

Episode 385: Kristian Stanfill from Passion Music That Sounds Fun Podcast with Annie F. Downs

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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store.

Tomorrow is the last day you can cast your vote for the K-Love Fan Awards. You guys, it would mean so much if you vote for That Sounds Fun as podcast of the year. It's at klovefanawards.com/vote. And while you're there, so many of our friends who have been guests on the show are nominated too, including Tauren Wells, who sings our theme song. So let's spread the love for our friends there too. Again, it's klovefanawards.com/vote.

Sponsor: But before we dive into this conversation, I want to take a moment to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Indeed](#). Listen, is hiring a particular challenge? Yes, it is. I mean, who you invite into your work with you really matters. But do you love a challenge? Yes, you do. You need a hiring partner that can help you rise to that challenge. You need Indeed.

Indeed is the hiring platform where you can attract, interview, and hire all in one place. Instead of spending hours on multiple job sites searching for candidates with the right skills, Indeed is a powerful hiring partner that can help you do it all. You've got to find great talent faster through time-saving tools like Indeed Instant Match assessments and virtual interviews.

One of the things I love about indeed is how they save us time. I mean, none of us have tons of extra time on our hands, right? Indeed does the hard work for you. When you pay to post a job, Instant Match shows you candidates whose resumes on Indeed fit your description immediately after you post so you can hire faster.

Even better, Indeed is the only job site where you only pay for applications that meet your must-have requirements. The right candidate is doing everything they can to find you. And if you use Indeed, you can be sure you're doing everything you can to find them too. In the last minute that we've been chatting, 16 hires were made on Indeed, you guys. That's according to Indeed's data worldwide. Your crucial hire could be next.

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Intro: Today on the show I get to chat with my friend Kristian Stanfill from Passion Music. You may remember Kristian when he was on before with Melodie and Brett back on Episode 77. Oh geez, they were in the double digits. He was in Nashville recently and stopped by the studio so we could chat about what's going on with Passion. The music of the movement that our friends Louis and Shelley Giglio began in 1995 has been a soundtrack of my faith for all the years, and I suspect it has been for a lot of you too.

Passion Music released a five-song project called *Burn Bright* after the Passion Conference this year. And y'all, these songs, they matter so much. I cannot wait for you to hear them. So here's my conversation with Kristian Stanfill from Passion Music.

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Annie: Kristian, welcome to That Sounds Fun. Welcome back to That Sounds Fun. Is that true or true?

Kristian: I'm so glad to be here in-person in your space.

Annie: I know.

Kristian: This place is beautiful.

Annie: Compared to the Sunday School room at Cross Point four years ago.

Kristian: I don't mind. I don't mind it.

Annie: It was fun.

Kristian: It's always fun. It's fun with you no matter where we are, but your space is beautiful and your people are so sweet.

Annie: Thanks.

Kristian: And I love being here.

Annie: Thank you. I think you know this but last time I saw you... Last podcast is so profound for me because I had just broken up with someone.

Kristian: I remember that.

Annie: And y'all were so good to me as friends that day.

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Kristian: That's so cool.

Annie: So this sticks real solid in my memory because I was like, "Man..." There was something about the Atlanta part, there was something about the hometown part, the history we have part that I was like, "Only God would put us all in the same place today when I'm fresh out, fresh out."

Kristian: You needed a big Atlanta hug, and just needed friends to come around.

Annie: That's right. Before we talk about music, we got to do this: Lake Burton. Let's just talk about it.

Kristian: I was hoping you would talk about this, honestly.

Annie: I'm just ready.

Kristian: You know when you meet somebody who gets it, who gets Lake Burton, never forget them.

Annie: That's right.

Kristian: I tell you, it's about this time of year my kids start asking for it.

Annie: Oh, that's gotta be awesome.

Kristian: I feel the itch to get up on the lake and see the mountains and go to Anchorage and Dillard House and all those things. We just haven't been in so long.

Annie: How long with everything? We did Thanksgiving there.

Kristian: So my grandparents—I grew up going there—they lived on the lake for like my whole life. And then-

Annie: Full time they lived there?

Kristian: Full time.

Annie: Oh, I don't think I knew that.

Kristian: That was like their primary risk is to be-

Annie: Oh, wow.

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Kristian: They sold their place and now they live up on top of this mountain not far from the lake which is beautiful. They still have a boat at the anchor, so we can go take the boat out. But it's a little bit harder to just go up and plant there. But we still go visit them and we take the boat out. My parents have a lot that they're going to build on eventually.

Annie: Oh, good.

Kristian: So it's such a big part of our family history. It shows up in a lot of songs that I'm writing now.

Annie: Does it?

Kristian: Yes. Because it's just so many memories, core memories. You know, the older you get you have these memories that you look back on and it's so sweet. And you realize how impactful they were. And it's moments with my granddad and my grandmother at the lake with my family. Thanksgivings, Christmases, really formative stuff. So it's a big part of our... I love it. I say it's like my favorite place to go in the whole world.

Annie: Your grandparents were OG living on the lake when we were kids.

Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: I don't know a lot of people who lived on the lake back then.

Kristian: I mean, some of my earliest memories are at the lake. They had a place early 80s.

Annie: Yes. Oh, yeah. I mean, my five-year-old birthday party, my birthday is in July, and I remember the fireworks and thinking, Is-

Kristian: Mm.

Annie: I remember clearly, Kristian, thinking, "Is this the rest of my life that I always have fireworks on my birthday?" because of the lake.

Kristian: It ruins you.

Annie: Yeah. When the weekend falls near to the seventh and we did the fourth, I thought it was for me and it was not for me.

Kristian: Wow. "Bring your boat. It's Annie's birthday."

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Annie: Can you imagine? Are your grandparents still living?

Kristian: They are.

Annie: That's amazing.

Kristian: They are. They're still living. They're still healthy and sharp. Man, I just talked to my grandmother on the phone on Mother's Day and she is hysterical. You would love to talk to her. She's deep well, so much life experience, so much to share. My granddad's the same way. So yeah, they're healthy and sharp.

Annie: Every time I meet peers who still get to be near grandparents and parents, you're like, "Man, we're so lucky."

Kristian: And special.

Annie: We're so lucky. Well, I'll see y'all out there. Every time I'm at the lake, I'll text your sister. I'm like, "Any chance y'all are here?" No way.

Kristian: Well, keep doing it because eventually, it's going to-

Annie: It's going to cross.

Kristian: It's going to overlap.

Annie: There was one holiday we were all there and we couldn't.. What was it? There was a scheduling conflict. Y'all were going out and we were coming in or something. And I was like, "We tried. We tried." Okay, so you're in town because you're working on music.

Kristian: Yes.

Annie: But also just this year after Passion Conference y'all released a new album?

Kristian: Yes.

Annie: It's so good.

Kristian: Oh, thank you.

Annie: I got to attend Passion. And when we get to sing the songs and they don't feel new, but they are, that's a thing, right?

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Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: How do y'all do that?

Kristian: God does that. God does that. You know, you show up and a lot of amazing writers and friends are on this project. And you get together and you just ask God to give songs and you open your hands. And what He gives every year is so cool, Annie because every year in that conference, we say, "God, what do you want to say?" And then He gives the songs-

Annie: When do you start writing the song for the next conference?

Kristian: Oh my gosh.

Annie: Do you get like two weeks off in January?

Kristian: No. Yeah, yeah. I mean, there is a sense of you feel like, after conference, you've been tipped upside down. Like you have nothing left. So there is a time where it's good to listen and receive and rest and hear. But then, you know, you do start hearing and receiving things and songs do start to flow. And I would say it's about now May, June, summertime, you start feeling the wind blowing again.

Annie: A theme. Yeah.

Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: Wow.

Kristian: But we've really hit it hard in the fall. October, November, that's when a lot of these songs were written. So you just never know. You know, God, what do we need to say? And then you write these songs, and you just never know how they're gonna land. And then you get there and you see how God ordained these songs. He gave the songs for this moment.

There was a talk that was gonna happen, we didn't know it but God did and He gave this song, and it unfolded this way. And you're like... It happens every year. I had to let it go. I remember in 2016 or leading up to 2016, I was so stressed. I felt the weight of "Oh, we have to write these songs. We have to..." And I just remember God's saying, "I care about this so much more than you think."

Annie: Wow.

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Kristian: "I've got this." And it's so true. Every year that God's like, "This is on my radar. It's good. It's good." So when the songs feel familiar, that's God just giving a song to His people.

Annie: Yeah. Why have you given your life to writing worship songs?

Kristian: Man, I mean, I grew up in the church. I'm here, Annie, because of the church. I don't think I would be sitting here right now if it weren't for leaders and youth pastors and songs-

Annie: What church did y'all grow up in?

Kristian: We grew up at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta.

Annie: Let's go.

Kristian: Oh, I love it.

Annie: First Methodist Marietta right downtown on the square-

Kristian: Oh, come on. Come on.

Annie: ...that's where I grew up.

Kristian: Right. Just leading the way, David Peacock was my youth pastor.

Annie: Of course.

Kristian: Lynn McKinney and... So much care. It was such a safe place for me to grow as a crazy middle school kid and high school kid. David Peacock, my youth pastor saw leadership on my life, he saw musical gifting, and he just created a safe place for that to grow.

Annie: As a middle schooler.

Kristian: As a middle schooler.

Annie: Is your oldest in middle school yet?

Kristian: My oldest is a freshman in high school.

Annie: Get out of here!

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Kristian: I know. I know.

Annie: Wow. Can you believe that when you're thinking back on how much your life was shaped, oh my gosh, and now that's your kids?

Kristian: Listen, I mean, side note, what my 15-year-old is dealing with at 15 versus what I was dealing with at 15, how much access he has to so much more of the world and the internet and all the things, it's crazy. Anyway, I love the church. I remember being in high school and not really even knowing... I was leading worship but I didn't really know what is... I didn't really have anything to shoot for. There wasn't like a Chris Tomlin or Michael Smith or a Matt Redman out there on my radar yet, like going, -

Annie: They were still over the oceans.

Kristian: "That's what I do," you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Kristian: But then we started having these moments with God that were so holy, and the glory of God would fall in our youth ministry. And that's when I was like, "This is it. If I can, through music, help bring heaven to earth, what a special moment to stay in?" I really focused in for me in that time of my life.

Annie: Did you think about any other job?

Kristian: No. Never. Never. This is it.

Annie: Wow.

Kristian: This is it. For a while, I really wanted to be John Mayer. I wanted to write songs. And I still do. I still do write songs about life and-

Annie: Your Lake Burton album.

Kristian: Yeah, yeah, exactly. You know, just writing songs about life. And I still do that. And I love it. But the church, that's forever. The church is eternal. The truth of God is eternal. So singing those songs or writing those songs will always be important.

Annie: You and I both are really lucky that we grew up with good youth group experiences. Not perfect youth group experiences or perfect churches, but really good ones. So many of our friends listening didn't. Either didn't enjoy youth group, didn't connect well with their leader, had a bad experience with the leader. So will

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you talk to our friends for a second who maybe they don't go to church anymore, or church is a hard place for them? Why give it another shot?

Kristian: Wow. I mean, that's so good. And I realized that that's people's story out there. And I do understand that my story, having a good experience in church, can be a unique one. But from what I've found, especially being a part of the Passion City Church journey since the beginning, is you get what you give.

Annie: You get what you give. Wow.

Kristian: You get what you give.

Annie: As an adult.

Kristian: As an adult. So if you want community, if you're looking for community, if you want to plug in somewhere, then jump in. Just go all in on this thing. Like figure out, how can I serve? What team can I be on? What's happening this week? Can I help in any way?

And you do that and you start to connect to the community of believers at a place. And it's transformative. We need people. We need people. We're made to be in community with people. And that's the church. The church is people. I know there's a lot of brokenness. People are broken.

Annie: Yeah, humans are everywhere at church.

Kristian: People are imperfect. But Jesus is the head of the church and He's not broken. He is perfect. He is holy, and He's full of grace and mercy. So I think for us we've learned to embrace the hard parts of it. But at the same time, we've gotten the massive, massive benefit.

I was just talking to my wife last time on the phone about it. Just going, "Can you believe..." This isn't just because we're talking. I've literally said this to her last night. These are our people. And I love these people so much, Annie. I love them so much. I love leading with them. I love building the church with them. I love writing songs with them. I love crying with them. I love hugging them on the mountaintop and weeping with them in the valley.

And you don't get that if you bounce from place to place to place to place. You got to stick it out. And it's gonna be hard. You're gonna go through the fire, but good stuff gets purified in the fire. So anyway, that's for us for our personal journey with it.

[00:15:17] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Stitch Fix](#). Shopping for clothes can be daunting. You never know if things are gonna fit, returns are annoying, and sometimes you don't even know where to start. This season let Stitch Fix do all the hard work.

They make it awfully fun to get started, which I'm a big fan of. First, you just take a few minutes to set up your Stitch Fix style profile. Answer a few questions about what you like to wear, what you don't, and how open you are to try new styles. And then Stitch Fix's expert stylists will get to work finding items exclusively for you.

Every single piece is handpicked for you. And it is unique to your size, style, and in your budget, making it the best way to discover clothes that make you look and feel your best.

Stitch Fix will send you five pieces to try on at home. You keep what you love and you send back what you don't. Shipping returns and exchanges are easy and free. Plus, there's no subscription required. You can try it once or set up automatic deliveries. There are no hidden fees ever.

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Sponsor: And I want to let you know about another one of our incredible partners, [Canopy](#). While this partner is really good for my MiniBFFs, these next few minutes are... You may want to be careful if there are little ears around. Okay.

We all know, and you parents especially do, about how many challenging things the next generation is facing these days. We're talking about it with Kristian. But one particular issue will have enormous consequences for our kids. And most people have a hard time talking about it and that is online pornography.

As kids spend more time online, they're being unwillingly exposed to explicit sexual content at record rates. On average, it happens by the age 13, and it can have serious lasting consequences. Even though research links pornography exposure to worsened mental health, unstable relationships, and other issues, the big tech companies are doing almost nothing to stop it.

That's why it's important to me to tell you about Canopy, a new partner of ours, that's helping families take back control over what their kids see online. Canopy

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uses state-of-the-art artificial intelligence to make the internet safe for kids by blocking explicit materials on every single website.

Learn more at canopy.us/thatsoundsfun, and use the discount code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout to get 30 days free and 15% off your subscription forever. Your kids and yourself will thank you later.

And if you're driving or on the treadmill or at the grocery store while you're listening, we know stopping to find a link isn't the most convenient thing to do at the moment. So be sure you're signed up for the AFD Week in Review because then the links to all of our incredible partners will be delivered straight to your inbox every Friday. You can sign up at anniefdowns.com so you never miss a thing. And also all the links are in the show notes below.

And now back to our conversation with Kristian.

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Annie: I asked Pastor Scott Sauls what happens when you stay at a church instead of leave, and he said it's when you grow up.

Kristian: Uh.

Annie: Right? And I was like, "Okay, okay." Then we have friends who God has really clearly said, Go to this other church or whatever, for their story.

Kristian: Sure. Oh, sure.

Annie: But in my story it was very important that... I said the other day that staying at a church long-term gets easier and more complicated.

Kristian: That's such a good way to say it. That's just how it is.

Annie: It's easier because you know the doors and you know the building, and you know where you're gonna sit. And also it can be really complicated.

Kristian: Well, it's just like relationships. Just stick it out with people. My wife and I've been married 18 years. Let me tell you the valleys we have been through and let me tell you the mountaintops we've seen. But was there ever a day where Kerri and I looked at each other and go, "Do you want to throw in the towel today?" Probably. But we didn't. We're still pushing. We're still walking together.

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And that's what you do in relationship. And when you do that and you commit to that, man, the fruit on the other side of that is just the blessing on the other side of that. I think you're right. There are situations where you need to get out. I totally get that. But if you can-

Annie: If you can, stay. Stay. I said to someone recently that my goal is to pretend like it's 1850 and there's only one church in town. And I just go to the one church in town.

Kristian: That's great. I love that.

Annie: Because in some of our cities, your city and my city, there are a lot of options. And I'm just trying to pretend there's only one church in this town.

Kristian: There's just one church.

Annie: So I'm giving my life to this one church in town because it's the only church in town. Because that's the one I'm at. So that helps me to ground. My Enneagram seveness would like to eject out of everything that is hard anytime. So there are times where I'm like, "Nope, this is the only one in town. You better go."

Kristian: Great. I love that, Annie. I love that so much.

Annie: Anything that's like wild west pioneer life, I'm gonna go, It's 1800s. Okay. *Burn Bright* has been out for a couple of months. What's it been like hearing people sing the songs at their churches and know this? I mean, what does it feel like?

Kristian: Oh, man. Again, it just feels like God did it. When you see the songs go beyond Passion City Church or beyond the writer's room that you wrote the songs, you go, Man, God's breathing on this. God's sending the wind and sending the songs." But it's been very cool, you know?

We just kind of pulled up a few more of the songs we haven't released from conference yet. We pulled up the tracks and started listening to stuff and going, "Holy cow, this is really cool, too." So I think we're gonna start adding some other songs to the *Burn Bright* album.

Annie: Welcome to 2022 where that's how music works.

Kristian: I know.

Annie: "We're gonna add another song."

Kristian: "Let's just add more. Let's make it some rocks."

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Annie: "It's Friday, we got another song for you. Here we go."

Kristian: "That was superstar listening. Let's just do it."

Annie: Exactly right. Why not? One of the things we love to talk about around here is hearing God prayer. Kind of like practicing those disciplines. And you said in the fall is when you start feeling the wind of something or in the summer and then you hear. So for our friends listening, what is it like for you to hear God, Kristian? Do you hear a voice? Is He loud? Is He out loud to you? Which is great. I hope so. He's not for me. What is it like for you?

Kristian: Well, I have to get still. I have to quiet. I have to slow the pace.

Annie: I'm terrible at that.

Kristian: Oh, my gosh, let me tell you how hard it is. Especially with kids and life, it's full-throttle living in this world. But I found just a few practices that really help me. I go on really long walks. I love going on walks.

Annie: Really?

Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: Just like around your neighborhood.

Kristian: Yeah, around our house. I mean, I'll disappear for two and a half, three hours and just like walk.

Annie: The kids are like, "Where's dad?" They're like, "Oh, he's back."

Kristian: No, this is usually while they're in school. We drop them off and then-

Annie: How many is they? Four?

Kristian: Four. Four kids. Fifteen down to seven. And I go and I start walking. I might be listening to music or a podcast maybe with yourself. But then eventually that shuts down, and you start walking and you start feeling your heart rate start to slow down, the pace starts to slow down. And I need to say, "Hey, I'm here and I just want to listen."

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So that's very practical. A lot, a lot has been transferred on those walks. A lot of songs have started. A lot of stuff that I've journaled supratherapeutic, God's taught me while I was on those walks.

Annie: Do you do it in the winter even?

Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: You just bundle up?

Kristian: I'll bundle up and figure out, you know... When it's super cold in Atlanta, maybe it's not three hours. Maybe it's like 45 minutes, you know?

Annie: That's right.

Kristian: And then prioritizing that time in the morning. We just had somebody at our church who I was asking him kind of what you're asking me: what are some practical things you do to stay connected to God? And he said, "It's always for me scripture. So Word of God before my phone."

Annie: Wow, I know.

Kristian: So every morning he's like, Don't pick up your phone first. Just open the scripture and hear from God. So we're trying to do that. And it is hard. That is so hard because like, "I just want to check the weather. While I'm here I might as well open Instagram."

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

Kristian: So I think it's that. Back to what you're saying about being a songwriter, it's collecting all of these things so that when you sit down in the moment to write a song for *Burn Bright*, you've got all this backlog of things that you've been collecting that you've heard from God. So you sit down and you start talking to people and you start going, "Oh, man, that reminds me of this thing that God taught me or was teaching you to come back here. We should write about that."

So I've just learned to kind of keep that fire going. And don't let it ever get locked down to the embers. Keep feeding it. Keep feeding it. So when you walk in and go, "Hey, man, fire is burning. I'm ready to go." So we don't always do that perfectly but we're trying.

Annie: What does your scripture reading practice look like?

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Kristian: Right now we're doing... It's a chronological Bible.

Annie: You're going through the Bible in a year?

Kristian: My wife and I we're trying to get... Our oldest two, Isaac is 15, Nora is 12. We're trying to get them in the habit of reading scriptures. So we got these Bibles for all of us to go through.

Annie: Oh, cool.

Kristian: I'm definitely behind right now. And I don't know, I might be like a month behind right now. So you like you get behind-

Annie: I'm a month behind in mine right now.

Kristian: ...but you just keep going.

Annie: Yeah.

Kristian: Like, "Well, today, maybe I'll read two days."

Annie: I map it all the time. I'm like, "Okay, if I read three starting right now, when am I back on track?"

Kristian: It's so hard. I do the same. You start doing the math. You're like, "Okay, divide by four, if I... Okay, 2024 I'll finish this."

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

Kristian: But I need the easy, like, "I'm going to open my Bible and this is my reading today." And just going, Man, today, I'm reading about how Joshua divided up the land between all the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan River and they conquer the land. You know, it's the seven-year conquest, and now they're dividing up the land.

And even in that, you go, "Help me, Lord. Teach me. And He always does. He always does. There's always something. There's always something that you walk away with going, "I will think about that for the rest of my day," you know?

Annie: Yes. I think when scripture talks about it being living and active, I'm like, "That is really true." Because we can read the same thing two days in a row, the same chapter two days in a row, and you're gonna get two totally different things based on what happened the day before and where God knows you need to go that day.

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Kristian: 100%.

Annie: It is. The problem with the Chronological Bible is you're not gonna get to the New Testament till like November or something.

Kristian: Let me tell you that journey through Deuteronomy, that second law-

Annie: Oh, it's brutal.

Kristian: ...we went through this already once. So here we are again. Okay.

Annie: All right. Got it. Really got it.

Kristian: But he knows we need it twice. He knows this. He's like, "You need to read this twice." So good though. It's so good. It's an easy way to get into Scripture and to read the Scripture as a storyline and see the story of God from the beginning all the way to the end.

Annie: So it's chronological. Do you start with Job instead of Genesis? Or how does it start?

Kristian: No, we jumped in at Genesis. Job was early. Job was early.

Annie: Job's brutal. I just heard... I watched the some of The Send Conference in Kansas City and Francis Chan talked about Job. And I was like, "I can't." Francis Chan will mess me up all day, every day anyway. But then when he's also talking about repentance and losing everything you have and what God has to say about, I'm like, "You know what? I'm just not a good person, Francis Chan. I get it."

Kristian: Oh my gosh.

Annie: Oh, he's the best.

Kristian: Francis, I miss you. I have not seen Francis speak in so long. I love him so much.

Annie: I love him.

Kristian: Love him so much.

Annie: Speaking of thinking back to Passion, who do you love hearing? Do you get to hear the teachers?

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Kristian: Oh my gosh. I mean, everybody. I feel like everybody brought speakers, worship leaders, all of it was so, so good. I remember Sadie's talk was so pointed and so, so powerful.

Annie: And she taught it while she had COVID.

Kristian: While she's sick. I mean, and like sick. She's not feeling good, at a different location.

Annie: And teaching all about identity.

Kristian: Identity and truth.

Annie: And who we are.

Kristian: And God's truth and what God says about you, and living your life according to that truth. I mean, it was... That. And then Jennie Allen.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Kristian: ...leading that moment of confession in the middle of her talk. Taking half of her time to let the room confess sin to each other.

Annie: And a room full of college students.

Kristian: Full of college students.

Annie: Confessing their sins.

Kristian: And if you weren't there... So this was during the day and Mercedes-Benz Stadium is open on one side with all these windows, and the sun is going down. As Jenny is leading this time to confession, the sun is going down, and it hits these windows. Do you remember this?

Annie: Yes.

Kristian: And the sunlight is pouring into Mercedes-Benz Stadium as if God is saying, The light is where you were made to live. This is good. This is where you were meant to be in the light. I mean, my wife and I, you know, we're weeping in our seats.

And a lot of it is because we have learned the power of vulnerability and we've learned the power of bringing your life into the light. And unfortunately, it took me

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specifically way too long than it should have to learn how to be real and honest with people that I trust.

And to watch these college students turn to people and go, "I gotta tell you something." And to know the freedom that was coming to the students just as it's coming out of their mouth, it's almost like you can see the chains falling off the students. And going, "I wish I had that when I was in college." Oh, I wish somebody had to go, "This is how you do it." So that moment, absolutely. Jackie Hill Perry... I mean, it was awesome.

Annie: David Platt was the one for me.

Kristian: David Platt.

Annie: You guys listening, if you didn't see it, I think you can probably watch it online. I know Passion has released a bunch of them. But he's going through Scripture and describing all the nations and what it's going to look like when people go to all the nations. And then on the screen he's circling scripture. He's just walking us through his Bible and circling.

I was like, "The technology is about to make me have a revival. I don't know. This is unbelievable how he's showing us. He doesn't cherry-pick them wrong way out of scripture. He finds, he minds out these things, and go, "Look how this ties to this and this ties to this." And it made me want to know the Bible more.

Kristian: Yes. Always. Whenever you hear David Platt, you're like, "I gotta do something. I gotta get to work there."

Annie: Our friends listening know this. David and I are the same grade and we were at Georgia together.

Kristian: Oh wow.

Annie: And I remember him really... Like we knew each other at Georgia. So now to see... I'm like, "This is actually the same guy. I don't know that he had Romans memorized in college but he had this passion in college.

Kristian: That was in him.

Annie: He and Heather, this was who they were.

Annie: That's so cool.

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Annie: It is so... I mean, Georgia makes good people. You know it. You know it. We come from a great place.

Kristian: It's a great place.

Annie: It's a great place.

Kristian: It's a great place.

Annie: What are you seeing God doing in Atlanta?

Kristian: Well, you know, I can say for passion City Church, a lot of new people are coming to our church.

Annie: Really?

Kristian: Like pandemic ended, COVID, and we're back in the building, and so many people were like, You are just now coming through the doors of the church. A lot of people that were in our church before, they've either moved along, or I don't know, but we have a lot of new people.

Annie: Wow.

Kristian: That's pretty cool-

Annie: That's really cool.

Kristian: ...to see a lot of new people come through the doors at church.

Annie: Do you lead on Sunday mornings?

Kristian: I do.

Annie: Okay.

Kristian: Yeah. So we have our location in Atlanta, Buckhead location, then Cumberland where the Braves play, and then we have a location south at Trilith kind of where all the studios, the big movie studios are. And then in DC. So we got these four. So we all kind of move around.

Annie: So y'all do live worship at every campus?

Kristian: We do.

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Annie: And then is the teaching streamed?

Kristian: Yes.

Annie: That's what we do at Cross Point.

Kristian: Usually, yes. So, Louis, or whoever it will be, and then it'll stream.

Annie: So you move around from campus?

Kristian: Ben Stuart is... he's our location pastor in DC. He preaches a lot there. But yeah.

Annie: Wow. So you move around on Sunday morning. So you're seeing all the new people.

Kristian: We see a lot. In Trilith, you know, down south it's like a brand new church. I mean, it's like from the ground up. We're going, "Here's our culture. Here's who we are. Here's why we worship. Here's why we sing. Here's why people are lifting their hands." I mean, it's like literally you're starting like on, "Here's the very beginning of..."

Annie: And being right there at the movie studios, anytime we can help with exporting culture, let's go.

Kristian: Let's go

Annie: Right?

Kristian: Yeah.

Annie: We get to feed any gospel into exporting culture, I'm here for that.

Kristian: It's very cool. It's very, very cool. And they're making some pretty big budget stuff down there.

Annie: Because there's Tyler Perry and Chick-fil-A, and all sorts of... I mean, it's a lot going on there. That's cool.

Kristian: The first time I went down there I was looking for Iron Man. I was like, "Where is Robert Downey Jr. I want to see him."

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Annie: "I keep hearing on podcasts I listen to or things I read of celebrities who are living in Atlanta right now because of the movies that are being filmed there. And then you just go like, "Okay God, what are you doing? What are you doing that these people who don't know you are living down the street from Passion City Church? Okay, God, walk them over. Walk them over."

Kristian: It's pretty crazy. It's pretty crazy.

Annie: That's really cool.

Kristian: It's a good location. It's a good spot to be right now. Atlanta is awesome. I love Atlanta. The world collides in Atlanta. So many different kinds of people.

Annie: What will revival look like in Atlanta?

Kristian: I think revival will look like... I don't really know how to say this, but like nominal Christianity going away. I don't know how to say that in the right way.

Annie: It's a takeaway versus in addition to.

Kristian: Yeah. I think revival will look like where it gets hard to follow Jesus in our city.

Annie: Wow.

Kristian: Right now it's very comfortable, it's very easy to say, "I follow Jesus. I love God. I'm gonna go to church today." Well, what if it wasn't easy? What if there was a cost or sacrifice involved? And I'm just speaking to... Personally, I've grown up in the South, I've grown up in Atlanta. It's never been... On a personal level, it's very hard. And I feel the struggle every day to walk in the light and to live a holy life. That's not what I mean when I say this. But it's never been hard for me. No one's ever been standing at the doors of the church, going, "You can't go in. You can't go to church today."

Annie: No one mocks you in a coffee shop if you have your Bible out.

Kristian: No, never. So I think I think that's probably what-

Annie: I like that.

Kristian: I think that's probably what revival looks like.

Annie: It's gonna get a little bit hard for us.

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Kristian: Yeah. It's gotta be a little tough.

Annie: Yeah. That's interesting.

Kristian: So sometimes I think that when I'm leading on Sundays, I just want to stop everything and I go, "Why did you come today?" Not in an accusatory way, but I just really want to know. Like what made you get out of bed and get dressed and get your family here? Are you checking a box? Is this just a routine for you? Like just a rhythm? Or does this mean everything to you? Is Jesus...

And some people are searching and that's okay. They came because they don't know what else to go? That's awesome. But, you know, I want to say to the person in the second row who's just kind of staring me down, and go-

Annie: Dear everyone, we see your faces.

Kristian: "I didn't make you come here."

Annie: "I didn't pay you to be here."

Kristian: "I'm good, bro if you're here or not." I really just want to go, Why did you come today?

Annie: Oh my gosh, Kristian.

Kristian: I think when we get that, like, I came, because this is where the saints gather. This is where I meet with God. This is where we open the Scripture and I sit under the authority of the word of God. And I need that. I need it. I need that every week. If I don't gather with people...

That's why COVID was so hard I think for so many people, is we weren't gathering. And there is a refining and a sanctification that happens when we're rubbing shoulders with the saints and we're looking people in the eye. Man, that's what I would love for people. I think that's what revival looks like when we understand the power of that.

Annie: Man, those Sundays when we do check it off for kind of the embers for the ones we feel it.

Kristian: Yeah. Right. Right.

Annie: So the rhythms and the disciplines save us on the days where we don't feel it.

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Kristian: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. And it's good to say that because there are times where you just go, "I'm doing this because I know it's what I need to do. I don't want to go to church today, for crying out loud." It's good to make that clarification because you do have days like that. You really do.

Annie: I do. There are times when I'm teaching and I feel that, and times when you're leading and you feel that. Or it's like, certainly the Falcons played too late last night or the Braves like do late last night and I wish I was still in bed.

Kristian: Right.

[00:37:22] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [Curology](#). You've heard me talk about Curology before and you know how much I love their stuff. Curology is a tele-dermatology company that pairs members with a medical provider who's trained in dermatology to help you with your skincare needs.

Reaching your skincare goals is a journey, we love journeys, and it just takes a little patience. And Curology provides effective products and helps you celebrate the simple wins along the way. I've used Curology for a little over a year, simply following the easy process they have where I filled out a brief quiz, you know I love a quiz, and sent them a couple of selfies. Okay, I love selfies too. In return, they have sent me an amazing personalized prescription product right to my door. My cream helped me address some skin tone and texture issues and it has worked so well.

Curology is a game-changing custom skincare made for you by a dermatology provider. They 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 just like I did by taking a short online quiz and upload some selfies. And if it's a good fit, they'll ship your formula right to your door. Love that convenience factor. I got mine in the mail yesterday.

Curology offers a free trial so that you can try it out risk-free. Isn't that awesome? You just pay \$5 for shipping and handling. And they just launched a lip balm in four different flavors: original, mint, vanilla, and passionfruit. Super moisturizing. So fun. So get started with Curology just like I did, with a free 30-day trial at curology.com/thatoundsfun. Just pay \$5 for the shipping and handling. That's curology.com/thatoundsfun. Cancel anytime. Prescription subject to consultation.

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Sponsor: And I got one last amazing partner to tell you about, [Babbel](#). For most of us learning a second language in high school or college wasn't exactly a high point in our academic career. Y'all, I took several semesters of Spanish. I cried during the final in college. I'm embarrassed to admit that I can't even place an order well in Spanish at all.

But now, thanks to Babbel the language learning app that sold more than 10 million subscriptions, there's an addictively fun and easy way to learn a new language. Whether you'll be traveling abroad, yes, please get me to some other countries, or maybe you're looking to connect in a deeper way with family or perhaps you've just got some free time and want to do some good mental exercising, Babbel teaches bite-sized language lessons that you'll actually use in the real world.

Since I already have a basic understanding of it, I think Spanish is going to be my first language to try with Babbel. But I'm also very interested in visiting my friend Joy Eggerichs Reed in France, so I may work on some French too.

Their 50-minute lessons make it the perfect way to learn a new language on the go. Other language learning apps use AI for their lesson plans, but Babbel lessons were created by over 100 language experts. Their teaching method has been scientifically proven to be effective. With Babbel you can choose from 14 different languages, luckily including Spanish and French but also Italian and German. Plus Babbel speech recognition technology helps you to improve your pronunciation and accent.

There are so many ways to learn with Babbel. In addition to lessons, you can access podcasts, games, videos, stories, and even live classes. It's an Enneagram seven's dream with so many options, you guys. Plus it comes with a 20-day money-back guarantee. Start your new language learning journey today with Babbel.

Right now when you purchase a three-month Babbel subscription, you'll get an additional three months for free. You guys, that's six months for the price of three. Just go to [babbel.com](#) and use a promo code THATSOUNDSFUN. That's [babbel.com](#), code, THATSOUNDSFUN.

And now back to finish our conversation with Passion Music's Kristian Stanfill.

[00:41:01] <music>

Annie: I think it's really interesting. I think one of the things that I have... hopefully this is a maturing thing, but I've grown to not expect the fruit right away.

Kristian: Oh, so good.

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Annie: And going like, "I might not see the fruit of me committing to this service at church or this community or whatever anytime in the next decade, but I'll see the fruit."

Kristian: That's right. Eugene Peterson says that in the message. It's a long obedience in the same direction. It's like, I'm just going to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Annie: Right. Right. So we've done this... I'm 41. Are you close to that?

Kristian: Thirty-nine. I just turned 39. So will be 40 next April.

Annie: Oh, you're going to love it. It's great.

Kristian: Thank you so much.

Annie: It's so great.

Kristian: I'm not dreading 40.

Annie: No?

Kristian: I'm asking everybody who's 40 like, "Tell me, what can I expect?"

Annie: It's when the Israelites got into the promised land. Are you kidding?

Kristian: Huh.

Annie: It's when everything breaks open.

Kristian: Come on. Across the Jordan.

Annie: You have been lapping for 39 years. You got to go in at 40.

Kristian: I like that. I like that.

Annie: I mean, it is a different thing. But my question for you, you got teenagers, you've got a busy job, we're at probably... I don't know, we hopefully have six more decades of this is my hope. I want to turn 100 because I want to go from two digits to three. I think it'd be really fun.

Kristian: That's pretty cool.

Annie: I remember going from 9 to 10 and loving it. So-

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Kristian: Double digit.

Annie: So I've got six more decades. So we're not even halfway yet, hopefully, if God willing giving us a lot of time. What do we need to do now as parents...? So many of our friends listening are parents. What do we need to do now to finish well? What things are in place in this Stanfill family that are for the fruit when you're 80?

Kristian: We love the church. We love the church. Like I said, the church is God's plan for salvation on the earth. And we've always had our kids in church. Our kids see the affection we have for the church. We love our community. They also see us wrestle too, but we never curse it.

Annie: Yeah, that's good. You can wrestle without cursing.

Kristian: You can wrestle with it, but we don't ever curse it. We don't ever get in the car and go, "Can you believe so and so did, so and so and whatever."

Annie: Even if you feel it.

Kristian: Even if you feel it.

Annie: Yeah, that's good.

Kristian: It's okay for Kerri and I to process stuff like that. And we do but... So we love the church. We've raised them to love the church. My daughter, Nora, now 12, she loves to come to church early with me on Sunday. Because she loves being around all the people because she's grown up with these people.

Annie: How early is early? Are y'all get in there in the sixes?

Kristian: We leave around 6:30.

Annie: Oh, brutal. That's impressive. Nora.

Kristian: Yeah, Nora. So we love the church. We have them around church. We try to make it a part of our rhythm, and not just, like we said, check the box. We try to be really honest with our kids and just open the door to have very raw, very vulnerable conversations appropriately. But you know, talk about my son's 15, my daughter's 12, they're dealing with some big boy and big girl stuff, you know, some adult stuff that they're feeling the tension.

Annie: Ain't that weird? You're like, "I was just 15."

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Kristian: "I was just there."

Annie: How is this possible?

Kristian: I feel like I'm still in high school.

Annie: Right. Now I have to parent through the internet. Oh, man. Wow.

Kristian: So it's just instead of shrinking back from that hard conversation, leaning into it. Even when it's awkward and hard sometimes like going, "Hey, I've been 15 and I know what you're dealing with. And I haven't made all the right decisions and I want to help you." And just opening the door for them.

And then the rhythms. Trying to teach them rhythms of how to be in the Word of God, how to prioritize that. But the community and church is a big deal. It's a really big one for us.

Annie: All that matters so deeply to me too, because I think remembering that how we feel... I mean, I say a lot our feelings get to ride but they don't get to drive. So they can be in the car. My friend Chris says, my feelings can even pick the music, but they don't get to drive.

Kristian: That's good.

Annie: So even for me, the disciplines are like, this is how we're going to do this long term is when I don't feel it, that does not affect whether I read my Bible or get on my peloton, or go to church or get in community. It doesn't matter what I feel.

Kristian: That's exactly right.

Annie: So you're teaching that to your kids. I think that is so huge, Kristian.

Kristian: We're trying. We're trying.

Annie: I think that's really good.

Kristian: It's hard, man. It's the hardest thing we've ever done, but it's the greatest thing we'll ever do. It will make you weep and will break you wide open, but it also I think it's the greatest contribution I'm making to the kingdom of God in my lifetime, is to raise these kids to love God in a real way. Not a rote, void of true love and effect. Not that. Not nominal. Not nominal, but a real relationship with God. A wrestling, you know?

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Annie: Yes.

Kristian: "I want to yell at God today." Then go yell at God.

Annie: Then go. Yeah, yeah. We'll be right here at breakfast-

Kristian: Go have a talk. Go talk it out. I think that's the... "It's messy" sounds pretty.

Annie: Well, I mean, the wrestling but not cursing, it even makes me think of Jacob. Even Jacob in that story does not curse God, he just wrestles with him. I will be writing that down today. Wrestle without cursing. Because that is the appropriate way. That's what we would do with everyone we love. When you and your wife have an argument, you wrestle without cursing.

Kristian: That's right. That's right.

Annie: And I think that is really good. Is there anything we didn't say you wanna make sure we cover?

Kristian: I don't know. It feels amazing.

Annie: I just love it. I love you guys. That speaks so much of you.

Kristian: We love you so much.

Annie: I'm like, "There's like a hundred things I want to talk about-

Kristian: I want to keep talking.

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

Kristian: Oh, my gosh, what sounds fun to me. I may have said this last time, but going to the lake.

Annie: Let's go to the lake.

Kristian: We've just been talking about the lake. That sounds fun. I want to get on that boat, I want to turn on some country music,-

Annie: Country music?

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Kristian: ...I want sparkling water in my hand and I just want to cruise.

Annie: All the throwback to the lake.

Kristian: That's it. There is an old restaurant, for our friends listening—it doesn't exist anymore—called Leprades.

Kristian: Oh.

Annie: You sat at a table... What I would give if there was one picture in the world of your family and my family at LaPrades the same day?

Kristian: I bet it happened, Annie.

Annie: There's got to be. Yeah.

Kristian: So you would park your boat at the LaPrades Marina and then you'd have to walk up the hill-

Annie: The highest hill.

Kristian: The highest hill. And then it was in this old house. Like on top of this hill.

Annie: Yeah.

Kristian: You'd sit at these long tables and they would just bring out fried chicken and mashed potatoes and biscuits and all the things.

Annie: And you just passed them down.

Kristian: You just pass them the family style.

Annie: And it was like big long lunchroom tables. You didn't know anybody that you were sharing your food with. It was so not COVID friendly.

Kristian: No. Oh my gosh. But unfortunately it burned down.

Annie: It burned down.

Kristian: It burned down. Now they've rebuilt it. There's a restaurant there, which is still...

Annie: I haven't been to it. Have you been?

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Kristian: We have been.

Annie: It's good?

Kristian: It's actually a cool hang. They've had like a pizza place and ice cream place. There's little general store and a bar there. And you can park the boat and get out and eat. So it is cool. It does create a spot that you can go to.

Annie: And your kids are gonna feel about that how we feel about the original LaPrades.

Kristian: That we feel. Exactly. Exactly. I try not to be that guy but I'm like, "Kids, this is cool. But now listen. Back in the day when I was close your age, we park the boat-

Annie: "We shared a chicken."

Kristian: ...we'd walk up the hill and we'd eat fried chicken. All right?"

Annie: That is my actual whole childhood is doing that. Okay, well, I'm going to summer so I'll just text y'all when I'm up there.

Kristian: Text us, please.

Annie: What are the chances? It'd be so great. We also could schedule it sometime. We're acting like it's impossible to work it out.

Kristian: We could schedule. We could talk about it. But I hope it works out. I really do. We could just pass each other on the lake.

Annie: Oh, that'd be great. Thanks for making time for this, friend. I'm grateful.

Kristian: Annie, we love you. We love you so much.

Annie: I love y'all.

Kristian: It's good to chat.

Annie: I'm really grateful.

[00:49:34] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't he the best? I just love him. I just think so, so highly of him and all of our friends down at Passion City Church and part of the Passion Conference and Passion Music. Be sure that you're listening to Passion's new project *Burn*

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Bright. Download these incredible songs wherever you love to stream your music and follow them on social media, tell Kristian thanks so much for being on the show and for leading us in worship all these years.

While you're at it, think about who you know that would love this conversation and just shoot it over to them. A little "thinking about you and think you'd love this episode" text could really make their day.

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

Today what sounds fun to me is going to Lake Burton, but it's a little bit of a drive so I'm not going to be able to. But it's in my heart. It is in my heart. Y'all have a great holiday weekend. Get outside, spend time with your people, go to the lake, go to the pool. Enjoy Monday off.

We'll be back here with you on Monday with a conversation you're gonna love listening to out on the boat, laying around the pool, or while you're driving back home with my friend and country star, Catie Offerman. We'll see you guys then. Happy Memorial Day weekend.