

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hi friends! Happy Thanksgiving week here in America. 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 want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors. This show is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). This time of year can bring up all kinds of emotions, I get it, between the really busy schedules, the darker days, and the grief that can pop up around the holidays, it's a lot to carry.

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Intro: Today on the show, no better guests for Thanksgiving week than our friend, Lisa Harper. I know y'all love her. And can you believe she has not been on the show since Episode 40? Y'all, I'm so sorry. We were clearly long overdue to catch up on mic's here all about what's been going on in her life and her studies and her writing and speaking and of course in her family.

Lisa has been in vocational ministry for 30 years, has written 19 books, and studies. And today we also get to talk about her latest project that goes along so beautifully with our Let's Read the Gospels podcast. Her latest devotional titled *Jesus* releases this fall and would be the perfect gift for anybody that's Christmas, especially someone who is reading Let's Read The Gospels along with us or is enjoying growing in their faith. This is such a good stocking stuffer, y'all. You're gonna love this episode and catch up sesh with our friend Lisa Harper.

[00:02:21] <Music>

Annie: Lisa Harper, welcome back to That Sounds Fun.

Lisa: I can't even tell you what your face does to my heart. Your face and your voice. I was so upset when I thought you were leaving us for good. I was like, New York City can borrow you, but I'll flatten the big apple with my car if they take you more than two months.

Annie: Do not worry.

Lisa: Nashville is sadder without you. We need you back.

Annie: Thank you. Thank you. It'll be so soon. I'm so thankful. And let's talk about this for just a second. This is something you model beautifully for me. But there are some griefs to not being married yet and there are some gifts.

Lisa: Oh, there's some great gifts.

Annie: And one of the gifts is I can do things like this in this season and God... I mean, even yesterday I was lugging home LaCroix and lugging home groceries in one arm. I just found myself smiling and saying to the Lord, "If you'd have told me at 20 that this is what you'd have given me at 43, I would not have believed you." But man, am I grateful for how he writes the story.

Lisa: Isn't it amazing? When I lived in Colorado back in the 90s, I had some precious roommates. You know, I've married off so many women. It could be Katherine Heigl or whatever her name is with the 29 bridesmaid dresses. It's probably 29.

Anyway, one of the girls I lived with, amazing girl. But I remember there was a sale somewhere, like at TJ Maxx or something, and I said, "Do you want to go get stuff at TJ Maxx?" And she said, "Oh, no, I really don't want to buy any new towels because I know I'll get those at my wedding shower." And I was like, "But you're not dating anybody." She goes, "I know. But I don't want to spoil it."

Like her whole life was on hold until this man should... she wouldn't even buy flipping towels on sale at TJ Maxx. And I was like, "No, I want to run so hard in the lane God has given me that I don't miss one ounce of joy. Instead of thinking, "If only I had that." I'm like, Gosh, that's antithetical to the gospel. He gives us everything we need for life and godliness and abundant joy in every season. I love that you've gone to New York. I would be ticked if you moved to New York for good.

But I think what you're modeling to the world is so necessary, especially in this season where we see a lot of chaos and a lot of grief to go, Yeah, I'm not gonna

stick my head in the sand to pretend like there aren't really hard things going around. But I'm going to choose joy. I'm gonna choose life. I'm gonna choose to be creative. I'm gonna choose to do... hard things are not always sad. Sometimes hard things are really, really happy. But I love that you've done that as long as it's just a brief period.

Annie: Just temporary. That's right. Isn't it funny, because as you're saying—thank you for your kind words—that you're saying, "I love what you're modeling for people." I think the people I enjoy watching how they're living and what they're modeling for me aren't meaning to do it.

Lisa: No, I totally agree. Sometimes if I see too much intentionality behind something, I think, are you doing this for real or are you doing this for real? It's usually just the everyday people who are just really living life well and honestly. Yeah, I love that.

But I love seeing people who choose joy. Not in a Pollyanna kind of way, but you see them going, "Yeah, a friend of mine right now, her husband is in a really hard place with cancer. She is the most hopeful, joyful woman that I rub shoulders with almost on a weekly basis consistently." Because she's like, "You know what? None of us know what's around the corner. We think we do." But you get hit with tragedy or trial, whether it's personal or global, it kind of shakes you up and you go, really, all we've got is this moment. Of course, be wise and plan for ahead. But we have this moment to make the most of. Don't waste the moments.

And usually, for me, the miracles are the small ones. It's not these massive dramatic things that I've been hoping for. It's usually the daily miracles that end up making up the scaffolding of a happy life.

Annie: You know, I can find myself thinking things like, what if this is the last Christmas that all of our family is together? The other side of that coin of what you're saying, the other side of that coin that I also hear the Lord sometimes whisper to me, and I'm thinking about our friends who are listening, who are trying to get pregnant or want a new job, or want to get married or move to other places. Like this may be the last day, you don't know the guy you're gonna marry.

Lisa: That's right.

Annie: This may be the last day you aren't pregnant. So what are you gonna do with the day if it is the last one before God answers your prayers?

Lisa: Right. And also Annie, you know, I'm 60, so you are much, much, much younger than me. I think you're wiser. But I can tell your age by your tight skin and high metabolism. I, on the other hand, am getting discounts at fast food restaurants. But

one of the things I've learned just in the changes in my life, some wanted, some unplanned, some that I didn't want at all, is that if I'm not happy in what I'm in currently, then you... actually, if you don't have contentment there, you're not gonna have contentment in the next new thing.

So I always encourage people when they're going, "Should I leave? Should I stay?" I'm like, I would really encourage you to stay until you would be willing to stay. I've done that several times with different positions I've had where I thought, "I can't take this one more day." And I sense Holy Spirit saying, "I want you to get to a place where you don't have an oppositional spirit where you say, "Lord, if you call me here for another year, I'm gonna plant and I'm gonna plant with joy and I'm gonna work at this with all my heart."

And usually, until you are willing to stay, I don't think you have the grace to go to a new place. And I'm all about change. I'm all about God didn't give Abraham and Sarah the pampers. You know, they were still wearing the pants until they moved from Ai. I mean, I'm all about moving. And I think we should have momentum in our life as believers.

But I think there's a tendency to not call idolatry idolatry and to be thinking, If only I had that thing. And it's what you're saying, the husband, the kid, the skinny jeans, the house, the car, the whatever it is. I'm like, oh goodness gracious. If you don't find God's presence to be enough in your current season, why do you think you'll have contentment in the next one? Because things don't do it. And quite frankly, relationships don't do it if you don't start with contentment in Christ. If that's your scaffolding, then you're not gonna put all your emotional needs on somebody else's shoulders. Our shoulders weren't shaped for that.

Annie: It is interesting. because we often think, If I get the thing I want then...

Lisa: Right.

Annie: And the joke I make a lot on stage, you probably heard me say it, Lisa, is I'm like, If you think that's true, then the fact you wanted lunch and got lunch should mean you don't want dinner.

Lisa: That's so good. That's so Good.

Annie: But you do.

Lisa: Yeah.

Annie: So, the wanting is never the problem. It's fine for us to be wanters. It is, how can we want well in a way that teaches us...? Because I know that one side of my brain says when I get married, this is gonna get so much easier. And in some ways it will. I won't take out my garbage anymore, God willing. But right on the other side, my brain knows, no, it won't. You will still be Annie. Like, the Annie part is not changing.

Lisa: Listen, you know, for me, my great desire, even more so than a husband, I thought I'd get a husband and children and then I would follow the more conventional route. But you know my story, that isn't the case. I became a mom through the miracle of adoption the year I turned 50. So I went through motherhood and menopause at the same time. It was exciting.

But I thought, if that hole in me is filled, I've always wanted to be a mom, then everything else will be wonderful. Now I will tell you Missy is tangible grace. She's not my hope. Jesus is my hope. Missy is tangible grace. But all the stuff I brought in prior to becoming her mom, I still have all that stuff. The other day, Annie, we were on the way to school and she told me, "Mom, when is the last time you saw Ms. Lynn?" Ms. Lynn is my therapist.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lisa: She said it so, so respectfully. But basically my 14-year-old, my seventh grader told me I needed to call my therapist. She was like, "Mom, I just feel like you're kind of anxious." And I was like, "You know what, baby? You are right."

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: So the anxiety that I had prior to becoming a mom, I brought that straight into motherhood with me. And so you're right. I think recognizing that what we need, the answer to every need in our life is Jesus. Once you have them, you can see Jesus. The other things are... I mean, there are wonderful gifts along the way, but they don't make the next season. They kind of decorate it. What makes it is intimacy with Jesus.

Annie: If you were describing your friend, Jesus, to someone that didn't know Him, if you know, tomorrow you're gonna meet my friend Jesus, but before you meet Him, you've gotta know this about Him, what would you say based on what your friendship with Him is like?

Lisa: I would say you have never seen a countenance lit with that much compassion. His face is backlit with compassion. And the moment He looks at you, you will know that you've been seen in a way you've never been seen before and you've been

loved with the love you've been longing for your whole life. He's the kindest. He's the best. He is so accessible. You won't have to work to lean into relationship with Him. All you have to do is just take one tiny step. He's just got a heart that is so huge. If you even take one tiny step, you'll be enveloped into a love that's like nothing you've ever known before.

Annie: I sat at lunch earlier this week, Lisa, with a friend of mine, a younger friend of mine here in New York and as we were leaving, we've been talking about this situation in her life, and she said, "Hey, will you pray because I think He's listening to you more than He is listening to me?" And I said, "Oh, sis, you have got that wrong." I said, "All you gotta do is talk to Him and He is listening. There is nothing..." And she said, "You know, okay." And that's all she said. "You know, okay." And I was like, Man, I love that when we talk about Jesus to other people, we don't have to pump Him up. We just have to tell the truth.

Lisa: You just have to tell the truth. And the kindness of Christ... You know, I love that verse, you and I probably memorized it about the same age of, you know, if you seek the Lord with all your heart, He will be found by you, which is a wonderful, wonderful promise in the New Testament. But I actually prefer the promise in the Old Testament that says, Our God is so great, His kindness for us is so great. In Isaiah, it says He reveals Himself even to those who aren't searching for Him.

Annie: Yes.

Lisa: The kindness of Jesus slays me. Every characteristic about our King. Not that I can understand all of them. He is a bigger God than my finite mind. But the characteristics of Jesus our Savior that are revealed in His word, in the Holy Spirit are unbelievable. But the one that gets me, Annie, it's not the Greek and the Hebrew I've memorized from seminary. It's His kindness. He is a kind, kind, kind, kind Savior and imminently accessible. And that slays me.

That He actually condescends to make Himself palpable to us. I'm like, this is the flipping King of all kings. And He reveals Himself in a way that mere humans cannot just see Him from a distance and be undone by His majesty. He actually allows us intimacy. I've been walking with Jesus for 55 years. I am more in love with Jesus at 60 than I've ever been.

Annie: Really?

Lisa: Yeah. He is my one true love. And He's enough. I used to be afraid He wasn't enough, but He's been enough.

Annie: I was gonna ask you, would it be the same if your life looked as traditional as we thought our lives were gonna look when we were 20? I don't think mine would either. That's why I'm asking. I think I have had an opportunity with Jesus that I don't know that I'd have taken if I'd have gotten married.

Lisa: I think I was so afraid of intimacy in my 20s and 30s. You know, I could wrap it with all kinds of religious, you know, platitudes and fill in bible study blanks. But I was really scared, slammed to death of intimacy with anybody. I didn't want anybody to look under the hood of my life. I thought, if y'all look under the hood of my life, you're gonna see something that'll make you walk away. So I studied God more as a proposition than a person with whom to engage.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: And He just dismantled my life. You know, He's so kind. He wouldn't let me have my heart and my mind segregated. I'd led with my mind. Not that it's that smart. When I was younger, if I could figure out a room, it meant I wouldn't be abused anymore. So I brought that into my relationship with God and just tried to be dutiful, just tried to study and be better and do better.

And it really wasn't until everything fell apart. And it wasn't just I didn't have the husband and the child. I thought, "I don't know that I can carry the weight of my own life. This is so not what I hoped it would be like."

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: When God met me in the darkest place I've ever been in such a tangible way and I didn't even have the grace to pursue Him, He pursued me, He held me, He was present, it changed everything for me. I think when you know Jesus in the dark, it takes a lid off your joy because I thought to go to the things I was most afraid of would... I was afraid I'd never come out. But when I went into a dark place with Jesus, I'm just not afraid anymore. There's still deep ends in my life, but I'm not afraid I'm gonna drown anymore.

Annie: What made the next right book for you to do the devotional about Jesus?

Lisa: It's Missy's fault.

Annie: Yeah?

Lisa: A little over a year ago, I was driving Missy home from school, and she got in the car... and I mean, she got in the car like she had swallowed a helium balloon, you know, just so excited. And she started telling me about her first crush. This young

man she had a crush in sixth grade. Of course, he's completely oblivious to it. But she had developed this massive crush on this kid in school, that same day, I think.

Annie: Oh, great.

Lisa: I mean, she just started telling me everything about this kid. Now, they have to wear uniforms. But she was telling me about the color of his socks and his shoes, and the inflection of his voice with the math teacher, and what was in his lunchbox. She had noticed every tiny detail about his life. And again, he's oblivious to it.

And I'm just watching my little girl talk about this young boy that she's completely preoccupied with. And I thought, "I remember when I was like that about Jesus. I remember when I was just totally crushed on Jesus. And I thought, "I want to spend some time just studying Jesus for Jesus." As anthropomorphic as this sounds, I want to date Jesus. I want to go where He wants to eat. I want to hear His voice when He burst into a belly laugh. I want to see His countenance when He's describing something He loves.

I thought, "I want to know more about Jesus." And I spent about a year all through scripture. Of course, Jesus isn't just revealed in the gospels. But I camped out more in the four gospels. By the way, I love that... I don't know if that's a whole different podcast, which is a fast of your-

Annie: No, no, no. Let's Read the Gospels. We've loved it too. Thank you.

Lisa: So good. So good. I fell further in love with Jesus. And there were things... and I don't mean to sound like such a twit, but you know, I spent eight years in grad school, and so I've studied a lot. And I did-

Annie: I mean, not just grad school. You're almost done with your doctorate.

Lisa: I'm finishing a doctorate. You know, I've remembered two or three multi-syllabic theological terms. But I have been surprised at how much I learned that I didn't know or I'd read and it had just leaked through me before. I just found deeper places of falling in love with Him. I found things about Him that I was just slayed by. There were times... I don't know if you do your best writing at night, but I tend to write really-

Annie: Yes.

Lisa: I mean, I'm a very mediocre writer, so I don't do any great writing. I'm a great reader. I'm a very mediocre writer. But I write best or most efficiently from like 10:00 pm to like 3:00 or 4:00 am and just around a midnight writer. And there were

times I would be so engrossed with Jesus. This is so silly, but one morning I thought I was having an angelic visitation because all of a sudden light filled the room and I was like, "Jesus, I can't believe it." It was the sun coming up. I'd written all the way through-

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lisa: I didn't realize I'd written and it was already morning because I was just so engrossed in His kindness. So He's such a good God and He's allowed Himself to be known in part by us. so I find myself going, "I want to know Him more. I want to know everything about Him. Like, what made Him say that in that story?" Or you know, there's no place in the literal Greek and Aramaic in the New Testament where it says, Jesus Himself, incarnate Christ laughed. But He uses so much humor, so much wit, so many double entendres in the Aramaic that you're like, "He had to be funny."

And of course the Pharisees, you know, they throw shade because He is invited to too many parties. So He was one sober... The way He is always painted during the Renaissance, you know, He's always painted as kind of wimpy, He looks like He's anemic, you know, He has this real wand expression. That is not who our Jesus was.

Read about His interactions with people. He was magnetic. And yes, the Isaiah prophecy of Him being One that would be despised is more about the cross than I think it is His personality. Because when you read of His encounters, He is just so unbelievably charismatic and compassionate. Annie, I can't wait to meet Him face to face. I can't wait.

Annie: I know.

Lisa: He is... You know how everybody says we're the hope set before Him, because that's what Paul tells us?

Annie: Yeah.

Lisa: He is the hope set before me. He is so enough for me. Of course, I'm also 60, so, you know, your hopes and desires change a bit. He has done so much for me. There's been so much healing in my life that I didn't deserve, that there's not a lot more that I'm desperate for Him to fix. Not that there's not plenty for Him to fix. But He's just been enough. I feel like I'm in the sweetest place with Jesus and I'm still a total idiot half the time. It's just I'm not afraid He's gonna leave me anymore. And I think that's the thing.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: I used to be afraid. I think there was a corner of my heart that was emotionally agnostic for years. And He has made Himself so present that He has made me secure in His affection.

[00:22:48] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [StoryWorth](#). As you are thinking about Christmas gifts for your parents or grandparents, I have such a great idea for you, StoryWorth. Listen, I gave this to my parents, Mr and Mrs F. Downs last year. I'm so excited that we have all their answers in one book that I can keep forever.

StoryWorth is an online service that helps you and your loved ones preserve precious memories and stories for years to come. Every week, StoryWorth emails your relative a thought-provoking question of your choice from their large pool of possible options. I've really enjoyed going through and picking out exactly which prompts are right to hear from my parents. Like, what's the bravest thing you ever did in your life? Or if you could see into the future, what would you want to find out?

After one year, StoryWorth compiles all your loved ones' stories, including photos that you send, and they put it in a beautiful keepsake book that you'll be able to share and revisit for generations to come. With StoryWorth you're giving those you love a thoughtful personal gift and preserving their memories and stories for years to come.

So go to storyworth.com/thatsoundsfun and save \$10 off your first purchase. That's storyworth.com/thatsoundsfun and get \$10 off your first purchase.

That link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes. We also will send it to you Friday in the AFD Week in Review email. So be sure to check those out. We will not have a Friday AFD this week, Thanksgiving week, but we do every other week.

Sponsor: And I've got another amazing partner to tell you about, [Beam](#). Okay, listen, y'all, we all know a good night's sleep is really important for a lot of reasons. So if you're having trouble falling asleep or getting a restful sleep, let me tell you about Beam Dream Powder. Y'all, I sleep so well when I drink it before bed. Like it really, really works. I have the cinnamon cacao and my gosh, it is so good.

Good sleep is one of the foundations of our mental and physical health and performance in our days. And Beam Dreams Powder is like this healthy hot cocoa for sleep. Y'all, it is so good. Today my friends get a special discount on Beam Dream Powder, which is their bestselling healthy hot cocoa for sleep with no added sugar. It's available in some really good seasonal flavors like the cinnamon cacao I told you about, the sea salt caramel, and white chocolate peppermint. I'm interested.

A recent clinical study revealed that Dream helps 93% of users wake up feeling more refreshed, and 93% reported that Dream helped them get a more restful night's sleep. I am in that 93%, y'all. You just mix Beam Dream into hot water or milk and stir it in, or froth it and enjoy it before bedtime.

If you want to try Beam's bestselling dream powder, take advantage of their biggest sale of the year and get up to 50% off for a limited time. You just go to shopbeam.com/tsf, like that sounds fun, and the discount is automatically applied at checkout. No code necessary. That's shopbeam.com/tsf for up to 50% off. Y'all have got to try it. It is so good.

Now back to our conversation with Lisa.

[00:25:51] <Music>

Annie: One of the things you just said that's really standing out to me is when you said, "I'm not afraid anymore that Jesus is gonna leave me." I have this thought, what a question... Like I kinda want to process it on my Sabbath this week of going, after 30 years of walking with Jesus, what am I not afraid of anymore? Because I can list what I'm afraid of, but what am I not afraid of about Jesus anymore? Because I think once you have that sentence, that also may show you a real place of healing.

Lisa: Yes.

Annie: That's interesting.

Lisa: No, I love that. I think that would be good for all of us to do. I had, about two years ago, but it arrested me, my mentor in seminary, they've all been mentors, but the one who sticks the closest with me is a guy named Dr. Jim Howard. And there's a group of us in his car driving back from lunch to a class. And he looked at me and he said, "Lisa, do you think he can disappoint God?" And I was like, "Well, I know you're gonna dismantle my question as soon as I say it." I said, "But emotionally, my first response is..."

Annie: Of course, I can. Yes.

Lisa: Of course. I disappointed Him today. And he said, "Now let's stop and talk about the atonement. You know, what do you believe is true of the atonement?" So he took us into this deep dive into the atonement and how we tend to, in Western culture, make atonement one and done. We make atonement only about salvation. And he's like, that's not atonement. Atonement is, Jesus is even in this moment, in the process of making all things new. He is always in the process of redeeming our inherent dignity imago dei. But He justified us perfectly and completely on the cross. So that's done. That's completely done.

So he said, "So with what you know theologically about the atonement, is it possible for you today as His beloved to disappoint God?" And I was like... and I said, "I know theologically the answer is no. But emotionally, I can't tell you no." I said, it's the same thing they used to do with us when I was in youth group, when they'd say, "God loves you as much as he loves Billy Graham." And I'd be like, I cry foul, there's no way.

So I think the cool thing about walking with Jesus, and Annie, I wish when I was your age and younger, somebody my age had said this in a way that I believed him, it gets better.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: It doesn't get stiffer. It doesn't get more rigid. It doesn't get... You don't have to do better. It gets better. The truth you believed as a young girl with Jesus gets more amplified, they get sweeter, they get deeper, they get more nuanced. Scripture becomes more and more and more and more of a love story. The things that you find yourself going, "Well, I don't understand this," you begin to go, "Oh, oh, oh." And it's like you start seeing that 3,000-piece puzzle and you realize you can see it almost put together. You realize, oh, even this, even this exists under the canopy of His absolute grace.

So that's the thing that I love about Jesus is the fact that as a member of the Godhead, you know, He didn't just come on the scene in the New Testament. Jesus had been there since the very beginning. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. We're loved by a community God. But the thing I love so much about Christ the Son is He's transcendent and immanent. So He is perfectly, utterly holy and other, but He chose to be... I have one arm with my injured wing. It's so hard for me not to use my hands when I talk.

Annie: I know.

Lisa: He chose to condescend to be accessible to us. So He's always teaching me, no, I'm right here. And there's this kindness where I feel like I'm learning to lean more on Him than I am to run before Him and try to be a good kid.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: I'm more comfortable... even in my own frailty... I don't mean at all to say uncomfortable with my sin. I'm definitely comfortable though with my lack, because He has... Oh, He's just been so kind to redeem the places where I couldn't get there. I think Anne Lamott is a great writer. And Anne Lamott describes grace as God slinging us over His shoulder and carrying us to a new place that we couldn't have gotten to on our own.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: And I think, boy, I look back over 55 years of relationship with Jesus, and I can't even tell you how many pits I've dug myself. What I can tell you is Jesus pulled me out of every single one. Again, I'm not minimizing sin. Sin separates us from God. If sin wasn't a big deal, He could have just done detention. Sin is a huge deal. But His grace and His kindness and His redemption is greater still. I love Jesus. I love Jesus. More importantly, Jesus loves me.

Annie: Yeah. You know, when you taught at Cross Point a couple weeks ago, you... I don't know if you saw this, but one of our staff members took a picture of your Bible. Did you see this?

Lisa: Uh-uh.

Annie: Yeah, she took a picture of your Bible and she said, "I hope my Bible kind of looks like this when I've been with Jesus as long as Lisa Harper has." Also-

Lisa: Oh, what a kind thing.

Annie: I know. And that's so sweet. Also, I got my Bible recovered. So it looks like a brand new Bible.

Lisa: You're really kind. Well, you know what's funny? I used to change my Bible like every seven or eight years because I just like having, you know, new places to write in. But my dad wrote in this one before he died, and I have not been able to part with this Bible. So I have a bunch of Bibles I study from, but this one is kind of my security blanket. So it's pretty tattered. It's not that I'm so holy, it's that I'm so desperate. And I'm a little ADD so I have to put a lot of sticky notes in it. So you and I are probably about the same as being stakeholders in post-It notes.

Annie: Yes. Yes. For real. That's what I wanted you to talk about a little bit. Will you talk about your rhythm with your Bible? I don't want to give the impression of people that the... I saw someone the other day post: the worse your Bible looks, the more your life is together. And that just has not been true for me. I don't think that's true.

Lisa: That's a paraphrase of Spurgeon. It's a paraphrase of Spurgeon. But what's so cool is I love that Spurgeon said that, but he was also honest enough to say that he felt like he spent long seasons residing in a dungeon underneath a castle of despair.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: So even though he said, if your Bible's falling apart, your life probably won't be, he also was very honest about seasons where his life was falling apart. So I think anytime you take one of those really great pithy statements and say, that has to always be true in your life, I'm like, Ah, we're not that... Don't be that narrow a thinker. And you may have the most wonderful day and the most horrible day in the same day. So be careful with what you put on other people just because it sounds great on Instagram.

Annie: Yeah, exactly. So will you talk a little bit... because I'm picturing our friends who get the *Jesus* devotional, I've had it here with me in New York as part of my rhythms. So will you tell me a little bit about your personal study rhythms of what does it look like in the morning or in the evening, or what's your personal study look like that we don't see?

Lisa: I've had to unlearn a lot of bad theology. I had a lot of theology that was wrapped around doing and performing. If I'm keeping step with the Holy Spirit, like scripture says, I'm a hard worker, I run hard. If I'm not keeping step with the Holy Spirit, I'm a hard worker, I run hard.

Annie: Right. Me too.

Lisa: I run really hard. So I've had to learn to listen to what the motive of my heart is. If the motive of my heart is if I kind of do this proverbial spiritual to-do list, God will be more pleased with me, then I may be studying the Bible two hours a day, but my heart is still scared and anxious and I'm still impatient, I'm still judgmental. If I'm not walking with Holy Spirit, I have a critical spirit real quickly of myself and others.

When I'm walking with Holy Spirit, I remember that this is a love letter. You know, the Bible is not primarily a textbook and it is definitely not a rule book, contrary to

popular culture. From cover to cover it's a love story. That's the thing I've loved about my doctrine, Annie.

What I've been pursuing as a doctrine is finding passages in scripture that have formally been perceived as punitive or misogynistic, finding a redemptive movement in what we would call an Orthodox hermeneutic—that just means you believe the Bible's true. That God actually revealed this to us, wrote it to us. And basically proving that God is not a unibrow, you know, punitive librarian in the Old Testament, and Jesus with hair extensions in the New Testament. He's always been kind. He's always been good.

So, for me, what that looks like is I usually wake up because I'm running pretty hard, usually with Missy, with school. So I used to spend a lot of time with the Lord in the morning. Now I spend a lot of time with the Lord, but it's making breakfast, getting her backpack ready, and getting her to school.

And then there's a lot of time in the Lord on the way to school because she's 14 and I get on her last nerve about every other day. So there's a lot of wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth on the way to school. But my study time tends to be during the day.

I used to, when I was writing or preparing a message, which for both of us in vocational ministry, that's pretty much every day. That kind of counted as my time with Jesus. And I've had to learn that's not your time with Jesus. If it lends to a vocational application, if I'm writing a book, then me studying, you know, Paul's prison epistles for that particular book, that doesn't count as my date with Jesus.

I need time where I'm just alone with Jesus, I'm in His word. Maybe I'm in a psalm. Maybe I'm listening to worship music and there's just one verse I'm kind of marinating in. So I don't mean to make it sound so binary. But I've had to learn not to make it dutiful. Because I'm such a doer that if I'm not careful, it becomes very perfunctory and transactional instead of relational.

So when I feel my heart getting into a real transactional rhythm, I go, Okay, I've gotta change the rhythm. And I change the way I study all the time. Some people find it helpful to have a rhythm that they don't break. If I have a rhythm I don't break, if I'm not careful, it becomes tradition and I start worshiping the tradition rather than Jesus.

So sometimes when I get real comfortable in a, no, I have to do this from seven to ten, or I have to do this this certain way, I'll go, "Mm-Hmm. You gotta change all the silverware, you gotta change the China, reset everything so it's fresh again for you."

So I don't have an exact rhythm. I have different seasons. I tend to, in the winter, spend a lot of time studying at night because I love being by the fireplace. I tend to, in the summer, do a lot more earlier because the sun really affects me. I love to be outside. I'm a real outside girl. And I've just found that I've got this... it's more of a... it's my relationship with God.

And of course, the Bible is not a member of the Trinity. Now, hear me. I'm a Bible banger from the word go. I love the word of God. My whole life is about the word of God. But if we're engaging with God's word so that we can sound smart or to memorize a text or to fill in Bible study blanks, and we're not increasing intimacy with Jesus, then the Bible can actually become an idol for, especially people like me, who tend to be performance oriented.

So I will find myself going, "Uh-uh, get your nose out of that Greek syntax study and go for a walk with Jesus and listen to Him in prayer. So I think in first-world culture, especially American Christian culture, we have to be so careful about our relationship with God becoming performative or transactional. Because when we do that, I'm telling you, the runway is real short. And you'll end up...

I've met so many believers who fall out of love with Jesus. And I'm like, "Well, then you weren't in love with Him in the first place. You were in love with some of the machinations we have around Christianity because Jesus is a relationship. That's not transactional. That's relational. So the Bible is the means of grace God gave us to understand Him more. It's revelatory as is Holy Spirit. But you don't have a deep relationship with... I mean, it has to be Jesus, the word of God.

I love that in Hebrews, you know, where in Hebrews chapter 4 talks about the word of God is a two-edged sword. I memorized that as a kid and I would swing my Bible around. One time I was teaching and Genesis flew outta my Bible and hit a woman on the front row. I wonder I wasn't sued. Because I love to quote that because you know, I love my Bible. I love my Bible.

And it wasn't until seminary that I found out, Oh my goodness, Hebrews was written between 60 and 70 AD. They didn't have leather-bound bibles. We didn't get our first canon of the New Testament until the late 300s at the Council of Hippo. So there are probably only two epistles, New Testament epistles floating around during the time Hebrews was written. If you study that word there, it's not a leather-bound Bible the pastor of Hebrews is talking about. He's talking about Jesus.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Lisa: If you read that whole chapter, he's talking about Jesus is the one who knits us together. Jesus is the one who judges our motives. The whole treatise of Hebrews is, remember they're Jewish Christians who are really struggling because they're getting beaten like a drum. They're being martyred for their faith. And so their pastor is saying, no, hang on, hang on, persevere, persevere.

And the whole treatise is Jesus is better than the old covenant. Jesus is better than the priest. Jesus is better than the temple. Jesus is better than the old ways. It's all about Jesus. Then we get to Hebrews 4 and we start swinging our leather-bound Bibles around. And I'm like, Boy, we've got to quit segregating Jesus logos, and that's the same as John 1, from these brick and mortar Bibles. If you're engaging in your Bible to sound smarter or learn theology instead of to develop more intimacy with Jesus, you're gonna get in trouble.

Annie: Yeah. Luckily here in New York, my team shipped this to me. Hold on, let me get it for you. My team shipped me my mind-blown emoji button. It says Wowy Zowie. I needed that because in my 30-plus years of being a believer, no one has ever told me that the sharper and double-edged sword wasn't talking about my leather-bound Bible. But of course it wasn't. But no one's ever told me that.

Lisa: Now, He could have been referring back to the Hebrew scriptures because they had the Hebrew scriptures in draw. That wouldn't really have made sense. Because the whole point of Hebrews is Jesus is supreme. It's about the supremacy and the accessibility of Jesus. But that blew my mind too. And I saw myself going... but I just hadn't thought, well, of course, we didn't get our New Testament canon until the late 300s. It wasn't officially formally canonized until early 400s.

So he couldn't have been talking about what we would call the Bible today. He was talking about Jesus. Read the next three verses. And again, please hear me. I love my Bible. But I love my Bible because it reveals Jesus to me. And I can't fully understand John 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. But what John is saying is the same thing the pastor of the Hebrews was saying is, don't segregate Jesus from this revealed in scripture-related text.

Because somehow, some way Jesus is on every page. That's what He told those fellows who are walking home from Emmaus so confused because they were like, Oh, God, we thought He would make life easier for us. And He says, you know... Don't you wish we had pictures in our Bible? I would so love to see Jesus' face. Because, you know, He was so tickled going, Yeah-

Annie: And how He was gonna keep going. And He keep walking. You're like, "Jesus, what were you gonna do?"

Lisa: Oh, I love that.

Annie: I love that.

Lisa: I know. And then, of course, He reveals Himself when they order pizza. I love that He always calls Himself the bread of life. I think I'd be so disappointed if He called Himself the kale of life. The fact that Jesus... Jesus validated carbs in my opinion. But somehow my mind is too finite to completely wrap around that. But somehow Jesus and scripture are... I don't want to say one and the same, I don't have the right word for it.

But if you segregate Jesus from the Word of God, logos, this is gonna become a rule book instead of a love story. And if you find that you've fallen in love with a Bible study instead of what the Bible is about, who is God Himself, then I'd say would, boy, be really, really careful that that isn't about you. Because I did that for a long time.

I was so trying to spin plates so that nobody would see the broken places in me. I mean, I had a verse for everything. I knew just enough Greek and Hebrew to sound smart. And really it was just a lot of subterfuge so you wouldn't see the places where I was scared and broken and felt so dirty.

[00:44:07] <Music>

Annie: Friends, have you gotten your copies of So Happy to Know You!? It's the book I wanted to write for my MiniBFFs to remind them God made each of them on purpose. It's a kids' book-size reminder that we need them just as they are. Their voice, their heart, their talents, their unique selves that no one else has. Jennie Poh beautifully brought it to life with her illustrations, and So Happy to Know You! is just the encouragement your kids need today to live confidently, and honestly, probably a message we all need no matter our age.

And you know when this book started rolling around in my brain? When I started telling you always Annie stories, things I would do that were a little and a lot. I realize the stories that make me me are your favorite ones and mine too. So this book hopefully helps your kiddos and you see yourself as perfectly unique. And we are so happy to know you. So get your copies of So Happy To Know You! wherever books are sold. Available right now.

Sponsor: And I have one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Ritual](#). Okay, y'all know I really am a fan of Ritual's Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin. And get this, they conducted a university-led clinical trial for it to see how effective it was, and

the results showed an increase in vitamin D levels by 43% and Omega 3, DHA levels by 41% in just 12 weeks, y'all. So I love that it is proven to actually work.

Ritual's Essential for Women 18+ has this minty essence in every bottle that helps keep things very fresh. I really love that. And helps make taking my multis every day actually enjoyable. It's made with high-quality ingredients and nine traceable key nutrients. You just take two capsules a day. And their capsule has a delayed-release design to help make it gentle on an empty stomach.

Essential for Women 18+ is also, get this, soy-free, gluten-free, vegan-friendly, and formulated without GMOs. Yes, and thank you. Ritual is all about hot data and stone-cold facts, you guys. 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.

Now back to finish up our conversation with Lisa.

[00:46:18] <Music>

Annie: Some things are colliding that I've gotta tell you about. Because the other day, a fire truck went down my street. And as the fire truck going down my street, this was what happened in my brain. I thought, "What happens if there's a fire in a building in New York? Does everybody leave? And where's the fire alarm?" And I was laying in bed and I pictured, what would you do if you got outta bed? And I thought, "Grab my Bible and get my phone." Those are two things I thought. I didn't think about my purse. I didn't think about my ID. I thought, "Get your Bible and your phone".

And what's stirring in me as I'm listening to you is a question I get to ask that I'm not sure of the answer of yet. But the question I get to say to Lord is, do I idolize my Bible?

Lisa: But I know you and I know your heart, and I know... I feel like I've had, at least from the cheap seats, I've been able to watch you. And you dance with Jesus. You love Jesus. My gut says you would grab your Bible because that represents your relationship with Jesus, not because you idolize the inscription and text. It's because you love Jesus so much. We can't grab Him.

Annie: Yeah, I just want to be thoughtful of that. I've had the same Bible since I was four 14. So much of my history is in there. And the other day when I was interviewing a theologian, he made a passing joke about "but I would never read it in the NIV". And I thought, "My Bible I've loved forever is the NIV."

So I think you're right. I hope you're right, that it would be a grab out of this is one of the most connected things to me and Jesus is my copy of my Bible. And also I probably need to walk through. In a world where your Bible falls out of the airplane next time you're flying home to Nashville, would you be okay? Would your faith survive? And what would you grieve? What do you need to start thinking about if you decided you needed a new Bible?

Lisa: It happened to me actually with my old NIV Bible. And by the way, one of my theological heroes, I love all the dead guys, but this guy's still alive in kicking, who's one of my professors at Denver Seminary. Craig Blomberg, one of the world's foremost authorities on the New Testament. I kind of had that same, a little bit of... about the NIV. And we can talk about translation some other time.

But Dr. Blomberg is on the Translatory team. And I mean, the Holy Spirit spanked my rear end up between my shoulder blades because I thought, who am I to say there's different reasons behind our translation. Some are formal equivalents, which means they're closer to the original Greek and Hebrew and Aramaic, and some have a little more liberty. Any Bible is a good Bible if it has all the included books. So I'm like, don't get so particular about that. That again, if we start breathing our own exhaust we're gonna get sick really fast.

But I lost a Bible. It was the NIV Bible my mom gave me when I graduated from high school. And I loved that Bible. And I had no idea where the Bible was. I'm actually right down the road from it. I used to do a Bible study years ago when I first moved to Nashville at Harpeth Hall, a girl school right up the road.

And probably five years later, a girl said... you know, she explained her name to me and she said, "I've been hoping for the opportunity to engage with you all this time. I found this on campus. Been at my parents' house." It was my NIV Bible. Evidently, I left it like when I was hanging out with some kids or praying for some kids out, like on their campus at Harpeth campus. It had been in the rain. It was all swollen. It just was a wreck.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lisa: But you could still see my name in the beginning. And I loved that bible. But I think that's a wonderful question, Annie, of what do our Bibles represent? Because I've got notes all in. The reason I won't let go of this one is my father wrote in it before he passed away.

But what does that represent? Because at the end of the day, it's just beautiful paper-thin pages with the word of God breathed on it. What does it represent? It represents that God, before the foundation of time, said, I know there's gonna be

this loudmouth girl named Lisa who can't land the plane, who struggles with anxiety, who will struggle with all these things. But I love her so much that I'm gonna send my Son. All that was worked out eons before time began. That's what this love story says.

So is it about a book or is it about a God who loves us more than we can possibly ask or imagine? It's okay to... I mean, I would baw my guts out if I lost this Bible, but I wouldn't lose Jesus.

Annie: That's right. And you wouldn't lose your history with Him just because your notes with Him fell out of an airplane or at the Harpeth Hall playground.

Lisa: Right. I pull out my sticky notes in this Bible all the time because there's just not enough room. And sometimes I'll rip them out so I have more room for sticky notes. And I'll think, "Oh man, that was so good." I'll be surprised at my own... Do you ever get surprised at your own... what you've written? I think you kinda cooking with gas that day.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lisa: I've a couple of times... this is just what, yay, who I am. A couple of times I haven't wanted to throw away sticky note because I thought, "I dunno if I'll be able to think that thought again. That was pretty cool about the Lord. And I'm like, You big yaywhoo, you need to learn that again. So I throw it away and I don't write it down because I think I want to relearn that and maybe relearn it at a deeper level. If I'm infatuated with my own quote, we're all in trouble. So I'll pull it out, throw it away, and let Him tell me-

Annie: We have time to talk about Kerygma real quick before we go?

Lisa: Heck, yes.

Annie: Okay, good. Because when I think about you and your teaching. I mean, now you've created Kerygma to help those other people who are teaching learn to teach. So will you kind of explain to people who haven't been exposed to Kerygma yet, what it is that y'all are building?

Lisa: Yes. Yes. Only if you'll get a matching Kerygma tattoo with me.

Annie: Oh, listen.

Lisa: Did I tell you I chickened out that I went to the place in Jerusalem that you got your sword tattoo from? And I had an appointment and everything and... You know, I think there's an age that you can miss that window. And I looked down-

Annie: You have not missed it.

Lisa: Oh, Annie, I was gonna get, you know, at Magdalo where it says duke and Autumn put out in the deep in Latin. I was so excited I was gonna get that tattooed to my wrist in white. I was gonna be a sissy.

Annie: All mine are white. All five of mine are white.

Lisa: I know. I love your tattoo. You are my tattoo hero. And I looked down at my wrist and I thought, "I'll look at that for the rest of my life and think I was drinking in Jerusalem. I'm too old to get my first tattoo. And I chickened out. I had an appointment and I chickened out.

Annie: Okay, we're gonna... When the Lord makes Americans available to go back to Israel, we will go to Razzouk and yeah... We'll do it.

Lisa: Oh, I just was so bugged at myself. I have loved seminary because I fallen more in love with Jesus. I just wanted to learn. And we learn more about God through His word and through Holy Spirit. And then my daughter... I'm an old adoptive mom. So I thought it would be cool for Missy and I to do our homework together at the kitchen table. You know, we should be lifelong learners no matter what age. We should always be learning something new.

So what I discovered on that journey, I'd got my master's from seminary in my 30s, but going back to school in my 50s, I realized there is a gap, unintentional, between a lot of women who feel passionate about teaching God's word and academia. And there shouldn't be. So you don't have to go to seminary, but if God has called you... all of us are called to be, you know, ambassadors of the New Covenant. All of us are called to teach and preach at some level with the people in your life.

But those who feel called to do it in a Bible study, on a platform or in church, or in a peer of church, it behooves us to know what we're doing. Not just to say, Well, the Bible says. I'm like, you might want to study the chapter before that and after that. You might not want to get all of your content from Wikipedia, you know? It behooves us to have a little bit of scaffolding.

And I thought, man, I have so many friends who don't have the time to go to seminary, or they're just not at a place in their life where they could go back. It's like you have a lot of friends who can't, for two months, pick up and go to New

York because of whatever commits they have. But you want to kind of bring New York to them.

And I thought, lemme bring some of my favorite theologians in the world who just make the Bible come to life and help. They put the cookies on the lower shelf. And you're like, hermeneutics, what does that mean? I used to get eschatology mixed up with... oh, scatology. Oh, sorry. That's about animal waste and hunters use law. But I would get that mixed up.

So I'm like, we need to handle plus today. You know, you talk to somebody in their 20s and it's not enough to say, well, Jesus is this warm fuzzy feeling in my heart. When they go, yeah, well, how can you justify that war? How can you promote compassion and talk about the forceful restraint of evil? You don't check your mind at the door when you become a believer.

Annie: That's right.

Lisa: He doesn't tell us to do. He says, bring your heart and your mind into the game. So I thought, I'm gonna bring my friends who are these amazing scholars with my other friends who are these passionate teachers, and even if it's not vocational ministry, but they lead a Bible study in their home every week. Because those two should be... I mean, that should be like coffee and cream. That belongs together. So two years ago we started Kerygma.

And Annie, it was the coolest thing. Because the number one question I got was, I'm afraid I'm not smart enough to sit under all these profound theologians. And I was like, well, none of us are smart enough.

Annie: Right. Right.

Lisa: It's like saying [inaudible 00:56:48] to be a Christian. Well, I mean, that's kind of a moot point. None of us are. It's the goodness of God. But I was like, no, no, no, no, no, come. We can all learn more about Jesus. So we had... I don't know the first one you were there, but we had a really good number of women from all over. I wish I had time to tell you about this woman.

I'll tell you short. A woman came from the UK and I noticed her the first night. First of all, I love any accent from across the pond. They had me the minute they opened their mouth. I'm like, I'll rededicate my life if you'll just read the phone record from London or Scotland or South Africa or Australia.

Anyway, she had this beautiful accent. And she said the Lord had just prompted her to come to Kerygma from across the pond. So the next morning after we had a

scholars panel with just some of these amazing New Testament, Old Testament scholars, I noticed she was crying. And she said, "When you have a minute, can I talk to you?" And I said, "Oh, I'd love to."

Well, Annie, because of the way Scot McKnight unpacked something from the epistles about women, it had lifted the shame off her that had been there for years. She had already stepped out of a teaching position because she felt like... she's a beautiful African American... not African American, African UK woman. She's from Nairobi.

But she said, "I'd never wanted being Black or being a female to be what led me. I didn't want that to be my driving force." But because of some things that had been said to her in ministry circles, she thought she was stepping out from under God's sovereign mercy for her life to teach the Bible. And the way Scott unpacked at a very deep level a passage about women in leadership but it spoke exactly to what someone who was not learned had said to her. It freed her up. She said, "You have no idea. This has changed the trajectory of my life."

So regardless of where you are on that egalitarian, complementarian spectrum, we're not gonna tell you how to think. What we want to do is get all this amazing teaching under you that will just put wind in your sails so that you can go further into the area God has called you to.

So this year... I just keep adding people. I mean, it's unbelievable that. Dr. Craig Keener, one of the world's foremost authorities on the New Testament, met with him a few months ago. Annie, he is brilliant. Every time he talks about Jesus, he just cries. He just weeps when he talks about the Christ. So he's coming. His wife who's from Africa, carried a baby on her chest in the jungle when her country was in Civil War. I mean, amazing people.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: So they're PhDs. They are the kindest godliest people, and they want to put the cookies on the lower shelf so that women like you and I fall more in love with Jesus and then become more effective sharing the hope that lies within us. So yeah, I'm hoping women come from all over. It's last weekend in April.

Annie: Okay. Last weekend of April, 2024. We'll make sure to remind everybody. But I'll be there.

Lisa: Well, you'll be doing a breakout session.

Annie: No, no. I'll just be attending. I'll just be there with Joy. I mean, you introduced me to Dr. Scot McKnight's work, and I read A Church Called Tov. And then he was just on the podcast about Pivot because of it. I mean, you introduced us.

Lisa: Is he not believable?

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lisa: Oh, he's awesome. He is so awesome.

Annie: He is brilliant.

Lisa: And they're all so lovely and they want us to get it. It's such a misnomer to think of a seminary professor as being this arcane person who, you know, wears black socks in his dusty office. They want to connect with people who are in ministry. Most of them pastored at some point. So they're like, what can I do to help you be more effective as a communicator of the gospel? Whether you're a podcaster, whether you have a neighborhood bible study. They want us to fall more in love with God His word.

I mean, I've been so undone by the people who've said yes, because some of them are my biggest heroes and have been for decades. And then to see them like kids in a candy store, that there's a thousand women who are not students, who are not paying by the hour hanging on every word. I had a woman from Denver Seminary last year, Eva Bleeker. Brilliant. She has a doctorate in counseling. Oh, she's just unbelievable seminary prof. It was when Hillary was leading worship. She began to weep and she said, "Lisa, I've never been in a room with this many women who are for each other and love Jesus."

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: You know, so many different denominational backgrounds. But she said, "I didn't know something like this existed." I think a lot of women, especially women who listen to you, who are leading at some level, I think it's easy to think, "I'm the only one. That there's not too many women I've met who are like me." And then you come together and there's a thousand women who are asking the same questions, who have the same passion and the same frustration. "I just want to get it. I didn't get it right. Who can help me understand this more or understand how to teach God's word and hang on to compassion and not be pharisaical?" And you see them just go, "Oh." It's very life-giving. So you won't feel stupid.

You know, one of my really, really close friends was at Angola for 22 years. He was in prison for 32 years and was a lifer. Didn't think he'd ever get out. And got his master's behind bars at Angola.

Annie: Wow.

Lisa: He's become a dear, dear friend. His name is Kyle. But because so many people have said, "Lisa, basically I don't feel like I'm smart enough or good enough to come to this conference where all these smarties and tardies are, I thought I'm gonna have Kyle open the conference." And I said, "Kyle, I want you to tell them where you got your degree from. You got your degree from... it was Golden State Seminary, but it was at Angola as a lifer who was in prison, maximum security prison." And I said, "And I want you to explain to them that no one is not good enough to learn more about the love of God." I mean, women just bawled. And then two women, after Kyle open in prayer, came up. They were at Kerygma. Their dad was incarcerated with Kyle at Angola.

Annie: No.

Lisa: There's thousands of inmates. So they came up and they're like, "You know, Lisa, can we meet Kyle?" I was like, "Absolutely." And they said, "This is such a shot in the dark. There's probably no way." I think there's like... I don't remember how many thousands of inmates, but a ton of inmates. And we meet him. I was like, "Absolutely."

And Kyle started to weep and he said, "I mentor your dad. I had your dad in bible study, prayed for these two daughters whose dad will never get out of Angola." I'm like, I mean, I'm sorry, this is not a stiff academic conference. This is like supernatural Holy Spirit stuff. So it was awesome.

Annie: It's funny. Because it isn't stiff an academic, but it is an opportunity to stretch your brain.

Lisa: Absolutely. I mean, it's like drinking from a fire hose.

Annie: It's the best. I can't wait. I'll serve in any way you'd like me to serve, but I am just very happy to be there. I mean, cannot wait.

Lisa: You and I are getting tattoos. You're doing something fun and perhaps a little bit of interpretive dance.

Annie: Yes. With pleasure. With pleasure. So Lisa, is there anything we didn't say that you want to make sure we cover today?

Lisa: I want to say I love you. I love who you are. I love who you are to the body of Christ. I love how every time I hear you put wind in my sails. I love that you've chosen joy. I love that you've chosen to encourage the body. I love that I never hear an unkind word coming out of your mouth. So that is what I want to say that I didn't get to say.

Annie: You're very kind. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Lisa: It's true. I'm not being kind, I'm being honest.

Annie: I believe you. Okay, the last question we always ask. Lisa Harper, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you though before you go.

Lisa: You know, what has been fun? I had this major surgery two weeks ago and I can't use my left arm at all for six weeks. It has been kind of a hoot. It is actually partly your fault, Annie.

Annie: Really?

Lisa: Mm-Hmm. I was laying in bed... you know I work with a lot of women in recovery and so I didn't want to take the really strong meds. So I was in a lot of pain the first couple of days. My mind was going down that track of this is so hard, this is so much worse than I thought. I can't believe I can't move for a couple weeks. I mean, your face came into my mind and I thought, That sounds fun. And I thought, Okay, this was totally perspective. This is kind of fun. I can choose to go, I get to learn how to do all these things, like washing my hair.

Annie: I was gonna say your hair looks very good for only having one arm.

Lisa: Had you seen it before the blowout? It looked like roadkill. But I've chosen to see this as not only can this be fun, it also helps me have empathy for people who maybe don't have all four appendages. It has been interesting. I don't mean to sound trite, but I thought several times this actually is kind of fun to be physically limited. Because I'm going, Okay, how can I do this in a more creative way? How can I work on Missy's braids in a more creative way with just one hand? How can I...? And it has been... I think life is fun. Life is hard, but life is fun. It all in the perspective, isn't it?

Annie: That's right. That's right. Well, thank you Lisa. I love you. I'm so thankful for you

Lisa: I love you so much. I can't wait to see you again.

[01:06:46] <Music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love her? I know. My gosh. We are just so lucky when our big sisters come on the show. I'm so thankful. Just grab a copy of her devotional, *Jesus*, as you are Christmas shopping. Get one for yourself, get one for your friends. This is also a great Post-It gift or housewarming gift. It's a beautiful devotional to put into any of your friends' hands. And make sure you're following Lisa on social media. Tell her thanks for being on the show.

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

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, on the parade route for the Thanksgiving Day parade this week. Really anywhere you need me, that's how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is my whole family getting here for Thanksgiving. And that starts tomorrow. I cannot wait. Y'all have a great holiday week. I hope you'll getting to see a lot of people you love this week, spending time the way you want to.

We'll see you back here on Thanksgiving on Thursday with a super special, really fun holiday episode with my friend Ann Lynn. Y'all, get ready. We're talking about home, we're talking about decor, we're talking about time with your family. Everything we need to talk about on Thanksgiving we're doing it. We'll see y'all Thursday.