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Annie: Hey 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.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I gotta tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [Athletic Greens](#). Listen, I'm always looking for ways to make my morning routine as simple as possible, which is why I've really come to love and trust AG1 by Athletic Greens.

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Intro: So today on the show, I get to talk with my friend Faith Eury Cho. Listen, Faith is the CEO and founder of the Honor Summit, which is a nonprofit organization that centers Asian American women in the mission of God. She's been a gospel preacher since she was like 19 years old, you guys. Alongside her husband, Pastor David Cho, Faith is the co-founder and co-pastor of Mosaic Covenant Church in New Jersey.

Faith just released her debut book called *Experiencing Friendship With God*. Oh, y'all, the book is beautiful. It is really one of those that will help us see how fulfilling a true connection with the Lord can be, especially during seasons of pain and loneliness, questioning what it means to live for God. I think you're really gonna love getting to know Faith and learning from her.

Also, this is a fun episode because Faith being in New Jersey and me being in New York, she just hopped on over to New York City. We went down to the Hephzibah House and recorded this episode in person. It was so fun. I just adore her and

thankful that we got to record multiple episodes at the Hephzibah House here in New York.

So here's my conversation from the Hephzibah House with my friend Faith Eury Cho.

[00:02:34] <Music>

Annie: Faith Eury Cho, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Faith: I'm so glad to be here.

Annie: I mean, our friends who watch on Insta story know this: that you are the first guest I'm getting the interview while I'm in New York at Hephzibah House.

Faith: What an honor!

Annie: I mean, this place is so cool.

Faith: Yeah. Such a legend just to be here.

Annie: Right. I mean, they were like, "Corrie Ten Boom was here. Elizabeth Elliott was here." I was like, "I've never been listed amongst."

Faith: Mercy.

Annie: It's not the list I'm usually involved in. Okay, tell me why y'all live up here.

Faith: Yeah, well, we planted a church in northern New Jersey. So my husband and I and our four kids and our two dogs, we live in Paramus. And it's just a party. I mean, church planting in the pandemic was something else.

Annie: Dude, so much of your book revolves around the wilderness of church planting in 2020. I was out on the road with a couple of our mutual friends this weekend, and I'm hearing so many women leaders say, "Okay, I need a break." Like, okay, 2020 was hard, we hustled, we church planted, we still lead online, we still wrote, we created things, books came out, conferences were born in '21 and '22. And in '23, everybody is outta gas. Are you hearing that too?

Faith: Oh, yeah. I mean, because there was this adrenaline. And especially leadership, we tend to thrive off of the chaos.

Annie: Oh, listen, I can triage discipleship like nobody's business.

Faith: Yeah, yeah. So I think at a certain point, adrenaline runs out. I think that's where we have to lean in into the real real, the eternal thing, the forever thing, which is just our intimacy with the presence of God.

Annie: So for any of our friends listening, I'm thinking about, it's November, it's the end of the year, the first semester is almost over. So we're about to break in for all of our moms, like you, are about to burst into all the Christmas parties, all the holiday things, shopping, and so many people, wherever they are leading are tired.

The mom who is responding to you saying, pressed into the presence of God, or the single woman who's in student ministry or leading at our church, who is saying, I mean, sounds good, except I am exhausted. What's that spot? What do you do when you're so tired? I mean, we're gonna dig into *Experiencing Friendship With God* because this book's incredible. But start there. Start with the tired people.

Faith: Oh yeah. And I've been there and I do share about it a lot in the book. I would say we're tired because it feels like there's a distance, a chasm that we have to close by our own strength.

Annie: I always feel that, Faith.

Faith: Yes.

Annie: That's embarrassing for you to nail me that hard in the first three minutes. I do feel that. I feel like it is mine to fix.

Faith: Absolutely. Right. And in a way, intimacy is our debt to pay just because we have a life to live.

Annie: Dude.

Faith: And in a way, we're constantly living as if our lives are in competition with our relationship with Jesus. But then what He's done for us is not that fragile. And instead of compartmentalizing and separating our intimacy with the Lord with the rest of our lives, we start to include Him.

So for those that feel just tired and having no strength to in a way revitalize their walk with Jesus. And I get that. I would say, acknowledge Him. Don't run to Him, don't look for Him, don't strive for Him, don't try to earn Him or perform for Him, but acknowledge Him. Because by the blood of Jesus, He's with you. He never went anywhere.

Annie: You say this really interesting thing in the book—we're just gonna jump in—about the Holy Spirit, how the Holy Spirit is loyal.

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Annie: I just sat in my apartment teary-eyed, reading the idea... I mean, it's the same thing you're saying. It's not my chasm to close. The Holy Spirit is loyal to me. I almost said "loyal to me too". And that's not even it. He is loyal to me. Will you talk a little bit...? I think we need to be reminded of that.

Faith: Right. Yeah. And when we think of loyalty, I think oftentimes, it could be such a vanilla concept. But loyalty is fierce. It is tough. It is gritty. It says in the Bible that the Holy Spirit can be grieved and quenched. Meaning He has feelings. He's responsive. He sees everything that we do. He hears every thought that we have, and it hurts. I mean, it hurts sometimes, obviously, because we're not perfect.

And the best of friends are the long-suffering ones. It's the ones that will remain with you when you are just unlovable. It's the ones that will remain with you even if you do not even like them. It never says that the Holy Spirit just walks away just because you've grieved Him. It never says that He walks away just because you've quenched Him. Because that bond is that bond of blood, the blood of Jesus Christ.

Annie: You talk in the book about how just like a pregnant woman doesn't forget she's pregnant, but isn't really doing anything to grow. I mean, the baby is just growing. As you were talking about that, I was thinking about all the things I've made and all the... because I haven't had any kids yet. Right?

Faith: Mm-hmm.

Annie: But of all the things I've made, of all the things I'm watching other people make, I'm like, "Oh, yeah, there are things growing in us all the time." I mean, I don't know if you know. I had surgery in August and had a cyst removed and it was five and a half pounds.

Faith: Oh my gosh.

Annie: It was a real deal this little cyst in my belly. I was growing it and didn't know.

Faith: Right.

Annie: So I knew my body was changing but I didn't know what was going on. Help us identify like how do we know if the Holy Spirit is doing something in us that isn't ready to be birthed but is growing. Like writing a book or starting a ministry or a

family or someone to date. How do we know when the Holy Spirit is growing something in us?

Faith: I think in that we don't know.

Annie: Oh, that's it, right? We don't know.

Faith: We don't. And this is the thing.

Annie: Is it wheat and weeds?

Faith: I would say a lot of the Christian conversations is a lot about breakthrough, destiny, what is He going to do with this, you know, what is going to do with my pain, how am I going to be rewarded? As if the purpose of the wilderness is the promised land.

Annie: Oh, boy! That hurts my feelings, Faith.

Faith: As if the point of this wilderness is to be a better person or to get to a better place.

Annie: Yeah, just get to the other side.

Faith: Right. But then when we live like that, we're just constantly disappointed because ultimately, the purpose of our lives and the purpose of the wilderness is not for the promised land, but it's for the presence of God. So when our focus is, well, how do I know He's writing the book in me? How do I know He's preparing me for that ministry that's gonna reach the thousands and the millions? Like, how do I know that? And the point is we don't know that because that's not the purpose of what we are going through. The purpose of what we're going through is to befriend His presence.

Annie: I mean, dude, okay, where you talking about God can do more... This sentence... the idea you slid this into page 140, Faith, is so brutal. "God can do more with your loyalty in the wilderness that you can do by yourself in the promised land."

Faith: Absolutely.

Annie: Are we always in the wilderness?

Faith: Hmm, that's a good question. I think yes and no.

Annie: I think I am.

Faith: Yeah. Yeah. Like I think it's a yes or no question. I think as long as we are on this side of heaven, there's always going to be a wandering, there's always going to be a waiting for heaven, for the things that we were created, for that ultimate perfect communion with the presence of God.

But at the same time, yes, I do believe in the concept of breakthrough, I do believe in the concept of next seasons, I do believe in the concept of God bringing us to new levels. These are all wonderful things that come with the presence of God. But like I said, so much of our focus is let me pray really hard so that I could become a revivalist, you know?

Annie: Right.

Faith: Or let me start this blog so that I could become an author. You know, because I believe that I have...

Annie: That's big 2012 vibes right there. Big 2012 energy.

Faith: Yeah. Yeah. And I think when we do that, we often find ourselves burnt out, disillusioned, and just running on fumes just because that's not the fuel.

Annie: Well, the funny thing... Okay, is this true in your life, too? I'm thinking about my friends... And this has been true of me too where ministry life feels like breakthrough but dating life is a wilderness. Or your physical health is a wilderness but your prayer life is breakthrough.

Faith: Absolutely.

Annie: Is that true in your life, too? Are there areas...? I mean, is that how it's... when I read your book, I had this moment of like, oh, we are always having breakthrough and yet we are always in the wilderness.

Faith: Yeah. I would say that's absolutely real and that's absolutely possible. I remember just even while writing this book... I mean, people have this misconception of me, like just because I wrote this book that they think I'm always just this cloud nine-

Annie: Aha, right.

Faith: And I'm just, ooh. Always-

Annie: Sorted it out now, friendship with God.

Faith: I have not. I have not. Let me tell you. I remember while writing this book, we were on a beach trip with my four kids, which is not a vacation.

Annie: How old are they now?

Faith: They are 6 to 11.

Annie: Oh my gosh. All two years apart. Stack stack stack.

Faith: That's not a vacation. That's a business trip.

Annie: That's a trip.

Faith: That's a business trip. Let me tell you. I remember, I mean, during the three to four days, I did not read the Bible. I did not feel God. And to be honest... and it wasn't just that vacation. I just kind of was in a season as I was writing certain chapters where the prayers weren't coming out of me.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: In a way, I felt like an impostor. Like, how am I supposed to write about certain experiences if I'm not experiencing anything? And I remember there was this moment that I had while I was in the beach and my kids were complaining about the meal, and it's just one of the worst feelings in the world as a mom.

Annie: Oh, I'm sure.

Faith: And I remember looking into the ocean and just telling God, "I do not feel you. I do not have peace. I know conceptually you're there. To be honest, I'd rather just be watching something on my phone." And I sat there and I felt the invitation of the Lord just to sit there. And I sat there not saying anything. He didn't tell me anything. There wasn't this groundbreaking revelation that He gave me. Silence with friends is meaningful and significant. And silence with God allows the Creator to create in us the things that we do not have.

So as I sat there, I remember around the 20-minute mark, just sitting there, acknowledging that He's there with me, but not saying anything, not hearing anything, and I start to feel peace. I started to feel a calm, a closeness. It wasn't exhilarating in the sense of I wasn't weeping, I wasn't laughing, but I didn't have peace and the Creator created it.

Annie: Did you feel it in your body? Like it actually felt in your body or just in your mind?

Faith: I would say both. Because when your mind starts to relax, your body starts to relax. Here's the thing, I have a Pentecostal background.

Annie: Hey, me too. Girl, let's go.

Faith: I don't even tell.

Annie: Let's go.

Faith: So there is a stream of thought where it's like, oh, it's like a body experience and it takes all of your being. And I would say the spectrum of experiencing friendship with the presence of God it's a very wide spectrum. And every day you could have great expectation of the Holy Spirit but you shouldn't go in with an agenda. As in I expect God to be with me. I expect God to minister to me. I expect God to be good as I approach Him. Now, how that should feel, that's not up to me.

Annie: That is the meat versus the milk of faith, I think. Because my younger self I expected God to show up in... Not one way. I knew better. But I thought three ways. Right? I thought it'll be this, this, or this that God will show up. And then when He picked way seven, I was like, no, I didn't greet him that, you know. But you're right, the older you get, not even an age but an experience with God, I think the more we're able to say, I am just coming to You and what You hand me is what is for me. Right?

Faith: Absolutely. And it's not always going to be weeping and it's not always going to be just joyful praise. Sometimes it is a stillness. And it is just a gentle peace. And I think when we start to nitpick our experiences, to be honest, then anybody could feel like they are not in friendship with the Lord.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: If we have that standard with any other relationship with our lives, saying to our friends, or our spouses, or our church members, I do not believe in this relationship unless I feel a certain way is just... that ain't it.

Annie: Right, that ain't it.

Faith: It's just not gonna happen.

Annie: Uh-uh.

Faith: But yet we feel like it's okay to do that to the Holy Spirit.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. You are convicting me as we sit here. You're right. I don't expect it from any other relationship. I go to dinner with a friend and I don't have... they have three options of how they respond to the thing I'm going to tell them or what they're going to say to me. Yeah, you're right.

[00:16:31] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to share about one of our amazing partners, [Prose](#). Okay, you've probably heard me sing the praises of Prose and their truly custom-made-to-order haircare. But switching to a custom routine from Prose is one of the best things I have done for my hair

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Okay, now back to our conversation with Faith.

[00:19:08] <Music>

Annie: You wrote a couple of things in the book that I've never thought about before. So thank you because you're teaching me so much. And I hope that comes across right. I mean, the concepts that... we have a mind-blown emoji. But that's what I mean that there are concepts that kind of blew my mind.

One of them is when you tell us how to actually practice the mystery of God's presence. I mean, it's beautiful. It's a beautiful section. Draw close, no matter what you feel. Stay with the Lord, turn to Scripture. But then you say, "Practice sacred assumption." When I tell you, Faith, I've never thought of sacred assumption. I've thought about sacred imagination. I've watched teachings on God using your imagination. We all need sacred assumption. Will you teach us what that is?

Faith: Oh, yes. Absolutely. I mean, a great example, a side example of this is. You know, when a loved one doesn't text back or they use a period, God forbid-

Annie: Instead of an exclamation point. Right.

Faith: What usually happens in us, we start to practice assumptions. Like, oh my gosh, you're upset at me or they, you know, I did something wrong. And we start to practice these assumptions that often poison reality.

We do the same thing with God. If we're in the season of waiting in our lives, oftentimes we could assume God has abandoned us, He has rejected us. It is our way of filling in for a narrative that we don't have yet. It's our way of filling in the blanks. Because guess what? The Holy Spirit is so vast, and God is so big that there is bound to be some mystery. That shouldn't be a discouragement to us, because it's just a testament of how great He is. But often we miss out on getting to know that greatness because we practice such negative assumptions of God.

If He didn't answer your prayer about a loved one and the worst case scenario came to be, and you practice this assumption of, well, I guess God just doesn't answer my prayer then. Or I guess God just isn't good. Or I guess He's just harsh. Or maybe this is just some cruel means for me to be sanctified and holy. If we start to practice those things, that is what bears a wall. It just builds a wall between us and the presence of God.

Annie: I'm hyperlinking in my mind, for all of our listeners, back to a conversation they heard in October with Micah and Shireen Eldridge about building a prayer team. And they talked about, if we would have believed God didn't answer prayers when things didn't go the way we thought we wouldn't have prayed this. And this thing that God did do, we would have stopped before He did this. And you giving me this sacred assumption idea is turning into like, No, God is here.

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Annie: ...I should assume God is operating on my behalf. So there are families listening who want more kids that haven't been able to have them.

Faith: Absolutely.

Annie: There are single people listening, the person sitting across from you, who would like to be married and is not yet. How do we sacred assume things about God that have been decades, years in the wanting? How long do we assume sacredly in God's direction?

Faith: Until heaven. Until heaven.

Annie: Hey, is that right?

Faith: Because we have no idea what He's doing with our story. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is Hannah's story in 1 Samuel. One of my favorite parts about this is who she is. And we just think at a certain point that this is just about a son. This is just about Hannah being barren and she just wants a son and she wants a boy.

But it's interesting because in the beginning of 1 Samuel 3, it says the word of the Lord was rare in Israel. But then by 1 Samuel 4, it says, The word of the Lord will come to the temple, and it will go to Israel. So what created that shift? It was Samuel.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: Hannah thought it was just an outcry of her pain. She was shifting the nation.

Annie: She was shifting the nation.

Faith: She was lifting the nation in her period of mystery. She didn't understand why she wasn't having kids. She didn't understand why God wasn't answering her prayers. But she cried out to the Lord, and she went to God. And I believe that had to have been some sort of sacred assumption as she decided to give Samuel back to God. That had to have been. Because if we believe in the worst in God, how do we trust them with our baby boy, our only boy? And yet as she did that, she blessed an entire nation, you know? Until how long do we assume great things of God? Until the very end?

Annie: That's it.

Faith: Until heaven. Because she probably thought, well, I guess that's it, bringing my son back to the temple. And I guess that's the conclusion of the story. No, God was not done. He was blessing the nation.

Annie: I have never known that. I mean, there are so many of our frie... everyone's waiting for something. You and I are waiting for dinner because it's lunchtime. Like everyone's waiting for something. But I don't know how often we think to ourselves: Am I waiting because God wants to shift something globally? Am I waiting because God wants to move through my story, through my life and people's lives that I may never know or may never see? I mean, as a mom, two young kids, I mean, that just has to feel like, what God is doing in my life is shaping these four people and we have no idea how they will spin off into gospel people.

Faith: Yeah. I think some of the discouragements that people have about their daily lives sometimes it's not tragedy, but it's the mundanity. It's the fact that you heard of Moses splitting the sea on Sunday, but on Monday you're just changing diapers.

Annie: That's right.

Faith: In a way, we feel like we need to chase the extraordinary to build what is real with Jesus. But the significance of our lives is not marked by how many awards we win or how many accolades we attain. But it's by including the Holy Spirit in everything that we do, whether it is going to the grocery store, whether it is filling up your gas tank, whether it's picking up your toddler from daycare.

Whatever you are doing, what makes that moment supernatural, it's not the exclusion of the natural, but it's the inclusion of the presence of God. Mary did not have a podcast. She did not write books. She just had kids. That was literally all she did. And to the day she died, she probably had a tarnished reputation. Very likely.

People still questioned her integrity until she died, because they were wondering, well, you know, what is this virgin conception? You know, was Jesus really birthed from the conception of the Holy Spirit? I mean, that was such an unprocessed revelation back then but yet she is one of the most iconic members of redemptive history. You know, God's not done until it's done.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Okay, so there are friends of ours listening who are dealing with that. There's someone I follow online and people roast in his comments all the time, aren't you, the guy who cheated on your wife a decade ago? I mean, people say it all the time. So for our friends listening, who are carrying some sort of scar from choices they made or didn't make, that is following them, how do you keep pursuing God even if there's this marked wilderness that you just live with now?

Faith: Totally. I would say what I'm reminded of is, you know how when the two spies go to the promised land and Rahab and she hid them and did this whole thing. This was right before they conquered the promised land and went in. What I think is so beautiful is that Rahab said, "We have all heard of what God has done. We have all heard of what Yahweh has done for you in Egypt, what He has done for you in the wilderness."

Meaning these last people grumbled, made mistakes, allowed their pride to get in the way, who have dishonored the Lord time and time again, and have sinned, have committed idolatry, and so on. We're still evangelizing to the world simply because they remain with Yahweh.

Annie: I mean, that is practicing friendship with God, right?

Faith: Yes. We are not going to make a kingdom impact because we're great. We're going to make a kingdom impact because we remain with Him.

Annie: That was technically going to be my first sentence I read but we did not go there yet. What if the most world-changing and history-making thing you can do is to befriend the presence of God? Jesus says, "You're My friend if you obey My commands." Can anybody be friends with God?

Faith: By the blood of Jesus, yes. By faith, yes. Absolutely.

Annie: Because everyone is a child of God, no matter what, right? Whether you ever pick Him or not. But to be a friend of God, I mean, that's a pretty rare title in the Bible. So what does it look like?

Faith: So in the Old Testament, there's this place called the Holy of Holies, which was hidden in the Tabernacle, hidden in the temple. And it was so holy that a high priest

can only go up once in a while, and had to go through all these procedures, make all these sacrifices in order to be able to have access to the Holy of Holies.

By the blood of Jesus, we carry the holy of holies. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. There's now no more veils, there are no more walls. We don't have to know Him through procedures, nor through a High Priest. But now we carry the Holy of Holies. When we have that revelation, oh, my goodness, the way we walk is different, the way we talk is different. That's not cheap, you know? That's not cheap.

When I had that revelation, seeing the trajectory of the presence of God from Old Testament to New and realizing that, wait, okay, at a certain point, it was in the tent of meeting, it certain point it was in the Tabernacle, and the tabernacle is in the middle of Israel. And then it wasn't a temple. And then it was in Jesus. Wait a second. Now it's in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit lives in me. I'm the ending place. I'm the ending place, you know? And when you realize that, you realize, oh, my gosh, what a gift. One could be blessed and not feel blessed. You know what I mean.

Annie: Yeah, right.

Faith: You could be a friend of God and not feel like a friend of God, which is why we got to practice it.

Annie: That's right. That's right. Have you heard John Eldredge talk about us being the temple lately?

Faith: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Because he talks about how Jesus says, "In the end, the temple will be destroyed." So he's like, are we in the end times? What does that have to do with our bodies? What is God...? I mean, he's doing some work around being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Faith: Yeah.

Annie: It's really interesting.

Faith: And it changes the way you live. And this is what, like I mentioned in the book, the pregnancy has taught me. Because, I mean, when you first get pregnant, they tell you... they told me I could do none of my favorite things.

Annie: Like what?

Faith: Like the third cup of coffee, saunas, sushi. So I'm like, okay, so everything I love. Or this little blip in the black-and-white screen.

Annie: That I cannot feel.

Faith: That I cannot feel.

Annie: That I cannot change my life that I do not love.

Annie: Right. And then I remember when I felt her for the first time, this revelation just downloaded to me realizing, wow, I really could have done all those things and acted as if she's not with me. And that would have hurt her. But because we're bound by blood, she would not just walk up and leave.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: Because we're bound by blood. This innocent, blameless soul would be hurt, would feel the effects of my actions, but she will not walk away and leave. In a similar way, we are bound by the blood of Jesus to the Holy Spirit. And we realize, Wow, the holy of holies is in me. And that costed something. When you have an awareness of that on your day-to-day, how you think, how you talk, how you live, completely changes.

Annie: When you talk about practicing the presence of God, practicing friendship with God, I love how you lean on that practice part so much, because it makes me feel like I can't do it quite as wrong as I think I could. I think it feels hard to say, go be friends with God. Like, ooo, what is He like? I don't know. What is He like? Are we gonna watch football? Like, what is it like to be friends friends with God?

Will you talk a little bit about what it means to practice? I mean, you do such a beautiful job, even when you're describing the spiritual rhythms of going like, These are all just practices for us.

Faith: Yes, absolutely. I like to say it's practice, not performance.

Annie: Yeah, that's good.

Faith: So when people go into it, thinking I have to perform, I have to feel a certain way, I have to become a super Christian. Ah, no. We're just practicing. I remember when I first met my husband, I mean, he was great. But I mean, 18 years later, he could walk into our house and I can recognize his presence simply by his footsteps,

simply by the way he breathes, the way he shuffles around. There's a familiarity that is built. Why? Because we've practiced each other's presence for 18 years.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: So with the Holy Spirit, I would say, don't be so discouraged, if you're not sure what's going on, as you practice Thanksgiving, as you practice giving him a sacrifice of praise, which is praising him when you don't feel like it, praising him when you are in pain. Practicing-

Annie: Plus other people write songs for us. I'm like, I'll just put it on. I don't know how to come up with it. But I can sing the *Desert Song* all day long because she wrote it for me first.

Faith: And grieving and all these things, practicing it, and just trusting that hey, it in some years time, you'll look back, and you'll be so glad you sat in that silence, you'll be so glad that you stayed an extra five minutes even when you felt like you're just talking to dead. You'd be so glad because of familiarity will be built.

Annie: When I walked in here and was in this house for like eight minutes, I was like, Oh, he's here. The familiarness of God going like, Oh, I can tell. And so you saying like, I recognize the shuffle of his footsteps. I'm like, oh, that's kind of what I felt about the Lord when I came here today is like, Oh, can I do everything here for the next two months? Because it just feels like the presence has been invited long before you or I got here.

So if that is true in our lives... I'm thinking about the people whose grandmothers are praying for them or the grandmothers listening who've been praying for their grandkids for years.

Faith: Totally.

Annie: We are growing into a place where the Holy Spirit's already been welcomed.

Faith: Absolutely.

Annie: So I've just moved into this place. What does it look like when we're praying into places to invite the Holy Spirit to be there?

Faith: I think it's really special when we invite and welcome the Holy Spirit wherever we are, because yes, God is everywhere, but He's not welcomed everywhere.

Annie: Ey, hey.

Faith: And I think that's really special. He's welcomed into certain places. I think the concept of the presence of God can sometimes be confusing because people are like, Why do I have to intentionally build a friendship with the presence when God is just everywhere? And yes, God is everywhere. But the concept of presence is this relational accessibility. God with us. Yes, He's in the universe, yes, He's in the stars, yes, He's everywhere, He's in every atom, but He's also with me. It's a personable presence. And when we acknowledge that, there He is. The blood of Jesus.

Annie: I mean, you talk about Joshua in the book. I love this. This was another mind-blown emoji moment. Because you said, "No one will ever know what happened between Joshua and Yahweh in the tent of meeting." I mean, that is this. That you're talking about this practicing the presence. We won't know... I mean, maybe when we get to heaven, we'll get to ask Joshua, like, how come you came out shiny? What was happening in there that made your face look different when you came out?

Will you talk a little bit about even in our rooms, or in the room where we pray or whatever, how does it change us to sit with the Lord like that? How does it change us? If we're practicing the presence in our own home, we're praying for our grandkids, we're praying for our kids, we are living in the downstream of what our grandmothers and mothers and fathers and grandfathers have prayed for us, what does it look like? I'm thinking of this new chair in my house.

Faith: Totally.

Annie: I'm like, it didn't feel the same as my chair at my house. But I'm like, Okay, how do I Joshua that chair? That's what I want you to teach.

Faith: I mean, it's hard to explain because it's mystical, right?

Annie: Yeah. Which we cannot be afraid of.

Faith: Right.

Annie: It just gets the worst rap in Christianity.

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Annie: It's so weird. This is me not knowing. Did someone mess that up like 40 years ago and now...? There must have been mistakes that screwed this up for everybody.

Faith: I don't know if someone did. But I would say there is, especially in the Western evangelical circles, in a way we kind of like to chew on concepts that we could understand fully.

Annie: Yes, certainly. Me too.

Faith: Right. And when we walk into the mystical things, then there's fear. What if we get it wrong, you know? And I get that. And sometimes, especially in an age where we're constantly telling people don't depend on what you feel. And yet the mystical is something that we feel.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Faith: But then I mean, the God that we read in the Bible is a God that we've encountered. He's an encounterable God. And what Joshua spent his preparation years doing, it wasn't just following Moses and figuring out all these strategies and learning how to be a great leader. It was sitting in the presence of God, which eventually became his secret place with Yahweh. And when I say secret place, I don't mean it's a place that is secret, but it is the depths of your heart that no one will understand, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Faith: It's the part of you that there are no words for. And it's not saying, oh, we need to keep secrets from people. No, no. There is a depth of you that even we that we do not have the ability to articulate. But the Holy Spirit knows, because he's there, he's with us. And when we engage with Him, when we sit in that new chair, when we are in our rooms, and we're just in that stillness, you have to know you're not abandoned, you're not rejected, you're not being unproductive, but you are engaging with the presence of God in the secret place.

This is not a new phrase, but our time in the secret place prepares us for the public place. That's something that's been said, you know? And for Joshua, that was his preparation, just sitting there in that secret place, sitting there in the intimacy with the Lord. You know, it's interesting. And you know what, I'll be honest. I don't remember the exact Bible verse but God has secrets.

Annie: God's... something to hide and kings to sort out?

Faith: He has secrets.

Annie: Oh, boy, we're about to Google it. It'll make me feel better if we can Google it.

Faith: It's in the Bible.

Annie: Yeah, yeah.

Faith: It's in the Bible. We're not heretics here. But the fact that there are secrets, the fact that there are more revelations to discover that not just anyone will get by looking at an Instagram meme.

Annie: Yes. Right.

Faith: It's not something that's accessible to just anyone. It's unveiled and unraveled to those that just sit with Him and give Him that time. So that access hits me. Sit in that chair and listen to His secrets, you know? And get into that secret place before you walk into the public place.

Annie: The verse is Proverbs 25:2. It is, "The glory of God to conceal a thing but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." That's the NIV I think. But I promise before the show releases to have that verse memorized. That's my promise to you. I'm gonna memorize that verse before the show comes out.

Faith: That's good.

Annie: I will have it in my heart.

[00:40:35] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [ZocDoc](#). Raise your hand if this sounds like you. You jump on every health trend that comes along on the internet. Yes, that is me. You take all the supplements that your friends, coworkers, mom recommends. Castor oil. Can we talk about it? You go all in on the latest food trends that we're supposed to be eating. But then when you realize it's time to find an actual doctor to speak into your health journey, you're stuck. You don't know who to turn to or where to start.

Thankfully, there is an easy solution. ZocDoc is a free app where you can find amazing doctors and book appointments online. We're talking about booking appointments with thousands of top-rated patient-reviewed doctors and specialists. You can filter specifically for ones who take your insurance or are located near you and treat almost any condition you're searching for.

These Docs all have verified reviews from actual real patients, not bots. And the average wait time to see a doctor booked on ZocDoc is just 24 to 48 hours. That's

it. You can even score same-day appointments. So go to zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun and download the ZocDoc app for free, then find and book a top-rated doctor today. That's zocdoc.com/thatsoundsfun.

Sponsor: And one last amazing partner I get to tell you about, [Hiya Health](https://hiyahealth.com). This one is for my miniBFFs. If you're looking for a children's vitamin that's actually good for kids and doesn't include a bunch of sugar or gummy junk, Hiya Health is the way to go.

Typical children's vitamins are basically candy in disguise. They're filled with two teaspoons of sugar, unhealthy chemicals and other gummy junk kids should never eat. So that's why Hiya was created, the pediatrician-approved super-powered chewable vitamin my miniBFFs will love.

Hiya is pressed with a blend of 12 organic fruits and veggies, then filled with 15 essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D, B12, C, zinc, folate, and more. Plus your bottle comes with these fun stickers your kids can use to stick on their bottle. So taking their vitamins is just a little more fun.

Hiya is also sent straight to your door, so you don't have to worry about another thing on your shopping list. We've worked out a special deal with Hiya for their bestselling children's vitamin. Get 50% off your first order. That's five-zero, you guys.

To claim this deal, you must go to hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun. That's hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun and get your kids the full body nourishment they need to grow into healthy adults.

That link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes or in Friday's AFD Week in Review. So be sure to check those out.

Okay, now back to finish up our conversation with Faith

[00:43:11] <Music

Annie: I mean, I think that is such an interesting... I'm also listening to Practicing the Way, John Mark Comer's podcast and nonprofit and curriculum and right now is about solitude. And literally, I'm walking downtown yesterday, I'm like, "This is it. I'm getting the solitude. I've been saving these till I got here." And he says, "Solitude is not have this in your ears as you're walking the streets of Manhattan." And I was like, "Oh, John Mark, it's very personal."

But I mean, he literally said the two most powerful forces in our spiritual life are community and solitude. And everything flows out of that. So even friendship with God... does friendship with God happen in solitude and in community?

Faith: Yes. I just want to add another thing, because I know-

Annie: Yes, please.

Faith: ...that there are some that are like, I'm also never alone. I may not be in community, but I'm also never fully in solitude, especially young mothers. And I think-

Annie: People with roommates?

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Faith: Especially in New York.

Annie: That's right. That's right. The people living around me.

Faith: Yeah, totally. And you may be thinking, Well, I'm never really quite alone, but I'm also not engaging in community. Sometimes we feel like, well, how do I do any of this if I'm never really alone? What if I'm on the subway? What if I'm changing a diaper? What if I'm just in traffic or something? How do I-

Annie: Work at a camp.

Faith: Right?

Annie: I mean, so many things that you don't ever get to be alone alone for extended time.

Faith: Absolutely. And I would say the secret place and our place of intimacy with the Holy Spirit, it's not a vibe, right? It's not like some energy that we create with our candles, with our beige rooms and as, you know, Instagram-looking-

Annie: Oh, I'm out.

Faith: I mean, if you have that, that's amazing.

Annie: Yeah. We wish you well.

Faith: We wish you well.

Annie: It's just awesome.

Faith: But that's not your secret place. That's not the holy place. The holy ground is not somewhere we go to. The holy ground is wherever we acknowledge the Holy Spirit. That's holy ground. So you could be on holy ground as you're washing dishes. You could be on holy ground as you are stuck in traffic. It's not somewhere that you have to go strive for or go to or get to. It's acknowledging the presence of God wherever you are.

Annie: I've never thought about what is my Joshua moment of what are the Lord and I doing in the tent that no one else will know, except they'll see that I'm different afterwards.

Faith: Yes. Oh, that's so good.

Annie: Right? I'm like, Oh, I don't know that I can identify what that secret is. And I'm like, Oh, maybe... I think I want to. Even just for me or just for me and you. I'll just text you, Faith, and be like, I sorted it. Found it. It took me some time but I found it. How do our spiritual disciplines, our spiritual rhythms, things like reading scripture, worshiping, how do those lead us to friendship with God and to that secret Joshua place?

Faith: They are the basic pathways. Like reading the Bible, praising, thanksgiving, grieving, and contending in prayer, petitioning, so on. Now, how we apply that though is different per person. I think everyone is so quick to want a formula. Just tell me how to live my life.

Annie: Girl, me too. I'm like, give me five steps.

Faith: Right. There isn't any.

Annie: There isn't any.

Faith: And that's the flexibility that I want to really offer in the book? Because I've tried that.

Annie: I know.

Faith: Annie, I have like 20 unfinished notebooks in my house.

Annie: 20 journal duds?

Faith: Yeah.

Annie: Oh, they're all duding out on you.

Faith: Because every time I'm thinking, this is gonna be it, I'm gonna be sold.

Annie: This is the one with revelation.

Faith: Yes, gonna be it.

Annie: I know.

Faith: To be honest, I am very terrible at finishing journals. I'm so good at starting them. Right?

Annie: Right.

Faith: But also, my problem was, I was looking for a formula that worked for somebody else, you know? And I would say there isn't quite one formula other than try the different pathways in a way that works for you.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: If you are nature gal, which I am not right, but if you are, then guess what, praying while you're walking down a hiking trail, I see... I can't even say it.

Annie: Even though I've never even heard of it.

Faith: One of those trails.

Annie: I don't know.

Faith: I mean, and that might bring you to such a place with God, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Faith: I know that's not going to work for me. And there are some that feel very anxious in a silent room. That's okay. Go to a cafe and read your Bible there. I used to have really bad postpartum depression. Really, really bad. So if you were to tell me that the only way I could practice the presence of God is in solitude in my room, I would freak out. I really would. I was not in a place where I could do something like that. So what did I do? I put air pods in my ear or ear pods at that time, and I would walk around the mall.

Annie: Wow. Stroller around the mall.

Faith: Just walk around.

Annie: Wow.

Faith: And somehow the bright lights, the busy walking it really gave me-

Annie: Temperature control.

Faith: Yeah. It just really gave me a sense of safety and really calmed my nerves. All this to say there isn't one method for everyone. I encourage everyone to find their God language what works for you. Everyone has a different love language. You know, some likes hug, some like gifts. For you, it might be running with worship music on, for some of you it might be literally in your closet, in the darkness, in the stillness. But whatever it is, is just the key is making sure that we acknowledge Him in all our ways.

Annie: Yes. I'll give you my trick on finishing a journal. I start in the front and in the back.

Faith: Oh.

Annie: The very last page of every journal so far is all the single men I meet in that season. Just to keep tabs, just trusting God. And then as I work my way from the back, I work on sermon notes in the back and I work on that. And then in the front, I'm journaling and they run into each other. So I finished more journals because they ran into each other the front and back.

Faith: Okay.

Annie: So mine dud out on me too but I usually have two-thirds to work with anyway because I'm writing sermons of single guys in the back to the front.

Faith: That's so interesting.

Annie: So that's just my today's tips with Annie and Faith. That's what I got for you. Okay, this book is out in the world, people have had it, what's the... this is a hard question.

Faith: Oh, boy. Okay.

Annie: In a 100 years-

Faith: Oh my goodness.

Annie: ...when you're with the Lord, your legacy is people having friendship with God. Why is that what mattered to you? In a world where this is the only book you write because the Lord moves you up and over 50 other things, because this is your first one, right?

Faith: Yes. My debut.

Annie: It's beautiful. I'm not even sure. I've said that to you before we started. I'm sorry. I'm not sure if I've said that since we hit "record". That's the problem with talking before we start. It's a beautiful book. I think I did tell you this in real life. You said everything. You did not waste a single word and every word matters. And I thought I was... I tend to waste words and say in three paragraphs what I could have said in one. You do not. But in a world where this is your legacy, why was friendship with God what mattered to you to write for us first?

Faith: That's such a good question. I would say it's because it's the ultimate thing. If we live for the accomplishment... If you're an evangelist, and you're living for people to be saved, I mean, that's a great thing. And it's easy to pass by. But even that will run into its own frustration. Even that will have its issues. So what does that mean for somebody that lives for that? That when people don't get saved, that you don't know why you're alive? It's just the ultimate thing.

Annie: Or when I don't stand up and walk forward, and you've put all your energy into that.

Faith: Yeah, absolutely. I feel like it's just the ultimate thing. It's the thing that will matter when we see Him face to face. And I want to be able to say that we crowded heaven with as many friends as possible, you know? Not people that settled with a substitute. I don't want to say, "Oh, I brought more people to conferences."

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Faith: I don't want to be able to say, Oh, I got people to look at my Instagram, or I got people to listen to other people's podcasts, you know. All those are wonderful things. However, really, like, what's gonna matter is if you can look at Him, and you could say, I've known you all my life, and here we are face to face. That's the dream. That's the dream.

I don't want to distract people to thinking that they're close with God just because we're distracted and busy with more Christian stuff. But I want to be able to at least offer practical pathways for everyone, no matter how low they've been to say that "I've known Him. I've known Him and now here we are."

Annie: Oh, it's beautiful. Thank you for writing this. I just love it. You did one of my very favorite things where your fingernails match your book cover.

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Annie: Ma'am. They look so good. How long did that take though?

Faith: You know, I do this by myself.

Annie: Wait, wait, wait. Pause everything. You did your own?

Faith: Yes.

Annie: Faith!

Faith: It's just how we save money, honestly. I got four kids.

Annie: You shaped them and everything yourself?

Faith: Yes, I did.

Annie: The fact that you have beautiful almond nails that you self-shaped is just impressive.

Faith: Oh, thank you.

Annie: Wow. So you did them yourself? Does it take so long though to do them yourself?

Faith: You know, it's therapeutic for me.

Annie: You just sit there, everybody's watching TV or working on homework or listening to a podcast and you're just going for it?

Faith: Yeah.

Annie: Gel?

Faith: Yes. I use hard gel over. My natural nails are very brittle and so I use hard gel over.

Annie: So you have your own machine?

Faith: Yes. I use builder gel, sorry. Builder gel. Not hard gel.

Annie: That is so impressive.

Faith: Thank you.

Annie: They really are beautiful. I had no idea. Everyone heard the shock in my voice. I had no idea you did those yourself. I use all the June sometimes, but I mostly let other people do my nails because I can't shape them. If it's just painting, I think I could do it. I just can't shape them.

Faith: I should put in my bio that I shape?

Annie: I need to go back and say by the way, when you see my nails out in public-

Faith: Come on.

Annie: ...I'm a self-made woman. That's what you need to start saying to people. Okay, is there anything we didn't say about the book you want to make sure we say?

Faith: No. I think we covered it.

Annie: Yeah, it's beautiful. I just cannot wait for people to read it. I can't wait for them to read it.

Faith: Thank you.

Annie: Okay, the last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Faith: Wandering around Soho.

Annie: Oh, yeah. Are you going to do it today?

Faith: Oh, I don't know.

Annie: You have time?

Faith: I don't know if I have time. My kids are coming back from school.

Annie: Tell me why Soho. What do I not know?

Faith: Okay, but not on Saturday afternoon?

Annie: Yes, certainly.

Faith: Don't do that on Saturday afternoon. You will hate it.

Annie: Because of the amount of people?

Faith: Yes.

Annie: Okay.

Faith: It's the new Times Square.

Annie: Ah, okay.

Faith: Yeah, it's the new Times Square. But I would say before... post-2020, Soho and Golden Hour, and you're just walking around with a cappuccino in hand and you just wander.

Annie: Is it shops? It's like fancy shops, right?

Faith: It's shops. It's cafes. It's a little bit of everything I would say. It's restaurants. But it's just a vibe. It's just wandering around. I love wandering.

Annie: I do too. Do you know literally my team has made space every week that I'm living here, literally on my calendar it says, write and wander. And I get to pick. I mean, my manager, Kelly, was literally like, if you come home and all you've done is wander, we are fine with that. I mean, it is amazing.

Faith: What a team!

Annie: Ain't that generous?

Faith: Yeah.

Annie: I know. We worked very hard in August and September to let October, November be shaped this way. But it is such a gift. Because I love to wander too. I mean, I walked 40 blocks twice yesterday just because I was like, I don't have anything else to do and I gotta go there and come back. So I was like, I don't care. I'm not getting on a subway when it's sunny and not cold.

Faith: Oh, yeah.

Annie: Because I'm like, November is coming, and I will be like, I am freezing and I don't want to walk outside. So I was like, "I gotta do it now."

Faith: Yeah, totally.

Annie: Okay, Soho. I need to hit Soho on like a Wednesday at 2:00?

Faith: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, great. I'll make it my wandering right time.

Faith: Yeah, just wandering around. It feels good.

Annie: Okay, great. Hey, thanks for being on the show today. Thank you for coming over to the studio and Hephzibah House. What a dream! I hope you get to use this place more.

Faith: Oh, absolutely. I hope so too.

Annie: It's beautiful.

Faith: Thanks for having me. This was so fun.

Annie: It was so fun.

Faith: I got to do it face to face and I got to look into your beautiful blue eyes.

Annie: Oh, I'm so grateful. Thank you.

[00:56:19] <Music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she the greatest? I know. Oh, my gosh, I just loved this conversation. She is just so smart and thoughtful. I love listening to her talk about the Lord. You are going to love this book. So go grab a copy of *Experiencing Friendship with God* right now. Follow Faith on social media, thank her for being on the show.

If you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener, or you can send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast and we're answering all those there.

So if you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter or X, whatever we're calling it these days, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me... well listen, tomorrow what sounds fun to me is I get to hang with our podcast friends Jordan and Jessica Rice. Remember, they are pastors up in Harlem and I get to hang out with them tomorrow. I'm so stoked about it. So I will post lots of pictures. Don't worry. Y'all make sure to check it out. And make sure you're following Jessica and Jordan Rice as well. I just love them.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back on Monday with our dear friend Lisa Harper. We'll see y'all then.