

[00:00:00] <music>

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 on our 500th episode, question mark? I mean, it does say that. Well, you're gonna hear me in the She Reads Truth girls talk about it in just a second. So sort of happy 500th episode.

Before we dive in today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [Athletic Greens](#). If you're looking for a simpler way to incorporate all the nutrients you need into your day without taking a bunch of different supplements, AG1 by Athletic Greens is what you need to give a try.

AG1 was designed with ease in mind so you can live healthier and better without having to do a lot of steps. It's the healthiest thing you can do in under a minute. All you have to do is mix one scoop of powder in cold water once a day. You can even try shaking it up with a couple of cubes of frozen lemon juice, which is what I do. It is delicious.

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AG1 is delivered like clockwork every month so you don't have to set a reminder to order it or worry about running out. If you're looking for an easier way to take supplements, Athletic Greens 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. That's athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Y'all check it out.

Intro: So today on the show our friends from She Reads Truth are back. Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams are here. And you know it is time to talk about one of our favorite things, Advent. Raechel and Amanda have been here so many times. They're now officially members of the Hall of Fun.

Today we're diving back into talk about the liturgical calendar—I just love it, you guys—the Gospels hope and why this all matters for Advent. Here's the thing there are so many resources available to you for this Advent season. We have our Advent guidebook and videos here for you at AFD. Or She Reads Truth has options for the whole family, or lots of our author friends have devotionals.

No matter what you choose to do, I hope you consider finding one way to intentionally shift your posture towards the season of anticipation and waiting during Advent. We all know December can be crazy and there's no right or wrong way to advent but just don't miss what God might have for you in a season where we're all hoping for something.

So here's my conversation with Raechel and Amanda from She Reads Truth.

[00:02:41] <Music>

Annie: She Reads Truth, we back.

Amanda: Welcome back.

Raechel: We back.

Annie: We back. This is how it should be.

Amanda: Hello. Feels good.

Raechel: Feels right.

Annie: Now the Christmas season may begin.

Raechel: That is true.

Annie: Anyone who's started your music already know you didn't. That She Reads Truth wasn't on That Sounds Fun yet. So Raechel Myers, hi.

Raechel: Hi.

Annie: I'm so glad to see you.

Raechel: I'm so happy to be here. And wow, new studio.

Annie: I know.

Raechel: So good.

Annie: New studios. That's why y'all are here. Will you kind of say your role at She Reads Truth for our friends listening so they can identify your voice but also hear what you do at She Reads Truth?

Raechel: Absolutely.

Annie: And He.

Raechel: And He, and kids, all good things. I, with Amanda, am one of the founders of She Reads Truth and also currently I am the COO of She Reads Truth, which is a new title for me this year. I've been CEO for about a decade. And I am COO of this year. That has been really fun.

Annie: Yeah, that's a lot more work, right?

Raechel: Yes. It is. Thank you. Thank you, Annie.

Annie: Thank you for listening. I know because I'm the CEO and I know how much my COO does.

Raechel: It scratches itches in the parts of my brain that hadn't been able to reach. So it's been real fun.

Annie: That's awesome.

Raechel: I really like it.

Annie: Probably a lot of hands-on communication with your staff.

Raechel: Mm-hmm. Way more in the business. Way more in the spreadsheets, which I have just come to love.

Annie: That's awesome. I follow Excel accounts on Instagram now.

Amanda: Wow. I didn't know that.

Annie: That is really good.

Raechel: That's really good.

Amanda: I do think that spreadsheets are a spiritual gift.

Annie: Yeah, they gotta be. When I take a test, I don't score nothing on spreadsheet.

Raechel: Well and the important thing to me is that they function like all the good formulas and all those things but also that they are beautiful. Like I just have like a standard brands for-

Annie: A lot of color.

Raechel: Not necessarily but a good color palette.

Annie: Okay, great.

Raechel: Yeah, yeah.

Annie: Fantastic.

Raechel: We've got brand standards for type and all of that but then we just kind of anything that's not data, like that's just like ether, we turn all those lines white so it just looks-

Annie: That's right. Data... I don't know that there's a thing that is more helpful in our world than just stats.

Raechel: Yes, ma'am.

Annie: Just the actual data.

Raechel: Information.

Annie: Because we can feel so many things about the work we do.

Raechel: That's right.

Amanda: And we do.

Annie: And we do.

Raechel: And we do.

Annie: And your feelings can be true whether the stats match or not. But stats are so grounding. Right?

Raechel: Yes.

Annie: I just love them. So congratulations.

Amanda: And they tell the story.

Annie: Yeah, they tell the story. That's right. They tell one of the stories that are true. Amanda Bible Williams.

Amanda: Hello.

Annie: Well, tell me your role at She Reads Truth now.

Amanda: Well, I, with Raechel, am one of the founders of She Read Truth and all the Reads Truth. So I spent many years, about 10, as CCO, which is chief content officer. However, this just in, well, not really, several months, at the beginning of this year, I will call myself—I'm just making this up on the fly—the CNO. Like, nope. No more C for me.

Annie: You're outta of CCO altogether.

Amanda: That's right. I am completely elevated out to founder status. We do the podcast together.

Annie: That's so good.

Amanda: We cheer on the team together. We cast vision together.

Annie: Do you still go to staff meetings?

Amanda: When I want to. So like sometimes. So it's been an adjustment but also really good. And the timing of it is so funny because it was not a surprise in that this is something that we have been working toward. You know, when you build a business, you eventually become... you get disqualified for your own job many times over. Because as the business grows, you need to bring in people who know more about that specific thing that you're doing. Right?

Annie: Every person in my office, I have done their job. They do it better.

Amanda: That's Right.

Raechel: That's what we're looking for.

Amanda: And you just kind of moonwalk out of each room as its time.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Amanda: So this is a really good thing. This is not a sad... Well, it is a little bit sad because you're like, Oh, end of an era. But also, amazing Lord, thank you for what you've

built and for the people that you have brought to carry this along and to carry it forward because, you know, it's exhausting to build a business.

So I'm working on a couple things right now. One of those is pulling Raechel up here to where I am because the wa... you know, well, I just am using a mixed metaphor now, but like come on in the water sign. There's a learning curve to it, but also it's freeing. It is bolstering in the faith department because I don't have my hands on a lot-

Annie: Less control

Amanda: ...or anything. So when we-

Annie: And your faith is connected to the brand.

Amanda: Yeah. And while we have said for a long time and meant it that this business tree belongs to the Lord. This is putting all the things where my mouth and to actually walk in that. And be like, okay, I'm having to trust in new and bolder ways it feels like.

Raechel: And I mean, Annie, you know as a founder, you start a business because of a passion. She Reads Truth started because we wanted to read the Bible more. And then we started writing PTO policies, and all of the making the spreadsheets and all of those things. And all of those things are so good. But it's kind of pulled us away from the thing that we loved to begin with. And that's kind of every founder's issue.

So getting to get back to the place where we get to be on the podcast and be in the word with the community every day, that's where we wanna be. That's our goal. And everything that we do, we want to be able to make it outlive us and outlast us. Right?

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: And so we could-

Annie: Preach the gospel, die, and be forgotten.

Raechel: Right.

Annie: Yes.

Raechel: Like we could white knuckle this ministry and be like, it's completely dependent on us, and if anything ever happens to us, it crumbles. But that's not good stewardship.

So really codifying our values and codifying why it began and all of that so that anybody who works in this company, even after we're long gone, will know what matters.

Annie: That's really good.

Amanda: I mean, what ultimately matters is not Raechel and Amanda. What matters is that people are invited to read God's word.

Annie: We had a thing like that happen today at lunch where I randomly mentioned this thing, me writing a zebra in the kids' books. And I was like, "Isn't that cool that we have it illustrated?" And they were like, "Yeah, I guess." And I was like, "Sorry, have I never told y'all about why I write a zebra? Have I never told you this?" And they were like, No, we didn't know it was a thing. Because all of that lives in us, right?

Raechel: Yeah.

Amanda: That's right.

Annie: And I know I've said it out loud, but I haven't said it out loud to the five of them-

Raechel: To this team.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. So you just have these moments where if you don't put it down, and if you don't... it's not that it gets lost in the founder, it's that it lives in the founder. So the founder doesn't know what everybody else doesn't know. I assume everybody knows everything that's inside of me. And they don't.

So writing it down and moving yourself into a situation where other people can lead via the things you know are true and you're called to is beautiful. Brilliant. Well done.

Raechel: One of the good jobs we do as a founder, any founder, is writing down what's important to us and making sure it's communicated well.

Annie: So all of October our friends listened to a series called Build Your Board, where we talked about what voices do you need to help you build the life you want.

Raechel: So good. So good.

Amanda: Excellent.

Annie: Counselors, mentor Nancy was on. Counselors, mentors, coaches, prayer team, all sorts of stuff and how do you make friends as adults? A whole-

Amanda: Whoosh.

Annie: And that is what people want to talk about.

Raechel: I'm so grateful for you, Annie-

Amanda: Is how did we meet?

Raechel: ...for these conversations.

Annie: It's fun.

Raechel: It's so good.

Annie: I mean, it's a really beautiful month. And it has helped a lot of people. My question for you, if you don't mind, I don't know this and probably could've asked you this privately or in front of God and everybody-

Raechel: Get excited. Get excited.

Annie: When two very good friends own a company together and one of them steps out of the daily leadership, how hard are those conversations? How does your friendship survive that? Is it easier than you think? Is it harder than people think? How do you put together work in friendship? Because that's what a lot of people are wondering.

Raechel: I think part of the weird answer to that is because one of us is still in it and just like elbow deep if not neck deep, there's not a lot of time for... I feel like we looked at each other for years and we were like, we'll walk out the door on the same day holding hands and it will be-

Annie: Oh wow.

Raechel: And then we get to be just friends. To some degree that has happened. But I think that really the finish line... That's a terrible word to use because I don't think it's anything close to a finish line. But that milestone for Amanda and I is still ahead of us.

Annie: Interesting.

Raechel: I'm excited about it.

Amanda: I think the answer is that it's both. I mean, just like any kind of transition like that, like it is both... Like there are good surprises and there are hard surprises.

Annie: Yeah, of course.

Amanda: And for us, our lived experience of running the ministry and business at She Reads Truth has been kind of like arm-in-arm the whole time. So this has been an area where I think... like what I just said about how I have been asked to trust, so has Raechel in different ways.

Annie: Sure. Of course.

Amanda: And we've been asked to trust each other in new ways, which we're good at trusting each other, you know, because we have a lot of practice.

Raechel: We have a long history of people.

Amanda: Of course.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: Be trustworthy to each other. Right?

Amanda: And here's what I'll say. I will say, so we actually did not begin She Reads Truth as close friends. Our close friendship came through She Reads Truth. So it has looked like any other intimate relationship looks, in that a lot of mess-ups, a lot of hard conversations, a lot of forgiveness, and starting over and choosing to continue to walk forward.

And the flip side of that is like she makes me so much better than I am on my own and what we do together is so much better than I would do. Like what has come from this is different than what it would've been if it were just Raechel or just Amanda.

Annie: Yeah, sure, sure.

Amanda: And I truly believe that it is better and more beautiful because-

Raechel: Absolutely.

Amanda: ...it has required a type of humility. Like, I can't get away with much. If my pride starts getting in the way, somebody's gonna notice immediately. And she does.

Annie: And they know our eyes. Kelly, that is my business partner, can see my eyes. I mean, even today, she said, "I saw what you were feeling." And I was like, "I didn't even see it." But they can read my eyes.

Amanda: Yeah. So it is a blessing. How many times, Raechel, have we said out loud, I'm so glad there's two of us?

Raechel: Yes.

Amanda: Lots of times.

Raechel: And how many times has one of us texted the other and been like, "Uh-uh nice trial snatch." We've got this conflict, whatever it is and-

Amanda: And we have to remind each other out loud that like-

Raechel: The last thing we're gonna do is let the devil take this away from us.

Amanda: And this being-

Raechel: This relationship.

Amanda: ...the company but more than that, the friendship and the relationship.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: It's interesting though, Annie, we've never known each other out of She Reads Truth, outside of that.

Amanda: I'm so excited for that.

Raechel: And now the funny thing is like, as we get older, so do our kids. Like our kids were twos and fives when She Reads Truth started. So now they're like, you know, 16, 17, 13-

Annie: Highschoolers.

Raechel: ...and like friends.

Annie: Oh, that's sweet.

Raechel: Which is sweet and fun. Yeah.

Annie: I mean, it's just really special to see the transformative nature of your friendship affecting the work. I mean, I think you can feel a maturity in studies that could not have been there a decade ago.

Raechel: I agree.

Annie: Not that the word is less mature or that your thinking is less mature, just the feel of maturity is there. And I think that's beautiful. Okay, so here is two things for us to celebrate. Number one, the numbering is insane, but this is technically episode 500.

Amanda: What?

Raechel: What?

Annie: Yes, it's number 500.

Raechel: How is that possible?

Amanda: Annie F. Downs!

Annie: Right. We're actually in the eight hundreds, but the way we numbered them is stupid. So welcome to episode 500.

Raechel: Amazing.

Amanda: High five. Actual high five.

Annie: I know. It's so ridiculous.

Raechel: I can't believe my good fortune.

Annie: I know. When we were counting, we were like, we're getting close to 500, which... Because like when we do entire series, we don't number them.

Raechel: Got it. Got it.

Annie: So it makes things get stupid. All that to say congrats. Number 500.

Raechel: How is that even true?

Annie: Well, here's how it's true.

Raechel: So many reasons.

Annie: This is your 15th time on That Sounds Fun.

Amanda: No!

Annie: Y'all are the most... probably most requested, but also the most attended guest. And that of course means you are on the Hall of Fun.

Raechel: Woo.

Annie: Here you are. You are the first one. Because you are the first ones to hit five.

Raechel: Oh my word.

Annie: You're also by far... I mean the only ones close to you are Dave and Santa, which bizarrely are interchangeable. But-

Amanda: Annie.

Annie: ...She Reads Truth, you guys-

Amanda: 15 times.

Raechel: Oh my word.

Annie: 15 times. Thank you. That it just could make me sob thinking about how much you have given our group of friends.

Raechel: Oh.

Annie: And how much you've taught us and how generous you've been to us and-

Raechel: And how many times you've invited us back?

Annie: Well, standing invite. Standing invite.

Raechel: Thank you.

Annie: But 15 times on the Hall of Fun.

Raechel: Wow. I leave it to Annie F. Downs to have a Hall of Fun.

Annie: We had to.

Raechel: I mean, are those engraved?

Annie: Yes, they are actually literally engraved.

Raechel: All right.

Annie: They are a real deal.

Raechel: Those are not printed stickers.

Annie: No. No. No.

Raechel: I wanna be so clear.

Annie: No, no, no. Those are engraved. They're a real deal.

Amanda: I need to know if there's some sort of-

Raechel: It's wonderful.

Amanda: ...like Jersey. I will pay for it myself.

Annie: A jacket?

Amanda: I need like a Letterman's jacket for the Hall of Fun.

Raechel: I'm so thrilled to just be right here.

Annie: I know. We should get like a little pin or something. We will come up with something that you can take home with you as well, but-

Raechel: Oh my word.

Annie: So just thank y'all.

Raechel: What Amanda's like to communicate here is this is not enough. She wants more.

Amanda: That is me.

Annie: That is not what I heard. But thank y'all.

Amanda: I love it.

Annie: It just means a lot to me.

Raechel: Five hundred and fifteen.

Annie: Five hundred fifteen. Welcome. I know.

Raechel: I feel like we're done.

Annie: What's the Lord saying in the numbers? I just love the numbers.

Raechel: Beautiful.

Amanda: What I love about you, Annie, you just congratulated us on being on the 500th episode when we've done 15 of them, which thank you. And also you've done the other 485.

Annie: I talk a lot. Remind us what scripture says about people who talk a lot. It's not good. They're fools. I know.

Amanda: Oh.

Annie: It's not great.

Raechel: But you know what? You don't just talk a lot. You ask questions.

Annie: That's true.

Raechel: You lead conversations. Like what y'all did in October. Like you are serving a really big need.

Annie: Thank you. Y'all are very kind. I'm just very thoughtful that I don't wanna be a person with all the words all the time.

Raechel: Okay. Same.

Annie: Amanda... I don't think this is true for you, Raechel. It's not true for me. You aren't doing seminary right now, right?

Raechel: I am not.

Annie: No, but you are.

Amanda: I am.

Raechel: That's one of the little perks of taking over the organization.

Annie: How is it?

Amanda: Semester one.

Annie: What do you think?

Amanda: I'm in semester one.

Raechel: We were talking about this on the phone this morning.

Amanda: It's good. It is surprising. I was a little naive to a few different layers of it.

Annie: That's a beautiful way.

Amanda: I think that has served me because-

Annie: That's how it was on Invisalign, so-

Amanda: I don't.

Raechel: Oh, yeah.

Amanda: Oh, excellent.

Annie: I was like, oh, I didn't know we did this, but it's already in my mouth, so here we go.

Raechel: All right.

Amanda: My daughter's on round two of that by the way. Everyone wear your retainers. So here's what I'll say. My mind has been in like medical terms lately. It is a more invasive process.

Annie: Oh, is it? Like personally?

Amanda: Yes. Than I expected.

Annie: I did not know that. It is more self-reflection? Is that what you mean?

Amanda: Now the program that I am in is a master's in Biblical and Theological Studies. I'm so impressed. I'm excited.

Raechel: What will your letters be at the end of your name, besides Bible?

Amanda: MBTS.

Annie: I think you're right. MBTS. Yeah.

Amanda: Keeping the Bible.

Annie: Yeah, of course.

Amanda: But the specific program that I'm going through, or the seminary that I'm at, they seek to like... Because what they found, like there's research backing this up that people go through seminary and learn all the things, but if it doesn't form them, then there's a misalignment.

So they actually have built into the program formational curriculum, where you have a mentor and a process to identify areas where you're maybe not in alignment with what, you know, what I believe. Like I'm living and what I believe. And they did disclose this, but I didn't really understand it. I didn't understand kind of what was coming. And I'm kind of glad I didn't because I think my antenna that goes up when I need to be vulnerable or uncomfortable would've maybe knocked me out of contention there.

Annie: Wow.

Amanda: I think I would've been like, Eh, I don't know.

Annie: Interesting.

Amanda: So I'm really thankful. I mean, it's work that you want to do, right?

Annie: Sure.

Amanda: And you're thankful for it, but it also feels like exposing-

Annie: Yeah, of course.

Amanda: ...in ways that I don't know that I was prepared for. But clearly, it's good. It's good. But also it's just a lot of fun. I mean, it's a lot of fun to dig in and ask questions and

for the not knowing to be the thing that is driving it, you know. That it's not just like, oh, I'm embarrassed that I don't understand this. It's like, no, no, we celebrate. Like we're all here to seek understanding and to learn how to be good readers.

Annie: It's a three-year program? Is that right?

Amanda: The way that we're doing it, yes.

Annie: That's amazing.

Amanda: I'm not sure what it normally is.

Annie: No, that's amazing.

Amanda: It felt long. But now that I'm in it, I'm like, Oh, this feels like... I hope I can get it done in that amount of time.

Annie: Oh, we'll blink and you'll be like, I can't believe I'm done. My fear of starting seminary currently is because of other things I'm working on. I will not read everything. I will skim. I will just get it done. And I'm like, don't do seminary that way. You can do.

Raechel: Right.

Annie: You can do some things that way. You can't do seminary that way.

Amanda: Well, I'm not gonna promise that I'm never gonna skim.

Annie: Oh, you're welcome to skim.

Amanda: Because sometimes that word count gets high.

Annie: That's right. You're welcome to skim. I just know how I got through college.

Amanda: I know.

Annie: And I would feel like I had wasted seminary if I go through seminary the way I went through college.

Amanda: Yeah. Yeah.

Annie: And I don't want to do that.

Annie: But that is amazing.

Amanda: It's so fun.

Annie: All y'all's that are in it together. I'm just super proud of all of y'all doing that.

Amanda: It's a really fun group. It's a really...

Annie: They were all mostly already friends, right? It's like all of our friends.

Amanda: I know. I knew maybe a third of the people in there.

Annie: Oh.

Amanda: There are a lot of people in there that I did not actually know. So it's fun.

Annie: That's kind of fun.

Amanda: Know them now.

Annie: Have y'all had any study groups in Nashville yet and gotten everybody together?

Amanda: One time.

Annie: That's cute.

Amanda: There's four of us in Nashville.

Annie: That's really fun.

Amanda: It'll be fun. I'm excited.

Raechel: I liked your little first day of school.

Annie: Oh, everybody's first day of school.

Raechel: I mean-

Annie: So until we are in seminary, we'll continue to let She Reads Truth be our mini Mary.

Raechel: There we go.

Annie: Semi mini. We'll find it. We'll keep studying the Bible.

Raechel: We'll keep opening the Bible.

Annie: Does that count?

Raechel: There it is.

Annie: That's what Tim Mackie says. You don't have to learn Greek, there's plenty in English. He's like, you ain't gotta... when you're done learning English-

Amanda: Amen.

Annie: ...then-

Amanda: Because I'll tell you what's not on my curriculum.

Raechel: Greek.

Annie: Yeah, for sure.

[00:23:00] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to tell you about another amazing partner, Daily Bible Trivia. Have y'all tried Daily Bible Trivia yet? Y'all, you know I love some Bible trivia. And Daily Bible Trivia is an app that makes learning the Bible both fun and interactive. You can challenge yourself by testing your knowledge of scripture.

Okay, think about questions like this. Can you name the town where Jesus was born? Or what are the three gifts that the wise men brought to Jesus? How about the number of disciples Jesus had? Well, whether the answer is yes to all of those, and you wanna rack up some points when you play, or you weren't sure of some of the answers but you wanna find out, Daily Bible Trivia is such a fun way to test your knowledge.

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Sponsor: And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Ritual](#). I love data. If y'all knew how much I love data. I love to know the facts so we can make better decisions. So isn't it crazy that women were excluded from clinical research policy by federal law until 1993? We're essential, right?

Ritual gets it. They love the data too. They conducted a university-led clinical trial for their Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin to see how effective it was. The results showed an increase in vitamin D levels by 43% and Omega 3 DHA levels by 41% in just 12 weeks.

I really am such a fan of Ritual's multivitamin. It's made with high quality nine traceable key nutrients. You just take two capsules a day. And their daily capsule has a delayed-release design to help make it gentle on an empty stomach. Essential for Women 18+ is also soy-free, gluten-free, vegan-friendly, and formulated without GMOs. Yes and amen. It has this minty essence too in every bottle to keep things fresh and make take in your multis every day really enjoyable.

Ritual is all about hot data and stone gold pack. So get to know your nutrients on a deeper level with 30% off during your first month. Visit ritual.com/thatsoundsfun to start Ritual or add Essential for Women 18+ to your subscription today.

Okay, now back to our conversation with Raechel and Amanda.

[00:25:23] <Music>

Annie: Okay, so Advent.

Amanda: Mm-hmm.

Raechel: Yes ma'am.

Annie: What are we doing?

Amanda: She's coming.

Annie: She's coming.

Amanda: Coming.

Annie: What are the dates of Advent this year?

Raechel: It starts a little bit later this year.

Annie: Right.

Raechel: So it starts December 3rd because it's always four Sundays before Christmas. And then it ends Christmas Eve is when Advent ends. And the Christmas tide, you know. We've talked about Christmas tide.

Annie: I love it.

Raechel: She starts Christmas day. But our advent plan, our reading plan for the community begins December 3rd and then goes through December 31st. Isn't it that tight?

Annie: Oh, that's cool.

Raechel: Through the end of the year.

Annie: Oh, that is so nice. Because we can all like get through Thanksgiving, get settled, and then roll.

Raechel: Honestly, I like this better.

Annie: ...on that Monday. Or Sunday.

Raechel: And it gives us like a January 1 to start the new year plan, which feels great.

Annie: Selfishly, this is really interesting for me that that's when we start because I get back from New York on Friday December 1st.

Raechel: Oh yeah.

Annie: So then I have my Saturday and then we start this new study and I start being home again. Okay, so advent. December 3rd to the 31st is the reading plan. I mean, you've been on 15 times, but there are people listening today who do not know what Advent is. Or maybe they grew up in a tradition that told them about Advent, but they haven't observed it except in mass or except on Sundays at church when the robes change color. So will you kind of say what Advent is in a personal study way? Like why do we observe it as Protestants in our living room every morning when we're reading the Bible for this month?

Raechel: Absolutely. The high level thing that we say every time it's advent is a Latin word. It means arrival. So that's why we have that word. But what we do, in the church calendar and we just talked about, you know, Advent and the dates and all of that, and Christmastide, we celebrate Advent to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus.

We do that every year because we are forgetful people. And we need the rhythms in our whole calendar year. We use Lent to lead us up to Easter, the death and resurrection of Jesus. And we have our ordinary time, which drives Annie nuts.

Annie: It's so boring. I'm ready to get out. Get me out.

Raechel: But every year we come back around. And like those four Sundays before Christmas, we-

Annie: I love it.

Raechel: ...we open the Bible, but... I mean, hopefully we're opening the Bible even during ordinary time and every time of the year. But I was talking to Amanda this morning about, like, why do I need Advent again this year? Like what is-

Annie: Man, what a great question. Why do I need Advent again this year?

Raechel: And I think that it kind of got me thinking about, well, what's different this year? I've lived a whole extra year of life. And Annie, that's date that we know of. I mean, this is recording on a different day than it's gonna air but He hadn't come back yet.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Raechel: So like our advent is both celebrating that Jesus came and it's looking ahead because He's coming again. He promised.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. So we read kind of the same scriptures every year. There's some traditional advent scriptures that we read. And every year at She Reads Truth, we do package them in a little bit different way or we maybe take a different thematic approach. But at the end of the day, we're observing Advent. We're remembering that the world needed Him and that He came and that He rose again and He ascended and we need Him still, and that He's coming back and He's gonna make all things new.

Annie: Beautiful.

Raechel: Like that whole arc of scripture we're here between our two Advents going, I need to remember again because it's been a year He hadn't come back yet. I'm still waiting.

Annie: Still Waiting.

- Raechel:** Everything that was true a year ago is still true. Everything that will be true and isn't true yet will still be true. So I need to go through it again. I need to rehearse the gospel. I need to rehearse the reality of Advent again this year.
- Annie:** And there are a lot of people that I've experienced that are friends of mine or are friends of the show that talk to us that this really is the time they read the Bible.
- Raechel:** It's true.
- Annie:** Like this is when they go, I make time that I do not make the rest of the year. And-
- Raechel:** I mean, you talk about data, Annie. That's what our data shows at She Reads Truth by like maybe three times. The number of people that read with us the rest of the year read with us at Advent.
- Annie:** Amanda, what are we studying this year?
- Amanda:** Well, we're Studying Jesus.
- Annie:** Oh, great.
- Amanda:** But here's how.
- Raechel:** That's our seminary girl.
- Annie:** It is. Yes.
- Amanda:** Jesus. The title of this year's plan is For He Alone is Worthy.
- Raechel:** I love it.
- Amanda:** We always choose a lyric.
- Annie:** I love that title.
- Amanda:** Yes, it's a good one. We always choose a lyric from a Christmas carol, a Christmas hymn. So this time that is the lyric. It's from, you know, the refrain after O come all ye faithful, there's like that kind of worship refrain of O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him for He alone is worthy. Will praise his name forever.

And what we are doing is we're looking at who Jesus is and that He is... like, you know, one of the answers to why are we doing Advent again this year is for He alone is worthy. The reason that our hearts, I think, are compelled toward the story

of Advent is that this is the redemption story, you know, and how Lent also, you know, Easter tide also presents the story of the gospel because we're looking at the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

But what I love about Advent is that I feel like it pulls the lens back even further to say, here's who God is, and here's the story of redemption, and where God came to dwell with us. So because we have scripture, which thank you Lord for the gift of Your word, then we... that story is recorded for us to know this about our God and to know who Jesus is.

So we're gonna walk through the advent season looking at different... like looking at a diamond. You know, and you're like looking at the different distinct ways that that one diamond shines. Like the different sparkles.

Raechel: The facets.

Amanda: The facets if you will. So some of those I'll read them from the table of contents. And we're asking Him to come. You know, we celebrate that Jesus came, that the baby was born in a manger and we feel that original anticipation and need again because we feel it all the time. And then we're also waiting for Him to return.

Raechel: Yeah, that's right.

Amanda: Like Raechel said. So every weekday of Advent, we're going to ask Him to come.

Annie: Love that.

Amanda: So we're gonna say, light of the world, come. Man from heaven, come. So these are all names for Jesus. Blessing for all people. Generous provider. Perfect sacrifice. Bread of life. Living water. Restorer of life. Righteous mediator. Great high priest. We just keep going.

Annie: And those are all names that someone in the Bible has called Jesus?

Amanda: Yes.

Raechel: Or He's called Himself.

Amanda: These are names that scripture shows to be characteristics of Jesus, who He is and why He came. So these are the titles that Jesus fills that no one else can fill. So it makes me teary. It's like we get to this time of year and we can feel it in our bodies and in our souls. We can feel that we need so much that we can't provide for

ourselves. As much as Raechel loves me, she can't be my... let's see. She can't be the morning star.

Annie: The Morning star. That's the same one I was looking at. That's right.

Raechel: This hurts my feelings.

Annie: I mean, but how much do we want someone to be our morning star?

Raechel: You're not wrong.

Amanda: How much do we want to be that for other people?

Annie: Or do we think we're asked to be that from other people, that I've got to be their morning star. And we aren't your morning star.

Annie: Wow.

Amanda: So this Advent, I Amanda Williams in the year 2023, am coming to Advent and saying, Lord, I need to remember that this is who You are for me and that this is who You are for the world and this is who You are for the people that I love so much, it just pains me. But I can't be those things. And they can't be that for me.

Raechel: I think that's one of the things that I love about the title for this year. That He alone is worthy because we look down the list of like, even the things that you read, Amanda, and I think, like, you know, we're saying, O come, righteous mediator. Who alone is worthy to be the righteous mediator? It's Him. Who alone is the perfect sacrifice? Who alone is worthy to be that?

I think it helps me in the reading the way that it's assembled even like that... you know, for those of you listening who might not be familiar with She Reads Truth or the way that we approach reading plans, for every reading day there is kind of a main reading and then there's some curated... like some additional scriptures. So that scripture kind of speaks to itself and addresses a theme, but kind of from all over scripture.

And I think that what I love... like the light of the World day, I think it's beautiful because it presents Jesus as the light of the world. But then it also shows why the world needs a light. We are in darkness. And then it steps in that third step to O come, light of the world. We're beckoning you. And that you did come.

So that's what each reading day is gonna kind of take you on a little journey through all of those things, under the umbrella of He alone is worthy to be all of these things.

Annie: And because He's the only one capable, He's the only one worthy.

Raechel: That's exactly right.

Annie: There's a section in this book I've never seen y'all do before. The practicing the presence of God in the Advent. That feels new. Am I wrong?

Raechel: Yes and no.

Amanda: So we did a reading plan on the presence of God and we have had this kind of zoom in on what, what does it mean to practice the presence of God? How do we practice the presence of God? But we've never put that in the advent study.

Annie: Wow.

Amanda: So you're not wrong. It is new to the Advent experience.

Annie: It's unique to the workbook?

Raechel: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, great.

Raechel: It really is. And it's 10 pages. It's a pretty thorough-

Annie: That's what I was saying, like, my Gosh, this is incredible.

Amanda: Can I tell you what I love about this?

Annie: Yes.

Amanda: My favorite thing about this year's advent reading plan is the way that it approaches spending time in God's presence and practicing the presence of God, which means being aware that God's presence is with us all the time, and living, walking in light of that.

So one of the ways that we do that is through prayer, right? Like as followers of Jesus, prayer is one of the key spiritual practices in our faith. I love that this year's

advent experience focuses on prayer, I think, in a way that maybe we've never done but definitely in a way that we haven't done for quite some time.

Annie: Wow.

Amanda: I feel tender about that because I think that it's really going to open up the scripture and the experience and the engagement with God, like the encounters with God that our friends who are gonna read along with us will have.

Annie: I mean, I hear you. And there's also not a busier time.

Amanda: You're not wrong.

Annie: So how do we do that? Is it a choice? I mean, is it a choice? We have to wrap all the gifts. We have to go to the performances at school. We have to go over the hills and over the river and through the woods, whatever.

Amanda: You got it.

Annie: ...to grow his house. How do we make space?

Raechel: Here's what I'll say. You know, maybe a little bit speaking to what you said, Amanda. There's a phrase that we like to use as 21st-century believers. God showed up. Like, God, I need you to show up here. Or Here's a way where God really-

Annie: I need you to show up.

Raechel: Yeah.

Annie: I told a story yesterday and I said, The Lord really showed up for Me.

Raechel: The Lord really showed up. I feel like I'm hearing it more and more and more. Maybe my ears are tuned to it. But I think that, like Amanda, as you were talking about practicing the presence of God, the already presentness of God, I think that there's somebody else to show up. And I think that what we know as students of the word is that God did show up.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: He has and He is. He is always present. And in that showing-up phrase that we use, I don't think it's wrong. Because I think what we're saying is like He's showing Himself.

Annie: It's not complete.

Raechel: Yeah. So He's showing Himself, revealing Himself. That's actually biblical. That's good. But there is-

Annie: The manifest presence.

Raechel: Yeah. Yeah.

Annie: If we're gonna get seminarial.

Raechel: And we should.

Annie: The manifest presence versus-

Raechel: Well, maybe you and I shouldn't, Annie.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. That's right. The vulnerability part, I was out. I just canceled my seminary membership. No, I'm just kidding. But yeah.

Raechel: But when I think about like, okay, if we're using that terminology, that showing up, I do think there's a little bit of like, I gotta show up. I wanna show up for this.

Annie: Interesting.

Raechel: I wanna tune myself to the presence of God. And how can I do that? By opening His word? By being in prayer, by just sitting quietly and tuning myself to His presence. But when we say show up, I too want to show up for this.

Annie: I want to show up. When I was driving here this morning, I was saying to the Lord in the car, I feel like we're at the same coffee shop at the same table and I have gotten up to get our drinks and to get our napkins and I'm doing all these things and the kindness of God is He's still waiting at the table. And He's like, just come sit when you're ready to come sit. Like, you don't have to do all this. You can just sit.

Raechel: Only one thing is necessary.

Annie: That's it. That's it. And my Marthaness is raging right now, and my Maryness is unavailable.

Raechel: Okay.

Annie: But the thing I'm sensing from the Lord, even as we're thinking about this study for next month is I'm going, oh, this is my Mary invitation. This is my sit-down invitation to make space.

Raechel: Because Jesus He did show up at the coffee shop.

Annie: Yes.

Raechel: He came right on time and He's sitting there quietly waiting.

Annie: Right. And sometimes I think... Amanda, I wonder if you can speak to this. Both of y'all can. I sometimes wonder if the reason we don't make time for this kind of stuff during a really busy season is we actually don't want to.

Amanda: I don't think you're wrong. I think that as much as I wish it were not true, to a large extent, there's always stuff we can't control. To a large extent, my life reflects the things that matter to me.

Annie: And whether it's pain or, I mean-

Amanda: That's right.

Annie: For so many people, it's I don't know how to sit down with God because I'm in pain. And so I will not sit down.

Amanda: Here's the other thing. I think that we also, to quote yourself back to you, I'm not actually gonna quote you, but a concept that you... I think we have to be okay, and not even okay, but eager to be amateurs, to practice.

Annie: That's good.

Amanda: I mean, this extra in the book that you referenced is called Practicing the Presence of God in Advent. A practice is something that you do, right, over and over. But I also think that the other definition of like, I am learning. And they-

Raechel: It doesn't say perfecting the presence, right?

Annie: Yes. That's it. Practice.

Amanda: Here's the other thing that I've learned in seminary is that it's still full humans. There's not really... you know, sometimes we joke about like if someone asks me to pray at a gathering or whatever, and I'm like, well, I am a professional. And it's like

that. Or you ask your pastor or whatever. And it's like, yeah, this is what you paid for.

But the truth is we are all learning and we are all Martha's at the feet of Jesus. And we're all just showing up whether we have the right notebook to... Because that's what I thought about when you're like, I'm gathering all the stuff and He's waiting at the table and I'm like online shopping for my prayer journal when He's like legitimately you could just talk to me. Like, grab a spiral, Bible. Let's go.

Raechel: Open up a Word doc if you need to.

Annie: That's it. Well, I mean, one of the questions we got from our friends that get the AFD Week in Review email on Friday, she said, How do you make reading the Bible a habit again after you've been hurt by the church?

Raechel: I think it becomes a must. I think it becomes a like, okay, all of these things that maybe I thought was true or I rightly or wrongly depended on, whatever it is, I need to come back to knowing what God's word says, just knowing what is true, knowing what the promises of God are so that I can know that I know that I know that those either are things I can count on, have happened, will happen, those kinds of things.

I think it's kind of imperative. It's a part of the healing process to come back to the word of God. And maybe the purest way you can where you're maybe not doing a big Bible study that starts with a big devotional and then has a little scripture to support it. But like going like, no, I'm gonna kind of go deep. I'm gonna read a lot of words of scripture because I kind of need to reorient completely.

And ask the spirit to use the living and active word of God in this time to reorient me to what I can count on, what I can know is true, what I can know isn't gonna be shaken or swept out from under me or what can disorient me. I think that church hurt can become extremely disorienting.

Annie: That's it. I mean, I feel like it throws you off the ship and you just don't know what to do.

Raechel: And you have to kind of, in some way, separate that human awfulness, whatever it is from what is real, real, real and what is everlasting.

Annie: What's helped me too is in places where I felt like the church has hurt me, I've actually put the name to the person of the church, where I've been like, It hadn't been the church hurt me. It was that person-

Raechel: That's good.

Annie: ...hurt my feelings. Or hurt our church.

Raechel: Or let me down.

Annie: So that it kind of removes this big umbrella of the whole thing in every city.

Raechel: That's good, Annie.

Annie: And instead it's like, Man, that guy really hurt me.

Raechel: And maybe some people that surrounded that guy.

Annie: Yeah. Totally.

Raechel: But those are also people-

Annie: There were systemic things but it's also people.

Raechel: When we talk about that Jesus and His body is the church, that's actually still meant to be a good thing.

[00:43:58] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [Indeed](#). Okay, we were just celebrating some work anniversaries, we call them workiversaries, for our team last week. And it always reminds me how grateful I am to get to work with this team. There was a day when it was just me working at my kitchen table. So to have such an incredible team around me as a gift I do not take for granted.

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Okay, now back to finish up our conversation with Raechel and Amanda.

[00:46:26] <Music>

Annie: Amanda, when you... because I'm also thinking for our, for new asked this question or for anybody who's thinking that there's a beauty in starting a plan and finishing a plan. Because then you can kind of jump in and go, Okay, well I can't commit to this thing but I can commit to December. Why do you think it matters if we start on December 3rd that we finish?

Amanda: Oh, that's a good question because I am historically... I struggle with finishing when I start. There's grace for that. I mean, goodness, we all do that, right? I also think there's power in persevering. It's not gonna be perfect. It's just not gonna be. I mean, if it is congratulations.

Annie: Well done.

Amanda: And let us know.

Annie: Tell me how.

Amanda: Because I've yet to experience a perfect advent. So that's not what we're after. But I just think even if you approach it as an experiment. Like we've talked to women before who are struggling to open their Bibles for various reasons. Life circumstance. They've been told that they aren't qualified to read the Bible or that it's not for them, or they've been hurt, you know, in a number of ways-

Annie: Will you just clarify for anyone listening? Women can read the Bible and understand it as clearly as men?

Amanda: Women can... Humans can read the Bible. If you have the Holy Spirit in you, look out.

Annie: That's it. He will tell you all things is what Jesus said.

Amanda: I mean, and there's a place for study. I'm devoting a lot of time to it.

Annie: Yes, you are.

Amanda: Like, there is a place for learning to read deeply and carefully as my professor is telling me. And that is good. The Holy Spirit doesn't operate like rogue of the intentions of scripture and the full... But also the Holy Spirit is God. So if you have the Holy Spirit, all bets are off, I think. And like you-

Annie: You can continue with your list. Sorry.

Amanda: Absolutely, absolutely women can and should read scripture. And you absolutely can understand. And it could transform your life. Because here's the thing-

Raechel: It likely will.

Amanda: Yeah. It's not about you or what you bring to the table. It's about the living and active word of God and a God who seeks to be with us and who has... that is what Advent is about. It is about God with us.

Raechel: That's right.

Amanda: So I just think it's comical when we're talking about the difference between someone with a seminary degree and someone without. But then we talk about the difference between the most educated person and Jesus. I mean, come on. Come on, you guys.

Raechel: Well, and part of why She Reads Truth began to begin with was sort of like I think as women, I think we could just go straight to scripture. And it felt a little audacious at the time, and we could probably go without any letters after our name. And part of the thing that I think made it so inviting was in fact that we didn't have letters after our name. We were just two gals from Tennessee who were reading the Bible and y'all come.

Annie: And y'all come.

Amanda: Yeah, y'all come

Raechel: The letters can come later after 10 years of obedience in this way. Right?

Annie: Yeah, that's right. I mean, I'd wanted to ask that question not in a mocking way at all. But seriously, I wonder if people are listening and I wondered that if they have been taught that. So you were listing for us reasons women have told you that they don't read the Bible. I didn't want you to not be able to finish that.

Amanda: Well, what we have said is just like, if you are wondering if this matters, try it.

Annie: That's it.

Raechel: Try it.

Annie: Experiment. That is the experiment.

Amanda: And start it, finish it. Push through.

Raechel: That's right.

Amanda: If you miss a day or two, pick it back up and keep going.

Annie: Well, y'all offer us grace days-

Amanda: We do.

Annie: ...one day a week where we don't have an assignment of what to read.

Amanda: And sometimes a day isn't enough. Sometimes we need more or sometimes we wanna read ahead. I mean-

Raechel: Or sometimes we wanna sit in the same day, a couple days in a row.

Amanda: Here's what we're not in charge of. We're not in charge of what you and the Holy Spirit are going to do with this book that we offer you. You can show up. And He is faithful. Yeah. And that's it.

I will also say my heart is just so tender toward... there's so much in the question that you just read. There's a story there. And that story is full of stories. And there are so many real feelings. But what we know about feelings is they don't tell the whole truth and we know that if a human has hurt another human, they have also hurt Jesus. God aches. His heart aches for His people.

Are we talking about Mary and Martha? Jesus wept with his friends for the death of His other friend, their brother. In our invitation for you to read scripture with us this advent, we're not asking for you to pretend like hard things happen to you, didn't happen to you. We are saying, Come sit in scripture. Bring your hard things and sit with Jesus. Sit with the only One who can make any of those things right ultimately.

Annie: That's beautiful.

Raechel: That's good.

Annie: Raech, let's talk through nuts and bolts of this series just for people who are new to She Reads Truth or ready to jump in again. You can go to shereadstruth.com and you can read every day.

Raechel: Yeah.

Annie: Totally free.

Amanda: Highly recommend.

Annie: Highly recommend. Starting December 3rd.

Raechel: Yes.

Annie: So let's talk about She's for just a minute.

Raechel: Great. And the She Reads Truth app. That's the other place that you can...

Annie: And the app. You buy the plan in the app?

Raechel: Yeah.

Annie: For 2.99 or something.

Raechel: Yeah, something like that.

Annie: But then this booklet is on your website.

Raechel: Shopshereadstruth.com.

Annie: Perfect. It is my favorite thing. I have all of mine. It is my favorite thing.

Raechel: It's like the Christmas collection.

Annie: That is how I feel. Now when you see mine on a shelf next to each other, you can't tell what year is which because I spiral mine.

Raechel: Yes, you do.

Annie: I'm sorry and I'm thankful.

Raechel: And we brought you spiral one.

Annie: You brought me a spiral one, which just felt like my friends know me. But they can get this on shopshereadstruth. We have a code. It is ANNIEADVENT15. And that's 15% off anything in the Advent collection through the end of the year.

Amanda: That's right.

Annie: So that's what's for She's.

Raechel: Yes.

Annie: And what else is in this series this year?

Raechel: Great question.

Annie: Thank you.

Raechel: I love saying “great questions” too because I know how important it is to you.

Annie: It matters so much to me and to my dad.

Raechel: And to your dad.

Annie: My dad.

Raechel: Yeah, I know this. So other things in the Advent collection that you can get your 15% off of. So we have the She Reads Truth book. We also have the He Reads Truth book.

Annie: Oh, good.

Raechel: The Legacy Book.

Annie: Oh, it's beautiful. Oh my gosh

Raechel: Same content as the She book. I think you might skip a couple of recipes. In the girls' book, there's a y'all come cookie exchange that's put together in the rest-

Annie: And how to host it.

Raechel: And how to host it and all the recipes. I don't know-

Annie: Great.

Raechel: ...if those are in the guy book or not actually.

Annie: But if a guy wants to, have people over and talk about cookies.

Raechel: Do it.

Annie: It doesn't change whether you're masculine or not.

Raechel: No. Not even a little.

Annie: Guys love cookies.

Raechel: Not even a little. Guys especially love cookies.

Annie: Yeah, for sure.

Raechel: And then for the guys and the girls this year, and this is the first time we've ever done this, there's an advent prayer journal.

Annie: What?

Raechel: So it's like a little bit smaller than the He Reads Truth book. But this is for guys or girls.

Annie: It's beautiful.

Raechel: And it's a little more space. As we were creating the She Reads Truth and the He Reads Truth books, we were like, but what if there was more space every day-

Annie: To pray.

Raechel: ...based on the theme of that day? So you really are gonna get another prayer prompt that's based on what you've read, the scripture you've read. It's just like Amanda was saying. That added layer of like, no, let's slow down.

Annie: Sit in it.

Raechel: Let's practice the presence of God. Let's pray with our hands.

Annie: It feels so different, y'all. Every year you bring a theme to us. But then there's an unspoken theme, right, that it is reflected usually in our three lives too.

Raechel: Oh yeah.

Annie: It's like, man, we gotta... this is about longing and this is about survival. And this year's about joy. And this feels like this year's about like dig in. Make time.

Raechel: He alone.

Annie: Yeah. Like there is something for us in this, but you have to dig.

Raechel: Yeah.

Amanda: Yeah.

Annie: That's beautiful.

Amanda: Because if you'll let us... and when I say us, I'm just thinking about our team right now, and I'm thinking about how... So every inch of this is intentional. And also the

Lord takes our offering as a team. And then, you know, a month goes by and we look at it again and we go, Oh, look what He did. And we didn't even know.

Annie: Right.

Annie: So if you will let us, you can take your reading guide and your prayer journal, so you'll read each day... So let's say you're reading the day that is blessing for all people, come. Yes Lord, please. So you read the scriptures, you're in Genesis, you're in John, there are questions at the end of the day to help you reflect on what you've read to understand where you see that, where you want to see that. And then if you have the prayer journal, you get to turn to the prayer journal and keep going and then talk to the Lord about it. So if you want-

Annie: That's wild.

Amanda: ...to really dig into practicing the presence of God, we've given you tools to do that. And then if you layer in community with that and do that with some friends, I feel like all bets are off. Look out, old scratch. We're coming for you.

Raechel: Look out, old scratch. It's like we were praying before we hit record about something else, something completely unrelated, and kind of concluded it with, "Lord, we know you're already on it." But that's how I feel about Advent this year. I feel like He's already on it.

Annie: It's what it feels like.

Raechel: Like we've done what we can, we brought our fishes and our loaves and He's already on it.

Annie: He's already on it.

Raechel: For every single person who opens His word this Advent.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: The only other thing for the grownups that we have, and I say only... there are others. But we always do a 12-card set. Like a little six-by-six card thing where you can kind of set them out in your house or wherever you want. The art looks the same as the book. There's kind of key scriptures pulled out. Well, for Advent we do 25 because it feels like another chance to kind of count from 1 to 25 and kind of mark. So anybody can do that. But I would say the very best experience that you're gonna get is I think we actually have a bundle called the Advent experience.

Annie: Oh, brilliant.

Raechel: So you just go and you hit that and you get the journal, you get the card set, you get the book-

Annie: And 15% off.

Raechel: And you get 15% off all of that. So that's the best deal. For kids we have three really good things. I think you might already have these, Annie. We have the book, This is the Christmas story.

Annie: That's so sweet.

Raechel: I think the first line is the Christmas story didn't begin with the baby, it began with a promise. So we kind of take everyone through from Abraham.

Annie: Such a good book.

Raechel: And then we also have a little ornament set with scriptures on it daily that kids can hang up. And then my favorite is the conversation cards. And you can just kind of sit at the table at dinner if you want, or the breakfast table, in the car is another really good place to do it. And it's just a little open your bible moment, a little scripture reading. And then there's three questions, kind of like grammar, logic, rhetoric.

There's like a one-word answer, maybe a one sentence, and then a discussion question. So it kind of hits all the different age groups of kids, especially if you have different age groups. Anyway. So those are the kids' things. So you could, I think, even get like a family experience bundle if you're like going for it.

Annie: And that is all at shopshereadstruth.com. This is in the show notes, but my code is AnnieAdvent15. That's 15% off. Brilliant. Y'all. I mean, this feels like something.

Raechel: I agree.

Annie: This feels like something.

Raechel: I agree. I think it might be our 12th advent as a community. It's not our 12th book. I think it's probably maybe our ninth book or something. I mean, just like our ninth advent book.

Annie: Oh. I was like, gosh, yeah, y'all are in-

Raechel: Hundreds and hundreds.

Annie: I was gonna say your ninth advent book.

Raechel: Yeah.

Annie: What did we not say about Advent that you wanna make sure we say?

Raechel: I don't know if this is helpful or not. But here's what I'll say. We've talked a lot about, you know, even like I loved that second question that you asked, Annie, where it was just like, well, how important is it that I stick the landing?

A conversation that we've had on your podcast before in one of our past 15 is about the topic of urgent versus important. And we all agree, any of us that believes that scripture is true and is our way to know God and is our authority, we all believe it's important.

In the advent season, urgent becomes next level across sort of every category of our lives. Everything is suddenly urgent. Christmas cards, like the parties, like you said, you listed some things. And it's hard sometimes to see the sitting still as an urgent thing. I think one might even argue, well, that's not urgent. Like, nothing's on fire here.

But I think that I've learned to tune my heart to scripture being an urgent thing. Like starting my day with what is true, especially in the urgent seasons of life is really important. However... Here's what I love. We probably won't stick the landing. There are a lot of things that we kind of have to stick the landing on this Christmas. Like we gotta get all the presents wrapped. We Gotta show up to these certain things.

Annie: A lot of things have timelines.

Raechel: There are a lot of landings that must be stuck.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: And this is not an over-spiritualizing thing to be like, we don't have to because Jesus did. But He did. He did stick the landing.

Annie: That's right.

Raechel: And He will again. That sounds silly, but what I know is that actually Advent is not about our perfection. It's about His.

Annie: Yeah, that's good.

Raechel: And I think that there has to be freedom in that. So if we approach the advent season as important, as Bible reading is important, it is urgent and He is perfect.

Annie: That's good. That's good. You got anything else, Amanda? How do you feel?

Amanda: I just feel tender, Annie.

Annie: You do. I love it.

Amanda: I am eager to see what the Lord will do in our hearts and in our communities.

Annie: Me too. That feels-

Raechel: We need Him.

Annie: We need Him. We need Him. So come Lord Jesus. In every way. You are welcome to come back. You are welcome to come back.

Raechel: Oh, I have one other fun thing that we didn't talk about, but might be kind of fun. In the Advent book, another cool thing that we did this year that's kind of new are the O Antiphons.

Annie: I saw that. And I don't know what that means.

Raechel: And you felt overwhelmed by it.

Annie: I thought that's not English.

Raechel: That's why I'm gonna give you a little quick high level thing before we close.

Annie: Yes.

Raechel: O Antiphons are seven prayers that are the kind of pulled out of prophecies of Jesus in scripture. And these were seven prayers that were prayed kind of since the Middle Ages.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Raechel: So one of the things that we try to do at She Reads Truth is not just celebrate presently, but connect ourselves over time to the Church, the capital C Church.

Annie: Yeah, which I love.

Raechel: The Church calendar is one way we do that. But these O Antiphons is another way. So what we did-

Annie: What is that word you're saying? O Antiphons?

Raechel: An antiphons. So like the seven of them. The O Antiphons are these, like, O come king of the Nations. O come Emmanuel. O come the morning star. So these seven that are prayed traditionally. So it's another actual like capital C Church tradition on the seven nights leading up to Christmas Eve, so December 17th-

Annie: Why have we never done this before?

Raechel: ...through December 23rd.

Annie: As an Annie. I'm putting this on y'all. I'm saying as an Annie, why have I never known there were seven things to pray?

Raechel: We're layering in an extra tradition.

Annie: Is it Catholic?

Amanda: It's kind of a deep track.

Raechel: It's a deep track.

Annie: Into it. I am so into it.

Raechel: It's very Latin, which... Yeah. So we are, as a community, starting December 17th will go through... We will pray as a community the seven Antiphons through the 23rd.

Annie: Oh, I'm dying about this.

Raechel: Amanda, I see you have the page open. What do you like...

Amanda: Do a little sampling?

Raechel: Do you want to sample?

Annie: Do this one.

Raechel: The prayers are so cool. They're so special.

Annie: Let's close like this.

Raechel: Yeah, I love that.

Annie: Just close us out by praying like this.

Amanda: Okay. I'm gonna give you guys a couple. I'm gonna start with O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their savior. Come and save us, O Lord, our God. O King of the nations and their desire, the cornerstone making both one, come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay. And listen to this one. O key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, you open and no one can shut. You shut and no one can open. Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house. Those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Annie: Amen.

Amanda: That is Jesus.

Raechel: That's what we have to look forward to.

Annie: Amen.

Raechel: Not just this advent season, but as believers we have Jesus to look forward to.

Annie: He is worthy.

[01:03:48] <Music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love them? Aren't they the best? Oh, I'm just so glad they're back. I love talking Advent with them. Listen, if you wanna jump in with their advent plan, head over to shereadstruth.com and grab your advent studies. They've got resources for women, men, kids, and you can use the code AnnieAdvent15. That's AnnieAdvent15 to save 15% off everything in their Advent collection. Just order by November 13th to make sure you have it in time for the start of Advent.

If you've got any questions from this episode, just drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener, or send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast. We're trying to answer them all over there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, the streets of New York.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is I'm meeting up with some girlfriends this afternoon, going on a little walk around Central Park. So I am very excited about it.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with a really special episode with my friend Jana Kramer. We'll see y'all then.