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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 with you today. We have got such a great show in store.

Before we dive into today's conversation, a word from one of our amazing sponsors, [BetterHelp](#). I don't know about you, but sometimes it's easier for me to focus to problems that are rearing their ugly heads than on actually solving the problems. I think it's part of human nature but we can probably agree that it's not the most constructive approach. I mean, the only way out is through, right?

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And if you're not sure you got that whole URL, no worries, all the links to our sponsors, the transcript of the show, and even a place you can sign up to get our email every Friday, the AFD Week in Review, those are all below you in the show notes.

Intro: Today on the show I get to talk with Dr. Diane Langberg. Dr. Langberg is an internationally recognized psychologist and counselor with 47 years of experience. She speaks regularly on abuse and trauma all over the world, directs her own counseling practice in Pennsylvania and she co-founded Global Trauma Recovery Institute, a Biblical Theological Seminary.

She has authored and co-authored tons of books, including her most recent *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church*. She's an

expert and advocate in this field. And that's exactly the type of person I want to learn from when I realize I have room to grow.

I am learning and I am learning with you and we are learning together. We're doing the best we can. So I'm thankful for wise voices like Dr. Landberg to keep learning from, aren't you?

And listen, we talk the entire show today about abuse of all kinds. So this is not an episode for MiniBFFs without you listening first. And if abuse is a part of your story, I would just encourage you to take care of yourself first, take care of your own heart. But also Dr. Langberg is just absolutely brilliant and thoughtful and grace-filled. It's a beautiful conversation.

So if this is part of your story, maybe listen with someone who loves you. But I would love for us all to learn and grow and benefit from the massive amount of wisdom that Dr. Langberg offers. So here's my conversation with the author of *Redeeming Power*, Dr. Diane Langberg.

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Annie: Thank you so much for making time to be on That Sounds Fun, Dr. Langberg. I'm really grateful.

Dr. Diane: You're welcome. It's an honor to be here.

Annie: Well, thank you. Because I'm new to your work, *Redeeming Power* was your first book that I read. Will you kind of back us up a little bit and talk to us about getting into the space of where you so deeply study abuse, particularly in the Christian church?

Dr. Diane: Well, I started in the early 1970s. I had just entered graduate school to learn how to be a psychologist and a young woman, a college one, came to see me. There were very few women in the field. I was the only woman in my doctoral program. So that was the secular world. So the Christian world was even less.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: But a young college woman came to see me. She had very long hair, and she threw it over her face, so I couldn't see her.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Dr. Diane: And she said to me, "My father used to do weird things to me." I had no idea what she was talking about. And I listened and I went to a supervisor who told me women sometimes tell these hysterical stories and my job is not to get hooked by them because if I do, I will contribute to their pathology.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Dr. Diane: So I didn't know what to do with that either.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: I think I was 22 or 23 at that point. And it's important I think to know that the other thing about them is that there was no diagnosis in the psychological world for trauma.

Annie: Oh, really? That wasn't language that people used yet?

Dr. Diane: No.

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: PTSD became a category in 1980.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Dr. Diane: So that was like eight years down the road. So I was working with women like this, but I was also working with Vietnam vets.

Annie: Okay.

Dr. Diane: Anyway, I went back to the woman and I decided to believe her and not the supervisor. So I quit talking to the supervisor about the case. And I just said, "I have no idea what you're talking about. You'll have to teach me." And she did, which took tremendous courage on her part. And over time, I recognized that the vets and the women all had the same symptoms.

Annie: Really?

Dr. Diane: So the way that I thought about it was there's more than one kind of war zone in the world, and I, fortunately, in terms of the way I grew up, it has never occurred to me that home could be a warzone or a church or a school or, you know... Which obviously, we know now that all of those, anyplace humans are can be a warzone.

Annie: So then you just spent... I mean, because you've written multiple books on abuse, and particularly abuse in the church. Is it more profound in the church? Is it more dangerous in the church? Why was that your area of focus?

Dr. Diane: Well, after some years working with traumatized people, whether we used the word or not then, I had some pastors come and ask to see me. And most of them came because they were burned out or they had been mistreated by congregations and were wounded.

But somewhere along the way, God let those worlds collide and I came in touch with pastors who abused parishioners, which is what I've spent I guess the rest of the years that I've worked focused on the body of Christ, how it does not follow its head, but builds its own systems to its own advantage and crushes the sheep.

Annie: Do you have abusive pastors and abusers, in general, get mad at you?

Dr. Diane: They don't want to talk to me, usually.

Annie: Okay. Okay. That's what it is. So they just kind of push you aside?

Dr. Diane: Well, they don't come and see me. The victims come.

Annie: Yeah, yeah. One of the things you wrote in *Redeeming Power* that really was moving to me is you said, "All abuse is spiritual abuse."

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: Will you talk about how that's true? That rang really interesting and really true to me that it's always gonna go back to your spiritual self.

Dr. Diane: Well, everything we do is spiritual because we're spiritual creatures. So we don't think that way. So when we do something, it has spiritual impact. But a spiritual impact, which can be done not just by an individual but by an entire system, has to do with taking spiritual things and using them to hurt someone. The word "abuse" literally means to misuse. So we take spiritual things and misuse them in ways that hurt people.

There was a pastor in New York in the early 1900s, I think, Charles Jefferson, and he was talking about spiritual abuse, though it wasn't a term at the time. And his definition of it was the host of hell speaking through God's people.

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Dr. Diane: And so it's using God's words or concepts from the scripture or whatever to manipulate, control, use, trample on, whatever, human beings.

Annie: So when people use the term "spiritual abuse," how do we decipher... I mean, is it one of those where if someone says they've been spiritually abused we just believe them? Is that the right next move? Or is there like a line that when you're meeting with someone or when you're hearing stories, where you go, "Well, that's not spiritual abuse. That is you disagree with your pastor?" Or is everything spiritual abuse, that someone terms it that way because of their own story?

Dr. Diane: Most people don't come in and say, "I've been spiritually abused." Number one, it's a relatively new term.

Annie: Sure.

Dr. Diane: And second of all, many victims are so full of self-doubt and confusion about what's been done to them on any level that they don't normally come in. They don't often even come in and say, "I've been sexually abused."

Annie: Oh, wow. Yeah, like that woman who said, "My dad did weird things to me."

Dr. Diane: Yes. They come and speak in different ways. And many of them blame themselves for something. I mean, they may have been five years old, whatever, but somehow it's their fault, which is one of the damages that's done by abuse.

We seem to have lost the concept in the scriptures that where Jesus says, "Whatever comes out of a man, a person, comes from the heart of the man." And the way that, you know, you talk about things like rape or whatever, I say what comes out of a man comes from the heart of the man; it does not come from a woman standing in front of them. I mean, that's a very clear scripture.

But I think the church very often misses that teaching because it wants to protect people in power, protect its institutions. And so "if you hadn't done X, Y, or Z, this never would have happened." But X, Y, and Z are expressions of the heart that produced them.

Annie: Yes, yeah. Because often when I'm thinking about youth groups stories where people say, "Well, if you wouldn't have dressed like that," or "You shouldn't have been alone, you made the choice to be alone with that man and you shouldn't have." And so then the stories are "That is my fault, because I knew I shouldn't have been alone with him."

Dr. Diane: The other thing that sometimes gives victims is a false sense of "If I had done the right thing, I would be safe," which is not true.

Annie: Right. Oh, Dr. Langberg, that's a profound thought. "If I had done the right thing, I would be safe." I would imagine we all... I have thought that before about a car wreck. "If I would have taken a different turn, I'd have been safe." That's a narrative that abuse victims carry.

Dr. Diane: Many decades ago, I did some teaching in seminaries and taught a class about some of these things. And it was long enough ago that it was a pretty new subject and 99% of the audience were male.

And I used to say to them, "Here's an example. You're sitting in your pastoral study, and somebody knocks on the door, and it's a woman and she's crying, and she needs to see her pastor. And you invite her in and you talk with her. And all of a sudden, she's very distraught, and she stands up and she starts taking off all her clothes. What happens next tells me about you."

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: "That woman would have... she's obviously confused and a mess and everything else but she would have been utterly safe with Jesus Christ."

Annie: Wow. One of the things you do so beautifully in the book *Redeeming Power* is outline all the different types of power. And a woman taking her clothes off in front of a pastor can mean physically, it can mean emotionally, it can mean spiritually. And we would all have been safe with Jesus.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: Yes. So where did it all go wrong, Diane? Where did this even come from? This isn't how it was in the Bible, right? This isn't how it was when they started the book of Acts? Or is it?

Dr. Diane: I think it's been with human beings since we started sinning. If you go back to Genesis, you know, we are creating the image of God. And what is He called us to do? To rule the earth. That's power. He gave us power. And we sinned against Him, and everything about us has been twisted since then. And power is one of those things.

So if you go back and read history in terms of the church and things like that down through the ages, you will find things like this not talked about exactly the same

way and maybe the frequency not understood and things like that. But it's always been there.

Annie: Yeah, because as you're saying, then I'm thinking, Even Cain and Abel is a story of power—that one was able to overpower the other. It has always been the case.

Dr. Diane: No. David and Bathsheba... He's the king. You don't tell the king no.

Annie: Right. Right. And then God calls him a man after his own heart. That's complicated.

Dr. Diane: Very.

Annie: So what do we do with that? What do we do with those two stories that he took advantage of Bathsheba and he's called a man after God's own heart?

Dr. Diane: That there is redemption.

Annie: When has someone done enough that they are redeemed?

Dr. Diane: Not when they think it is.

Annie: Really? Is it more than it?

Dr. Diane: Typically people want to decide that about themselves, you know? "No, I'm sorry." They cry, they do whatever. People don't realize the depth of deception in themselves. I mean, you know, it's not like everybody has to walk around all day long, every day being terrified they're going to sexually abuse somebody.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: You have to deceive yourself, perhaps being a victim to begin with yourself. But you have to deceive yourself to making something like that okay enough to do and to do repeatedly. And so you can cry and say you're sorry and be 100% genuine, but it doesn't change what's inside and has been practiced for years.

So it's the humility of knowing, number one, I can't judge myself about this. You know, my measures are all messed up. We also hold getting the position back as the rewards, you know.

The thing that needs to happen when somebody is repenting of that and learning and everything else is that the driving force of their lives is a likeness to Jesus Christ and nothing else.

[00:14:58] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupt in his conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Athletic Greens](#). Okay, here are a couple questions for you. Would you like to have more energy? Would you like better gut health? Would you want to support your immune system? Would you rather not have to take 14 different pills every morning to get all your supplements in? Well, if your answer is yes to any of these, I've got the answers for you. It's Athletic Greens, you guys.

Drinking one scoop of Athletic Greens mixed in cold water every day will provide you with 75 high quality, easily absorbable vitamins, minerals, Whole Foods source superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens. Their special blend of ingredients supports, get ready, here we go, your gut health, your nervous system, your immune system, your energy, your recovery, your focus, like all the things, you guys. It supports all the things.

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It costs less than \$3 a day. I mean, y'all being a good friend to our bodies, and it's cheaper than the bougie hot bev we grab on the daily, let's go. That seems like a no-brainer to me. It's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition, especially during this flu and cold season. It's just one scoop in a cup of cold water every day. That's it.

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Sponsor: And I want to tell you about another one of our incredible partners, [Stitch Fix](#). Stitch Fix is the best way to discover new styles and brands just for you. Think of Stitch Fix as your style partner. You have a personal stylist who will learn all about your tastes and collaborate with you on looks that you love.

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I'd probably describe my style as casual and classic. So with that and my interest in keeping my clothes affordable enough that there's plenty left over for the fun I want to have, I love that Stitch Fix, since we stuff I can tell straight into my suitcase because it fits me, my budget, and my life.

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And now back to our conversation with Dr. Langberg.

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Annie: You are a teacher for me, as we've already talked about. I am ashamedly a little new to paying attention to even my own power and how I have used that in the past as a female. I think a thing of the church is also that the males are the one in power and the females aren't.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: And I know that is often true. But there's a lot of ways that women have power and we silence other women. So can you talk for a little bit about like for our female friends who are listening, the majority of people listening are women. And how do we learn to identify the power that we have?

Dr. Diane: Well, let me first start with the fact that all human beings have power. That's part of the image of God in us. So it doesn't really matter what gender you are or what your position is. You have some power. One of the basic examples I gave in the book is, you know, you have a two-month-old baby in the house and the baby wakes up at 3 a.m. and you're exhausted and the baby cries. Guess who has the power in the house?

Annie: That's right. That's right. Not the grownups. Not the grownups. No.

Dr. Diane: No. No.

Annie: Not at all.

Dr. Diane: So it's just part of being human. So a lot of the time, different parts of humans have tried to reduce the power of other parts of humans, like males with females and things like that. People in high positions want people under them not to have power and all those kinds of things. But we still have it.

Annie: Yes!

Dr. Diane: And it just means to be able. A lot of women have verbal power. A lot of women have emotional power. You know, they use their emotions to do things to other people or to get them to do things for them. or whatever.

We think of power as a physical thing, which of course it can be. But it can be many, many other expressions. And everybody has it. Everybody has it.

Annie: And it is ours. What I think I'm learning from you, but you are... I mean, for the rest of our lives. Dr. Langberg, you're allowed to correct me every time but correct me here if I'm wrong. I think what I'm learning about this is that it is ours not only to make sure we aren't misusing power but to even identify that we have it.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: For a lot of us, and even as I'm continuing my journey, how do I keep identifying the power that I have? How do I know where my power lies so that I'm not taking advantage of anyone else?

Dr. Diane: Well, part of the way we can identify where our power lies is to understand where we're gifted.

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: So if somebody has an IQ of 150 and somebody else has one of 70, they have power. Now the other one might weigh 250 pounds and be all muscle and the one with 150 IQ may be scrawny.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: So now the power gets reversed in that arena.

Annie: That's right.

Dr. Diane: But the things that we're good at, often the things that we love because we aren't good at them, the things that we're gifted in are places of power. And you know, it's not really hard for any of us to misuse, unknowingly sometimes, the gift that we have.

And we can often end up feeding ourselves rather than the people we're supposed to be serving. That's a very easy thing to happen in places like the church. You know, you stand up, you preach every Sunday, and all that, you see yourself as a shepherd feeding the sheep. But it pretty much happens to feed you too. And we're not aware of that.

Annie: So once we become aware, once we identify, for all of our friends, listening, we're sitting and thinking, "Okay, here's what I'm really good at. So here's where I have power." I mean, it's also kind of the skin color we're born with and the socio-economic status we're born into. Do we need to automatically go, "I have more power because I'm white. It's just true. I just have more power. So I need to be paying attention. And the family I was born into gives me power over some and not over others. So do we need to kind of go through and like inventory our lives a little bit? Is that the godly move?"

Dr. Diane: I certainly think so. And I think we need the other people to speak into it, because we're probably crooked about it somewhere.

Annie: Oh, right. I know, I know. Well, you do that. In *Redeeming Power*, you get all of us. If we're not careful, you got us all in there. So taking an inventory of ourselves, paying attention to what we're gifted at. I kind of wonder if it's the next step is asking the Lord to kind of reveal anywhere that we're misusing our power. Is that what you would have us do next?

Dr. Diane: Well, I think before we go there, the other thing I would have us do is we want power where we're not gifted.

Annie: We want power where we're not gifted.

Dr. Diane: We want it where we're not on top. So oftentimes we will do things to try and get it, which ends up often usually being a misuse. So if I feel like people aren't listening to me or something like that, then I'm going to do either something to change that or to exercise power in other arenas, so I feel better.

So we're not only managed by what we have as power in our lives, but we are often frequently managed by where we do not or at least not to our satisfaction. And we will work hard to make that happen. And you can trample people either way.

Annie: Right. And men and women do that.

Dr. Diane: Sure. Humans do it.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Do you find that people who have been victimized by someone else, either sexual abuse or emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, are they more inclined to then turn around and try to exercise power in other ways? Or are they more inclined to kind of disappear and pull back altogether?

Dr. Diane: Most of them are crushed. Now, that doesn't mean that some of them are not scrambling to get power somewhere to protect themselves, which I understand. I mean, it doesn't make what's happening good necessarily, but I do understand that.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: But they're crushed. You know, think of a child growing up in a home full of domestic violence, you know, that child is shaped by that. They can also just grow up to be hungry to have some power, which is not necessarily wrong at all. They're meant to have it. But they don't know how to do that in healthy, well, godly ways because they've never seen it.

Annie: So what is the next step? I'm wondering about our friends listening who are going, "Yeah, I'm in a spiritually abusive relationship," or "I was sexually abused and I haven't ever used that word. I just said something weird happened"? What's the next move?

Dr. Diane: You need somebody to help you. It's not a journey one should take alone. First of all, it's full of too much pain. We're meant to walk with each other in our confusion and suffering and all of those things.

Of course, saying that, you also have to be very aware and careful about finding somebody who's actually safe to see and who has expertise and what you need and all of those things. But as much as possible, I would encourage people not to do it alone. It's a hard road by any means.

Annie: One of the things we do is we tell people the week before we interview someone who's coming, so they can ask us questions and submit questions for you through our weekly email I send out. And a couple of different people sent versions of the same question, Dr. Langberg.

And the question was, "I was abused and I was abused when I was young and I don't know what to do now because I think the just..." I mean, multiple people said, "I could call the police, but it is gonna mess up my whole life and it might mess up that person's whole life. Like it's gonna drag stuff up and my story with my family, and I don't know what to do."

And so for our friends who've just been suffering, suffered by an abuse victim 10, 20 years ago, and have never told but are afraid to tell now because of what it'll do to everyone's lives, is the right thing to tell?

Dr. Diane: I would never make a decision like that for somebody else.

Annie: Okay.

Dr. Diane: And I would certainly not say that there's the right answer across the board. I would go back to what I just said, which is you need somebody who understands these things to care for you in this very difficult place and walk with you and help you make the best decision for you and your family or whatever. No, you're not required to do that, and nor should you do it alone.

Annie: Yes. Because I figure if they're reaching out to tell me to ask you that something is stirring in them that says, "I need some healing here."

Dr. Diane: Yes, absolutely. I mean, there's so much in the news now about it that even 10 years ago didn't exist. So you're hearing about leaders and speakers and Christian institutions, everything else that are being exposed. And that may be something you choose to do down the line but that's not the first step.

Annie: It's not the first step.

Dr. Diane: You need to care for yourself first.

Annie: Yes, yes, that's really good. I wonder, as I'm hearing you, there's just so many people who have stories, and you write in the book about how of all the sexual abuse stories you've ever heard, only two of them out of hundreds... In the book you say two of them were not to be believed, but everyone else was. So is that still remain true to you? I mean, if someone's saying that something happened to them, we believe them?

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: Yes.

Dr. Diane: And the two, which I was suspicious with them from the beginning, it just... I mean, after you do this long enough, it felt different, but I didn't make a judgment. They eventually told me.

Annie: Wow. Okay, so as people of friends of the abused or people who are listening to people who are saying they've been abused, we just believe them. That is we just believe them.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: Yes.

Dr. Diane: And the reason why we would not is because we don't like that it's true. We're taking care of ourselves.

Annie: Right. Yeah, because it messes with our systems. If they're telling us they were abused by someone that we care about or respect or love, it actually messes with our lives, too.

Dr. Diane: It sure does.

Annie: If I'm reading this correctly and understanding correctly, when that happens, there comes our power that can either protect the system or protect the person.

Dr. Diane: That is correct.

Annie: So we either join the side of the victim or join the side of the abuser.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: Yes. It is very complicated because there's just so many types of power. I didn't realize we're all different types of power at play here, Dr. Langberg.

Dr. Diane: No, most people do not.

Annie: One of our questions that someone submitted is they said, "What's a common form of church abuse that goes completely unnoticed and unchecked?"

Dr. Diane: Spiritual abuse. People use the word of God, they use their position in the church and all of those things to... They can use them to crush people just by their words. They can use them to shut them up. "You know, you're gonna hurt God's house if you tell people this." Not "is it true?" Not "do we need to find safety for you and

others?" and all of those things. Because what they're doing is putting God behind what they say. So that's about as powerful as you can get.

Annie: All right. I mean, when someone says, "God told me to break up with you, what can you do?" If you put God behind any of your statements or any of your leadership, there is no opportunity for pushback from the general public.

Dr. Diane: You think of asking somebody, first of all, who's been abused and confused and full of pain and everything else, and then somebody with power in the church uses spiritual things to say, "No, do you really think God would want you to do damage to His church?"

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Dr. Diane: How do you answer that?

Annie: Right. So many people have heard that as an attender of a church and just had to walk out of that room and live with it.

Dr. Diane: Yes, walk out of the church. If you think back to Jesus in the temple and the Pharisees there, and He goes in there, and they're making all kinds of money on people and everything else. So what does He do? He cracks whips and turns tables over and says, "You have made my Father's house a den of robbers," which literally if you think about a den with, say, bears or something, it's a safe place. You have made my Father's house a safe place for those who steal. That's what we do.

Annie: He was saying then what is still true today.

Dr. Diane: They didn't listen. He did it a second time, and he never went back.

Annie: You're right, He never went back, Dr. Langberg. He never went back.

Dr. Diane: He never went back.

Annie: Yeah, because one of the things you say in the book is until Jesus did that, people in need were not welcome at the temple until Jesus made it no longer a safe place for those that were abusers. Wow. So what does it look like for us... I mean, what if this is happening in our church and we know it? What do we do if this is happening in our church and we know it?

Dr. Diane: Well, again, I would advise talking to somebody who's something of an expert. I mean, there's an organization that used to be on their board called GRACE—Godly Response To Abuse in the Christian Environment. You know, there are others. But

talk to somebody who has expertise. "This is happening in my church. It's not happening to me maybe, but I know it's there and I don't know what to do."

Annie: GRACE does some beautiful work. The way they go in and just research and bring... I mean, they're almost like physicians with their clarity of how they research and report. You just kind of go, "Well, if GRACE said it, then that's what we can read and believe because GRACE has done the work to do the research.

Dr. Diane: Yes, they're very careful.

Annie: Yeah. It's incredible. Since *Redeeming Power* has come out... it came out two years ago, right? 2020?

Dr. Diane: Yeah, 2020.

Annie: What has the response been? What do you see coming next for you? What's happened?

Dr. Diane: Well, the response is a bit overwhelming-

Annie: I'm sure.

Dr. Diane: ...because it gives people ideas about who to talk to.

Annie: You know, I'm part of a counseling ministry or... Anyway, it has like - what it is now? 17 or 18 therapists, all of whom have been trained in this stuff. So it's a busy place, which is very sad. You know, it's good that there's a place where people know and understand, and it's also very sad that it needs to exist.

I think for me, part of what writing that book and the work I've done have taught me, particularly in terms of abuse in the system of the church, that in many ways, she's a very sick place. And we're protecting our institutions rather than the name of our Lord and His work in and through us.

So I think probably my next project or whatever you want to call it will be something for the church—a call to the church. She's not following the good and great shepherd in these ways.

Annie: I also really love the church. I love my local church, and it mattered to me growing up. So how do we balance... How do I balance? I don't know about anybody else. I'm just gonna ask you for me. How do I balance how much I love the church and actually how much I loved growing up in the church with the realities of what was going on parallel to my upbringing, and what is going on now? And I'm a leader in

our local church. And so how do we balance loving the local church and being a part of it but not allowing it to keep going down this path? What is the call there?

Dr. Diane: A couple of things. Think about a person that you love. What if you knew they had cancer in them and they weren't paying attention to it and they didn't want to go to the doctor? What would you do? What would love do?

Annie: What would love do?

Dr. Diane: It would turn on the light. Two funny little side stories I suppose that taught me a great deal. One is my father was a colonel in the Air Force and flew planes and all kinds of things. And he ended up with a neurological disease that for a long time nobody could diagnose.

When I was in college, I came home for a spring break or something, and I was sitting with him and he was thirsty. So I got up and went to the kitchen to get water. And on my way back in, I was in the doorway, but he didn't see me and he was trying to stand up by himself. And he was 6'5", he had been a superb athlete, that man could not get up out of his chair.

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: And I stood there watching him and what went through my head was this: a body that does not follow its head is a very sick body.

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: Now, I had no idea at the time that God was putting something in my head that He would use down the road.

Annie: Right. Right.

Dr. Diane: But when you think about a church that you love and it has cancer in it, you don't ignore the cancer.

Annie: No.

Dr. Diane: And if you love the person, you want them to get the work done that they need done. And you want the body to be able to follow the head. And if she's covering stuff up, she's not following the head because He's the God of light and truth. Which is the other little story.

My grandmother lived in the hills of West Virginia and she was on a hill in a little house and she sent me to do the laundry one day in a little room that had a dirt floor, and it was an old-fashioned washing machine. Anyway, I went in there and I came running out crying because there were rats in there.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Dr. Diane: So she took me by my hand and walked me back to the laundry room and she turned on the light switch, which I had not done, and she said to me, "Honey, remember this. If you turn on the lights, the rats will run." That's what the church is called to do. We don't want to say things because it's going to upset people or because it's sad, which it is, or because who knows what's going to happen next, which we don't. But if we follow the one who is truth and light, who did this in the temple, we turn on the lights, and the rats will run.

Annie: Yes.

Dr. Diane: And sometimes we're surprised who the rats are.

[00:37:31] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [Everlywell](#). Okay, if you've been experiencing symptoms that have raised your eyebrows and brought up questions, but you don't know where to start, Everlywell is committed to listening and supporting your journey towards better health and wellness.

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So, first, here's how it works. Everlywell ships products straight to you with everything you need in one package. And to take your at-home lab test, you simply collect your sample and use the included prepaid shipping label to mail your tests back to the certified lab. Your physician-reviewed results get sent to your phone or device in literally days. And you could share the results with your primary care physician to help guide your next steps.

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Sponsor: So I've been podcasting since 2014. And let me tell you, things are definitely changing and have definitely changed and grown in the podcast world. From the technology to the variety of options to the number of people listening to podcast. It's part of the reason we grew from the That Sounds Fun podcast to the That Sounds Fun Network.

All that growth, experience, and learning leads us to refine the tools we use for bringing you all of these great shows. And one that we absolutely cannot live without is Anchor.

You've probably heard me say it before, but Anchor is seriously the easiest way to make a podcast. It's free, as in it costs you zero doll-hairs, but it has simple-to-use creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer.

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We hear from people all the time who have great ideas and are looking for how to get their podcast started. Well, Anchor is what we use across the That Sounds Fun Network. And we are just huge fans of how easy they make it to create great-sounding, far-reaching podcast episodes.

Just download the free Anchor app or go to anchor.fm to get started. Again, that's anchor.fm or you can download the free Anchor app today.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Dr. Langberg.

[00:41:00] <music>

Annie: So when you're thinking about each of us individually, I'm thinking about myself, my friends who are listening, like individually, is turning on the lights and being part of the solution and believing victims and not supporting a system that is a den for abusers?

Is that something we do in the church we go to on Sundays? Is that something we do on Twitter? Is that something we do by sending letters to our denomination? Individually, are we supposed to stay at... supposed to? I don't know. I don't know, Dr. Langberg. Are we supposed to stay at our local church and handle it? Are we supposed to be part of a bigger story of bigger other churches and yelling at other churches who are having problems? What's our move?

Dr. Diane: Well, I think first of all, you start with where you are. I mean, number one, do they have policies for protecting children? Have they ever had people come in to train pastors and whoever else is in leadership in the church in different ways to protect the little ones, to protect adolescents, to what do you do if you see something? Who do you tell? What did the authorities require in the state that we're located? What does it look like to obey the law in this place, which we are called to do as Christians?

And so there are many things that we can do. Can we have people come in and speak about these topics to our high schoolers, to our college kids, to the grown-ups in the entire congregation? You've got homes where there's domestic abuse and probably nobody knows.

Annie: Of course, nobody knows. I mean, I'm thinking about my church. I'm like, nobody knows if that... I don't know if that's going on.

Dr. Diane: And nobody knows if there's sexual abuse and nobody knows if somebody was abused at the church before they came to your church and has never dealt with it. So turning on the lights will probably cause a few rats to run. But the bottom line is it will help you find the sad places and the broken places and invite people to come forward because you've already put it on the table.

Annie: In *Redeeming Power*, the last section you write about is power redeemed—when it actually looks right. So can you paint a picture for us, Dr. Langberg, of like, what will this look like when it's right?

Dr. Diane: Well, ultimately, it will look like heaven, which we will see when we are there.

Annie: Yes, yes.

Dr. Diane: We're not gonna get that here. But you want to submit here, and we're meant to have tastes of it here. But if we cover up sin in our own lives, we're not gonna have it, which is, you know, partly where we need to start.

You know, we're talking about sexual abuse and all these things. What if the problems in the church is pornography, you know in homes in leadership and whatever? And that doesn't get talked about?

Annie: Yes. And that is men and women. That is not a sin for men.

Dr. Diane: Yes it is. Yes, it is. No. No.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: So we're not being verbal and turning the lights on about many things that are harming precious lambs of God.

Annie: Right. Right. And so it starts even in our own lives of saying, Do you have anything secretive in your life that's contributing to the greater society and community that is allowing secrets to exist?

Dr. Diane: Yeah. So I would say, individually and to the church, you know, I think we've lost our way, priority-wise. The most important thing in my life is to be loving, obedience to Jesus Christ no matter the cost.

Annie: No matter the cost.

Dr. Diane: That's an individual call. It's also a body of the church call. And we're busy collecting money and getting new members and being famous and getting on TV and having the best pastor ever. None of that is what Jesus calls us to. If all those things are signs of His presence, He made a lot of messes.

Annie: Yeah, right. Right. That's exactly right. So I feel hope in this of like there are actual steps that normal people like me can do, who are not pastors of a church, though I am on the teaching team, but I'm not one of the pastors, and I don't have my own church. But there are steps that all of us like normal Annies in the world can do in our own lives that will help our church and the global church actually be less safe for abusers and more safe for victims.

Dr. Diane: Yes, yeah.

Annie: Yes. So even in my own learning about power and how to let humility lead me and to not abuse power, what's my next step? What's the next thing I read? What's the next thing I do? I've read *Redeeming Power* and I've talked to my therapist, I've made apologies. I'm learning. I'm in a public learning way right now. What's my next thing?

Dr. Diane: Well, your next thing is to continue learning and feeding off of truth, whether it be learning more about suffering and trauma and how it affects people so that you know better how to understand them and how to respond in a way that cares and doesn't harm. Too there's sort of a joke around the office about my reading habits. Everybody says that "she likes to read the dead guys."

Annie: I also really like to read the dead guys, Dr. Langberg, so I'm with you.

Dr. Diane: Okay. I cut my teeth growing up on Oswald Chambers. I think of Andrew Murray's book *Humility*. I mean, we need to go back to those things. This is not about numbers and money and fame and TV and all the things. They have nothing to do with being the true body of Christ. So we need to go back to reading some of the dead guys I think and feeding off those truths.

Annie: Richard Foster is about to release a book called *Learning Humility*. And it is painful to read in like the best, hurt-so-good kind of way. It is a painful read. I was like, "If he wasn't such a beautiful writer, I'd have thrown this out the window by now."

Dr. Diane: Oh, I've been known to throw books. But then I'll get them and read them anyway.

Annie: That's exactly right. I'm gonna toss this and then pick it back up. I didn't take a break halfway through yours and eat lunch on the weekend that I read it. So I said, you know, I think I could set this out and go eat lunch and come back to it and think about it.

I mean, you're saying one of the things that really was profound for me is that the more power you have, the less empathy you have.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: So your invitation-

Dr. Diane: Accept Jesus Christ.

Annie: Yes, that's it. Right. Accept Jesus.

Dr. Diane: He holds all power and all empathy.

Annie: And so for the rest of us, it's about chasing humility and chasing empathy.

Dr. Diane: Yes, yes. And again, going back to this thing about us being the body of Christ, you think truly about what He did. He put on flesh to enter into all kinds of awful things. Well, if we're working with an abuse victim, that's what we're called to do. We're called to put on their flesh and enter into all kinds of awful things in a way that carries into that place the character of Jesus Christ.

Annie: Yes. Yes, ma'am. Dr. Langberg, your teaching in this is such a gift to us. Thank you for spending your life on this so far. I mean, it's changing so many people's lives. I'm so grateful. Is there anything we didn't say that you want to make sure we cover? Is there anything for victims or for abusers that we need to say?

Dr. Diane: Well, I don't know we need to, but I would like to say to victims a couple of things. One is what happened to you doesn't tell us who you are. God tells us who you are. And you're made in His image no matter how that's been trashed by other people. You're valued by Him. You're loved by Him. And He wants to do redemptive work in you where other people walked in muddy shoes.

And, you know, finding someone who knows those things and how to do them and how to walk with is the first thing to do. You may end up on the newspaper headline someday exposing something. That doesn't happen to everybody and happens to some. But, you know, take care of yourself and the wounding that has happened before you do that.

Annie: And how would you recommend people finding therapists? The ACC? Is that where you would send people or is there a place where you know that people can start looking if they're like, "Okay, I've got to do this, but I don't even know where to start"?

Dr. Diane: Well, there are a lot of things like the ACC and CAPS and things like that where is one place to start. The best place to start is from people who know somebody. Because they have usually experienced them in some fashion. And the other thing to ask is whether or not somebody has worked with sexual abuse, whatever it is, domestic abuse, violence, and how long.

Annie: That's how my therapist came into my life is it was a friend's therapist, and I said, "I think I need to see someone." And she said, "I've been telling you for a long time to go see my counselor." So that's how I ended up with my counselor is through a

friend as well. But the invitation there, Dr. Langberg is to everyone who wants to see a therapist, you have to say to someone else, "I need help."

So there's an invitation to vulnerability right there at the start. You don't have to tell that person your whole story. You can just say, "Do you know a therapist that I could call?"

Dr. Diane: Well, yes. Because going to see one is a very vulnerable thing to do. And if you've been abused, you know vulnerability can be a really bad thing. So it's very scary.

One more story. When I first started out, so I must have been 23, pastor's wife brought a woman to see me from her church. They knew something was wrong, but they didn't know what it was because she went to tell them. And she came to see me. She was terrified. I've never seen such a frightened human. And I had to go into the office first because she didn't want anybody behind her.

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Dr. Diane: And she sat in a chair with her arms and legs pulled up against her and shook visibly, and did not say a word for six months.

Annie: And just came in once a week for six months?

Dr. Diane: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Dr. Langberg. Oh my gosh.

Dr. Diane: You know, I'm 23 years old. I'm sure it's all my fault.

Annie: Sure.

Dr. Diane: There's something I'm not doing right.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Diane: But I just believed that I was supposed to stay so I did. And eventually she became my teacher, frankly. I mean, she had been battered and abused and trafficked when it wasn't a word and everything else you can think of.

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: But she told me a long time later, "The reason I didn't speak is because I was terrified if I said anything you would tell me to leave. And it was the first time in my life I had ever felt safe and I didn't want to leave."

Annie: Wow.

Dr. Diane: So you know, sometimes we think as therapists, you know, "She's not talking with me. What am I doing wrong?" Which of course I did think. "You know, if somebody else were in here who had more knowledge or something, they'd know what to do."

Annie: Sure.

Dr. Diane: But anyway, I learned a great deal from her. We need to be able to be with people in a way that doesn't satisfy their academic egos for a while.

Annie: Wow. It made me just think around all of us there could be someone who's suffering like that and we just don't know.

Dr. Diane: Yes.

Annie: And in our churches there are people sitting around us who are being abused at home by their spouse, who are being fin... I mean, even financially manipulated and abused, right? Like being told how they can use money. I mean, is it is around us all the time.

Dr. Diane: Well, let's just say it's a lot around us.

Annie: Really? Oh, Dr. Langberg, I'm very thankful that you're helping lead me on this through your writing on this learning journey. So I will get Andrew Murray's book. That's my next one.

Dr. Diane: Okay.

Annie: Now, our last question we always ask. This is a sharp turn but you've got to have fun in your life, too. So the last question we always ask is because this show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you. What do you do for fun?

Dr. Diane: Well, my number one and fun in my life these days is to go see my four grandchildren.

Annie: Oh, yes. How old are they?

Dr. Diane: They're 15, 12, 7, and 5. Two girls, two boys.

Annie: Okay. Do they live near?

Dr. Diane: We live in Pennsylvania. All of them live in Virginia. So we found a little place in Virginia that's on some water and in the woods. And we see them there and gets to go on the water and trip through the woods and games and whatever. It's wonderful.

Annie: My sister just had my first nephew a couple of years ago. He's two and a half. I just had no idea. I can't imagine how my parents feel as grandparents because as an aunt, I am just... He is the best thing that's ever happened to earth.

Dr. Diane: We can have an argument about that.

Annie: That's right. That's right. That's right. I know. Oh, well, Dr. Langberg, anytime you have anything released or anything come out, we would love to have a conversation. Or if there's just a thing you're like, "We need to talk about this," please come back.

Dr. Diane: All right.

Annie: You're just very very welcome here. Thank you for teaching us things that we do not know we need to learn, but makes us more like Jesus. It means a lot to me.

Dr. Diane: You're welcome. Thank you for having me.

Annie: Of course.

[00:55:05] <music>

Outro: Oh, friends, isn't she brilliant? I know she is straight shooter, no plan, telling us the truth and helping make the church the healthy, safe place that it could be and should be, you guys. And I want to be a part of that too.

So be sure to go now and grab a copy for yourself of *Redeeming Power* and then buckle up as you read it. It is convicting and it is good. And I am so thankful for what I'm learning and have learned from Dr. Langberg. Make sure you follow her on social media. Tell her thank you so much, so so much for agreeing to be on the show with us.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today, what sounds fun to me... Well, to tell you the truth we have a big announcement coming for you on Thursday. And I am bursting at the seams to tell you. So what Sounds Fun to me today is I don't have to keep this a secret anymore. Well, I do until Thursday, but after that. huh, don't keep it a secret.

Y'all have a great day. We'll see you back here on Thursday with a big announcement and our lovely friend who I adore, Anne Wilson. We'll see you guys then. Have a great week.