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**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be with you today. We have got a great show. I love when we have guests that y'all have been requesting like crazy—and that is true today.

But before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [Athletic Greens](#). Athletic Greens is an incredible mix of 75 high quality vitamins, minerals, Whole Foods source superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens. You stir one scoop of Athletic Greens into cold water daily, and you'll be supporting your gut health and your nervous system, and your immune system. Plus, you'll see improved energy recovery and focus.

The founder of Athletic Greens was dealing with a ton of gut issues and ended up on a complicated and really expensive supplement regimen in order to recover. A far more affordable option, Athletic Greens is easy for your body to absorb and contains less than one gram of sugar. No GMOs, no bad for you chemicals or artificial anything while still tasting so good.

It's got a fresh green flavor with a sort of tropical finish and it's lifestyle friendly, whether you eat keto, Paleo, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free. Whatever "free" you are, you're all set. Athletic Greens says over 7,000-star reviews and it's recommended by professional athletes and professional Annies, at least this one.

It's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition, especially heading into this flu and cold season. It's just one scoop in a cup of cold water every day. That's it.

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

Hey, be sure to check out the show notes too for links to our sponsors so you don't ever have to memorize it. We've got that link for you right there, the transcript of the show, and you can sign up for the AFD Week in Review email.

**Intro:** Today on the show I get to talk with my new friend Brandon Lake. You know him. You love him. He's the Grammy Award-winning songwriter and worship leader who's written so many of our favorite worship songs. Trust me, we talked about it. I'm so grateful for this generation of powerful worship leaders who craft song experiences that change the atmosphere.

Brandon released his latest full-length album *HELP* a couple of months ago. It's a beautiful, honest, deep dive into his battle with depression and anxiety and other mental health struggles and the power we can find on the other side of that simple prayer "help".

Y'all, I love getting to know Brandon and hearing his story and us talking about prayer and miracles and... We're going in, you guys. We are going in. I cannot wait to share this with you. So here is my conversation with our pal Brandon Lake.

[00:03:01] <music>

**Annie:** Okay, Brandon, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Brandon:** Thank you for having me. This is gonna be fun. I'm really excited.

**Annie:** Dude, are you kidding? You know I've been dying to have you on. I mean, did I not like beg you at the K-LOVES?

**Brandon:** It was an honor.

**Annie:** Like, "Please, man, got to have a conversation."

**Brandon:** Yes, yes. But I mean, yeah, that's easy yes from me. So I'm excited.

**Annie:** You're very kind.

**Brandon:** I'm excited we're doing it.

**Annie:** Okay, so you're home. How long are you home in this little stretch?

**Brandon:** I think that's the question that everybody asks me when I get home every single time. I go to church and everybody's like, "How long are you home?" You know, because I've been all over the place the past few years. I have been home since August 2nd.

**Annie:** Oh, yes.

**Brandon:** So I got off tour and I decided it would be a brilliant idea to bring home a puppy a few days before we had a baby. And so-

**Annie:** I didn't realize that was the story. I did not realize the dog was new and the baby's new.

**Brandon:** Y'all.

**Annie:** Brandon!

**Brandon:** Yeah. On top of my busy schedule, I'm like, "Yeah, let's throw a puppy.

**Annie:** And other children.

**Brandon:** And another child. It is cray cray at the Lake house right now. But I got done with tour on the 30th or I think the first house was to fly home. I'm like, "What if I fly to Pennsylvania and pick up a dog?" So we decided to do that. So I got home August 2nd. My son was born August 6th.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh! So y'all are right at just like six weeks, seven weeks with a brand new baby and a brand new puppy.

**Brandon:** Yeah. Puppy's like... yeah, yes.

**Annie:** Did the Lord tell you to do this? Are you sure you heard the Holy Spirit on getting a puppy?

**Brandon:** Like my pastor said, sometimes you hear the Holy Spirit and then sometimes you're like, "Maybe that was bad burritos. Maybe that wasn't the Holy Ghost. That was something I ate the night before."

**Annie:** What's the gift of being home for this long?

**Brandon:** Oh, man, as beautiful as when you do a trip, even for three days, and you come home and you notice the change that, like your kids have physically grown, that hurts me because it really shows me how much I missed.

And honestly, it's almost like a gift to not see the growth happening in some ways, like the physical growth, because I want to get lost in how little they are as long as I possibly can. And I think when I leave and I come back, oh, I can cry. You see it way too tangibly.

You know, that's a gift in itself, because you're like, "Oh my gosh, like he's gone..." But when you're doing that often, it's pretty haunting. You know, like knowing, Man, when I come back in five days, I'm gonna notice a tangible difference in my son's face, you know, physically, like changing and becoming more mature.

I think the gift of just not having to deal with that right now, being home and getting lost in the season that we're in right now, how they look right now, how they act right now. And honestly, not spiritual but yet it's so is. Like, physical touch and cuddling, and just literally getting my hands on my kids.

You know, when you're in and out, it's very hard to have deep conversations, which is already hard to have with a child. But when you have a chance to be in the car for 20 minutes together in your every day, like taking them to school or going running errands, you fall into some of those random little conversations where you get to know their personality and what they're actually thinking about.

**Brandon:** There's so much more to my kids than what we dialogue about right before bed and right before we wake up and before they go to school. So I think just the gift of that time is everything.

**Annie:** I mean, not to be too spiritual at eight o'clock in the morning, but also... I mean, that speaks to me about like how much all of us... the gift of being in the middle of a season and you don't have to be able to see the growth, but it's happening.

**Brandon:** Right, right. Absolutely. Yeah. Man, I learned a lot through COVID. The power of being close and physical touch, we lost that for a really long season. And then I think people withdrew. It's easier to put the walls back up. When we're together and when we're sharing intimate time with one another that's when real growth happens, you know?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Brandon:** There's something too just like getting your hands on your friend and loving on them. For me that breeds trust, it breeds security, a feeling of feeling loved and accepted and seen and valued, and all those things. So I think we're even bigger than my family, we're coming out of a season where so much of us like, you know, we had those close relationships and friendships and we were seeing each other a lot, but then we kind of weren't.

And I think the church has lost kind of that power of like, "Let's lay hands on people and believe that freedom is coming and healing is coming." We weren't able to do that but now we are. So I'm learning through my family and I'm learning through this season of coming out of COVID how valuable intimacy is, how valuable physical touch really is.

**Annie:** I officiated a wedding this weekend-

**Brandon:** Nice.

**Annie:** I was so rad. We don't have time to talk about how it pushes back the enemy to do a wedding when you're not married yet. That kind of stuff... Let's go! Like, you won't steal my hope. So we all type it out.

**Brandon:** I love that.

**Annie:** But when the bride and groom are holding hands after we did rings... I've never done this before. I've only done a handful of weddings. But just before I even thought about it, I put my hand on their hands to pray for the rings. And it is that physical touch thing of like, Man... I mean, Scripture says that laying on of hands will heal things, right?

**Brandon:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Annie:** So it just felt like this moment of like, Oh, I should make a note to do this every time because I think it matters with what God does in prayer.

**Brandon:** Yeah, 100%. 100%.

**Annie:** I need to talk to you about a couple of things on your HELP album, okay?

**Brandon:** Yes.

**Annie:** For starters, let's do the high conversation around a worship album about mental health. Because if we're going to talk about healing, what people want to talk about is what's going on in their heads too, not just what's going on in their bodies. How did you intersect worship and mental health for a whole album? Like why was that what God asked you to do?

**Brandon:** People seem a little bit surprised by it. But if you read the book of Psalms, it sounds like a mental health record to me, you know?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Brandon:** David's, you know, often going cray cray and he's crying out to the Lord.

**Annie:** In one psalm.

**Brandon:** In one psalm. Yeah.

**Annie:** It's all of them.

**Brandon:** Sometimes it's really depressing. And then there's a time where it's like, "Okay, but my help comes from the Lord." So for me, I had a season where I had just experienced so many mountain tops. I'm writing with all my heroes, I'm on my first-ever huge tour. My first-ever tour. Period. And it's like a massive Bethel tour with all my heroes.

So a lot of things chemically were new to me. I had never been going that hard, that fast, and experiencing such a heightened state, an excited state. So what happens is when you stay there you get adrenaline fatigue. And what that can kind of turn into is like a big crash, right?

**Annie:** Yeah

**Brandon:** And it attacks your emotional management system. At some point you're not able to manage your emotions, and even decipher what's real and what's not. So I came off of that, went to Disney World, which was like-

**Annie:** What a move!

**Brandon:** ...how on earth for me at that point. I had no time to decompress with Brittany. I go right into this thing with my extended family. There was one night I collapsed, and I, in the fetal position, just begin to bawl my eyes out because for a few days, which felt like an eternity, I was believing that no one loved me, that I would actually be better off if I just vanished.

And y'all, I literally just accomplished every dream of mine and then I go to the darkest place so quickly. And the enemy just jumped in and just used that as opportunity to get me down and make me feel crazy. And so I began a journey of... Because that wasn't changing, the pace wasn't changing, so it wasn't slowing down so I had to figure out new tools to stay healthy. And worship and worship is a way that I can stay sane. It remind-

**Annie:** Because what you were being called to was not slowing down-

**Brandon:** It wasn't.

**Annie:** ...but your body had to keep up too.

**Brandon:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** And so like they say, new levels, new devils.

**Annie:** New devils. Oh, that's right.

**Brandon:** Man, man, did I meet some devils in those next few months and I quickly... But you know, grace of God, I just had the most perfect person in my life to go talk to. Obviously, my wife.

Here's the thing. Here's why I started to freak out too. This is what the enemy loves to do. He wants to isolate you. I was lying to myself and believing the enemy that I can handle this myself, this was too embarrassing to talk about, to share even with my best friend. My wife is my best friend and for a few days I couldn't talk to her about it.

And then I finally broke and I just confessed and said, "This is what I'm believing. This is what is going on in my head. I feel crazy." And then I began to meet with my counselor and therapist. And he had to give me new tools for those new levels, those new devils to combat those things. But it really just had to start with a self-awareness that like this is the reality I'm living in.

He said it was like taking heroin for a little while and then coming home and having to quit like cold turkey. That's essentially what you're having to do. You're going on these trips and going on tour and it's like, you know, you're having the time of your life, and you come home and it's like you're having to quit and your body's having to reset. He's like, "You've got to learn how to live on and off of a drug if this pace continues."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** So I began to write songs about what I was feeling. I've learned if I'm going to something, God probably wants to use it. And it's really as simple as that. So I began to write songs about how I was feeling. Not sugarcoating it.

**Brandon:** Help, you know, it's like My mind feels like a Circus, taming tigers, flaming torches. I can't deal with my own conscience. Truth and lies entangled, dodging arrows at every angle. Why does life feel like a jungle? Come take this weight off my chest, put this chaos to rest. I think I'm losing my mind. Help, help.

I just wanted to write and make a song that even sounded like a panic attack. "Panic attack" so that people when they hear it can be like, "Whoa, I've experienced that." But at the end of the day, it's going to point them to Jesus, it's going to tell them where I have found my help.

**Annie:** There's one song on the album, *Don't You Give Up On Me*, that I think is so interesting, Brandon because... Also, be like, Annie, you're wrong. Very welcome. But it isn't us talking to God, it's God talking to us. Right?

**Brandon:** Right.

**Annie:** I mean, that's kind of like that emoji with the mind-blowing up a little bit. I loved how you wrote this song because I like when we remember that God feels too.

**Brandon:** Yeah.

**Annie:** So will you talk me through *Don't You Give Up On Me*?

**Brandon:** Yeah. I think one of the most powerful tools to combat any kind of mental chaos that you're going through is hearing the voice of God, the one that created you.

You know, think about: what's going to calm my son more than anything if he's having an attack? The sound of his mother, the sound of his father—the voice of the person that knows him the most. There's even the voice of the Father that you can find through friendships. So I think it's really important when...

And really we wrote that song and I immediately saw somebody in their car deciding to not take their own life after hearing the voice of the Father say, "I've got more. I've got more blessing. I've got more dreams. I've got more... Like, hang on. Don't give up. Don't give up. If you can just keep on going. Man, the darker the night gets, the brighter the light hits. Know that."

That's even a word for our nation. People are freaking out right now. But you know what? the darker it gets, the brighter the light can shine. And I think we're entering into a season where it's going to be less and less lukewarm, and it's going to be dark, or it's gonna be super light. It's going to be cold, or it's gonna be burning hot for people on the edge of giving up and knowing that the voice of God can shift everything, you know?

**Annie:** Yeah. We love talking about hearing God around here because it's different for everybody. So what is your experience of hearing God? How else do you hear God? Have you like audible heard God?

**Brandon:** I've never audibly heard God that I can put my finger on and be like, This was a moment I think or I know I heard the audible voice of God. I've had moments where I'm like, "What was that that I heard?"

**Annie:** Yeah, right? I'm always like, "Say it again. Was that you?"



**Brandon:** Yeah, yeah.

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Brandon:** I'm still on a journey trying to understand the voice of God. Like I said, "Is this Holy Spirit?" or "Is this bad burritos?" It can be a similar death feeling. But it's not sexy at all. Honestly, in my car when I'm driving, I don't really even like to listen to music a whole lot. I like to listen to silence because I'm surrounded by music all the time. And so I'll literally just be in my car and I just give that time to the Lord.

Each time I'm in the car, like let me try to give that time. When I'm by myself, let me try to give that time to the Lord. And often I hear God's voice through my own. It's a thought. It's that feeling of something drops into my spirit, into my mind and I go, "Where did that come from?"

And that's exactly how the record *HELP* happened. I got in my car, I went down to go have coffee just by myself. I'm sitting in my car and I'm literally just sitting there in silence. And I felt like I heard God say, "Brandon, I gave you these songs and I've been leading you through this season for a reason. And it's not just for you. I think it's time that you need to release these. You need to share these with other people, because it's going to help a lot of people."

There's a reason why I had, you know, nine or 10 songs just sitting in my Dropbox about this, that if I just did another traditional worship record, like people wouldn't have gotten the songs right. So I had this unique window to release this mental health record.

So honestly, I hear God through those moments of just like, where did that come from? I hear God say my friendships, my closest friendships and people that I trust. I think God uses His people. And a lot of times it's through Godly counsel I'm like, "That was the voice of God."

It might not have sounded like God, it might have sounded like Tim, it might have sounded like Michael, it might have sounded like... You know what?" I know the Spirit of God led you to say that because that is exactly what I needed right now.

[00:19:42] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [ZocDoc](#). Before you pick a book for your next book club meeting, you're gonna read some reviews to make sure it's a good fit, right? In fact,

one of the girls in my book club is not reading our book this month because she did not like the review she read. The rest of us loved the reviews.

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**Sponsor:** I want to tell you about another one of our incredible partners, [Rothy's](#). Okay, what are your follow-up sessions? A poll at our office yielded this. Leaf carpeted hikes, beautiful; PSLs, you know; heated football rivalries, listen, you should hear us on Monday mornings; and firepits and elaborate movie watching under twinkle lights and making apple cider donuts. Yes. Our prince himself, Craig, carry this out. And you know what else is going to join in your list of FOB sessions? Your new Rothy's.

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And now back to our conversation with Brandon.

[00:23:07] <music>

**Annie:** I have a question about what do you do when you miss, when it is the bad burrito. Because that happened to me this week, where I thought for sure I heard the Lord say like, "This goal..." And then once my team and I talked about it, it didn't make sense. And I kind of just said, "Well, I guess I have to go back to the Lord because I thought I heard that but it doesn't make sense."

Not in like it doesn't make sense good way of like, "That's unbelievable..." It's like, "Oh, that doesn't actually make sense. That can't actually be what He said." So what do you do when you miss?

**Brandon:** Well, you know, the beautiful thing is God doesn't waste a single thing. And I'm sitting here going, Even if you missed this week, just to say on this podcast that, "Hey, I'm a real person and I missed," maybe that's why you missed this week. And God wanted to use it for this very moment to let other people know, like, "Hey, I'm not perfect. I get the voice of God wrong," or "I thought it was God and it wasn't."

Like God doesn't waste anything. And even when we fail, when we mess up, when we miss the mark, I mean, that's the story of the gospel. You see over and over and over again God using failed, flawed people to still accomplish His purpose. Like, God doesn't need us but He wants to use us, right?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Brandon:** He wants to use us as the vessel to reach the world. And He's okay with failure. He knows what He's-

**Annie:** More than I am.

**Brandon:** He knows what He's dealing with, you know.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Brandon:** He's not surprised when we get His voice wrong or when we go left and He was saying to go right. Honestly He's like, "Watch what I can do with that," you know?

**Annie:** That's right.

**Brandon:** I think the key is just to be teachable and to be hungry to learn and to grow and to get better. And for every miss, maybe that just gives you a little bit more clarity on getting it right the next time. So I don't think He's worried about it or surprised. I think He uses it.

**Annie:** Yeah. I love your line "He knows what He's working with." That is it, Brandon. That's it. I say a lot that I've lived with myself every day so I know how bad it gets. Like I haven't missed a day of being Annie, so I know what it's like. And I'm like, "Yeah, the Lord hadn't either." The Lord knows. He's been here from the start so He knows what He's working with.

**Brandon:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** It also is fine because this experience we're having at work of hearing God feels a little bit like, "Well, let me refine." Like, "Oh, well, maybe what I heard was right from the Lord 50% and I finished it." Like I heard half the sentence and I got up and walked out and finished the sentence. Have you ever done that?

**Brandon:** Well, I mean, absolutely. And I think that's why it's so important to have other godly people around you to help maybe decipher what He's saying. Because sometimes it's that. Sometimes it's like, "I got half the word and I wasn't patient enough to keep hearing."

Sometimes I think He gives you a piece of a word and says, "I want you to take a baby step. And guess what? I'm gonna bring you these people, and they're gonna give you the other piece of the puzzle. And when you guys do this..." Man, I think God's often doing that. He's given a piece of a word to this person and this person,

knowing that if we were to come together, boom, this thing's created and this is going to change the world, you know?

**Annie:** Yes. So that's fun that you say that because our friends from the AFD Week in Review email, a bunch of them that sent in questions are all like, Talk about working with Mav City, talk about working with Phil Wickham, and talking about all the people you are out on the road with all the time and riding with all the time.

So were you experiencing that when you're even on tour, and when you're riding with these other artists of like, "Oh, man, I had a piece of this that this one chorus can't get out of my brain, or the Scripture is not getting out of my brain? And then Phil says, "I've got verse one," and it's just like, boom. Does that happen?

**Brandon:** Yeah. Oh, my gosh, every day. I mean, that's the only reason I am living in what I'm living in right now is through the power of collaboration. A lot of times, I'll bring a concept to the table when we're writing and be like, "What if we had a song called, you know, whatever it is," and then somebody's like, "Wait, okay, so, if we're gonna go after dry bones, what if we opened up talking about the valley. I've got this line, dah dah dah." And then it's like it starts happening, right?

A lot of these things I couldn't have done on my own. I think that's a really beautiful way that God keeps me humble too, is the more powerful things that happened they're always like collaborative efforts. And He's using his bride, He's using His church to create them and not necessarily one person.

Like *House of Miracles* has become such an anthem for my family. And I don't think I could have written that by myself even though it's something that was burning in my spirit. I wrote that with my producer Jacob Sooter and-

**Annie:** I need you to know how much I love Jacob and Meredith.

**Brandon:** Oh my gosh.

**Annie:** I mean, my people! I mean Meredith is an incredible singer. Jacob is so talented.

**Brandon:** They are unreal.

**Annie:** There's people like him and Jeff Pardo, all these guys are in the background and women in the background that none of our friends listening know. But we're like, "Let me tell you who the power players are when it comes to making music. Jacob Sooter."

**Brandon:** 100%. So two guys that I did *House of Miracles* record with, Jacob Souter and David Leonard. And man, I thought I was getting producers and I got pastors. I mean, these guys helped me, loved me.

I mean, Jacob is even the one that I was having a panic attack on a flight when I started writing *HELP*. So "My mind feels like a circus, Taming tigers..." I'm on a flight and I'm like panicking on my way to Nashville to work on a different project, a different song, and I just start writing the song down.

I get there, Jacob knows I'm not like super okay. So he's like, "What's really going on?" I said, "I think this song idea would best explain how I feel right now." And so I sing him the verse and he's like, "I think we have to write this song today."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** So that's when we wrote that song. And I held on to it for a while, because I was like, "What do I do with this? This is a weird thing to put out." you know? So I couldn't have written that song, I couldn't finish that song if it wasn't for collaboration.

Here's the thing. Here's the beautiful thing. And I'm curious if you've experienced this. I'm a different Brandon today than I was a few years ago because I've rubbed shoulders with greatness in other people. And I've recognized things that have been drawn out of me because I've spent time with a Phil Wickham, with my community at Maverick city.

I've been transformed by the renewing of my mind through spending time with people that don't look like me, think like me, sing like me. Even so much practically that I sing differently at times because we wrote the song *Graves Into Gardens* and Pastor Steven is encouraging the country in the southern rock to come out with me, which I never fully let that lion out right until that song.

So that's the beautiful thing about collaboration is the iron sharpens iron proverb. Is that something that you've experienced, like, "Man, I feel a little more confident after spending time with this person or almost like... And maybe it's just my personality, but I will pick up accents. It's that bad.

**Annie:** I'm a parrot. I am actual parrot. I mean, if Christine Caine teach us on Friday night at a conference, I look just like her on Saturday morning. I mean, I'm switching from a head mic to a handheld just because that's what Christine does. Right, yes. But it makes us better. Right? It makes us better.

It is a beautiful thing. It's one of the things that's beautiful about conferences and about worship nights that there are multiple of y'all is we are able to sharpen each other and make... I remember I came offstage one time and Lisa Harper was so sweet. And she was like, "That was so good. Have you thought about going to seminary?"

**Brandon:** Wow.

**Annie:** And I was like, "I hear you. I hear what you're also saying." Right? Where she was just like sharpening me of like "you're starting great, there's more to learn. Do you want to keep going?"

**Brandon:** Wow.

**Annie:** Right?

**Brandon:** Wow.

**Annie:** So I'm with you. It's one of the gifts of it. I mean, this weekend you were at a Joyce Meyer thing, right?

**Brandon:** I spent time with Lisa and she actually changed my life the way she spoke over me. It was just beautiful.

**Annie:** Uh-uh.

**Brandon:** Yeah, yeah.

**Annie:** So you're with her and Chris and Joyce Meyer? I mean, okay.

**Brandon:** Yeah, we had some awesome girl time.

**Annie:** That's right. That's right. That's some power girl stuff right there. So tell me, you're sitting there watching those three women and knowing that you're at a Joyce Meyer event, celebrate her 40th year? And here you and I are in our I think first decade of really doing this as a full-time hustle. A full-time calling is the better way. What did you learn? Teach me what you learned from seeing someone in their 40th year that I don't know yet.

**Brandon:** I think what I was most impressed by was Mamas Joyce's intentionality and making sure that every generation and age group was ministered to and represented.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** So you knew from the beginning of the conference. So they had this big opener that I got to be a part of, and it started with a video. But then went into this guy singing opera *How Great Thou Art*. So you know, a little bit older folk in the room are like-

**Annie:** Yeah, totally.

**Brandon:** All right. You see me?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Brandon:** ...open with a hymn. And then it goes into Tauren Wells which is like pop, it's young, it's fun, it was explosive. Then it goes into an instrumental, like classical, violin, like the most gorgeous moment of no singing, just violin. And then it settles, and I start singing *Gratitude*.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** I felt like she and her team united the room. Even to the speakers that she has, there's such diversity. You know, you've got really a wise counsel, you've got really a young expression and a passion, and... all the things were represented.

So I was just really impressed by that. I felt encouraged to make sure that I'm speaking to everyone but also I'm focused on the next generation, not just who is like my age and seemingly paying attention, the most attention, like who isn't paying attention that if I were to change my language a little bit that I could pull them in and make them feel seen and loved and speak to them?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Brandon:** So just the fact that she gathered people around her to make sure that everybody felt seen and spoken to, I think that was powerful for me.

**Annie:** Okay, that's good for me to hear. We have to do that. Because it's so easy to think about people in their 30s and 40s for me.

**Brandon:** Right, right.

**Annie:** And I'm like, No, we've got to think up and down.

**Brandon:** And if you have a lane, that's great. Stay in it. But bring people around you if you're trying to reach a broad audience. Like bring people onto your show, bring people on to... Like get other people around you. And again, that kind of comes back to



that same collaborative word of we all get better when our circle just doesn't look like us and doesn't sound like us.

But my favorite part of the conference was when she said to the ladies, but I was out there listening, and she said, "If you've done it, do it, do it big." And so I came the second day with my leopard print pants on. It's not every conference that you feel the permission that you can wear leopard print pants. And third day guess who showed up in leopard print pants?

**Annie:** Oh, please tell me she didn't.

**Brandon:** Mama Joyce showed up in Leopard printed pants.

**Annie:** Did she really? Oh my gosh. She's unreal, man.

[00:35:37] <music>

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And now back to finish up our conversation with our guy, Brandon Lake.

[00:39:31] <music>

**Annie:** Okay, listen, I'm glad you brought up *Gratitude* because I've been meaning to talk to you about this. I've changed one of the lyrics. Can we talk it through?

**Brandon:** Oh, please, improve it, tweak it? Yes.

**Annie:** No, no, I'm not improving it. I'm personalizing it.

**Brandon:** Oh, love that.

**Annie:** I just needed permission publicly because what you're saying is "Come on, my soul. Don't you get shy on me." And I sing "come on my soul, don't you get tired on me." Is that okay?

**Brandon:** Yeah. I need that song today.

**Annie:** Right? Because I'm like, "Guess what, Brandon, you know about me. I'm not shy. That didn't happen. That's like not a word that I don't think anyone's ever used about me. But the thing is *Gratitude* is such an important song. I hope everybody goes and listens to it today again because everybody's heard it.

But it's so important. But that part... I mean, when I say... It feels like a David moment of saying, Come on, don't get tired. We're gonna keep being grateful. I mean, "shy" works for a lot of people, too. It's just not quite Annie. So I was just gonna make sure that was all right with you that I've made that one little switch.

**Brandon:** Anyone out there can change any one of my songs to make it more personal. Hey, that's what we're supposed to do is make worship personal.

**Annie:** But we don't get it cut. We don't get it cut.

**Brandon:** Yeah. There's a saying, say a word, get a third. That does not apply here.

**Annie:** Not here. Not here.

**Brandon:** I'm not giving my royalties.

- Annie:** But you know I've been trying to get that songwriter gig. I've always been like... I've talked to the band CAIN when they were in here—and they're buddies of mine—I was like, "Can I just come one time? Just let me come on." Come on. Give me that mailbox money.
- Brandon:** Sometimes that's how it works. You can be in the room... And if you're in the room, it doesn't even matter what you contributed or not.
- Annie:** That's right.
- Brandon:** Man, if that's not just the goodness of God. Because sometimes I've showed up to a wright and I've driven it. Sometimes I've shown up and blacked out. And somehow, by the grace of God, they still allow me to be a part of it.
- Annie:** Your name is still at the end. Yeah, that's right.
- Brandon:** Cheating my kids off of something I didn't deserve, you know, I didn't write.
- Annie:** That's right. Okay. So tell me what's next. Miracle Tour, right?
- Brandon:** Yeah. So Miracle Nights Tour is coming up. Really, really excited about that. 13 opportunities, 12 cities. Charleston sold out the first week—that's my hometown—so we added another show.
- Annie:** Same night or another night?
- Brandon:** Another night. Added another-
- Annie:** Okay. I was about to be like, "You're going twosies, my guy?" No.
- Brandon:** Hey, no. Here's the reality.
- Annie:** You can't. Not in those leather pants. Not in those leopard pants.
- Brandon:** Not in the leopard pants and not with the songs I sing. I mean, I need a good break after singing a few of mine. I don't know why I keep writing songs that are so hard to sing.
- Annie:** Were you gonna holla to make it right?
- Brandon:** I'm like "If I'm screaming then I think I can believe it," you know?
- Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Brandon:** So, yeah. I think seven of the shows are sold out. So we have a few left. We're so excited, so expectant. I've got Blessing Offor who is going to be a part of it. He is a phenomenal songwriter, artist. His vocals are ridiculous. And then I've got Joshua Silverberg coming out. He is just a prayer warrior and has such a grace on his life to see miracles. And we have a long history.

**Annie:** That part of it! I mean, are you really like praying through some stuff each of these nights? Are you like expecting God to do actual miracles?

**Brandon:** That's why we're calling it Miracle Nights is-

**Annie:** I was gonna say that's a big title.

**Brandon:** We're believing that we're gonna see what we wrote about and too good to not believe. Like cancer disappearing, mental health being restored, addicts being set free on these nights, families being reunited, relationship stuff being healed, bitterness lifting, being forgiven.

Anything and everything that our God does we're expecting on these nights because God will be in the room because He is who we're coming to see. He is expecting to meet with us. And so that's why we can be expecting that when He comes into the room He's going to do what he wants to do.

**Annie:** When you and Phil and Pat Barrett were in Nashville, when I was at the show I remember listening to you talk between songs, and I thought, "Oh, this guy thinks God does miracles. This guy actually believes what he's saying." It's almost like your shows have a little preach in them.

**Brandon:** Yeah, I think so. I never intend to and God just arrests me every single night. And it's like I can't lead worship now without stopping and just like trying to get a hold of the people in front of me. Like, don't you realize who you are, and how loved you are? And because you're so loved, God wants good things for your life.

And today that might just be a mental clarity. Maybe for you it's like your back has been bothering you. And yes, you need to go to the doctor, and yes, you need to do this, but I do believe one of the ways He will love on His children is by healing us.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Brandon:** And when it doesn't happen, I don't know. It's not my responsibility to try to figure out why it does and why it doesn't. All I know is I've seen too much, God has been too good for me to not try to make sure that in a moment that I have the

microphone that everybody in the room... Like I want them to realize just how good He is.

And I want to pull up people higher. I want them to leave better than they walked in. I want them to leave fully alive as the word says. In John 10:10, He came that we may live life and life abundantly. I'm tired of Christians just like ngee ngee. I'm with them out there just living life and setting other people free. You know?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Brandon:** I feel too much of that responsibility when I get people in a room that I can't just sing the songs and be done. Like let's talk. Let's go somewhere.

**Annie:** "Listen, I gotta say some. I'm gonna say some things to you about who God is." It's a funny thing, Brandon, because I feel like a little bit of the pushback on the prosperity gospel idea has led people away from believing that God does miracles.

Because they don't want to believe in prosperity gospel, that everything you ask for you get and blah, blah, blah, all that. And so they go, well, because I don't want to... that phrase makes me feel funny, then I'm not gonna step into what if God actually did a miracle for our family today? Or what if He actually did a miracle on my body today? Or what if He actually did a miracle in our finances today?

So how do we balance that? How do we stay away... Do we need to stay away from believing that God wants us to prosper? I mean, that's kind of my real question.

**Brandon:** Well, I think God wants you to live on a mission. And I think that the mission might look different for many of us. There's not like one answer to this because there's so much that is factored in, right?

If you're a very hard worker and you're great at what you do, a lot of times, that's going to equal more money, right? That doesn't necessarily mean that God wants me to be rich. It just might be that you know what, the way that our culture works, and the job that I have, and I'm doing the right thing... I'm like I don't think God wants you to be rich. But if you are rich, I think God wants you to be generous. I think His goal is that you have the spirit of generosity with whatever you have.

**Annie:** Whenever you have.

**Brandon:** So if you have \$10, you have \$10 million, His goal would be that your heart is the same, right? You have the spirit of generosity, and that you're living that out. With healing... You know, I've seen God do so many things. But if you're abusing your body, it's going to be... I don't want to say the word "it's going to be hard for God."

But I think God wants to get a hold of your heart more than He does want to give you things. And He's a good Father. So He's not going to give you something that's going to hurt you. He wants to give you something or not give you something to help you. He wants to lead you. He's a good Shepherd.

So if you're abusing your body, there's a good chance God's just not going to be like, "Oh, I'm gonna totally fix you." If you're eating McDonald's every single day and you... There's going to be repercussions. There's going to be... I don't know. God could sweep in and clean out your body and make you skinnier and all that, fix your back. But I think He's more concerned with getting a hold of your heart. So maybe He would do that.

**Annie:** And then when He changes our heart, it changes what we do and it affects us. Yeah.

**Brandon:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And the spirit of generosity is in Him first.

**Brandon:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** So all these miracles you're getting to see on the road and that'll happen on these miracle nights out on tour, I mean, it is where God meets... I think. You can correct me. It is where God's generosity meets kind of our willingness to say, "Will you do the thing that I've longed for you to do? And I'm bringing the best I can bring. Here's everything I'm trying. And also you could fix this in a blink."

**Brandon:** It's so true. I mean, our best worship is still like filthy rags to Him, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Brandon:** There's nothing we could give Him. It's like what *Gratitude* talks about. I love the line "there's nothing else fit for a king." What can I possibly offer God that equates to His worth and His greatness? I have nothing. But I have my life to give Him. I have my brokenness to give Him. I have my expectation.

I think He loves... That is a gift. Like, "God, all right, I know I don't deserve it, I've not earned it, but because I know who you are, I'm gonna give you my expectation today and I'm gonna expect that you're going to show up." And I think He's like, "I love that and I am going to show up. And maybe not in a way that you intended me to, but I'm going to show up."

**Annie:** Even in me thinking I was hearing God about this thing at work this week, when I went like, "Did I mess up on this?" I just kind of felt like the Lord kind of goes like, "I appreciate you trying. I appreciate you trying." That goes somewhere is it when we try, even when we miss.

So even showing up at your shows—I cannot wait for everybody to get to be at the shows—but showing up at the shows and going. "Yeah, before I even get there. What am I expecting from God? Not from Brandon or the other musicians? What am I expecting from God?"

**Brandon:** 100%.

**Annie:** And then "what might He do?" Right?

**Brandon:** Yes, absolutely.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's rad. Okay, well, we'll make sure we link to the shows. Is there anything we didn't talk about you want to make sure we cover?

**Brandon:** No, I love it. Tour, records. I've got, you know, so many songs I'm excited to release in the coming months and year. I'll be focusing on writing a new record in the next and the next several months. Yeah, focusing on family. Family is my first ministry and I love them to death and so just trying to keep the main thing the main thing. Yeah, I think we covered it.

**Annie:** Yeah, we did it. Hey, listen, whenever that new album comes out, if you want to come back, you're very welcome here.

**Brandon:** I will. It's just been for so much fun.

**Annie:** It's so fun. Okay, our last question we always ask, speaking of fun. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Brandon:** What sounds fun to me.

**Annie:** No rules.

**Brandon:** No rules. No rules. A pool full of jello. I'm wanting to go swimming-

**Annie:** Get out.

**Brandon:** ...in a pool full of jello. I don't know what movie that was on or where I saw that but that sounds fun.



**Annie:** What is the flavor?

**Brandon:** Lime green. I don't know why.

**Annie:** Lime green. Okay, my only concern for you... We don't judge fun around here. Everybody is allowed to have their fun. So yes to your lime green pool of jello. If you dive in, can you get out? I'm concerned about the breathing.

**Brandon:** No, you definitely can't breathe. You have to come up often. You have to eat a tunnel to-

**Annie:** You have to eat your way out?

**Brandon:** You have to eat your way out to the surface.

**Annie:** This is a feet-first jump in then. We need to go feet first so that we can push off given the-

**Brandon:** Yeah, you need jello swimmies. Actually, maybe it all started when I went to Israel and I went to the Dead Sea and I sat in the Dead Sea. And I was like, "This is the closest thing to a pool full of jello. But I want to do a lime green pool full of jello. I don't know why that came to my mind but that sounds fun to me today.

**Annie:** Yeah. Do you know what's annoying about the Dead Sea? Is everybody thinks it's so cool. And then you can't put your hands in or your face in. Because if you put your hands in and then you go to wipe your eyes... You're floating like you've got gloves on. It's so weird.

**Brandon:** It's so weird. If you have a cut on your feet, oh, good luck.

**Annie:** Bye.

**Brandon:** Yeah, bye.

**Annie:** If you have a cut anywhere... Every entrance and exit of your entire body experiences the Dead Sea.

**Brandon:** You don't want to be chafing or you don't want to be... No, no, no, no.

**Annie:** No. No. You need to be your best healthiest self when you get in the Dead Sea or you're gonna know where you're not. You're gonna know where you're not. It's a black light to where things are not going right in your bod.

**Brandon:** I kid you not. I just have to say it since you said that.

**Annie:** Do.

**Brandon:** Literally the first thing I saw when I'm walking up to the Dead Sea, a dad and his son had just gotten in and this kid starts screaming. He's running up. He runs over the freshwater shower and just starts washing his butt. The poor kid was probably... He was chat. As soon as he got into that sea, it's just done and he ran out screaming. I'm like, "I don't know if I want to do this." I don't know.

**Annie:** Yes. Yes. I'm going next month and I'm in pre-Dead Sea mode.

**Brandon:** No way. Oh, my gosh.

**Annie:** I'm like, "Clean it up, clean it up. Get everything right."

**Brandon:** Every little scratch, every little...

**Annie:** That's right. Be ready. Brandon, thanks for making time for this. I'm really grateful.

**Brandon:** Thank you, Annie.

**Annie:** What a treat,

**Brandon:** This has been such an honor. Love you.

**Annie:** Same. Mutual.

**Brandon:** And I love your spirit, your joy. We all need more of your joy.

**Annie:** Oh, you're very kind.

**Brandon:** Thank you.

[00:53:49] <music>

**Outro:** Brandon is the best. What a dream to have him on the podcast, you guys! I hope it is the first of many. Hey, stream this album *HELP*, and be sure to catch one of the Miracle Nights Tour stops, what I'm sure are going to be faith-shaping nights. And follow Brandon on social media so you can tell him thanks for being on the show.

If you do 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 is how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you and I will do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me... man, I'm flying to Lynchburg, Virginia to speak this weekend. So that sounds really fun to me. If you ever want to see where I'm speaking, just go to [AnnieFDowns.com](http://AnnieFDowns.com) and there's a whole page on that website that'll tell you where I am. And you can meet me there.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday with Richard Foster, the author of *Celebrations of Discipline*. You guys, yes. He has a new book. He and Brenda Quinn are joining us. It's going to be so good. We'll see y'all then. Have a great weekend.