you moms in our friend group here at That Sounds Fun and all the moms and those who are mothering presences in our lives.

So here's my conversation with my friend Kirsten Watson.

[00:02:39] <music>

Annie: Kirsten Watson, I have to lead with Go Dawgs. Sic 'em.

Kirsten: Oh, yes. It's such a year.

Annie: What a year to be... how many years that we suffered? All of them. Not this one.

Kirsten: All my life. All of our lives literally.

Annie: All of our lives. We're the same grade.

Kirsten: Yes.

Annie: Yes. I have a stance about our grade. We've waited the longest. Because I was born in July of 80 and we won in January of 80.

Kirsten: Oh, yeah.

Annie: When were you born?

Kirsten: May 81. But Benjamin is 80. So I feel like I live vicariously through his December-

Annie: So all of us have technically waited the longest.

Kirsten: Exactly.

Annie: Mathematically, I've waited longer than any... Even the people who were born the year before me, they got it as infants. They didn't know that Georgia won a National Champion in 1980.

Kirsten: Yeah. It's awesome.

Annie: You live with Benjamin Watson who's been on the show, professional football player for a long time, Georgia Bulldog.

Kirsten: Of course.

Annie: I screamed his name more time in those four years we were at school together. What was it like for y'all Georgia winning this year? We y'all at the game?

Kirsten: Benjamin was at the game. He was working in the game and I think told his producer, "If Georgia wins, when Georgia wins, I'm supposed to be in this chair, but I probably will not be in this chair." So I was at home with all the other people because it happened late at night and you're up watching. But he was there. And I was so grateful that he was there. There's this picture of him jumping on the sidelines as we're, you know, running the ball and he's jumping up in the air until...

Annie: Oh, I've seen him. Him and David Pollack are next to each other.

Kirsten: Oh, my goodness, that's part of his new introduction everywhere we go. I'm like, "Beb, everyone doesn't need to have that introduction." But he's like, "I don't care. I'm saying it anyway. Go Dawgs! National Champs in case you didn't know." So it was good. It was good for me to see him love it in a different way than being in the NFL. It's a different love.

Annie: Right. How did you end up in Georgia?

Kirsten: The Lord. No, I was looking at going to Spelman College and then Emory. And then for some reason-

Annie: From Atlanta? Are your people in Atlanta?

Kirsten: My people are from Atlanta. We were coming from Louisiana. And I knew I didn't want to do LSU. My mom did LCU. I was like, "Oh, I'll do Georgia because there's grass." Seriously. Because I went to Emory and I looked at it, great school. Spelman, I was like "I just think I want there to be football?" And I said yes to Georgia and in honors leadership program and had never stepped foot. So I grew up in Atlanta, but I'd never gone to a Georgia game.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Kirsten: Is that crazy? Total crazy?

Annie: No. I don't think... I only went to like two before I was there.

Kirsten: I never went. So my first time being on campus was orientation.

Annie: Oh my gosh, you didn't tour ahead of time?

Kirsten: I did not tour.

Annie: You're like, "I'll go here."

Kirsten: I was like, "I'll go here." Is that crazy? It's a little crazy. It's crazy when I think also like simultaneously Benjamin was saying yes to Duke university. And then somehow after a year made his way to Georgia, I made my way of just playing softball, we made our way to FCA. And that's how we met. It's kind of crazy. But yeah, good times at Georgia.

Annie: Did y'all have a lot of friends from FCA that got married?

Kirsten: No. Not that were dating in college. I don't think we know very many people that were dating. We were kind of the sole daters of our friend groups. And we're also the arguers. They were like, "How are y'all getting married? You argue all the time. You disagree. You have to be on the same team or you'll be arguing for three days." I think we're the only ones.

Annie: Were you already walking with God in college?

Kirsten: I was. I got saved in seventh grade, but grew up Catholic and then went to Georgia. And then that's when I really kind of made decisions about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to spend time and how I was going to dig in. And that was kind of happening my freshman year. Again, then meeting Benjamin who has a background in his parents, his dad being a pastor. So it was perfect timing for us to meet.

Annie: It's gotta be funny thinking about your kids... I mean, your oldest daughter is 13.

Kirsten: Yes.

Annie: I mean, I'm the same way. I grew up in church, I got saved really young, meant it, knew what I was doing and I still had to process my faith as a college student.

Kirsten: For sure.

Annie: I'm curious what it feels like knowing that your kids in six years, five years will start that process, even though you're raising them in a Christian home?

Kirsten: Yes. It's actually really exciting. Because we're always telling them, "You have to know it for yourself. We're laying the foundation for things to be written on your heart, but you're gonna have to walk it out. So how you do that is going to be unique to your journey."

And I think as Benjamin I pray, like, "Lord give us wisdom to not step in when something could be part of their story." Because you want everything to be good and nice and everything. But sometimes things are rough. And sometimes they experience things that you don't necessarily want them to. And so there's moments where we push and say, "No, this is a good learning experience for you. This is part of how you're going to trust a God." And so sweet when God shows up the way you kind of want Him to.

Annie: You're like, "We're doing this together."

Kirsten: "Yes, Lord, you're showing her you're real."

Annie: We're raising these children.

Kirsten: Exactly. Exactly. But you have to be prepared for whatever happens. But the idea is that they can do some of that learning a little bit at home so that way when they go out they're not doing it by themselves.

Annie: I'm not raising any kids, but across the hall we had a little thing go sideways with our renovation. And the actual person in charge over there, I had to let her suffer through the decision. Because I was like, "The only way she's going to learn how to fix this is if I don't fix this."

Kirsten: Right.

Annie: So I had this moment where I was like, "Is this what it feels?"

Kirsten: It is. It's Like, "Oh, I want to step in. And I can't. This is for your good. This is for your good."

Annie: I was like, "This is for her good. She will be stronger for this." Even though I could solve it-

Kirsten: For sure.

Annie: ...I was like, "This is my little birdie."

Kirsten: I know. But you realize you're there. You're kinda there but you're going to-

Annie: Okay, list off your children for us.

Kirsten: Okay. Grace is 13, Naomi is 11. I have to think about it.

Annie: I'm looking for her in the picture.

Kirsten: Naomi is sitting on the couch.

Annie: Naomi is 11. Yeah, okay.

Kirsten: And then Isaiah is 10. He's the one not sitting.

Annie: He's wildly standing on the couch?

Kirsten: No doing the rock paper scissors.

Annie: Rock paper scissors.

Kirsten: Uh-huh. The wild one is Judah. Judah is nine. And then Eden is with Grace and she is six and a half. I say the half. It's important. And then Asher and Levi they just turned three. Lord help me.

Annie: Seven of them.

Kirsten: Listen-

Annie: When Benjamin was on the show, he was like, "Annie, we thought five was hard. We are being dominated by the twins."

Kirsten: Listen, I'm so glad we didn't write a parenting book before the twins because it would have all been lies. It would all-

Annie: Like five was easy? Is that what you're saying?

Kirsten: Yeah. I'm just saying we thought we knew. We were so prideful. And then we had the twins and God's like, "Let me bring you back down to earth."

Annie: And you write about this in your book, *Sis, Take a Breath*. But you and Benjamin are living in New Orleans and in Boston where he's playing and you've got a five-year-old, a four-year-old, a three-year-old, a two-year-old world. And living in a city where he's playing professional football, so he's gone, and you're home with all those people.

Kirsten: All the people. Yes, yes. I remember specifically when it was four and under and then my oldest was like, "Mommy, I don't want to go to school." She was going to kindergarten. We had this beautiful kindergarten picked out and she's like, "Can't you just teach me?" And I'm like, "Ah, yes and no."

Annie: And am I capable? Certainly.

Kirsten: Yeah. Do I want to? That's our homeschool journey. I'm like, "I am now homeschooling. You're playing football. There's a million people in this house it feels like." So yeah, every year, every move, every kid was really a process of me surrendering what I thought how it should look, how I thought I could control and really just... it was like kid by kid, I was like, "I can't do this on my own."

Annie: So back up to like 21 year old you and Benjamin arguing in the drive-thru at-

Kirsten: Of all things.

Annie: What's the chicken tender place?

Kirsten: Guthrie's?

Annie: Guthrie's.

Kirsten: Is it Guthrie's? Is that right?

Annie: No, it's Guthrie's. Tell me, did she think it would look like this?

Kirsten: No. I write about this. She thought she was going to be a corporate exec, owning her own business, corner office, I was gonna have the amazing suit, the amazing car, the parking spot that said reserved for Kirsten Vaughn.

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: That was what I planned. Anyone who knew me knew that I was going to be in business doing something. I knew I wanted to have a family-

Annie: I mean, every time I've been around you, y'all been like, "There's business in there, yes."

Kirsten: Right. I didn't really know when that was gonna happen. I was not ready or planning for it. Like definitely not in college. I was like, "This is what I'm doing. I'm graduating and I'm gonna go and do my thing." So 21-year-old Kirsten had no idea that she'd had this many kids, be married young, relatively young, just the whole life. I just never in a million years would imagine.

And even now, having a book... Someone just asked me, "Did you ever think?" I was like, "There was not even a close million on the list of things I want to accomplish in my life."

Annie: Do you still want to do business?

Kirsten: I do. I think that's one thing I realize, that all the skills that I feel like God has given me I use them with my family.

Annie: Really?

Kirsten: So whether it's marketing or figuring... I mean, I have to sell people to do the right thing all the time.

Annie: Listen, me too. I'm marketing from when I wake up till I go to bed.

Kirsten: Exactly.

Annie: Even if it's just my coworkers.

Kirsten: It's like my persuasive skills got to be on point.

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

Kirsten: I am directing and ordering, and financing and scheduling. It's all the things that I feel like I'm somewhat gifted in. I just have people who I don't pay, and are much younger than my age bracket.

Annie: So at Georgia, it was all business classes? You were in North Campus all the time?

Kirsten: I was in North Campus. I was marketing and actually Spanish. And I get to use that because people sometimes I'm walking around and will start speaking to me in Spanish. I don't know if I give a Spanish Bible. I don't know. At the gas station, people will just start asking me questions and my kids are like, "Mommy..." They're surprised when I can start speaking. But yeah, I was North Campus the whole time.

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: Crazy, right? Sitting next to Benjamin. He was in finance.

Annie: And here I am way on South Campus in Aderhold stuck in that one building doing education the whole time.

Kirsten: Oh man.

Annie: Okay. So that is just so fascinating because then you... I think so many of our friends listening, all of us, our lives did not look the way we thought they would. And we all need to take a breath. Right? I'm having migraines way more than I used to have. I am in a season of having it more often and I think it's because I need to take a breath.

And I don't have any kids I'm raising. I go home and my house is exactly the way I left it this morning hopefully. You're gonna go home and you have no idea what the house is gonna look like because you got seven people in there. Why was *Sis, Take a Breath* the right book? Why is that the title? Why is that what you want people to do?

Kirsten: I think I realized I was at a point... I should say realizing because I'm definitely not the point where I'm breathing how I'm supposed to breathe. I just had a migraine today coming in.

Annie: Did you? Is it better?

Kirsten: It's better. But I realized we were moving and a lot was going on, and I felt like I was juggling a lot. Just this idea that everything looked important. And closer look, it was some of those balls were glass and some of them were plastic. I was like, "Lord, you've got to help me decide what is glass and what is plastic because I can't do it all.

So I think, *Sis, Take a Breath* is that we keep moving and we're doing good things, we're doing good work. But God's like, "Hey, hold on. I'm showing you something. You're missing it." So whether it's in a good time... Like there's been times where we've been at peace. You know, everything's kind of jiving. It's like, "I'm teaching you something there." And there's times that are awful and are tough and are challenging and I don't know what to do. And He's teaching me something there. It's the idea that regardless of our life, where we are in the journey, God is always speaking. But sometimes we don't breathe in and take the pause to hear what He's saying.

Annie: When you sat down to work on this book, how did you even find time to write?

Kirsten: I didn't want to write a book. I still didn't want to write.

Annie: You're like, "I still didn't want to do this."

Kirsten: No. Because of our moves, I've always been directly connected to women in the NFL. So we would go to a new team, I'm always the new girl, whether it's at church or at school, and the team. Bible study was my place to kind of go and meet new people.

Annie: Is there an NFL wives Bible study in every city?

Kirsten: Pretty much.

Annie: I know Elizabeth does it. You're right.

Kirsten: Yes. So there's a Bible study that you can be a part of a lot. I mean, the average age in the NFL is between 22 and 25. So by time we were year six, I was ancient. So year 16-

Annie: You're like, "I'm here to teach you everything."

Kirsten: "Listen, here is what I know." So I just think that time developed and time kept going on and I just realized that I had to figure out a way to stop and pause.

Annie: So even with y'all being an NFL, you're moving a lot?

Kirsten: Yes.

Annie: And y'all don't even know till weeks ahead of time when you're moving cities?

Kirsten: That's funny. Because literally after our first move and then our second move, I literally have the moving company on speed dial. I'm like, "Hey, we're moving." And they'll say, "Where?" I'm like, "I don't have a state yet but it's possible. He's got to be there by June, so hopefully we're moving in May." And that would be my conversation. And then finally it'd be like, "Okay, you're going to the Saints." And I will call them say, "Hey, we're going in New Orleans." He's like, "Where?" I was like, "I don't know yet."

Annie: Would you go pick a house?

Kirsten: I have never picked a house.

Annie: You went to college without seeing it, you've moved into every one of your houses without seeing them.

Kirsten: Sixteen years of marriage, I have never picked a house. Ever. Ever, ever, ever.

Annie: That's unbelievable.

Kirsten: Is that crazy?

Annie: Yes.

Kirsten: A little bit.

Annie: I love it.

Kirsten: But guess what? Again, Lord, show me I can't do everything. He had to go find the house. So that became his thing. He finds the house, I pack up a house and I move the house.

Annie: How many times have y'all moved in 16 years?

Kirsten: Oh, well, four teams and two of them twice. So six. Now we're in Georgia and we're building. So I get to pick a house. I'm literally picking the house first time ever.

Annie: How did Georgia end up being the stop after NFL retirement?

Kirsten: We thought about it a lot. We've never been close to family, driving distance from family. So we were deciding between states and where we should go. And just because we both have ties to the University of Georgia, as Benjamin thinks about what he's going to do next, we thought, "Hey, that might be a good starting place to have that connection." And that kind of helped us determine the state.

Annie: You know what I hope he does next?

Kirsten: What's that?

Annie: Well, I don't know if it's next.

Kirsten: What's that?

Annie: I mean, I eventually want to vote for him for president.

Kirsten: Oh, Lord. Don't say it.

Annie: That's what I want.

Kirsten: Oh, man.

Annie: It feels like y'all operate in a political direction at some point.

Kirsten: Yeah. I think maybe him. Definitely I ain't got that girl.

Annie: Listen, you know what the house is gonna look that you move into. So here's the upside.

Kirsten: I will be the first bottom on the toilet.

Annie: The White House may look the same. I just think I love how y'all do life. And I'd like the stuff he talks about... He's very open about what he believes, which is what y'all believe. So I just am always like, "Are we eventually going to see him running for things?"

Kirsten: I don't know. I mean, I think one thing that's tricky about this day and age is people want their truth.

Annie: Oh, right.

Kirsten: So Benjamin is very good about the truth. And then his opinion comes second. So, you know, everyone's not ready for that. And social media is just tough in general because, you know, it's just a tweet. I'm not even on Twitter. I'm not there. But I can't read comments. I can read some, but I can't read all. And then I get stuck and my cheeks get hot and I'm like, Uh.

Annie: He gets yelled at more on Twitter than anywhere else.

Kirsten: And he's wise enough to let me not know what's going on. So I'm like, "I can't..." He goes, "Kirsten, it's just Twitter." I'm like, Okay, but still..." I can't imagine, you know, the more you're doing the things, you have to be exposed to the thing.

[00:19:11] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Liquid I.V.](#) Y'all know how I live by my morning routine. Getting those daily practices in can truly make or break my day. And staying hydrated is one of the habits that I like to get started on early in my day. It's why I love the jumpstart I get with Liquid I.V.

One stick of Liquid I.V. in my water bottle hydrates faster and more efficiently than water alone. Liquid I.V. has incredible hydration flavors like watermelon, lemon lime, strawberry, pina colada, and more. And like I said, I'm a morning time Liquid

I.V. user. I just add it into my first water bottle in the morning. It helps me feel my best so I can tackle the day ahead with energy and focus, especially when I go for that energy multiplier.

The premium ingredients in Liquid I.V. contain five essential vitamins B3, B5 B6, B12, and vitamin C and have three times the electrolytes of traditional sports drinks. And because of the science of the cellular transport technology, all that hydrating goodness is going to be absorbed into your bloodstream super quick.

As if that weren't enough awesome, Liquid I.V. is on a mission to change the world. They've donated over 20 million servings globally, which I think is the actual best. So grab Liquid I.V. in bulk nationwide at Costco, or you can get 25% off when you go to liquidiv.com and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout. That's 25% off anything you order when you use the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at liquidiv.com. Experience better hydration today at liquidiv.com, promo code THATSOUNDSFUN.

Sponsor: And I've got one more incredible partner to tell you about, Chime. Do you feel like the piece of plastic in your wallet is doing enough for you? With the secured Chime Credit Builder Visa Credit Card, you can start building credit with everyday purchases and on time payments.

You see, with credit builder, members can easily increase their credit history with no annual fees or interest. And having a good credit score isn't just for bragging rights around the dinner table. It can mean getting better car loan rates or renting apartments more easily. Listen, it's for you. So continue your credit journey with Chime.

Signing up only takes two minutes and it doesn't affect your credit score. Get started at chime.com/thatsoundsfun. That's chime.com/thatsoundsfun. The Chime Credit Builder Visa Credit Card is issued by Stride Bank, N.A., pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Chime checking account and \$200 qualifying direct deposit required to apply for the secured Chime Credit Builder Visa Credit Card. Regular on-time payment history can have a positive impact on your credit score. Impact score may vary and some user scores may not improve.

And now back to our conversation with Kirsten.

[00:21:52] <music>

Annie: The interesting thing about y'all is you have a lot of influence, especially in Georgia. I mean, I know that. I'm from there. I watch the whole thing. Also, y'all played with really influential players. Benjamin has been a professional football

player y'all's whole adult lives. What does it look like for you to have all your dreams, all your plans, all your hopes, you need to breathe, your whole book, *Sis, Take a Breath*, you can breathe? How do we balance all that? How do y'all balance what he's called to, what you're called to and the seven children?

Kirsten: Yeah, that's a great question. I think in the beginning, I was probably very... If I'm honest, I did not want him to be in the spotlight. You go to school, you have your own dreams, your own aspirations. And then I move to a place in Boston where I've never been, I have no connections, I know no one and now I'm just his wife. And I'm like, "Oh, I don't feel good."

I'll tell the story and people are like, "Oh, you're so lucky to be married to Ben Watson." I'm like, "Oh, really, I am. Let me tell you about that man." There was a hole getting used to like, is that my identity now? And is that really what I'm about? So I think there was a little bit of... I don't know. Maybe it was jealousy or I feel like I had to put my hopes and dreams on hold while he pursued his.

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: And that's just me being honest.

Annie: Yes.

Kirsten: Because I couldn't hold on a job because in off-season he wants to go places, we want to hang out. So who's gonna hire a person who wants to work six months a year, you know?

Annie: Right.

Kirsten: So it was just really tough to figure out my lane. And then you start adding to the family and that really feels like it puts things on pause. But I did realize it was... we were in Baltimore, we had five kids at that time, it was actually right before both of our miscarriages. But I realized the Lord was saying like... I think I was reading through the Old Testament. There was probably a veggie tale somewhere that I was listening to because it was crazy. And it was just like, Man, David was just a shepherd. His brothers were doing the exciting work. They were on the front line seeing what was going on. He was just tending the sheep. And all of that was preparation for when God called him to the front line.

So that changed how I was looking at my job and what I was responsible for doing. And I was like, "This is my thing. I'm gonna come open handed." I said, Here's my loaves, and here's my fish, Lord. This is all I got. You've got to multiply it daily for

me. But I trust that you are not doing this for no reason at all. I am learning in this journey.

And I do think now as Benjamin has retired and still doing a lot of things, that's how the book came. Because I kept saying, no, no, no, no, I'm not gonna write a book. I don't have anything to say. And Benjamin was like, "No, Kirsten, you do." So it was him and a couple other friends. And I was like, "Lord, I don't want to write this. But if I do, make it very clear. Because if I say yes to the time it takes to write a book, I'm saying no to some other things. So I want this to be good but I want this to be the better choice for this time."

So God didn't write it in the sky and there was no audible voice, but over the course of very few days, it was very clear. It was like, "Oh, here's a publisher. Oh, here's someone who is gonna help you write it. Oh, here's an agent." And I was like, "Whoa, whoa, this is happening super quick." I have no idea how, at the time, to write the book but I know that I was made strong because of God. Because I was not strong enough to. I didn't have enough time, I didn't have enough margin in my brain to sit down and collectively think of these stories. I mean, I was praying that He would help me recall things to tell.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, there's so many stories.

Kirsten: There's so many stories.

Annie: That's crazy that you had to ask Him to remind you.

Kirsten: Yes. It was just story after story after story. The lady who helped me write it, Ami McConnell, did an amazing job of asking the right questions and helping me organize them. I would say this book is really an act of obedience. And so the fruit that comes from it is what God has already said. Because I didn't want to do it, I didn't think I had time to do it, and I didn't think I had anything to say. And those three things have been proven, in my heart, wrong-

Annie: Yes.

Kirsten: ...and ungodly, and not what He says about me. So if anything, the book was for me to know who He is more than it was about writing a book.

Annie: I'm thinking about our friends that are listening. Yesterday was Mother's Day. So Happy Mother's Day to all them, our moms out there and to everyone who is mothering. Because there are a lot of people who have not birth kids or adopted kids and they're mothering.

Kirsten: 100%, yes.

Annie: One of my roles in my life. But for the people who are day in and day out with their kids, one of them, five of them, seven of them, whatever, why make time to read a book?

Kirsten: Well, here's the thing. Honestly, we don't have a lot of time. We don't have a lot of time. But I do think there is something in getting... Some of the things I talk about in the book, my mom even said, "Kirsten, is there gonna be on Audible?" I was like, "Mom, what are you talking about?"

Annie: Do you read the audible?

Kirsten: I did.

Annie: Yes, girl, I cry every time I read an audio. I can't wait to listen.

Kirsten: So that sort of thing. I was like, "Guys, it has to be on Audible because we can't read." If we're reading something, it should be the Bible. So let's be mindful." I think this is one that you can pick up and put down. You can read a story here. It reads very like you're sitting down for coffee. So hopefully it's not burdensome.

Annie: No, it isn't.

Kirsten: And you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll do it with some friends, talk about it. I said that it has to be an easy read because that's not something that I would do.

Annie: That's right.

Kirsten: I don't need to remember what happened the last... I need to write new story every chapter.

Annie: That's right. That's right. We spent the whole month of April on the podcast talking about prayer and we did a Q&A section. And ended up doing like two shows of Q&A. They were both almost two hours long because people had so many questions.

Kirsten: Oh, wow.

Annie: One of the sections of questions that we got were people saying, how do I make time with my toddler to pray? Especially women probably like you who, unlike me, have seasons of life where you've got time and then suddenly you don't. So what

did your rhythms look like when you had tiny babies? What do your rhythms look like now as far as reading the Bible and getting to pray?

Kirsten: This is actually really fun. Because there was a time when I'm like, "Have I picked up my Bible other than Sunday?" I don't even take it on Sunday because I'm holding a kid on each... I remember an older, wise woman that has somewhat disciplined me without even her nearly knowing that she disciplined me. She's like, "Kirsten, God will speak to you through anything."

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: So she's like, "You put on that Veggie Tales and be like, Lord, let Bob the tomato and Larry the cucumber speak to me in the way that refreshes a story that I've heard a million times." And that is exactly what I would do. I was like, "Lord, I didn't have time today into my Bible, but we're gonna listen to worship music, we're going to..." So I was getting it in another way for a season. And now that all of my kids go to school except for two, it's different.

Annie: Those two are quite the two.

Kirsten: Those two are like 10. But now-

Annie: But the other five are all in school.

Kirsten: All the five are in school. So now I'm able to get away to get Bible study time with friends. Benjamin and I are reading the Bible through a year together. So there's other ways we've found to do it with little time, no time.

Annie: So for our moms listening, or any of us that are very busy, give a little permission to seasonal faith expressions.

Kirsten: Yes. And I would also say another thing to do is to do stuff as a family. So if you don't have time yourself, I would carve out time as a family to memorize Scripture and to talk about what that look like. So I put on a big post-it note, I'd write it out and we would memorize large chunks of Scripture. But every week, it'd be a different verse.

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: So I would always say, "I can't memorize Scripture. I'm too old for that," whatever I'd say. But it's like, I'm seeing that my four and five year old can remember it because we're repeating it at breakfast, we're repeating it at dinner. So that was

another way to do it as a family so that didn't seem like, Lord, if I didn't get 15, 30, 45 minutes of alone time, I really wasn't talking with you.

I tell my kids all time now, it's like, "I'm going to be honest with you, a lot of this we're going to do together. I don't know all the answers but we're gonna go through John together, and we're gonna see how God is speaking to us and what he says." So a lot of things just bringing people in. Helping you do it together in community I think makes it much easier.

Annie: I'm thinking about our friends who may be struggling in their faith. Like maybe they've just had a miscarriage and they've got kids at home or something's going sideways in their job, they're working mom or dad and something's going sideways. Because I've never done this, I don't know what this looks like. What does it look like when you are struggling in your faith and you got to lead your family in their faith?

Kirsten: Well, this is where your people come in. So I talked about it in the book. It's my dark alley friends.

Annie: Yes, your dark alley friends. I thought that was so sweet.

Kirsten: And those are the people that I'm taking. And I know what each role they... You know, the play they play in my life and in our lives together. So I think those are the times when they'll text me like, "Hey, Kirsten, we know you're the one that's always texting us. I haven't heard from you, what's going on?"

Annie: Wow.

Kirsten: Or Benjamin will look at me and he's like, "When's the last time we've gone out?" Or "when's the last time you've been with your girls?" So it's the other people that... It's like in the Bible. Who's holding up Moses? It's other people that have to hold your hands up when you're like, "I can't do it anymore." So the importance of having real friends or your no-makeup friends is that they see you.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, no makeup friends. That's great.

Kirsten: The no-makeup friends. They see you and you see them. So in those times when it's happening, I mean, I can send a text like just today, "I have a migraine, I need y'all to pray." Those are the people that know you. They don't need an explanation. Or like, "Me and Benjamin aren't getting along, y'all better pray. Pray for somebody."

Annie: Yeah, I don't care who you pray for. Pray for somebody.

Kirsten: Pray for somebody. You know, whatever it is. Those are the people that know... that's when community, that's when the body is supposed to do what the body is supposed to do. So we're not made to do this on our own. And I think that's what's isolating about life is we feel very much like we're running our own race. And while we are, there are people in the body that are there to be our brothers and sisters. So if we don't tell anybody about it, if we don't trust anybody about it, that's right when the enemy attacks.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Kirsten: When you're alone.

Annie: When you choose to be alone. Yeah, it's exactly right.

Kirsten: That's what you see in National Geographic. The antelope that's by itself, that's the one they go get. They don't go to the group. They got to the one that's by itself.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Kirsten: So I do my best not to isolate. And some of the times that has been the hardest in our life, especially the first miscarriage, I totally isolated.

Annie: Did y'all have any early on?

Kirsten: No.

Annie: No. After the five is the first time you had one. That has to be so uniquely devastating.

Kirsten: I had no idea. I had no idea.

Annie: Sorry.

Kirsten: It was awful. It was awful. And then to do another one for... within the four months-

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Kirsten: ...the second one happened. And I was like, "Lord, what is going on?" But the second one I learned we need to tell people. Like, I can't. I can't. But it's interesting that when we actually are vulnerable and real, that's when people come around us and that's when we realize we're not alone. So I think we do everything in our power to make it look good. We don't-

Annie: "What are you talking about?"

[crosstalk 00:33:39]

Kirsten: But just like, "Gosh, I can't make this look good. And I'm done doing that." So once I was able to do that, people I didn't even know... It like opens up a whole nother conversation with people about life. And when you're thinking you're doing the right thing and God says no, and you're like, "This was good," He's like, "No, I have something else." So even with the miscarriage thing, it's such a sucky thing. I mean, it's just awful.

Annie: It's awful.

Kirsten: I always say, you know, I will never not think about those babies. I think about them. I will never forget them. And it's hard. But gosh, I learned more about who God was through that.

Annie: It's a thing He didn't protect you from for a reason.

Kirsten: Right. Right.

Annie: For some reason, which is just terrible.

Kirsten: I'll never know. But gosh, I trust Him more. Because there was songs that I couldn't sing after that. Like You Are Good God. I'm like, "I don't really feel that it's good." But now I'm hurt but I trust Him more and His sovereignty more through going through those things. And I think the more we communicate that as a body, that it's not always easy. I think sometimes people think something about a person like, "Oh, I wish I had that," and I'm like, "I don't know."

Annie: When I think about Mother's Day I think people probably pushed to the edges of either if you're a mom, it's a great day and if you're not a mom yet, it's a terrible day. You probably feel a lot of things on Mother's Day.

Kirsten: Yes. It's AND both. It's I'm super excited for being it and my mom's still being here and my mother-in-law still being here and being celebrated. But man, I miss my babies. AND I also think of my friends who are trying to have babies. I think of my friends. I feel like all of that is happening in one room.

Annie: Yes, it's all happening in one room.

Kirsten: So how do you celebrate all the thing and acknowledge all the things? I think that's where we got to the point it's like, it's hard to make all the moms stand up because you're proud. Maybe you see your sister who's trying to be a mom or lost the babysitting down. What do I do with that?

Annie: What do you do with that?

Kirsten: So it's having those honest conversations so that way we are more, I don't know, aware. But we can only be aware sometimes when people are talking and we'll speak on it. But if we're isolated and people don't know then you're offending without knowing, kinda. You know what I mean?

Annie: That's right.

[00:36:06] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one last time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Canopy](#). And to my MiniBFF parents out there, we're going to talk about something here that is a little PG 13 and really important. But I just wanted to give you a heads up before my MiniBFFs hear about this partner.

So everyone knows that social media when left unchecked can have a bad influence on the kids in our lives. And to be perfectly honest, the same is true for us grownups. But there's another massive issue for kids caused by technology that a lot of people are afraid to discuss and that's online pornography.

Most kids are exposed to graphic sexual content online before they turn 13 usually by accident. And that's just not okay, especially since research shows that regularly watching pornography is linked with all kinds of negative life outcomes, like worse mental health and unstable romantic relationships. No one wants that for their kids. But most parents don't know about the powerful technology that can prevent exposure from happening in the first place.

That's why we are proud to partner with Canopy, the world's most advanced internet filter, to bring families a tool that can help them flourish by protecting them from explicit content. Kids deserve a chance to be kids. Installing Canopy is a vital step all parents could take to keep their family safe online. Our future depends on the next generation.

Learn more about Canopy at canopy.us/thatoundsfun, and use the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN to get 30 days free and 15% off your subscription forever. Again, that's canopy.us/thatoundsfun for 30 days free and 15% off your subscription forever.

Sponsor: Here at That Sounds Fun and at the That Sounds Fun Network we love learning new things about podcasting and continuing to improve in the work that we do. And that's why we are so glad to learn about [Anchor](#).

If you haven't heard about Anchor, it's seriously the easiest way to make a podcast. Let me explain. Not only is it free, yeah, that means you paid \$0 for it, but it has simple-to-use creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer. And Anchor will distribute your podcast for you. So people will be able to hear your content on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and all the other platforms that they love listening on.

Anchor even has ways that you can monetize your podcast with no minimum number of listeners. It's everything you need to create a podcast in one place. We hear from people all the time who have great ideas and are looking for how to get their podcast started. Well, Anchor is what we use all across the That Sounds Fun Network. And we are just huge fans of how easy they make it to create a great podcast.

So just download the free Anchor app or go to [anchor.fm](#) to get started. Again, that's anchor.fm or you could download the free Anchor app.

And now back to finish our conversation with Kirsten.

[00:38:57] <music>

Annie: Another chapter in your book that I would love for us to talk about if you don't mind-

Kirsten: Yes.

Annie: For the listener, I am peach and you are brown and there is a whole chapter called *Straight Talk to My Peach Sisters*.

Kirsten: Yes.

Annie: Because in it you talk about the parenting you get to do with your kids that our friends who do not have black or brown kids are doing. Why do you write a whole chapter to white girls?

Kirsten: To my peach girls. So peach and brown comes because when our kids were little, I said, "Well, what do you see?" You know we're teaching them the colors and I was like, "What color is your skin?" And they said, "Brown." I was like, "Yeah." But it's

funny now because they'll hear black and white and they're older now and they'll say, "That's what they said in the olden days." I was like, "The olden days? Y'all are so cute." I think-

Annie: They're like, "It's peach and brown now."

Kirsten: It's peach and brown now.

Annie: Peach and brown is way better. I like that a whole lot more. That's beautiful.

Kirsten: I think so. That's what it is.

Annie: That's a business you and I will start. That's what we'll call it.

Kirsten: We should do that. Peach and brown.

Annie: That's beautiful.

Kirsten: I love it.

Annie: Okay, sorry, go ahead. Why did you write this one?

Kirsten: I think because after everything that happened recently, I would say my whole life experience, I realized one thing... I am brown and I think there's a part of me that has learned how to make sure people are comfortable in a room. So although I may be the only African American in the group, I have learned how to make it not be the one thing about me in a room. Does that make sense?

Annie: Yeah.

Kirsten: And so when all the stuff went down a few years ago and I had my friends calling me, they were wondering if all the rhetoric was true, around racism, around things being different. And I looked, I was like, "Man, maybe I've done a disservice by not making that more of a part of who I am. Does that make sense?"

Annie: Yeah.

Kirsten: Because now we have kids, and they're like, "How do I talk to my kids about this?" So now it's different. It's not just me in a room. Now it's you're in the room with my children and things happen. You think back all the stories you can think of you as growing up, and I said, You know what, it would have been so nice to have another peach believing family talking to their kids about race, to not dismiss color, but to embrace and not have value associated with color. So that when that did happen,

that line was crossed, they could stand up and speak when that child, person, woman cannot.

So if we talk about speaking for those who are voiceless. I remember several times and things that I went through and I was voiceless. As talkative as I am, as witty, and I can come back with a comeback super quickly, I had no voice and there were no other voices in the room. So now as a mother, I say to my preach friends, I say, "Hey, listen, you have to talk about it because there may be a time, hopefully not, but there may be a time where it's your kid who was the voice to my kid." And "my kids" not being selfishly just mine, but like brown.

It's tough. It's a tough conversation to have. It's awkward. But I tell you, it's my friends that said, "Hey, I don't understand all the things. And I may not agree, and I may not see it, but because you said it and I love you."

Annie: "I believe you."

Kirsten: "I believe you. And this is important. And we will talk to our kids and make sure they understand." I think that's the beauty of mourning with those who mourn and rejoicing with those who rejoice. So yeah, I think it was important because I think as women, it happens as well. It's not just for my kids. I say that now.

But it's just as people, as believers, how we interact and how we see and recognizing our own bias and knowing that time and time again we read in the Scriptures that "God is not one that has partiality. He sees all of us the same. And it's so difficult for us to be that way. But it's important for us to recognize if we do see difference, "Where does that come from? What's that about? Lord, I want to be more like you. And that's not like you."

So yeah, that's why I wrote it. Because I think it's a part of me that can speak in an honest way about race and hopefully that you would feel the importance of it.

Annie: I think that language of I don't feel that or understand that but I believe you is one of the biggest changes I've felt in me, that I've learned in the last few years of going like, Just because I didn't experience it or see it, I get to choose just to believe you, whoever the you is, and operate out of I believe that kid when they say that thing happened. I believe my neighbor when they say that. I believe my... I mean, do I trust other people's experiences? What if they aren't telling the truth? Well, at least I believe them.

Kirsten: Right, right, for sure.

Annie: So teaching the next generation just to believe each other feels like a really sympathetic way and empathetic way for us to exist.

Kirsten: Right.

Annie: It feels gospely to me.

Kirsten: Right. And why not? I mean, if somebody came up to me and was like, "Hey, I heard how you talked to your husband. That was not respectful." Or "I heard how you... that was... you just told a lie." There's other things that you would hope that believers would come into you and say, "Hey, I love you. I know you want to do life the way God would have you and this is not godly." That's iron sharpening iron. Did you want that in your life?

This is just another us. This is not like a whole new world. It's just another part of the refining process that we are doing, part of our sanctification as we get older, as we grow, as we mature, and hopefully we are not the same as we were a year ago or two years ago. We've grown in some ways because people have spoken into our lives and we've done some work. Right?

Annie: Yes.

Kirsten: So that's why the chapter is in there.

Annie: I think this book is such a gift to so many of us because the idea of... we can all fill our lives too busy. I actually am a big fan of busy isn't bad. I like busy. I'm built that way. Some people are built... But when you can't breathe, that's a problem.

Kirsten: Right.

Annie: So how do we figure out how to be busy and breathing is what you're teaching us.

Kirsten: Right. And breathing like full breath. During the day, I'll stop and like, "Have I really taken real inhale and exhale?" When you do that, it's like, "Okay, I can do this." You know, there's something that comes with the breath. And so yeah, it's just not that short stuff. Which happens. But it's like, Man, Lord, give me more time to recognize, to stop and just really like, what are you showing me? What are you telling me?

Annie: Do we have all the Watson babies we're gonna have? Are we gonna have more?

Kirsten: Unless there's a dog or an animal-

Annie: This is it?

Kirsten: Listen, unless a baby comes to our doorstep. Which it's possible. It's possible.

Annie: The Lord can do-

Kirsten: The Lord can do what He wants to do.

Annie: I know the seven I know and the two we'll know in the future. The seven we know are just adorable.

Kirsten: Thank you.

Annie: So being a mom, you've got the rest of today in Nashville with no responsibilities. What are you going to do? Do you have more things like this to do today?

Kirsten: No. I am going back to the hotel.

Annie: Are you going to get room service?

Kirsten: Yes, indeed.

Annie: Yes, ma'am.

Kirsten: And I'm just gonna do nothing. I'm checking my email. I have the emails... For a good hour I'm gonna do nothing good. I'm super excited.

Annie: There's a really great bookstore like one mile right here that's local if you just wanted to get a new book or something.

Kirsten: Do something?

Annie: If someone wanted to go buy *Sis, Take a Breath*, you can get it from Parnassus. But it's a great bookstore. Is there anything we didn't talk about that I want to make sure we talked about?

Kirsten: No, I think that we covered all good stuff.

Annie: We were at the same event a couple of weeks ago, and I left that thinking, there's about five phone numbers I put in my phone and I was like, "I'm going to use this." And yours was one of them.

Kirsten: Thank you.

Annie: So I'm very excited that our friendship gets to keep going. Our new company: Peach and Brown.

Kirsten: Peach and Brown.

Annie: What are we gonna make?

Kirsten: I don't know. Does it matter? Can we eat something? I want to eat-

Annie: Yeah, yeah. I'm not great... Well, I'm great at eating. I'm not great at making things but I'm great at hiring the right people.

Kirsten: I just want to do something that I can consume, I can eat.

Annie: Okay. I like that a lot. Maybe it's like a bakery.

Kirsten: Maybe. I don't know. Let's think about it. Let's think about it.

Annie: The last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Kirsten: Oh, this is a great segue because my kids asked me... They said, "Mommy, if you could do anything in the world right now-

Annie: What a great question!

Kirsten: This is my Judah. This is the one that's standing on the couch.

Annie: Yeah, I get it.

Kirsten: He says, "Mommy, if you could do anything in the world, have any job that you wanted, and you didn't have to worry about us or anything like that, you could just do it, what would you do?" I said, "I would be a professional taster."

Annie: Tasting what? All things?

Kirsten: All things. I don't really need to taste sweets. I love hometown... like whatever your thing is. I want to taste your thing. Wherever I am, whatever country I'm in, whatever city I'm in, your thing. And I want to compare it to other things. I just want to taste food everywhere and enjoy it. Because I think something magical happens around the table. So I enjoy what happens around the table. That sounds so fun to travel and eat.

Annie: Oh my gosh, if I can be in a small town, I want to eat somewhere local every time.

Kirsten: Hole in the wall place.

Annie: We have a guy that tours with us that every day he would get on his scooter and go to a Wendy's or a Chick-fil-A or McDonald's because he was like, "I don't want to eat local. I want to eat what I know." And the rest of us were like, 0%, what is the one restaurant that everybody in this town eats?

Kirsten: Everybody goes. That's it.

Annie: We need that." I need those meatballs, I need that fried chicken. I need... yes.

Kirsten: That macaroni and cheese, that special bread with... whatever you do, whatever you do, that's what I want to try.

Annie: Don't tell us your address. But are y'all in metro Atlanta or are y'all somewhere else?

Kirsten: We're a little outside.

Annie: Okay. There is someone on TikTok in Hiram, Georgia and every day they tell what is on the buffet at their restaurant. And it's like a meat 'n' three. Can we go there? Can peach and brown go there? That's our TV show. That's what it is, Kirsten.

Kirsten: The TV show.

Annie: Annie, Kirsten eat across America peach and brown.

Kirsten: I love it. I am there.

Annie: Oh my gosh. I mean, they have like four meats, 12 vegetables. They do that kind... I'm like, I bet that is so nice.

Kirsten: And probably desserts. Probably homemade pies.

Annie: And in Hiram, you're not gonna get better. You're not going to get better.

Kirsten: No. You're going to get real butter.

Annie: Small town. Yes.

Kirsten: Listen, girl-

Annie: Someone made that butter. Someone made some stuff on that-

Kirsten: Let me tell you. Let's go. I'm already thinking about it. Like, where am I going in Hiram?

Annie: That's why I'm like, I'm glad you're gonna get room service and also I'm gonna give you like three places that maybe you can get-

Kirsten: If they can deliver, I'm down.

Annie: Yes, yes. Don't leave the hotel.

Kirsten: Uh-uh.

Annie: Are you kind of in a bougie Hotel? Are you staying somewhere kind of nice?

Kirsten: I am. I am.

Annie: Do you get to spa or do anything like that today?

Kirsten: I didn't think about it.

Annie: You should look into it.

Kirsten: I might think about it.

Annie: You got plenty of time.

Kirsten: I know, right? We're good. I gotta eat well, rest well-

Annie: And then fly back out tomorrow.

Kirsten: I never watch TV.

Annie: Oh, sure.

Kirsten: So I'm gonna see what are people looking at. I don't even know.

Annie: What are people looking at.

Kirsten: We have Netflix and people are like, "Oh, I'm watching this show." I'm like, "When do you watch this? You must stay up really late. It must be late thing."

Annie: I'm of the same mind because I'll like work, work out, dinner and then I get home and I'm like, "I've got like 45 minutes."

Kirsten: "I'm done."

Annie: But then sometimes on Saturdays. My life of no kids, Saturdays or Sundays I can knock it.

Kirsten: I gotta figure that out. So I'm gonna figure out what people are watching.

Annie: Okay. And watch some of that?

Kirsten: And watch some of that.

Annie: And eat good.

Kirsten: Yes. I'm having dessert in the bed.

Annie: Yes, mam.

Kirsten: Can't wait.

Annie: Thanks for doing this today.

Kirsten: Thank you for having me.

Annie: Thanks for *Sis, Take a Breath*. I think our friends are going to absolutely love this book.

Kirsten: Thank you.

Annie: For real.

[00:51:05] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love her? She's amazing. Hey, be sure to grab a copy of *Sis, Take a Breath* and follow Kirsten on social media, tell her thanks for being on the show. And you can say Go Dawgs if you want to because we Georgia Bulldogs are out here.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me is painting my nails navy blue. I don't know why but I've been dreaming of it for days. So that's happening today. Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with my lovely friend and first-time author Christine Bailey. We'll see you guys then.