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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 here with you today. And we have got a great show in store.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [AG1 by Athletic Greens](#). I know it's the time of year when some of our healthy rhythms start going out the window because schedules are so crazy and summer is coming.

But AG1 by Athletic Greens is such a simple way to incorporate a nutritional foundation to your day. It's hard to keep track of all the vitamins and supplements we need to take, right? So when it comes to things that will help us prioritize our health, what if it's as easy as adding one scoop of AG1 powder to really cold water instead of taking multiple different products?

Every scoop is packed with 75 vitamins, minerals, and whole Foods-sourced ingredients of the highest quality. They give us major benefits like gut and mood support, boosted energy, let's go, and even healthier-looking skin, hair, and nails.

Here's what I love too. AG1 is delivered like clockwork every month, so it's super easy to make it a daily habit. You don't have to set a reminder to order it or stress out when you only have one scoop left. Plus, the single-serving travel packs can be thrown in your purse or carry-on, thank you very much, when you are on the go. It's the healthiest thing you can do in under a minute with AG1 being good friends to our bodies each day. It's really that simple.

If you're looking for an easier way to take supplements, AG1 is giving you a free one-year supply of vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. So go to [athleticgreens.com/soundsfun](https://athleticgreens.com/soundsfun). Y'all check it out.

**Intro:** Today on the show, we get to chat with Dr. Nijay Gupta. Nijay, as he told me to call him, otherwise I'd be calling him Dr. Gupta, you get it, Nijay is professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary. He's an author of several books, including his latest, which came out in March, *Tell Her Story: How Women Lead, Taught, and Ministered in the Early Gospels*. This is a fascinating conversation about the ministry of women in the Bible.

For those of you who are reading the Gospels with us each month, I think you're going to especially love this. And if you're not reading the Gospels with us at the Let's Read the Gospels Podcast, May 1st is a great time to jump in. Now, listen, I

want to tell you, as you go into this conversation, this is a topic that is important to talk about that not everybody agrees on. And that is so, okay.

We can listen, we can learn. We don't have to agree with everybody that we are friends with. So if this subject matter feels tricky, that's okay. Just hang with us, stick with us for this conversation. I think you're really going to benefit from it.

So mostly I just cannot wait for you all to get to know Nijay and hear this conversation. Man, it had me mind-blown a few times. We've got to start a scale of how many mind-blown emojis each conversation does to me. And this is like a three or four out of five, you guys. Three or four out of five. So here is my conversation with Dr. Nijay Gupta.

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**Annie:** Okay, Dr. Gupta, I know you said to call you Nijay, but I'm going to welcome you. Dr. Gupta, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Dr. Gupta:** My pleasure. Grateful to be here.

**Annie:** Oh, what an honor! Your thinking, your writing, your research is extraordinary. So thank you for what you've done already. I'm grateful. Okay, will you back us up? How did you get into this? How did you get into theology as your job?

**Dr. Gupta:** You know, I don't know how many hours we have. But, you know, born and raised in Ohio, the heartland. I grew up actually in a Hindu household. My parents are Hindu.

**Annie:** Are they still?

**Dr. Gupta:** They are. I struggled with who I was as a brown kid in a white rural town in northern Ohio. I found Jesus as a teenager. The gospel just found me in the midst of just lostness and I just fell in love with Jesus. Kind of like Paul says, "Woe to me if I don't preach the gospel." I want to be all in on ministry.

I did missions trips. I was going to church like five times a week. I was involved in everything the church offered. and I just had this burning in my heart to just study the Bible, understand the Bible, follow God. So it really starts with a passion for God's Word, just loving God's word.

Remember I was involved with The Navigators in college at Miami, Ohio, memorized hundreds of scripture verses. And then going to seminary, not because I wanted to be a pastor, I didn't know what I wanted to do, because I wanted to study

the Bible in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. I just was like, "If this is what you do to love Scripture, then I'm going to spend four or five years doing it."

So I went to seminary. And that just really started this journey of saying, I think I'm... I don't know you that well, Annie, but I think I'm like you are: I just love learning and I love telling other people what I'm learning. And I'm like, "What job can I get paid to do that?" And being a seminary professor is a job where they pay me to study and learn and then to be able to kind of share that fire with pastors, students, and whoever will listen or read.

**Annie:** When you read your Bible on a normal day, are you reading in English?

**Dr. Gupta:** You know, I do a lot in Greek, but I will... I'll do a little bit of a humblebrag here.

**Annie:** I need you to.

**Dr. Gupta:** I just joined the translation committee for the New Living Translation.

**Annie:** Wow! Oh, my gosh, that's incredible.

**Dr. Gupta:** I love it. I've always wanted to be a professional Bible translator. We just met with our committee last month at a summit in Chicago, working with the greatest, greatest people.

**Annie:** I mean, reading the Bible, translating it, eating Chicago pizza.

**Dr. Gupta:** Right. It doesn't get better than that.

**Annie:** Unbelievable.

**Dr. Gupta:** That's living the dream. I kind of savor good translations. I savor it like a good movie version of a book, where you can just say, "They did good choice there." Thinking about film critics, you know, they've watched a million movies and so things don't always surprise them, but they can appreciate the craft that went into it.

I kind of do that with Bible translations where I don't like pooh-pooh the English Bible. I say, "Somebody really put a lot of work into this and they come up with really great English words for the Greek text. So I read in Greek, but I really savor good English translations. Like the Message Bible, which is a paraphrase.

**Annie:** I love it. Yeah.

**Dr. Gupta:** Eugene Peterson is like one of my heroes. If I had a poster on my wall of somebody, it would probably be Peterson because just the humility and just his patient learning, long obedience, all of that comes in the Message Bible.

**Annie:** So why NLT? I mean, they asked. But is that also the one that you're like, "I love this"?

**Dr. Gupta:** One. Yeah. My take on the NLT is the New Testament written in Koine Greek, which means the language of the people. And I love the beauty of the King James, but King James is no longer street English.

**Annie:** Oh, Nijay, multiple people have asked us to read a month of Let's Read the Gospels in King James. And I'm like, "Are you kidding?" But people feel a real attachment to it. It is not easy to read or to understand.

**Dr. Gupta:** It's beautiful, but it's not reflecting what the early Christian writers were doing, which is trying to write most of the time in the regular language of the people. So I think what the New Living translation does is it says, "We're going to translate the Bible faithfully, but going to translate into the language of the people so that our kids can understand, so that we can enjoy it, so that it has some artistry to it." And I think they do that really well. And that's why I like it.

**Annie:** So you are doing what Tim Mackie did to me, what Lisa Harper does to me of like, "Get to seminary, Annie." Purely because I wish I was reading it in Greek. I just regret that I haven't done that for the first four decades of my life.

One of our friends that sent in a question through our AFD Week in Review, Lauren asked, "Do you have any suggestions on how to figure out the right place to go to seminary? Green flags, red flags to look for?"

**Dr. Gupta:** I'll give you a couple of tips. And these are kind of my opinion, but I hope people will take that into account. I want people to study the seminary that has different kinds of people teaching there so you're getting influence from different traditions.

You know, I do want people to go to seminary that is faithful to scripture, you know, understands that Jesus is God and all of that, you know, kind of evangelical heritage. But when I went to seminary, I went to Gordon Conwell, I had an Assemblies of God Old Testament professor, Lutheran church history professor, I had Presbyterian professor, Baptist, all kinds. And you learn so much from the breath.

It was the first time I was introduced to Episcopal and to Lutherans and to Presbyterian. I didn't know anything coming out of my unchurched background

before I was 16. So then to get a flavor of the different streams and different types of Christianity is beautiful. So I encourage that.

Second thing I would say is follow the authors. Annie, you read so many books. I can't even keep up with what you read. So who are your favorite academic writers? People like Tremper Longman, people like Scot McKnight or Lynn Cohick.

**Annie:** Esau McCaulley.

**Dr. Gupta:** Esau McCaulley.

**Annie:** I mean, I will follow Esau McCaulley to a university. You. I'd follow you to a seminary.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah. Esau and I went somewhere together at Gordon-Conwell.

**Annie:** Oh, really?

**Dr. Gupta:** We were there same year.

**Annie:** Were you the same Thomas Taylor Reagan, too?

**Dr. Gupta:** Yes.

**Annie:** So also then we have weird friends that are not public people.

**Dr. Gupta:** James Michael Smith.

**Annie:** James Michael and Dan, his brother-in-law. I mean, all those people. Yeah, those were all my people in college.

**Dr. Gupta:** All those people. Carmen Imes, same era of Gordon-Conwell, but different campuses. So I'd say follow the authors that you love because if they're a good writer for the Christian public, they're probably a good teacher also. Usually, that matches up.

And then now with the benefits of social media, try to find current students and try and ask them, "What's your experience like? Do you like it? What don't you like about it? Be honest with me." All of that. Admissions people have to say good things but students will tell you exactly what they think.

**Annie:** Yes. Okay. So your latest book... How many books have you written total?

**Dr. Gupta:** Solo authored about 15.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dr. Gupta:** And then kind of total about 20, 25.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh. All theologically-driven verses memoir, narrative, fiction.

**Dr. Gupta:** All for seminary students or about the Bible.

**Annie:** Nijay, it is like that scene in the Aladdin where that lion opens his mouth, the sand lion in Aladdin walks in and suddenly it's gold everywhere. I feel like reading *Tell Her Story* is the opening of that for me. And you're telling me there's 20 more books back there?

**Dr. Gupta:** There's more. There's more.

**Annie:** I can't wait. Okay, so *Tell Her Story*, why? Why did you set out to write a book about women in the Bible?

**Dr. Gupta:** There's kind of a personal reason, and then there's kind of more professional reason. I'll start with the personal. I grew up, as I mentioned, Ohio and the church I went to, which was amazing, was more of what we call traditional complementarian church. And what I had kind of just received from that church, having not read much of the Bible beforehand was that church was a place where men lead and the Bible really is written by men about men for men. And women are welcome and women can support and women can participate but leadership is a man's thing.

And they encouraged gentle leadership, they encouraged humble leadership, they encouraged wise leadership but it was really a man's thing. Men were pastors, men were elders and, you know, women kind of played supportive roles. And I didn't question it, didn't think much about it.

Went to college, was involved with The Navigators, Campus Crusade, similar. Women were involved, mentor women, women sometimes lead things, lead mission trips. But at the end of the day, you know, the spotlight is on men. Men could be campus directors and women couldn't so forth.

It wasn't really until seminary that I became introduced to other ways of looking at it, and I actually went through a process of changing my mind on the subject. I kind of came of age as a Christian in kind of the heyday of John Piper, Wayne Grudem, kind of the late 90s, early 2000s and I sort of passively embraced a theology, a complementarian theology.

And in seminary I was really challenged to study the issue in depth. It's kind of like a Jenga tower, you know, this view of men kind of, you know, the buck stops here. It's kind of like a Jenga tower. What I realized as I was studying this in seminary studying the Bible in Greek and Hebrew is pieces started to come out of the Jenga tower, as I realized that it's not as simple as, you know, Look at the Kings, they were men. Look at the priests. Look at Jesus. Look at the disciples.

One of the big aha moments for me, Annie, was realizing that there are actually a number of amazing women who lead the people of God throughout Scripture, I had never heard sermons on these women, I'd never read books about these women.

**Annie:** Not just Ruth and Esther.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah, that's right.

**Annie:** You don't even mention Ruth and Esther actually, do you?

**Dr. Gupta:** There's even more. There's even more to explore. So one thing that really impacted me was watching the movie *Hidden Figures*. I don't know if you remember that movie, but it's about these women in the 20th century that were behind the great spaceflight achievements in the United States and we never grew up hearing their stories. So it's not crazy to think that maybe there are biblical women who we have hidden from this great story of scripture that includes great men, but should also include great women.

So I'll credit IVP with the title. I didn't come up with the title. But *Tell Her Story* is an exercise in recovery. I'm not making it up, I'm not bringing stuff from outside the Bible, but right there in the Bible we have these heroes who show great faith, leadership, wisdom, resilience. And I felt this compulsion in me to tell their stories.

**Annie:** I did very good not crying reading the book until page 161 where you said "where men have sometimes said women can't, the Old and New Testaments testify they did." That is the sentence that we need to hear is that we have been told historically women can't do this. And what you have shown through the Bible is "But they did."

**Dr. Gupta:** They did.

**Annie:** They did. Let's do Old Testament first.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yes.

**Annie:** Deborah. She's the queen. Between Deborah and Phoebe, I can't decide who my new Joan of Arc is. I just love them both. But will you talk a little bit about Deborah's leadership?

**Dr. Gupta:** Sure. Now, people always ask me why I start the book with Deborah. Because the book is really about early Christian women. But if I have-

**Annie:** Meaning, New Testament women.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah, New Testament women. If I have 20 seconds on an elevator to convince somebody that women are amazing leaders, Deborah is easy because she checks these boxes that so often we feel like can't be checked.

So if we start with 1 Timothy 2, "I don't permit a woman to..." or 1 Corinthians, "women should be silent," I want to just kind of flip the script and say, Let's look at a woman, Deborah, who really leads the entire nation.

So let's talk just briefly about who she is. The era of the judges is one of the darkest eras of Israel. I don't know if we could talk about HBO Max here, but I just finished watching *The Last of Us*, which is about a zombie apocalypse.

**Annie:** Yeah, I've heard about it.

**Dr. Gupta:** So basically the era of the judges is the zombie apocalypse of Israel, meaning they're in their darkest days where they don't have good, wise leadership like Joshua, and they don't have the kings yet. Three things are repeated.

**Annie:** So it's in between Joshua-

**Dr. Gupta:** The monarchy.

**Annie:** ...and Saul.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dr. Gupta:** So three things are repeated in the book of judges. "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes," "no one did what was right in the eyes of the Lord," and "there was not yet a king in Israel." Meaning it's like the Wild West.

And Israel is struggling with sin and dealing with the consequences of that, which is the Canaanites pestering them. So God raises up these temporary leaders, these



judges, these ad hoc heroes to step in, fight off the enemies and put Israel back on track. So you have Gideon, you have Samson. They don't come across that great.

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Dr. Gupta:** Gideon is the cowardly one. Samson is the kind of just unrighteous leader. But then you have Deborah. And what's interesting about Deborah is a few things. One is nothing really negative is said about her or even implied about her in the same way it is about Gideon and Samson.

Number two, not only is she a judge, which means kind of a deliverer of the people, but she's also an actual judge. She sits on kind of a throne of judgment, and she is thereby also an adjudicator of Torah. They've just been given God's law. And when people come to her for judgment, she's going to use God's word, the law of Moses as the arbiter of truth. So that makes her a spiritual leader.

On top of that, she's a prophet, which makes her a spokesperson for God. So she checks all these boxes of executive leader, judicial leader, spiritual leader. And then she goes in a war with Barak, they're victorious.

**Annie:** And that's not her husband. That is such a big deal.

**Dr. Gupta:** No, it's not her husband.

**Annie:** She is a partner in ministry with someone who is not her. And she has a husband.

**Dr. Gupta:** She has a husband, Lappidoth. We don't know what happens to him. He could be dead. He could be at home. We don't know. He's not a co-leader. He's not a co-judge. He's not mentioned in the rest of the Old Testament. He's not mentioned by the rabbis. He's not mentioned in the New Testament.

**Annie:** It's wild.

**Dr. Gupta:** I get Twitter messages sometimes, I get tweets at me and they'll say things like, "Shame on her. She's only there as an example that, you know, righteous men didn't step up."

**Annie:** That's right. That there was no man available and therefore a woman.

**Dr. Gupta:** What was interesting, though, is basically Samson and Gideon were chosen to be military leaders, and that's exactly what Barak is and yet he wasn't chosen as the judge. So that's interesting. And then a victory song is sung. And whenever people

say, "But is Deborah really a good figure?" I say, "Read God's word. Read Judges 5."

The victory is attributed to her arising as mother over Israel. What a powerful image! We could talk about the kings like David who did great things, we could talk about prophets who did great things, but there's this beautiful hero of a mother in Israel. And what happens when she's all done? The people get 40 years of peace, which is exactly what a judge is supposed to do.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dr. Gupta:** So whenever people say, "Oh, but can women? and are they capable of? And aren't women too...?" I want to say Deborah did.

**Annie:** Deborah did.

[00:19:34] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Cru](#). We are so grateful for our access to Scripture every day. Just like this conversation we get to have because of our access to Scripture. And together we're going to do everything we can to get the Gospel to as many people as possible around the world.

Cru is on the ground making sure we get Bibles in the hands of every people group in their very own language. And we get to be a part of that. We can easily take for granted our easy access to Scripture. We can pull up the Bible on our phones, find one in any translation we want to and probably have more than one at our houses.

But take a second and think about if you didn't have access to a Bible or weren't even allowed to have one. That is the reality that many people around the world are facing today. Sharing that hope and peace with others is something that really matters to me.

Cru has people doing ministry in almost every country on earth, and they are seeing people come to know Jesus. One thing they are missing is a Bible in their own language. Friends, we can meet that need. For only \$25 a month, you can provide three people with Bibles each and every month.

When you sign up to provide three Bibles with the monthly gift of \$25, you'll also be providing meals to 15 hungry individuals through their humanitarian aid ministry. Plus, as a thank you, you get a free copy of my book, *Chase the Fun*. So simply text CHASE to 71326 to help today. Imagine just how much this gift could

change someone's life. So text CHASE to 71326 to help now or visit [give.cru.org/chase](https://give.cru.org/chase). Message that rates may apply. Available to U.S. addresses only.

**Sponsor:** And I have one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Hiya Health](#). When it comes to my MiniBFFs, I always want them to stay healthy. But I know getting them to take their vitamins can be a struggle. They want something that tastes like candy and therefore you want something that's actually good for them. And that's where Hiya comes in.

Typical children's vitamins contain sugar, unhealthy chemicals, and other gooey junk growing kids just don't need. But Hiya is pediatrician approved and a super-powered chewable vitamin. Hiya is made with zero sugar and zero gummy junk but it tastes great and is perfect for those picky eaters. It fills in the most common gaps in kids' diets to provide the full body nutrition that they need. Plus, they taste good.

Formulated with the help of nutritional experts, Hiya is pressed with a blend of 12 organic fruits and vegetables and then filled with 15 essential vitamins and minerals to help my MiniBFF support their immunity, energy, mood, concentration and more.

Get this, your first order comes in this really cute glass bottle that includes stickers that the kids can decorate the bottle with. And then your refills are delivered each month in plastic-free pouches.

We've worked out a special deal with Hiya for their bestselling children's vitamin. You get 50, five-zero, 50% off your first order. To claim this deal, you must go to [hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun](https://hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun). This deal is not available on their regular website, so you have to go to [hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun](https://hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun) to get your kids the full body nourishment they need to grow into healthy adults.

And now back to our conversation with Nijay.

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**Annie:** Even as a person who is not married yet, a woman who is not married yet who does ministry as my job in multiple forms, the paradigm shift as I read of "Oh, she has a husband that is not her ministry partner." Side by side with Barak-

**Dr. Gupta:** Totally.

**Annie:** ...while she and her husband have a marriage. I thought, "Oh, this is what nobody talks about. Nobody talks about it." And you didn't make it up. It's in the Bible.

**Dr. Gupta:** No, it's right there.

**Annie:** But nobody talks about that. That is so interesting. So when we know that is true of Deborah, what would you want to see leadership shaped like in the church or in ministries? How do we do this in a healthy way, looking at Deborah's life?

**Dr. Gupta:** Well, one thing I say when I talk about Paul, and we can jump to Paul as soon if you want to, is, if we look at a text like Romans 16, Annie, Romans is a hard book to read. There's so much going on in Romans 1 through 11. If you get to 12, good luck. If you get to 16, you are a saint.

It kind of feels like the end credits of a movie. And yet what I've learned from Romans 16, which is a lot of greetings, greet Phoebe, greet Priscilla and Aquila and so forth, what I realized it's not just end credits, it's an honor roll. It's a celebration of leadership. Paul is not just mentioning... he's not saying hellos to his friends or fans. He's celebrating leaders.

**Annie:** People who are leading with him.

**Dr. Gupta:** So when you ask, "What does this mean? What does Deborah mean? What are these people you talk about in your book mean?" it means that Paul had a kind of blind approach to leadership, saying, who's gifted? Who's the best person for this job? So we can just jump to Phoebe real quick.

**Annie:** Yeah, come. I'm telling you, I've sent text about Phoebe since I read this.

**Dr. Gupta:** Phoebe is fascinating.

**Annie:** Oh, she's awesome. You have to understand a little bit about the ancient world to understand Phoebe. In the ancient world, you didn't have the mail system. It's amazing on my phone I can track a package. If I'm waiting for a book or if I'm waiting for clothes or something, I can track that. Sometimes I can track the actual truck to my house and I'll be literally standing on the road waiting.

You didn't have a public delivery system for the private person. So if you wanted to get a message to somebody, you would either hire somebody or you would send a trusted friend, especially for something really important. And Romans is really, really important.

So Paul tended to send a trusted Christian colleague like Epaphroditus or perhaps Luke or Timothy or Onesimus. He's going to send someone he really trusts. And they're going to be not just a delivery people. I hear this sometimes: a letter person

is just a delivery person. If you're traveling hundreds of miles, you're going to put your feet up, you're going to take a break. You might stay there for a few days. You might receive some hospitality. So you're going to be a messenger that's going to be an agent of the sender.

So Paul's in Corinth and he's sending a letter to Rome. And what we realized in the way that he talks about Phoebe is he's sending the letter to the Romans with Phoebe as the letter carrier. Actually, there are some ancient Greek manuscripts of Romans that actually say, "Through Phoebe. Paul to the Romans through Phoebe."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dr. Gupta:** Because it's so obvious when you read the kind of commendation he gives about her and that she's staying there, give her whatever she wants. Now, think about this. Paul sending this letter, it's a very deep letter, it will be a provocative letter because he's saying, "Hey, Gentiles, do this. Hey, Jews..." He even says, in Romans, "I'm speaking to you boldly." Meaning "this is going to upset you because I'm preaching the gospel to you." So if they're going to get upset and they're going to start complaining, who are they gonna complain to?

**Annie:** Phoebe.

**Dr. Gupta:** They're gonna complain to Phoebe.

**Annie:** Because she's probably the one standing there reading it.

**Dr. Gupta:** She's probably the one reading it because texts of this kind, with such drama and rhetoric and rhetorical questions and ups and downs, they're kind of performed.

**Annie:** When I read this part of your book, it blew my mind. That Paul would have trained Phoebe, "Okay, when you read this part, make sure..."

**Dr. Gupta:** Right.

**Annie:** That's unbelievable.

**Dr. Gupta:** Absolutely. So, for example, I did my first audiobook narration for *Tell Her Story*. And you can't just read the book.

**Annie:** Yeah, right.

**Dr. Gupta:** So I'll tell you something funny about the audiobook. So I have a whole bunch of quotes in there from different scholars, and they didn't want me to say "quote" in

the book. They didn't want me to say the word quote. So how do I make sure people know it's a quote? My producer had to come up with like, when it's a woman's voice, I would just use my voice just a little bit higher.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Dr. Gupta:** Because I couldn't do the word "quote."

**Annie:** You acted the whole thing.

**Dr. Gupta:** And if I did a man's voice—I have a naturally high voice—I would do my voice just a little bit lower. So I had to perform. But I didn't want to make it silly. So if you're listening to it, it's not going to be silly. But you know, if I'm doing Lynn Cohick, if I'm doing Linda Belleville, I just do it a little bit higher.

So I think it's probably like that where he's going to teach her and train her. So that makes her the most likely person to read it. Whether she read it or not, she's going to eventually go back home. So if they're going to have things they want to say to Paul, they're going to say them to her.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dr. Gupta:** So I actually refer to her as Paul's proxy. She's not an apostle in the sense that Paul's an apostle, but because he can't be there in person, he's investing her with some of his agency. And that makes her pretty important.

Now, you might say, "Nijay, are you just adding stuff to the text?" He actually calls her a few things which are really important. He calls her diakonos, which we can translate as deacon, but we can also translate as minister. We actually get the word "minister" from Latin, the word minister and we get the word "minister" in Latin as the Vulgate, the Latin Vulgate Bible translations counterpart to the Greek word diakonos.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dr. Gupta:** So she's a deacon/minister, which means she's a leader in her own church. And it also says that she's a benefactor to Paul and to many. And hospitality... I can't tell you how important hospitality was in the ancient world of not just giving people cookies and coffee, but taking care of them. Taking care of them. The same kind of language is used of Philemon actually for his church. He takes care of people. He's hospitable. So she's actually very important.

Here's what I want to say. Paul could have chosen a wide number of male leaders to send the letter from Corinth: Stephanas, Achaia, Gaius, Erastus. He knew all these men. He knew, I think, seven or eight male leaders, and he chose Phoebe. Why? Because she was capable, I think.

**Annie:** One of the things you do so well, and you do this a lot when you're talking about Phoebe and Deborah, is you have all this other research. "These are texts that were written right then. And here's what else they're saying." That is something that me, as a normal Bible reader, I don't often think about the additional texts that are not Scripture, but are telling us about the time.

When you write about households, you're like, "Well, we know all this because here are all these other writings." We'll talk about how those can inform the importance of us understanding what else was going on around the Bible helps us inform what the Bible is saying.

**Dr. Gupta:** Absolutely. Some of the pushback I get on the book is how much I appeal to quote-unquote, "context". But I've thought about writing like an extra chapter for this or something else, a feature called context is not the boogeyman. Meaning I'm not adding things to the text. I'm catching up on what the living experience was like for the people reading the text.

So, for example, you have parts of the New Testament that say, "Wives be submissive to your husbands and children to parents and slaves to masters." That's sometimes used as a way to say to women, "Hey, stay in your lane. Don't lead a church. Don't do this. Don't do that."

But when we look at the context of early Christianity, the New Testament in the first century, the Roman world, we learn some interesting things about women in the household. So this is just stuff that was true about the time. One is you could have women heads of household.

**Annie:** Like Lydia, right?

**Dr. Gupta:** Lydia would be a great example where no man is mentioned. But even in the Gospels, in the Gospel of Luke, you have Mary and Martha, and Martha invites Jesus to her house for hospitality. That's normally the head of the house's job, [inaudible 00:31:24] familias. She does it. No men are mentioned in the story. You'll even see paintings... You know, this is the one where Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus, Martha is, you know, working in the kitchen. You'll even see paintings where there are no men in that story because there aren't men in that story.

So that could be a case where they are. But then you also have Nympha, I'm gonna come back to Nympha in a minute... I almost wrote a chapter called The Most Important Christian You've never heard of: Nympha. Because she's mentioned in Colossians, at the end of Colossians and talks about Nympha and her household.

And churches, men, and household, this would be the language you would use for a house church that meets in that person's household and every sign points to her being the leader of that house church. In the same way they talk about Stephanas and his household and Priscilla and Aquila and the church that meets in their house. And it talks about Philemon and Apphia and the church that meets in their house.

And so you could have a head of household, and they often were the right person to lead a house church because they can provide a meal, they have some leadership experience. And if they're full of the Holy Spirit and if they're trained, they would be a great household leader.

So this idea that women couldn't be ministry leaders that could oversee a community I think is defied by stories like Nympha. And we learn from context that even though the Roman world was patriarchal, which means the laws were oriented towards men being in power, you did have exceptions to that.

**Annie:** I love the part where you say the rules that a golf course will say, no facial hair or something. Like, No shorts. You can't wear shorts," or "you can't have facial hair. You need to shave your beard." And you say, It's not that women aren't golfing. It's that if men are golfing, they can't have beards or whatever it is. I can't remember the exact thing.

**Dr. Gupta:** So, for example, on 1 Timothy, you know, someone has mentioned to me that, "Oh, leaders can only be men because Paul says that a leader has to be the husband of one wife."

**Annie:** Yeah, an elder. Yeah, yeah.

**Dr. Gupta:** That assumes that it's a man because it doesn't say the woman can have one husband. Well, the laws were oriented towards male empowerment, and so women really couldn't easily have multiple husbands. But men could have... you know, there were opportunities for men to have multiple wives or have multiple divorces.

But think about it this way. If we make that statement an absolute, it would actually mean that you had to be married to do ministry, which would actually contradict what Paul says in 1 Corinthians.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.



**Dr. Gupta:** He says, "I wish everyone were like me." Someone said to me before, "Oh, Paul couldn't be an overseer." Does that make any sense?

**Annie:** Oh, right.

**Dr. Gupta:** What it is really talking about is faithfulness. Faithfulness in your relationships, faithfulness in your marriage, commitment. It's not an absolute. So yeah, the example I use is, if you went to a golf course and it says facial hair must be good at all times, that's not saying there can be no women golfers. It's saying, This is a common happenstance and so, hey, this is the expectation and rule. And I think Paul's doing that. He comes back to me saying he had a blind former leadership. You know, I love soccer. I watch a lot of soccer-

**Annie:** Me too. Who's your team?

**Dr. Gupta:** Portland Timbers

**Annie:** Portland Timbers. Of course. Nashville SC.

**Dr. Gupta:** Okay.

**Annie:** Next time they play, we should cheer against each other. I love that.

**Dr. Gupta:** But sit together.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dr. Gupta:** So what I love about soccer is you go with who's most qualified on the day to be put in the starting lineup. I think when we read Romans 16, this is... I hope you caught this in the book because when I first read this in the scholarship, I read it was profound to me.

One scholar argues Paul's using Romans 16 as a practical outworking of Galatians 3:28, neither male or female, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave or free. I encourage listeners to go read Romans 16 and think through this. Some of the people mentioned in that list of Christian leaders are Jewish, some of them are Gentile. Some of them are slave names. Slave names often were very practical names. Like Urbanus means city person.

So we get the sense that some of the names are either slave names or former slaves, and some are probably free. Most are probably free. And about a third of the names

are women. Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis Mary, Junia, Prisca, the mother of Rufus, the sister of Nereus.

What we learned from that is Paul rubbed shoulders with lots of women in ministry. You have to ask yourself, if he hasn't been to Rome to meet this church in person, which he says being in a letter, how does he know all these women? Because they travel for ministry.

[00:36:29] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hi friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about another amazing partner, [Mended](#). Okay, we are coming up on Mother's Day and we have such a fun gift idea. Mended has the cutest tea towels, dinner napkins, table runners, and more. We have two of their cactus green tea towels in the office, and we love them. They are so beautiful, match our kitchen perfectly. Plus, have you seen anything that's block printed? We love it, you guys.

Mended hand block, prints their products, and oh, my gosh, it just feels like the most personal touch. But what's so much better than how beautiful Mended products are its mission? Mended is a social impact company working to economically empower survivors of modern-day slavery in South Asia.

So the beautifully printed products have been made by one of their 23 survivor artists and partners that Mended partners with. That is so cool. It's an absolute win-win for all of us involved. And it's why I love bringing my friends into the Mended story.

When you gift products from Mended, you get a story card and the confidence that you're giving a true gift of impact. So go to [www.mended.com](http://www.mended.com) or follow them on Instagram @mended\_co and use a code THATSOUNDSFUN for free shipping.

No matter who you're buying gifts for this spring, I know they are going to love the stuff that Mended makes and with such a good cause.

**Sponsor:** And one last amazing partnership with you, [Storyworth](#). You all know Mr. and Mrs. F. Downs by now, my parents and you know they're full of good stories. They were just recently in town. We got to go to the Ryman, which was my favorite. Leipers Fork has some great meals. We went to church. It was just one of those weekends with my family that I never want to forget.

And that's where Storyworth can come in. If you need another Mother's Day gift idea, this is a great one. Storyworth is an online service that helps you and your

loved ones connect through sharing stories and memories, and it preserves them for years to come.

Every week, Storyworth emails your mom or dad, or whoever you're buying for, a thought-provoking question of your choice for my vast pool of possible options. Each unique prompt asks questions you've never thought of. Like, what's some of the best advice your mother gave you? Or what's one of your favorite memories from a trip we've taken?

One of my favorite ones my parents have answered is about their vacations as kids. It's so interesting. It's just something I never thought to ask, but I'm really glad Storyworth did.

After a year, Storyworth compiles all the questions and stories, including photos, and do a beautiful keepsake book that the whole family can share for generations. I bought Storyworth for my dad and my mom and y'all, I cannot wait to read all of their answers and hold that final book and gift it to my siblings and my cousins. I know that we will love this for years to come.

Give all the moms in your life a meaningful gift this Mother's Day that you'll both cherish for years, Storyworth.

Right now for a limited time, you save \$10 on your first purchase when you go to [storyworth.com/thatsoundsfun](https://storyworth.com/thatsoundsfun) to save \$10 on your first purchase. Storyworth.com/thatsoundsfun.

And now back to finish up this fascinating conversation with Nijay.

[00:39:44] <music>

**Annie:** That sounds. Let me ask you here. The mother of Rufus, the only other time I see Rufus is when Jesus is being crucified and Simon of Cyrene carries his cross. And it says he's the father of Rufus.

**Dr. Gupta:** Right.

**Annie:** So do you think this is the same family?

**Dr. Gupta:** I do. I've looked into it, and I think the mentioning of Rufus is too kind of in-your-face to not make those connections. There's a lot of common names in the Bible, like Mark or Mary. But Rufus is not as common of a name.

**Annie:** No.

**Dr. Gupta:** So to me, it's like, you know, this is the same.

**Annie:** That is crazy.

**Dr. Gupta:** And then this idea they settled in Rome makes sense. It's a big city. It's the imperial city.

**Annie:** My gosh. That is so cool.

**Dr. Gupta:** It's pretty cool. Little Easter eggs in the Scripture.

**Annie:** That is so cool. One of the tensions I feel that I wonder if some of our friends listening feel too, is like, I hear you on all this. I mean, I love your book. I love all this. And also I find it really complicated to not just read what Scripture says and to go, "Well, I don't know all that context, but Scripture is saying this." Scripture says Romans 12, "Therefore. I urge you, brother." Do we just need to learn more or can we take Scripture at its word in the translation that we're reading?

**Dr. Gupta:** We should always be learning more. But I think we have to take seriously that... You know, there's a famous quote, L.P. Hartley, "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there." I use that quote with my students all the time. I'm teaching a course right now on Bible interpretation and I love using that quote with my students because you have to know that you're making a cultural jump when you step into scripture.

I do believe the big things are clear in Scripture about who Jesus is, about the storyline of the Bible, all the stuff. You've had Tim Mackie on your show. All the stuff Tim says is true, true, and clear in Scripture. But we have to admit that throughout time we have made some blunders like slavery.

So I think in the 1800s, good, Bible-loving Christians were saying, "Shouldn't I just read off the page? It says right there in Scripture that slaves should obey, slaves shouldn't rebel, slaves shouldn't run away. Slaves should be good slaves." And what did we realize? Not every structure in Scripture is meant to be taken at face value.

Now, I don't want any of the listeners to be worried. There are guardrails there, right? We trust most of the things in Scripture to be exactly what they say and what they mean. But let's just take a simple example, like braiding your hair. The Bible on multiple occasions forbids it. But we've learned that actually that's a practical reflection of some symbol of what hair braiding at the time, and that we realize it doesn't have the same symbolic value today.

So there are times where I think that we have to say, maybe a command is given in scripture that is really specific to its context, really specific to its time. Kind of tongue in cheek, the example I like to give is when Paul tells Timothy, "Oh, you have a tummy ache? You need to drink less water and drink more wine." I tell you, I think that's actually not good advice.

**Annie:** Right. Dear everybody, not the best advice.

**Dr. Gupta:** It's not a good advice for everybody, right?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dr. Gupta:** So when it comes to women, okay, here's the way I explain to my students. Studying scripture with complex issues is kind of like walking into a crime scene as a crime scene investigator. You have to look at everything in the room and not just look at one thing.

You can't just say, We found a bloody knife and that's the answer. If you have a bloody knife and that person has an airtight alibi, things get complicated. So what I'm saying is, yes, in one text it says women shouldn't teach, in another place, women are teaching. Or here it says what-

**Annie:** And both by Paul.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah, that's right. And then we have in one text, women should be silent. In another text, women prophesy out loud in front of the church. So what I want to argue in this book is, yes, read your Bible, but letting such an important issue hang on one verse that even scholars disagree about how it should be translated, like 1 Timothy 2:12, is really messy.

So I would say what I want to do with my book is, let's look at the whole Bible. Let's look at what women do in the whole Bible as models, as examples, as heroes. Let's just take the word "pastor". I can't tell you how many people tell me the Bible forbids women from being pastors. Read your Bible. It actually doesn't use the word "pastor" in that way. So then we need to actually say, what exactly are we talking about? What constitutes teaching?

I'm not encouraging people to ignore parts of Scripture but I really want them to take all the important parts of Scripture into account when studying these messy issues.

**Annie:** Yes. To me, anyone, myself included, whose stomach sometimes hurts when these topics come up of going like, "But the Bible is God's word, I want to take it as it

is." And it makes my stomach hurt to not just do that. The excitement is, go to your pastor and say, "Give me two books to read. How did you get to where you're teaching us from this standpoint?"

Like, before you get unhappy with people who disagree with you, just let this be what drives you deeper, and to study, right? I mean, that's one of the reasons I picked up your book is I've been on a 12-year journey of where do women lead in the church because of how God made me. I needed to figure out what was okay and what was true and what was scriptural because I feel my stomach hurting a little bit when we talk about it. I just want to acknowledge that.

And that's okay, you guys. We will all survive our stomach hurting when we get to certain parts of the Bible. And that is just part of the gig. One of the things you talk about so much is the purposeful diversity that Jesus also did when He told parables and how often I have never realized this until you taught it to me. How often Jesus would go, Here's a parable with a man, and then right next to it, a parable about a woman. The lost sheep with a shepherd and the lost coin. I mean, will you talk about how rare that was and why that mattered?

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And they didn't stand out to me ever.

**Dr. Gupta:** A lot of this is the way that Luke thinks as a Gospel writer-

**Annie:** Gosh, I love Luke. Gosh, I love Luke.

**Dr. Gupta:** So at the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke, you know, it talks about Zachariah and it talks about Elizabeth. So you have that pair. You have Mary and Joseph, you have that pair. You have Anna the prophet, and then you have Simeon. He likes to make sure that everybody is taken care of.

**Annie:** I never paid attention to that.

**Dr. Gupta:** And then you have the calling of the disciples, but then you also have the mention of the women that follow Jesus in Luke 8, which is interesting because none of the other Gospels explicitly say... The line I like to use with my students is when I was growing up, I used to think that like when Jesus, you know, got a reservation at the Cheesecake factory, it was for 13. Like the 12 disciples and Him.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dr. Gupta:** And Luke broadens our imagination to see more people following Jesus. So you got to think in three circles. You had the 12 and then you had another group of committed close followers. Right?

**Annie:** The Chosen shows us this beautifully.

**Dr. Gupta:** They do. We're just going to mention that. You know, you'll see Mary Magdalene in those scenes in the movie and in Luke and you'll see sometimes Mary the mother of Jesus, and other people as well. And then you have the crowds. But in between the crowds and the 12, you do have this bigger group. And what's interesting is they just kind of pop up. But Luke makes sure that we know that they were there at the cross. That's not a ladylike place in our minds for women to appear.

**Annie:** I would imagine that probably historically, women didn't gather there.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yeah, they definitely wouldn't be the majority, but the men were nowhere to be found. And that makes clear "Strike the shepherd and the sheep or scatter". The men were hiding and the women were there, including the mother of Jesus. And then they go to the tomb.

So Luke goes out of his way... So let me just talk about the parable of the coin. This is interesting. I don't know what kind of, quote-unquote, agenda Luke has, but what we know about this woman, just this like two verse woman is, number one, she has money, number two, she can throw a party by herself. I mean, this-

**Annie:** That is what we know.

**Dr. Gupta:** Those are the things we know about her. So Luke is really interested about the women that go off script, that go off the script of woman-like behavior according to pop culture, the time, and according to even our pop culture of where women can be and what they do to have these seemingly single women who have had demons cast out of them, as Luke says, following Jesus around. And it says they supplied for His ministry out of their resources.

**Annie:** I love that part.

**Dr. Gupta:** Right.

**Annie:** The women paid for everything.

**Dr. Gupta:** Like He's at the Cheesecake factory and they pull out their Chase Sapphire card. I mean, that's pretty cool that He's not, you know, "No, no, no." And then here's what's fascinating to me about Luke, 24. The Angels at the tomb appeared to these

women, including Mary Magdalene and they say, "Why are you upset? He said He would suffer and die and rise again, just as He taught you."

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Dr. Gupta:** Just as He taught you. They were interlopers or eavesdroppers on Jesus's teaching. Not only were they direct recipients, but the angels of heaven hold them accountable to the teachings of Jesus.

**Annie:** Wow. Wow. How we miss little things like that. It is-

**Dr. Gupta:** Hidden figures.

**Annie:** Yes, hidden figures. Luke has always been my dude. I just love him. I love that he wasn't there and he just researched. He just went, "I need to go ask questions." That part where the mother of Jesus, where it says she treasured all these things in her heart, I'm like, Well, at some point she said to Luke, "I haven't told anybody this." I want to watch that scene.

I hope the Lord I'll pull that up on the movie screen when they get there. Because I just want to watch Luke interviewing Mary.

We're going to talk all about Mary for a little special Mother's Day thing, so we'll hang on to her. But if you could send our listeners, male and female, out today with the thought of... what's our next step? What's our next step as church leaders? What's our next step? As many of our listeners are in our age bracket of 30s, 40s that are stepping into leadership at companies, at schools, at churches in our nation, what's our next step of how we bring these hidden figures to light and how that plays out?

**Dr. Gupta:** I would say be careful with stereotypes that we use for both men and women. I'm not saying men and women don't have differences. I think they have differences. But for example, I have really bad allergies so I don't do very much of the yard work and my wife is really good at using the chainsaw to cut branches and using the tree clippers. And I love food. I love food so much, Annie. I do all the cooking because I love it, because I love making food and because it's a good relaxation for me. And I love making Asian food and Indian food and all kinds.

So be careful of stereotypes because we can sometimes use that to stop God from doing great things like He did through Mary the mother of Jesus or through Deborah. It's very interesting to me when Scripture talks about virtue, it doesn't genderize virtue, meaning all Christians should be gentle, all Christians should be patient, all Christians should be courageous, all Christians should be bold.



So what I would say... a key thing is whether you're talking to a man or woman, affirm how God has made them in their giftings. This person's bold. This person is winsome. See, people for the great things they've done and the great potential they have. You know, it is going back to that blind sense of, you know, this person has a gift.

I love watching those shows like *American Idol* and *The Voice* because they're predicated on the fact that people have gifts that sometimes our eyes get in the way of.

**Annie:** Yes! Right. So when they're not looking and the voice turns around, they don't know... The thing I don't know that you know about me but our friends listening know is I'm not Paul's biggest fan. I'm kind of Peter's biggest fan. I think Peter's awesome. He's ridiculous and makes a ton of mistakes but I'd had a sword and cut off some ears too.

But you and N.T. Wright and some of our friends that are coming on that have really helped me, it has never been the leadership thing for me with Paul. It's been that I feel like I don't like his persona.

**Dr. Gupta:** I'm going to try to change your mind, Annie.

**Annie:** Are you?

**Dr. Gupta:** I'm gonna try.

**Annie:** You love him?

**Dr. Gupta:** I do. I'm gonna give you a couple of books I think will change your mind.

**Annie:** See, I am very here for it. That is what I encourage our friends listening. There are so many women who are trying to sort out, and I hope men, that are trying to sort out: what does this look like for me? And you have given us a book that can change our minds in small or big ways, you know, that is just scriptural. It is such a gift. It is such a gift. So thank you for writing it.

Is there anything we didn't say you want to make sure we say?

**Dr. Gupta:** No. I'm just excited. My final encouragement is, reading never hurts anybody. I think people are afraid, "Oh, no. What if? If this is God's world and truth is God's truth, read. And my friend A.J. Swoboda always says, you know, eat the meat, spit out the bones. Even with my work, I don't think I'm right in everything. N.T.

Wright sometimes says, "I'm 30% wrong about everything I say. I just don't know what the 30% is."

**Annie:** That's right.

**Dr. Gupta:** So I eat the meat, spit out the bones.

**Annie:** That should be true. As we go forward in our culture, we can read, and it is not scary. You're an adult with a brain. We can eat the meat and spit out the bones. But I will tell you, I was fully fed by your book. I mean, I've cried twice since you've gotten here, buddy. So it is such a gift.

**Dr. Gupta:** Happy tears.

**Annie:** Yes, really. Happy tears that this book came to me at just the right time. So thank you so much for writing it. On the last question we always ask, I've got to know, Nijay. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Dr. Gupta:** What sounds fun to me is going out to a great restaurant with friends.

**Annie:** Where are you eating here in Nashville? How long are you here? Do you fly back today?

**Dr. Gupta:** Yes. It's just a whistle-stop tour, 24 hours. But sadly, I had to eat at McDonald's at the airport.

**Annie:** No, I'm so sorry.

**Dr. Gupta:** So, no, I did not eat well. [Inaudible 00:54:31] with some ribs.

**Annie:** Yes, Lady Bird Taco is the taco place to go to if you need some tacos on your way out. We will give you some recommendations before you leave today.

**Dr. Gupta:** Thank you.

**Annie:** And you'll join us for Mother's Day to do a little thing about Mary.

**Dr. Gupta:** Yes, I'm excited.

**Annie:** Oh, that's very kind of you. Thank you. Thank you so much for this book and all the others that you have just opened up a treasure trove for me of your work. I'm so grateful. Thank you.

**Dr. Gupta:** My pleasure.

[00:54:53] <music>

**Annie:** Oh, you guys, right? Ain't he awesome? I love smart people. We are so lucky to have theologians that make time to come on our show. In the comments on the Instagram post of this conversation, I need you to tell me, out of five mind-blown emojis, how many are you? Show me in the comments today.

Hey, and be sure to grab a copy of *Tell Her Story*. It is such an important conversation. Remember, as Nijay and I talked about, it is so good to keep reading and keep learning. So I hope you will do that with *Tell Her Story*. I have handed out a lot of these copies. I purchased them the day I finished reading it and handed out to a lot of my coworkers and friends because I think this is one of the best books on this I've ever read, truly.

Make sure you're following Nijay on Instagram. Thank him so much for being on the show. And just a reminder that we don't have to agree with everyone to be their friend. So I just remind you to show kindness on the internet. Even if you don't agree with me or Nijay all the time, your kindness is one of the best things about you. And so just thank you for that in advance.

And hey, don't forget the Here For You Tour is just a little over a month away. You guys, Carlos and I are hitting the road in June. We want to see you at one of the stops along the way. Head to [hereforyoutour.com](http://hereforyoutour.com) to grab your tickets.

Okay, we heard what sounds fun to Nijay, good answer, now we get to hear what sounds funny to one of our friends who was then just like you.

All right, Hannah, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Hannah:** Hi, I'm Hannah from Atlanta and what sounds fun to me is this summer I'm going to Oklahoma City to watch the Women's College World Series for softball with my sister and my husband and her husband. It's always been on our bucket list. We grew up playing softball and played in college, so super excited about it.

**Annie:** Okay, so it's the Women's World Series between and it'll be two college teams?

**Hannah:** It'll be the top eight out there.

**Annie:** Oh, wow. Okay.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Now, where did y'all play? Are y'all playing at one of the schools that could make it?

**Hannah:** No, we went to Georgia College and State University, so we were in division two.

**Annie:** In Milledgeville.

**Hannah:** Yeah, in Milledgeville.

**Annie:** That's cool.

**Hannah:** So, no, we have played out there before, but not in the World Series.

**Annie:** So you're softball not playing, but you're softball observing. Watching a game snack is what? What do you gotta have in a ballpark?

**Hannah:** Oh, man. That's a great question. I've got to have a good pretzel, especially if it's a cinnamon pretzel.

**Annie:** Oh, yes. Great answer, Hannah. Very good.

**Hannah:** So I'm super excited.

**Annie:** I love a salty pretzel. If I'm going to go hard on that kind of gluten, I'm going to get a salty pretzel. Well done.

Oh, I love it. You guys! Okay, if you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me.

And don't forget to subscribe today because I don't want you to miss the Mother's Day conversation that Nijay and I got to have about Mary the mother of Jesus. It is an awesome part two, just about 15 minutes part two conversation about her that I think you're going to love. So make sure you're subscribed today.

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 is eating lunch at the airport. I can't wait. I'm getting ready to head to the airport and grab a snack. And I love that. So fun. It's one of the most fun things about the airport is all the treats.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday to kick off the month of May with... are you ready? First timer Cece Winans. Y'all, Cece Winans is here on Monday. Y'all, she's just the best. So y'all have a great weekend. Make sure you are subscribed to the show so you do not miss what is coming in May, particularly Cece Winans on Monday. Will see y'all. Have a great weekend.