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**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun in our 10th anniversary year of the podcast. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. And listen, if you have not heard our January 6th episode, our epiphany episode from Saturday, there are lots of great 10th anniversary announcements in there, some stories I wanted to share with you, so go back and listen.

I also told y'all some really fun things, like save that date for August 11th in Nashville. You're going to want to be in Nashville on August 11th. It is going to be such a fun weekend. So plan for that.

Also, starting this year, every episode will be a podcast as well as the full video on YouTube. So you can watch as well as listen. The link for YouTube is in the description below, so you can subscribe over there if you'd rather watch. And if you're watching already, hi, look, here we are.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [Athletic Greens](#). As part of my rhythm for making healthy choices in my day, I like to drink AG1 first thing in the morning. I fill up my shaker with extra cold water, one scoop of AG1, a couple of lemon juice ice cubes, just for a little something fun, shake it up and I am ready to go.

If I'm running short on time and can't mix my AG1 before heading out, I'll just grab a travel pack. Each one is an individual serving of AG1 that's easy to mix on the go, so I make sure I get my daily nutrients. Each serving of AG1 has my daily dose of vitamins, minerals, pre and probiotics, and more.

If there's one product I have to recommend to elevate your health, it is AG1. And that's why I've partnered with them for so long. So if you want to take ownership over your health, start with AG1.

Try AG1 and get a free one-year supply of vitamin D3 plus K2 and five free AG1 travel packs with your first purchase exclusively at [drinkag1.com/soundsfun](http://drinkag1.com/soundsfun). That's [drinkag1.com/soundsfun](http://drinkag1.com/soundsfun). Y'all check it out.

**Intro:** Today on the show, I get to talk with my friend and one of my favorite pastors, Banning Liebscher. You may remember Banning from Episode 237 or from the 2018 Christmas Party episode. Banning Liebscher is the founding pastor of Jesus Culture, the author of multiple books, the host of the Banning Liebscher podcast, and the pastor's podcast, one of my very favorites.

So here's why we started the year with Banning. As I've listened to the Pastors Podcast, as I am listening to his teaching over the last few months, I felt like he really had some important things to say about where we should go in 2024, particularly in our spiritual lives. And that really matters to me.

And as Emily P. Freeman teaches, we can slowly come into 2024. We don't have to have all the answers by today. So today, Banning and I are going to talk about what should this year be shaped like? And I am telling you, mind-blown emoji. [Wowie Zowie]. Mind-blown emoji.

He has reshaped how I am planning for 2024 in this one conversation. And I hope that will be true for you as well. I also hope, and you'll hear me say this, I hope you get protected from a mistake I made last year by listening to Banning today.

So here is my conversation with pastor and friend, Banning Liebscher.

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**Annie:** Banning Liebscher, welcome back to That Sounds Fun.

**Banning:** Well, it's good to be back. Thanks for having me.

**Annie:** It is such an honor. It's your third time on the show.

**Banning:** That's amazing.

**Annie:** The thing you should really point your arrow toward is when you hit five shows, you enter the Hall of Fun.

**Banning:** But I think at three shows, I should be considered quasi-staff.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, right. Yeah, you are a pastor of the pod.

**Banning:** I'm kind of part of the family now, you know?

**Annie:** That's exactly right. What an honor to us! Banning, you are our first episode of our 10th anniversary year of That Sounds Fun.

**Banning:** Wait, 10 years, congratulations.

**Annie:** Yes, 10 years.

**Banning:** What an honor!

**Annie:** So one of the flip-flops we're doing this year is we're starting with our favorite question.

**Banning:** That's wild. That's wild.

**Annie:** So Banning-

**Banning:** Starting 2024 off is just wild.

**Annie:** I know, right? So tell me, what sounds fun to you, Banning?

**Banning:** Okay, so here's my life right now. I have three kids, 24, 21, both in college. And then I have an 18-year-old. He is graduating high school. He's my last one. And he plays basketball. It's what he's done for most of his life. So right now, my life is basketball. It is at games, helping referees, and just churning on.

**Annie:** Helping referees.

**Banning:** I actually tell my church all the time, I'm like, "Listen, I have a call to be a pastor, but from mid-November to mid-March every year, my secondary calling is to assist referees in this assignment." It's just been basketball. It's so fun just to see.

You know what it kind of feels like? It feels like a TV series I've been watching for 10 years that I know I'm on the last season. But I'm a little bit kind of sad, but it's just... it's all the feels. But that's what I've been doing. It's been a blast.

**Annie:** Will he keep playing after his senior year? Is he gonna go to school and play, or?

**Banning:** Yeah, he might. We're in that conversation right now, and in that mode right now. So if I have my way, yes. If I have my way, he absolutely will be giving me another four years of sitting in his pants.

**Annie:** I mean, so many of our friends listening, a lot of our peers have high school seniors and are doing this process you're doing. So what's it like in your house that it's your son's senior year, that this is y'all's last one? I mean, now y'all are about to be empty nesters, right?

**Banning:** Yeah. Well, you're empty nesters, I guess, when your kids leave, but my kids haven't left yet.

**Annie:** Okay, got it, got it, got it.

**Banning:** My girls are still in college. My 24-year-old, who I love, still lives at home, which I love. Yeah, it is very weird. I gotta be honest with you. I'm kind of experiencing so many different emotions with it. My son's a senior. He's my youngest. This is now gonna kind of be it.

Well, you know what's weird is, outside of the kind of emotions around the empty nest concept, is my life has been heavily influenced by some school schedule my whole life, for 24 years. And all of a sudden, it's not gonna be influenced by a school schedule anymore, and that's weird.

I'm looking at next year, and they're like, You wanna come... I only do two international trips a year intentionally. And somebody said, "You wanna come to New Zealand in November?" I was like, "Yeah, yeah. Yes." I was always connected to some schedule somewhere, so that's kind of gonna be weird, but we're so proud of my kids. It's this weird feeling of sad and then super proud. Like so proud and then kind of melancholy sad.

**Annie:** I am having a similar experience to you not being trapped by the school calendar anymore, because that's all my friends. Like, all my friends are suddenly like, "Hey, I can come do that with you, Annie." And for 18 years, they haven't been able to.

**Banning:** No, totally. Gabe Lyons has invited me to something for... and I wanna go. I love Gabe, good friend. And every one I'm like, "Dude, I'm sorry, my son's got this. My girls have this." Every year. I just can't go do a bunch of stuff with people that I love nationally, but all of a sudden, I'm like, "Well, I guess I can now." That's so weird.

**Annie:** I know. I'm so thrilled that y'all are coming back. Everybody's coming back to my social calendar. I mean, I just was texting with a friend today. I said, "Hey, do you wanna go with this event to me?" Because her kids are middle school and high school now. And when they were elementary and babies, before they were born, she traveled with me some. And then she had a season where she couldn't travel, and now I'm like, "Hey, you wanna...?" And she's like, "Actually, yeah, one of my sons is on a school trip that weekend, and the other son's... my husband said that's great."

**Banning:** It's way less costly. For those... I don't know, anybody listening that travels. When you travel when your kids are little, it just feels so costly. And I do it. It's the Lord, and we make sure we do it well, and family's first, but it just is so costly.

Now that my kids are older, it's funny. I'm on the road, and I'm like, This doesn't feel costly. Like, it's not costing my kids right now that I'm speaking over here. So yeah, it is a different experience. As they get older, not just when they're out of the house, but as they get into their high school years.

**Annie:** I'll tell you a really funny thing that's happened, Banning. So I'm paying attention. My town where I grew up, a lot of my friends, not all of them, a lot of them have high schoolers, middle schoolers, high schoolers. My Nashville friends that are the same age have elementary. My New York friends that are the same age are having babies. It is fascinating.

**Banning:** It is very fascinating how much people... I have a weird opinion on some of this stuff, because I don't know if I would've... If we went back and did it again... We were married at 21, got pregnant, and then had a kid at 22. But I do look back now and go, "Oh, there's a whole stage of life from like 45 to 65 that I wasn't even thinking about.

**Annie:** Right.

**Banning:** So there are some... People don't like my advice sometimes, actually. I'm not giving this advice to anybody right now on the podcast, and maybe we'll edit this out. But I do talk to people in their 20s sometimes, and I say, "Hey, you're really looking at your 20s right now, trying to go, I wanna have them be the best, I wanna get what I need out of my 20s." Not in a selfish way. They're just like, "I wanna be able to travel." I said, "There is another part of your life called 45 to 65 but you're thinking about 25 to 30 right now. But you gotta be thinking also about what do I want it to look like when I'm 50 and 55 and 60, when, hey, I'm more established, I've got some money, I can actually do some stuff.

**Annie:** And boundaries. I actually have better boundaries in this season of my life than I ever have.

**Banning:** No, totally. So there are some people, I'm not saying everybody needs to get married early and pregnant early and all that type of stuff. But I will say this, sometimes when you're in your 20s, late 20s, you are kind of like, "I want this time to be the best." And I'm like, totally, there's just another time coming up, and you definitely wanna go, What do I want that time to look like? Because if I delay all of these things because I want my 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 years to be amazing, you do have a year where you're 50, 51, 52, 53.

**Annie:** I'm thinking about it a lot as an Annie. I'm 43 and not married yet and not totally uninterested in having kids, right? So I would have a totally different life if I got married and got pregnant. Suddenly my life was shifting, y'all, and I wouldn't be able to do some of the things I get to do, and it'd be different gifts than these gifts.

But talk a little bit for a second, and then we're gonna jump into what actually... I bet this is it too. I feel like someone told me recently, I'm sorry, I can't remember who. Some of our listeners will tell us in the comments on Instagram. Someone recently came on the show that was theologian-ish and said, your 60s and 70s are actually your best seasons of ministry.

**Banning:** Oh, I 100% would believe that. And I think here's why.

**Annie:** I hope that's true.

**Banning:** Oh, 100%. Annie, you would recognize this even in your 40s. When you're in your 20s and your 30s, you're just trying to figure things out. You don't know what you're motivated by, and there's just broken things that are still getting healed. So it's hard to describe. You can be a driven person in your 20s and 30s just because you're looking for acceptance. Because you-

**Annie:** And you have the energy too.

**Banning:** And it's genuine. It's genuine. It's not like broken, you know.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Banning:** So you spend your 20s and 30s, though, kind of learning about yourself, getting healed up, getting healthy, getting whole, making sure the motivations that are driving you are actually healthy motivations, not unhealthy motivations. And all of a sudden, you start getting to that place. And also for many people, when you're... not for everybody, like you said, Annie, but for some, you've got little kids, you're doing all this type of stuff. But you start getting into your 50s, and all of a sudden, you've really done the work with the Lord. All of a sudden, you have actually grown in those areas.

And I'll say this. One of the things I talk about is there's an authority that comes in your life. I don't know if you felt this at 40, Annie. I felt a shift in actually the weight of authority in my ministry. I don't think it was just connected to a date, but there was something that shifted where I felt like, well, I'm not just an older brother, I'm a father.

**Annie:** I like put my shoulders back at 40.

**Banning:** Yes. And what I think that is, is you... you know, they actually talk about elders in scripture. One of the requirements for elders is that they've been tested.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Banning:** So you haven't been tested necessarily, or you're going through the test, which isn't just a season. It's decades sometimes. And when you come through that fire, when you come out the other side of that test, there is an authority on your life that was not there before.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Banning:** You own something now. You own a truth. You own a revelation. You own something now that you didn't own before. So you see these s... they're slower. They're more patient. They're not kind of running around wasting their energy.

I got a friend who played in the NBA for 13 years, and it was very interesting. I asked him... if you watch sports at all, he was playing with these Division I kids that would come home for the summer. So he's in the NBA. He's playing with these Division I. Now, if you play basketball in Division I, you're legit. Like you are-

**Annie:** In college, for people listening. In college.

**Banning:** Yes, in college. In college. If you play Division I basketball, you're legit. They'd come home, and he'd play with them, and he goes, they just are all over the place. They're just running everywhere. And the NBA guys, they go from point A to point B.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Banning:** They don't go all over the place. They don't waste energy. And even these D1 kids who are so good are still wasting energy on the basketball court, where these NBA guys, they're like, "Nope, you go from here to here." So I think as you get older, you're not wasting energy like you used to. There's a different level of authority on your life.

Annie, you've been preaching for a while. There's stuff I'm preaching right now that I was preaching 20 years ago, there's just a different authority on it.

**Annie:** It's different, yeah. I'm telling the same story, but it's being heard different, yeah.

**Banning:** There is a weightiness to it. So I 100% believe that as, whatever it is, whether they're in vocational ministry or not, as we get older, there's some things that have been tested by fire that we now possess. There's authority on our life. There's wisdom that comes with age. There's all that type of stuff.

So yeah, I would agree. I 100% would think the most impactful years are your later years, not your younger years. You know, the problem is, Annie, and we can have this conversation. The problem is that most of our culture values young.

**Annie:** And when is the last time you saw a 70 under 70 list? No.

**Banning:** No.

**Annie:** It's 30 under 30. It's 40 under 40.

**Banning:** And everybody's trying to look younger. Anybody who's in Hollywood or whoever else is in their 70s is trying to look 30.

**Annie:** Do men feel that as much as women feel that, Banning? Or do men feel... I know we can't take temperature of that.

**Banning:** I don't know. I don't know.

**Annie:** Do men feel that too, though?

**Banning:** No. I would imagine they don't, but not at the level women do. I mean, I'm just saying that from watching Hollywood. You can be in your 70s, and everybody still thinks as a man, you know. But if you're 70s and a woman in Hollywood. So I would say we probably don't feel the same amount of pressure. But I think we legitimately, the Bible does, should be going, "You've got gray hair. I 100% need what you have and the authority you carry, even though you're not wearing the latest fashions, even though you're not whatever."

So I do think there's some of that pressure sometimes. People are not wanting to wait till they're 50. They're not wanting to wait till they're 60. They want to see it now.

**Annie:** I mean, that's in me too, though, is the problem, is I like said, I want to do... I said to my management, I want to do these things before I'm 50. Well, why, why? Why do I want to do it before I'm 50? What do I think happens at 50 that I can't do it then?



**Banning:** No, exactly.

**Annie:** So how do we balance that? How do we balance the drive to like, I want to accomplish these things now, and what if I would actually be better at them in 10 years?

**Banning:** Well, even Chris Tomlin... it's funny with Chris Tomlin... I don't know how old Chris is, but you know, they're like, well, Chris-

**Annie:** I think he's like 84. I'm just kidding.

**Banning:** Yeah, he's probably. A lot of Botox. Like he's still going to his worships, they're still relevant. And everybody's kind of amazed by it. They're like, that's amazing. He's still going. But I'm like, this shouldn't be amazing that only young worship leaders are the ones that are... I love young worship leaders. It is very strange that sometimes as you get older, people are... I don't know, it's just our culture. But I'm going to tell you-

**Annie:** I mean, I struggle with it too, Banning, because every single time I dye my hair, I have a conversation with the Lord about how the Bible says I should let my gray hairs out. People make fun of me on the internet all the time. I take it far too serious, because I'm like, "Lord, is it all right with you? Because..." I mean, I wrestle with it.

**Banning:** No, I do. I get it. I do too, 100%. I think sometimes we just don't value age at the level that we should, and we don't really celebrate it. So that is interesting. And we live in a world that's obviously... when you're in front of the camera all the time, it is a different... I'm saying it is a different kind of experience you're having, like of aging in front of people. You're aging in front of people all the time.

**Annie:** I mean, happy 10th anniversary of the podcast. We're showing all the graphics that we've had for 10 years. And I'm like, well, there she goes. There she goes from 32 to 43. Okay. I mean, I'm thrilled with where we've gone, but it is... I mean, that is part of having... for all of us, anybody who has an Instagram, people can scroll back and see you five, 10, 12 years ago.

**Banning:** But I want to echo what you just said, that the greatest years of impact will be the second half of your life.

**Annie:** Listen, it's why it matters to me that I'm doing everything I can to keep my body in a place where I can live to 100.

**Banning:** Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

**Annie:** I don't want to eat and not exercise in a way that my body gives up at 70 when my spirit was entering its best decades.

**Banning:** Yes, agreed. Man, I love that.

**Annie:** That would be so tragic to me. I mean, I'm teary saying it to you. That'd be so tragic to me if... in any way that I can control, we don't have as much control. I don't have as much control as I think I do. But in the ways I can control, I want to do everything I can to be doing this, whatever the this is that God's invited me to for the next 40 years, 50 years.

**Banning:** It's interesting you talk about that. That's all a stewardship issue for me. Whether it's the fitness, the nutrition, all of this type of stuff, for me, it's a stewardship issue. There's a call of God on my life. There's a mandate that He has put on me. There's an assignment He's given me in the earth, and I want to steward it well. If I don't address those issues that you're talking about, I won't be stewarding this well. And I want to steward well.

**Annie:** Do you know the one he's convicted me the most about this year is getting enough sleep?

**Banning:** Oh, gosh.

**Annie:** I mean, when I tell you, whatever you have felt about a sin that like in your 20s, maybe, that you like couldn't quite get the ball to get going down the hill for a while, and the conviction would just like come on you, that is who the Holy Spirit is being to me about sleep. He is like... I might as well be running rampant in the streets in sin with the amount of conviction I'm getting about not getting enough sleep.

**Banning:** Every time you get five hours, six hours. Is that the workaholic in you?

**Annie:** I mean, if I'm telling the whole truth, it's the living alone and being lonely and being on my phone too long. Truth.

**Banning:** Yeah, no, totally.

**Annie:** It's not that I work that late, it's that I'll stay on Instagram or I'll read a book or I'll stay up too late because I'm trying to not feel lonely. So then the Lord's like, what if you went to bed? Here's a solution: close the eyes.

**Banning:** Listen, I'm sure you've talked about all this on your podcast, but society does not lend itself to the stuff you're talking about, you know? You know, back in the day, sun went down, you went to sleep, sun came up, you got up. Like it was just such a different era not too long ago. And now what you're talking about, all the technology. Before, you know, you're just reading a book around light and then fall asleep. But yeah, you're right. It is a different world that we have to discipline ourselves in. There's a level of discipline and intentionality in the culture we live in, for what you're describing, that is another level.

**Annie:** But I mean, whenever the Holy Spirit convicts me, I always say, okay, don't ever leave me alone, and also I hear you. Like, okay, okay, okay, okay, I hear you. Because I don't want to be like, leave me alone, because I don't ever want the Holy Spirit to stop convicting me of sin or misalignment, you know?

**Banning:** Totally. Totally.

**Annie:** I mean, there have certainly been days that I've asked him to leave me alone, but that is not who I am today. That's not who I want to be from here on out. That's a 20s Annie, not a 40s Annie.

**Banning:** That's a 20s Annie.

[00:22:23] <music>

**Annie:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Thrive Causemetics](#). Did any of you guys get Thrive Causemetics for Christmas? I want to hear about what you got.

You know their Liquid Lash Extension Mascara is my favorite. I talk about it all the time. And it is because it truly makes my lashes look longer and fuller without smudging all over the place. And it is super easy to remove. It slides right off with warm water and a washcloth, no soap required. The ingredients in it are super nourishing. So they support longer, stronger, and healthier-looking lashes over time. And their flake-free tubing formula dramatically lengthens and defines your lashes from root to tip. Also, I've been wearing this lipstick, Ilene, almost all of December. I love it so much. Their lipstick is also my new favorite.

Thrive Causemetics is certified 100% vegan and cruelty-free. Plus their products are made with clean skin-loving ingredients. And with thousands of five-star reviews, it is no wonder the turquoise tubes of makeup you see all over Instagram are trending. Thrive Causemetics is luxury beauty that gives back.

Right now, you can get an exclusive 20% off your first order at [thrivecausemetics.com/TSF](https://thrivecausemetics.com/TSF). That's Thrivecausemetics.com/TSF for 20% off your first order.

That link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes, or we'll send it to you Friday in our AFD Week in Review email. If you aren't getting that, that is a good resolution for you this year, to sign up to get that email. We'll email you every Friday.

Okay, now back to our conversation with Banning.

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**Annie:** Okay, so one of the things Emily P. Freeman talks about is letting January be the week between Christmas and New Year's. So we don't have to have everything sorted out by January 1. Give this month some time to help you figure out how you want to shape your year instead of kind of forcing it on that one week.

You and I are recording this in January, the first week. I am telling you, I have not opened my Bible yet, Banning, because I was traveling and I woke up late this morning. So will you talk to us a little bit about how do we figure out what rhythms we want this year and without the like, Oh man, it's the 4th, it's the 5th. People are hearing this on the 8th. It's the 8th and I haven't done anything yet. I might as well not, blah, blah, blah.

When it comes to spiritual stuff, like how do we... give us a little pastoring around getting spiritual rhythms for '24.

**Banning:** Well, I think that one of the things we have to constantly be asking, and there's two questions I try to ask myself consistently, is one, is what season am I in and what is God doing in that season?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Banning:** So I think that we don't recognize seasons enough. I think that we need to be asking the Lord questions often. "Lord, I wanna know." So many people that I know get

tripped up and confused simply because they don't recognize the season that God has them in.

**Annie:** Wow, Banning.

**Banning:** The Bible's written in an agricultural age. Jesus taught in agricultural age, the Bible's written in that age. So we kind of miss a little... we don't understand seasons. We don't understand what farmers would naturally understand. That there is seasons to sow and seasons to reap and seasons to rest and there is... Like we expect it to be harvest all the time or we're confused when it's winter.

So I think for me... I'll just tell you what I try to do, is I am trying to pay attention to the Lord of, what's the season you have me in and what are you trying to accomplish right now? I wanna be able to partner with what you're doing in my life. So I just ask him, what is it that you're doing in my life? What is this year about...? What is the season?

So sometimes people, I think they're just confused, they're frustrated because they're not seeing any harvest, but it's wintertime. And wintertime is where you rest. Wintertime is where you maintain some tools that you had. Wintertime is where you're more with your family. Farmers would understand this.

So I would just challenge people in January or whenever, I would say do it all the time, but especially in January as you're looking at 2024, just really ask the Lord, "Lord, what season am I in? And then what are you trying to accomplish in my life?"

Psalm 33 talks about that there's the council of the nations, there's the plans of the people. But he says those come to no effect. And he says, the council of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations. So for me, I'm wanting to say, God, what is the plans that's on your heart for my life right now? Because I actually wanna partner with them. I wanna participate in what you're doing in my life.

So I think much of what we need to do is just stop and just ask the Lord some questions. So even sitting down going, here's what I wanna do, and here's my goals, and here's all that, I just start with like, Lord, I wanna know what you're doing. I wanna know the things that are on your heart for me right now. I wanna know where you're developing me. And then I wanna know how it coincides with the season that I'm in.

**Annie:** Ah, okay. That's really interesting.

**Banning:** So then the season makes more sense. A lot of people, I just think they need, what I would say, they just need context and clarity. They just need, "Oh, this is what you're doing. This season makes more sense now." I find people can actually go through hard things. I find what people get tripped up more than difficult times is confusing times.

**Annie:** Yes, that's true for me.

**Banning:** It's when I don't know what's going on. But when the Lord says, here's what I'm doing, I'm trying to teach you a deeper level of trust, I'm trying to grow this area in your life. And all of a sudden I go, Okay, all right, I understand now why then things aren't working exactly like I thought they would. Does that make sense to understand?

**Annie:** Yeah. I sat with the Lord right before Christmas was my quietest week. And I sat with the Lord just sobbing, Banning, over like, I feel like I am out of my depth in like four areas. And just sobbing. And I kept saying to the Lord, thank you so much because this is so painful and I'm so afraid and it has been a while since I was out of my depth. So you must be growing me.

So I'm miserable as a person because I'm afraid and I'm confused and I do not know what to do next, and thank you that this is what you do when you grow me. And therefore this must be an intense growing season for some reason. Does that ring true? Am I reading that right from the Lord?

**Banning:** A hundred percent. You talk about crying. I was just preaching in San Diego at a church down there and just in worship I just was like crying in worship. And I realized nothing's wrong with my son right now. He's doing great. But as he's a senior and I... you know, I was really just wrestling through some things with my kids. It wasn't anything. There's nothing wrong. I just put that out there.

**Annie:** I mean, it's parenting.

**Banning:** Yeah. But he reminded me of when my son was in third grade and he tried out for a basketball team and didn't make it. And I was spinning for like three days and I could... I mean, like it really threw me off. And I was mad and I was irritated. He shouldn't have gotten cut. We were new to the city. We had just moved to the Sacramento area.

And finally, three days later, I just stopped and I realized the Lord just kind of began to speak to me, I don't trust the Lord with my kids or with my kid. Now,

listen, it's basketball. It's not life or death. It didn't matter. But it was really revealing like I was spinning because I'm like, God, I don't know if I trust you with my kid's heart, the thing that matters to my kid. And I just stopped and said, "God, I trust you with my son's heart. I trust you with his heart."

Well, sure enough, now 10 years later, I'm like, dude, what's going on inside of me? And he reminded me of that again. And I just had to stop and go, Oh, this is a moment for me to, again, just say, God, I trust you. I trust you with my son's future. I trust you with my son's heart. I trust you with my kids.

When I saw that, like you, all of a sudden, I'm like, Oh, okay, I can do this. I can get before the Lord and say, God, I do trust you. And this is what you're doing. You're giving me a chance again to trust you with something that matters deeply to me. And so I can do that. But when I don't know, that's what's going on.

So I think as we look at 2024, it's just like, Lord, what is it that you're doing in my life? Where are you shaping me? Where are you growing me? And I'm asking the Lord this stuff. Because I wanna partner with Him.

**Annie:** So when we're asking what season we're in, I'm thinking about some of our friends who are like, I've never asked God that ever. So should we listen for winter, spring, summer, fall, and kind of go, okay, it is a summer. Everything is blooming. I need to get to work. Are we listening for that kind of language or are we listening for you're in a season of abundance, you're in a season of blessing, you're in a season of struggle? What kind of language do you think God's saying back?

**Banning:** I would probably say both. But here's why I like the winter, summer, fall, spring seasons, because the Lord made them.

**Annie:** Yeah, right.

**Banning:** Because it's how He operates. I think it just gives some picture sometimes of... and I do this with the Lord, but I also process with friends. I think that sometimes friends have such great insight. They can see things we don't see. They have insight into our lives. The ones that really know us have insights into our lives that we don't always have.

But I think it's just really given me context sometimes for... sometimes the Lord just may say, you're in a season of growth, or He may tell me... what I wanna know is what are you doing in my life? Ultimately, that's what I'm wanting to know. And then what you're doing in my life does kind of reveal and give me some context for what season I'm in.

Well, we talked about this. I remember going to Brazil one time and I just assumed Brazil in July was the same weather as California. I didn't even look at my app or anything.

**Annie:** I would have assumed the same thing.

**Banning:** Well, I show up to Brazil and it's just raining, freezing cold, we're doing all these outdoor venues. I didn't pack at all for it. Now, if I would have packed properly, I easily can navigate winter. Like winter's not hard to navigate. Winter's hard to navigate when you packed for summer.

So a lot of people I just am like, oh, you think it's summertime right now. It's wintertime. And you can actually get through wintertime fine. You just have to pack properly. So for me, the farming analogies, which I think we find in scripture, were trees planted by... I mean, we're constantly being talked about as trees and all that type of stuff.

So I think the farming analogies and the growth... listen, let me just say this right now. I don't care what season you're in, here's God's goal for you, growth. The entire Christian life is a life of growth and maturity. Every day you're being renewed to look more like Jesus. Every year you should look back and say, hopefully the fruits of the Spirit manifested at a deeper, more healthy level than they did last year.

So I do know this. This is a given. God's trying to grow me. He's trying to grow me. That's a given. You know what 2024 is? It's a year of growth. I'm not talking about a year of like picking fruit. I'm talking about he's wanting to grow me.

Now, any farmer knows this. There are seasons of how growth happens. And sometimes growth is a root season of going deep. That's why it works for me.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's beautiful. My encouragement to our friends listening, I think what a great thing to sit with the Lord tomorrow morning or on your Sabbath this week or at some point and go, what season am I in? And then pay attention to what you hear and what you see. Like, do you see a picture in your brain of somewhere you go every year in the summer? Or are you wearing a sweater in your mind? Because the Lord works so much in pictures with me, Banning. And then I suddenly go, wait, why do I keep seeing this person in my head?

The Lord just healed such a deep wound in me, I'm gonna say to you... on accident, it wasn't on accident. But like through a series of like, why do I keep seeing this



one person when I pray who is not in my life? I mean, an ex, not in my life anymore. And I was like, I am not reaching out to this character. And through about three days later, I was like, oh, you're healing a thing. Oh, you're healing something in me, but you were showing me pictures along the way. So I would just encourage people to pray and ask and listen, pay attention to what you hear and what you see in your mind.

**Banning:** Yeah. I don't know how many would... I'm obviously coming from a charismatic background and have that grid for what we're talking about. But I'll tell you a quick story because we went through a massive pruning season, personally, ministry-wise. And the whole time though, I did feel like the Lord was speaking to me. But He would speak to me in times...

And when you know what God's doing, it may not make it easier, but it gives it real purpose. Okay, there's purpose behind what's happening. It's not just a flippant thing that's going on. So we were going through pruning and I know enough of obviously the Bible and scripture to know that the Lord prunes things for more growth, that pruning is a part of our life.

And as a farmer... a farmer doesn't hate the tree when he prunes it, he prunes it so that there can be more growth and health.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Banning:** So I know, okay, we're in a pruning season. But it was brutal. It was hard. I was talking to one of our board members and she said, "You know, last year, I cut these vines back on our house. I cut them back and they went back to just a little stump. And my kids came out and they're like, 'Mom, you killed that vine. What'd you do to it?'" And she said, "It was just a little stump." She said, this year they exploded with growth. Now, as the Lord's speaking to me, as she's talking, I know. I'm like, this is... I do believe the Lord-

**Annie:** "I hear you. I hear you."

**Banning:** ...has pruned me for growth. But it was shortly after that, that the picture that you talked about, I had a picture. Because it felt like, man, this has been... I felt like somebody just took a machete to me. I feel like, yeah, I got pruned and it was just a machete. It felt so brutal and rough.

But I had a picture of Jesus as a gardener leaning over this stump with a water can and just with great tenderness and care, taking care of this stump. And what it did for me, you talk about healing, what it did for me was I just realized, Oh, there's

great care and tenderness with what the Lord is doing in this season. He's not being flippant with me. He's not just hacking His way through my life.

And it was what I needed to see, what I needed to kind of hear was just the tenderness of the Lord over me in this season that felt so brutal. And even in my head and in my heart, I know what's happening right now is unto something greater. What's happening right now is because of whatever, even in the midst of that.

What you described, it was so much healing to me just seeing the Lord with such tenderness over what felt like I just got a machete taken to the vine. It was so beautiful for me.

**Annie:** That's such a beautiful way to start the year, Banning, because also we know seasons change. I mean, Jesus talks about this, right? Like when He says in the gospels, you know what's gonna happen when you see the sky in the morning, like He's telling His disciples, "You predict the season in your life. Why do you not see what I'm doing here?"

So I think that's really helpful for us as we go into this year to go, Okay, God, what season am I starting in? And if I am starting in spring, what that means is summer is coming. And if I'm working really hard and there's a lot of harvest, that means winter is coming and that is okay.

**Banning:** And what I do and what I focus on-

**Annie:** This is so good.

**Banning:** ...and where I put my attention is connected to the season of what God's doing. So are there seasons to sleep in? Absolutely. Absolutely. You know when the season is. During winter, sleep in, get rested. When the harvest is coming, you'll never find a farmer sleeping in.

**Annie:** Yeah, the days are long.

**Banning:** I think it gives us real clarity of what I need to be putting my attention towards, what I need to be focusing. And then therefore what we all know this, what I don't need to be focusing on right now. What do I not need to be focusing on right now? What do I not need to be putting this much attention on? Because that's not what the Lord's highlighting right now.

And I think that when we can find that rhythm and it's not just at the beginning of the year, although I think at the beginning of the year is a brilliant time to just kind

of take a moment, pause, reset, look at, assess. The Lord speaks to me about years. But we're consistently wanting to know, God, what is it that you're doing? How can I partner? And then that determines, well, this is where I'm gonna put my attention. And I am intentionally not doing this other thing.

**Annie:** Yes, that is so helpful. I'm telling you, six months ago, if I would have said to the Lord, what season am I in? It would have saved me so much pain. It would not have changed what happened over the last six months.

**Banning:** It would have given you clarity.

**Annie:** And I'd have gone, this is what this season looks like, and therefore, here's what I do. Because now here's what I'm doing, Banning. I'm going, okay, I'm gonna ask the Lord what season I'm in, and then I'm gonna Google, what does a farmer do in that season? Because I go too hard. I go too hard down these paths.

**Banning:** Well, what you're talking about is the things don't change... This is what's so challenging about Scripture. The Lord tells us that we are to have joy. We're to rejoice in the midst of trials. And so when you're talking about James and Peter, these different passages and so... But you can't rejoice if you're fighting against things.

It talks about, well, listen, trials lead to perseverance, to character, to hope, to joy. Or it talks about that your faith is gonna get tested and it's gonna come out gold. I think half the time the Lord's looking at us going, why are you fighting this? I'm trying to show you that your faith is genuine. I'm trying to give you what you're lacking. So what you're walking through that's gonna require patience, what you're walking through that's gonna require perseverance. I'm doing that so that you can be lacking in nothing.

And half the time I'm just complaining and frustrated the entire time. But if I go, Oh, I'm in a season that requires patience. I'm in a season that requires perseverance. But God tells me, the Bible tells me that on the other side of perseverance is, the other side of patience is, He's going to give me things that I'm currently lacking. Okay, all right, let's do it. Let's do it. So I just think that, yeah... we're saying the same thing, but it's just that I now have clarity so I can now partner with what you're doing rather than fight what you're doing.

**Annie:** Yes, I fought what the Lord was doing for September, October, November, December. I mean, I am so thankful our listeners are hearing this in January. I wish I'd heard this in August. If I'd heard this in August, my fall with the Lord would

have been far less me fighting. I'm the one who, when the Lord was teaching me how to swim, I thought I was drowning.

**Banning:** Yes, totally.

**Annie:** So all fall, I was trying to paddle when the Lord was like, I'm trying to teach you how to swim.

**Banning:** You're like, "No, no, no. No, you're trying to drown me. That's what you're doing."

**Annie:** Yes, yes, no, you are trying to drown me. And He's like, "I am right here, just paddle." And I'm like, "Don't paddling for an entire season because I didn't know what season I was in."

**Banning:** Yes. Oh.

**Annie:** Oh.

**Banning:** And I'm telling you-

**Annie:** How frustrating.

**Banning:** ...if people can get some of this stuff down. It really does take us on a journey with the Lord as well. The Lord has you on a journey. I wanna say this again. The journey is a journey of growth. The Christian life boiled down is that the Holy Spirit was given to you to help renew you every day to look like Jesus. Like the goal is to look like Jesus.

So God's at work in your life to mature you. This is what Paul was constantly talking about. He's just like... in fact, I would say this right now. Again, the word for 2024 is God's trying to mature you. At the end of 2024, you should be able to look back and go, I look more like Jesus now than I did at the beginning of the year. Because that's what the Holy Spirit's trying to accomplish.

But my point is, is we're to partner with Him in that. And if we don't have clarity that that's what He's trying to do, then we're just frustrated, and we fall into entitlement. We fall into thinking, God, you know, that we deserve something, or, you know, we start approaching God as if He owes us something.

**Annie:** Yeah. It's rude of you to bring this up in front of everybody instead of just telling me, Banning. I don't think you needed to make it public. You could have just texted me and been like, "The Lord has a word for you, Annie." No, that's it. I mean, that's

the thing I fight against. I would imagine a lot of our friends listening deal with this, especially if you work in a faith space at all, is, hey, I work for you.

**Banning:** "Do you not know?"

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. "My whole life, I work for you." And so I fight that a lot. At this point, because we're older than I was when I started, because this is 15 years in this career, I have learned the bubblings of that instead of the overflow of that. 10 years ago I was dealing with the overflow of feeling entitled. And now I start hearing the bubbles and I go, no, no, no, no, no, no. We are lucky to do any of this. He could have picked anybody. The Lord could have... So I am with you.

**Banning:** If I was to say what I believe would be one of the words for 2024, I cannot get away from the concept of thankfulness right now. We don't have to go deep into this one, but this issue of thankfulness, I believe as we head into an election year, as we head into so much that is uncertain and unrest and all of the shaking that's going on, the Bible is consistently calling us to live thankful.

I think that thankfulness is the thing to be able to look at every situation and be able to say... and it's hard to. And I'm not talking about just blind thankfulness, like, oh God, I'm just thankful, you know? Going like, Oh, I can see what you're doing. Thank you.

I'll go through something I don't want to go through and He'll tell me, Banning, I'm giving you a chance to walk out what you believe. And I'm like, I don't want to walk out what I believe. I want to make what I believe. I don't want to walk this. And I will have to walk through some stuff sometimes, and the Lord will say, Banning, I'm letting you walk out what you believe right now.

And then for the ability for me to go, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for allowing me to walk out what I believe. Thank you for allowing me to trust you at a deeper level." But if I don't see that's what He's doing, it is hard to be thankful sometimes. Just to be just generally like, Oh, I'm thankful. No, I see what God's doing and I'm grateful. I'm grateful for who He is in my life.

**Annie:** Is this theologically correct? You can say no to me. I have noticed a shift in my authority when I got thankful for the life I have, not the life I wanted.

**Banning:** I think that faith is connected to thankfulness because I think thankfulness positions us to understand the abundance that we really have.

**Annie:** Right, got it.

**Banning:** So thankfulness puts us in a place where we live from a place of abundance, not from lack. So many times when we're ungrateful, it's because we think we're lacking something. We think we're lacking the life that we wanted. We think we're lacking the plan that we thought was gonna fall. We think we're lacking whatever it is.

Thankfulness actually positions us to see things from a place of abundance and to be able to go, Oh no, I am living in a place of abundance, not lack. So I do think that there's probably another realm of authority and faith that gets on us when we actually stay in that place of thankfulness and we don't get into that "lack" place.

**Annie:** Yeah, it's been interesting because the more... I mean, I'm very honest with God about my feelings about this and what I thought my life would look like at 43 and blah, blah, you know, all the stuff, about not being married, not having kids, and not living in my fa... all the things. And it is like, while I can still hold that, the other thing I go is like, Gosh, you have shaped a life that is so much better than I would have shaped. I can't believe you had this in your mind all along. I would have never picked this and look what you've done.

And when that shift happened to me, it didn't let go of my desires but brought along some actual view of how God did it, it is like something shifted in the spiritual realm for me.

**Banning:** Do you know what that is, Annie? I have found for me, and I don't know if I've talked about this on the podcast, although I'm sure people wouldn't remember if I did. I have to consistently... and I find that it's at marker moments. It might be at 30, it might be at 35, 40. I have to stop and take down the picture that's been hanging on the wall that isn't realistic and put up a new one.

Here's the discipline that I do. There is a picture in my head of what I thought 47 would look like that I am competing against. But that picture was painted by a 21-year-old.

**Annie:** Right, Banning. Right.

**Banning:** So what happens is at 21 I had an idea of what I was gonna be at 45 and what was gonna happen and this and that. And the whole time I'm competing and I'm wrestling against this picture that a naive 21-year-old had. And I have to be able to actually stop and say, Okay, my life doesn't look like the picture that the 25-year-old had.

And I take it down and grieve it. I'll take a moment. I'll take that picture off the wall and I'll grieve it for a moment. But then I put the real picture up and I say, but you know what? The picture that God did paint is beautiful. It is wonderful.

So I think that we're constantly competing against a picture that 30-year-old Annie painted. And now 43-year-old Annie is like... But you have to be able to go, Oh, well, 30-year-old Annie has no clue what she's talking about when it comes to 43 years old.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right.

**Banning:** And so I take that picture down, I grieve it for a moment and I put up the real picture and I go, "But God is so good.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Banning:** And this is a beautiful thing He's done." So I think that we need to do what you're talking about often. And I think when we do that, we go, Okay, all right, this is good.

[00:50:36] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about one of our amazing partners, [Bite Toothpaste](#). Okay, I think Bite Toothpaste is the coolest thing. It's these dry toothpaste tablets that are made with clean ingredients and are sulfate-free, palm oil-free, and glycerin-free. They call them Bite Toothpaste Bits.

And they're so convenient, y'all. You just pop a bit in your mouth, chew it up, and start brushing, it will turn to paste just like you're used to, but with no plastic tube or mess. Because get this. Did you know, oh boy, we swallow five to 7% of our toothpaste every single time we brush our teeth? Ew. That's like an extra blob of toothpaste every seven days. I'm so grossed out.

And most commercial toothpastes have harsh chemicals, artificial flavors, and preservatives in them, which just isn't the best for us. So Bite is the better way to go.

These bits also come in refillable glass jars and they send refills in compostable pouches. So they are just better for our bodies and the earth. Bite is offering our friends 20% off your first order. So go to [trybite.com/thatsoundsfun](http://trybite.com/thatsoundsfun), or use the code that sounds fun at checkout to claim this deal. That's [trybite.com/thatsoundsfun](http://trybite.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to finish up this amazing conversation with Pastor Banning.

[00:51:55] <music>

**Annie:** Man, what a beautiful way you've started our year, especially if we're giving ourselves a little time to kind of, we don't have to have it all sorted by January 1. We're giving ourselves a couple of weeks to get into this year of going like, what am I thankful for? What has God given me? What season am I in? What is God doing in the earth that I can be a part of? Can you take just a couple of minutes? What is God doing on the earth? What is happening in 2024? What are some rumblings you're hearing either with you and the Lord or just in your commute...? I mean, you have a really expansive network of Christian leaders in your life. What's going on?

**Banning:** Well, I'm gonna use the big word revival. That means a lot.

**Annie:** Hey, let's go.

**Banning:** That means a lot to a lot of different people. But I will just say this. When I say revival, I'm talking about God moving in such profound ways that He awakens His church and we see the greatest harvest the world's ever seen. I think that right now, there is a fresh hunger that is stirring in the hearts of people. Everywhere I go, doesn't matter where I go in the world or where I go in America, there is a fresh hunger and a fresh stirring.

There's two things I would say. One is when we look at the landscape of what's going on, especially in California... Guys, I'm in California, and sometimes I'm like, dude, I live in Babylon. It's what it feels like sometimes in California. My heart just is burdened for California. I love this state. I'm believing God for revival in California.

Sometimes it can be overwhelming, the spirit of this age. And what Isaiah talks about, deep darkness, it feels like more than ever before, we're just looking at deep darkness, going, dude, there's just deep darkness. But when there's deep darkness, the next thing is this: the glory of the Lord's about to rise on His people.

There's two books that have been really instrumental for me. One is a book called *Cure of All Ills*, and it's an intercessor lady in the 90s who wrote a book just on the concept that awakenings, first great awakening, second great awakening, outpourings, revivals, they happen when society's at their lowest.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.



**Banning:** When society is at its lowest economically, socially, morally, that this is when God... the cure of all ills, is an outpouring of the spirit of God, is a move of Protestant awakening. And so everywhere I go, I think there's just an awareness, an expectancy, if you pay attention to what the Lord, that... Some people are just distraught and discouraged, but I think it's because they're connected to the wrong storyline. But there's just an awareness that what's happening right now, God is about to do something that is unprecedented. So I think there's that.

But the other thing is this, is I am so encouraged right now because everywhere I go, there's the prayer movement. There's a fresh prayer movement.

**Annie:** It's wild.

**Banning:** I mean, in churches and businesses and people's lives. Here's something I would tell you. There's a book called *World Aflame*.

**Annie:** Oh, love it.

**Banning:** *World Aflame*, which is about the Welsh Revival. The Welsh Revival happens in 1904. One of the most significant revivals in the last few hundred years. I mean, it's significant revivals in history. Over 100,000 people get saved in a nine-month period. It kind of helped spark Azusa Street.

But the author makes a distinction. He compares Wales to giving birth. And he says that Wales, in 1902, two years before this thing happened in Wales, there were prayer meetings happening all over Wales. Unconnected, unbeknownst to one another, not organized or coordinated, just prayer was happening in a home and it was happening in a church. It was happening in a business. Prayer was happening all over Wales and the revival breaks out two years later.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Banning:** He makes the point of this, that birth pangs and childbirth. He says birth pangs don't create the baby. The baby creates the birth pangs.

**Annie:** Dude.

**Banning:** So his point is, it's not the birth pangs that are bringing the baby. It's the baby that brought the birth pangs. So he connects it to revival that it's not even prayer that causes revival. It's revival that causes prayer. God about to move a harvest, the glory of the Lord rising on His people.

When I go around and see the increase of prayer, when I go around and see the hunger, it's not just prayer, it's hunger and expectancy. It's a greater dependence on the Lord. This is one of the things I've seen right now is that we had a word right when COVID hit. One of our school leadership students, I was asking him, what are you guys hearing and what's the Lord saying? And they said, I've been in Song of Solomon. And I'm like, what?

And they're like, there's a verse in the Song of Solomon where it says that who is this coming out of the wilderness leaning on the beloved? And it was this concept that I said, "That's the word of the Lord. Whatever happens in the next season, God is going to strip us of everything we've been dependent on that's not Him."

**Annie:** Oh no, you said that before COVID.

**Banning:** Yes. This is what we realized. Every part of our human effort that we have leaned on, we're gonna come out of this season leaning on Jesus and only Jesus. My point is this, is that I think people have gotten to a place now where we realize Jesus is the only answer. There's no plan B, there's no backup plan. We need God. And maybe in California, we feel it more than others. I don't know.

Listen, I am a guy that believes in civic duty. I'm a guy that believes you should vote. We should have Christians in leadership, we should be involved locally. But at the end of the day, especially here in California, we're not gonna out-organize a vote. We're not gonna organize a greater vote.

**Annie:** Right.

**Banning:** We need God. We just need God. So I think that there's also not only a prayers rumbling, a hunger but a recognition that apart from God, this doesn't work out. We need God and there's not a plan B. And I think that those factors coming together. And I think what's causing those is revival.

**Annie:** That's it. That's the baby.

**Banning:** Is the baby. And I just wanna go, guys, listen, you may look around right now and you may be discouraged and you may see darkness abounding and you may see sin and it may seem hopeless. But I'm telling you right now that the stirring that is happening in the lives of people in churches and in the lives of people is because God is doing something. And we are going to see Him. So I'm coming into 2024 with great anticipation and expectation.

**Annie:** We have a button, it's called the wowie zowie button. [Wowie zowie]. Whenever somebody blows my mind and you nailed it. You totally did. That the baby... and I've read World Aflame, I don't know how I missed that. But that the baby is causing the pains is so hopeful. It's just really hopeful.

It has been interesting, Banning, as we've gotten into the first two or three days of 24, the vibe is, what's coming? People aren't afraid. People aren't like... Like there were a couple of years where I was like, man, we barely got through that. I hope this year's better. There isn't that like weariness coming into this one.

**Banning:** No, I agree.

**Annie:** There is this like, what's gonna happen?

**Banning:** Yes, expectation.

**Annie:** And it's really interesting. I haven't felt this at the beginning of a year culturally. I don't know when I felt this.

**Banning:** We have a prayer meeting every Tuesday night and it's always good. It's wonderful. But our first Tuesday night of the year, I was in the room just going, all right, I don't know what this is, but there is something different in the air and there is a different level of expectation. There's a different level of anticipation. It's faith rising.

I think that a lot of people got the wind knocked out of them and they got the wind back and they're like, God's gonna do something. What we've been walking through is unto something. And God is still on the throne. Here's what we know. God is on the throne and in control.

I would say in the macro level revival in the nations in America and California, but I'd say also in the micro level of people's lives that there's a real sense of anticipation for what God's gonna do.

**Annie:** I feel it too. I feel it too. It's really interesting. Banning, thank you for making time to do this. I would love for you to pray for us as we're going out. Would you just pray some power and peace and all the things over our 2024? I wanna make sure people know that Jesus Culture is where you are, that they can listen to the Pastors Podcast, which is, though I am not a tech... Well, I am ordained, so I guess I am a pastor now. But I don't work at a church. But that podcast, I don't miss an episode, Banning. You know that. I text you too much about it. I don't miss an episode. I'm

so grateful for you. You also have the Banning Liebscher Podcast. Anything else you wanna make sure people know about?

**Banning:** No, all that. I love it. Everything you just mentioned, it's wonderful.

**Annie:** Well, your books are great. As we're working through seasons, if they wanna grab *Rooted*, *Rooted's* a great book to walk us through this kind of stuff.

**Banning:** Well, I'm gonna pray over the two things we talked about. One, that God would give you context and clarity, and that two, He would stir a fresh hunger in you this season for God to move, not only in our nation, our state, but in your own personal life and your family and relationships.

God, I just ask first that You would give clarity, God, that You would draw close to us and that You would reveal to us, You would speak to us the season that we're in and what You're doing. God, we just say today, we are so hungry to partner with You. That I just wanna partner with what You're doing. I know that You're doing a work in my life, and sometimes I don't see it fully. Sometimes I'm confused by it. But when You reveal it to me, I can partner with it.

So God, I just thank you for deepening our trust. Give us clarity on seasons we're in. And then God, this is what I'm asking. I pray that 2024 would be a year where you stir a fresh hunger inside of us. God, that every day that we would wake up, that there would be an anticipation, an expectation for what you're going to do in our lives, what you're going to do at our church and in our city, in our workplace, in our neighborhood, amongst our friends and family.

God, I pray that You would stir a fresh hunger and anticipation for You to move in our midst. I just pray what Paul writes the Romans, that You're going to awake every area in our life that's asleep. God, that You would awake us from slumber and that we would awaken with a hunger for You to move in our day. We love You, Jesus. We trust You, Jesus. And we love You.

And we thank You that when deep darkness is covering the earth, that's when the glory of the Lord's about to rise. And we thank You that when sin abounds, that's when grace is about to break in. We just are looking for that this year. Amen.

**Annie:** Amen.

[01:03:24] <music>

**Outro:** Oh, y'all, isn't he the best? Oh my gosh. I mean, again [wowie zowie]. I know. I feel like I could run through a wall after that conversation. I just feel like we know the questions to ask, we know what we're listening for, we know where we're going this year, what God might be up to. So I'm really curious what season you are in.

If you want to share on Instagram today, I would love to hear in this post what you are sensing seasonally you are in. Banning is just an incredible pastor. I'm so grateful for him and for Jesus Culture and what they're doing.

So he has multiple books you can get. I loved *Three Mile Walk*. I loved *Rooted*. So you can grab either of those. Also, listen to his podcast, The Banning Liebscher Podcast. It's so good. And Pastors Podcast is what got this whole thing started.

So even if you aren't pastoring, I'm not a pastor in a church, but man, the leadership help that that podcast gives me has really benefited me a lot. So just like today's episode, good gravy.

And if you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if that's where you're listening, or send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast. We'll try to answer them there. Make sure you're following over there. There's a lot more clips and information over on That Sounds Fun Podcast.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, on video now, we're everywhere you need us, that's where 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 and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me... what sounds fun to me today? I think what sounds fun to me is going to Baja Burrito. It's one of my very favorite places in Nashville. If you have not eaten there, I highly recommend it. Baja Burrito. Go try it next time you're here.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday as we keep on diving into how to shape our year. We've talked about our spiritual health today and we're going to talk with our friend Mike Foster on Thursday about some of our emotional, mental health questions, some things we can be asking to make sure we're growing emotionally as well this year too. So we'll see you back here on Thursday.