

[00:00:00] <music>

**Annie:** Hi friends, welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host, Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1](#) by Athletic Greens. One of my favorite ways to cover my nutritional basis for the day at the very start of the day is to drink AG1. I know it's helping me kick off the day with essential brain, gut, and immune health support and it has a ton of vitamins, probiotics, and nutrients from whole foods.

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If there's one product I had to recommend to elevate your health, it's AG1. And that's why I've partnered with them for so long. We're so grateful. 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](https://drinkag1.com/soundsfun). Y'all check it out.

**Intro:** Today on this show, I'm so thankful to get to have my friend Laney Rene. Laney is a wife, a mom, a worship artist, author and speaker, a former backup dancer. That's how I met her. Today we're talking about what Laney calls the single most important question a woman has to ask herself: who am I? Oh, it's beautiful y'all.

Laney tackles this in her new book called *Daughter: Becoming Who You Already Are*. It comes out tomorrow. I've gotten to read it. It is good. It is really good. Put it in some Easter baskets.

We talk about why this conversation on identity and security and who God made us to be really matters right now, and why it matters to the generation behind us as well. You're gonna love getting to know her.

So here is my conversation with my friend, Laney Rene.

[00:02:39] <music>

**Annie:** Laney, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Laney:** Thanks for having me.

**Annie:** I mean, sorry that you're just getting here. You should have been here a thousand times by now. I'm so sorry.

**Laney:** Gosh.

**Annie:** But what a treat.

**Laney:** I'm excited. This is such an honor.

**Annie:** Get out of here. It's just us.

**Laney:** I know, but still.

**Annie:** I loved when in your book, *Daughter: Becoming Who You Already Are*, you start talking about when you were on the road as a dancer. And I was like, I mean, that is when we met.

**Laney:** I know. I knew we were gonna talk about this today.

**Annie:** '12 maybe? '11 or '12?

**Laney:** I feel like it would have been '13 or '14.

**Annie:** Oh, '13 or '14 is when you were with Britt.

**Laney:** Yes, because I quit in 2017.

**Annie:** Okay. How long?

**Laney:** No, no, no, no. Wait, yeah, 2017.

**Annie:** So you did like years with her.

**Laney:** That was like my whole college kind of experience. I didn't go to college.

**Annie:** Yeah, you talk about that in the book about how your years here, when you and Sadie were living together, were like your college years.

**Laney:** Yes, yes. It was amazing. But yeah, that was my college experience, I was on a tour bus.

- Annie:** So many other people listening will think this is so fascinating about your life because there are so many people who are raising little girls who are dancers or who danced when they were young. And you like literally got the call of like, do you want to come on tour as our full-time and dance full-time?
- Laney:** Yes.
- Annie:** And you were doing huge arenas and stages.
- Laney:** Yeah.
- Annie:** When you look back on it now, what was God doing with your life then? What was that about?
- Laney:** Man, you know, just thinking back to when I was like 18, I had so much in my heart that I wanted to do. I remember just feeling this burning in my soul and going, God, I know this is from you, but I don't know what to do with it. Like, what is this? And something that actually is super cool about my just kind of dance story for those who are dancers is I was not technically trained.
- Annie:** Really?
- Laney:** Uh-uh, no.
- Annie:** You're just like a good dancer?
- Laney:** No. But it's not my skill. It was one of the coolest things in my life, honestly, to look back and go, God, that was so you doing that and qualifying me for something that I was honestly so unqualified for.
- Annie:** Okay, how did it happen?
- Laney:** I grew up singing and dancing. I was in this ministry where we would go to nursing homes and perform and just really share the love-
- Annie:** Just through your church?
- Laney:** No, it was a separate organization. But we would just share the love of Jesus with people. And I grew to love that. So when I was 18, I went to a Britt Nicole concert and I remember just standing in the crowd and going, "God, I want to do something like that."
- Annie:** Wow.

**Laney:** Didn't have to be necessarily even dancing. I love to dance, it was a passion of mine. But I just saw the way she ministered to people and heard their stories. And I went, "I want to do something like that. That's the burning in my soul that I feel." There's so many details.

**Annie:** I love all this.

**Laney:** And you know some of it here and there. But I was dating a guy who auditioned for... she put out a tweet and basically said like, "I'm looking for dancers for my tour." And he auditioned. My boyfriend did. And I thought, "I'm not good enough. I won't even audition. I won't even try."

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Laney:** So he started touring with her first.

**Annie:** Oh wow.

**Laney:** That's when I saw her, found out about her, and went, "God, I want to do something like that." But I didn't have the training or anything. I love to dance, but I didn't have the training. I started just learning her choreography and felt like God had put that in my heart. Started watching all her YouTube videos, learning her show.

She had another dancer that couldn't make it to a show one time, and she called, she knew that I'd answer. She just literally went out on a limb and asked me to fill in for this other girl. And I-

**Annie:** She just knew you through your boyfriend.

**Laney:** Literally, yes. But I knew it all. I was the only one who knew the show. It was so last minute. But it was one of those things where it was like God had put that in me, like faith that He was going to do something. Even if I never actually performed the show, it did something so good in my relationship with Him, just to pursue something, go for it. And even if it doesn't look like what I thought he was going to do, something good with it. And yeah, she called me and I stepped in for one show and then I stayed with her for four years.

**Annie:** That is crazy. I mean, that other poor dancer who was like, "I was sick and now I don't have a job."

**Laney:** I know. She had a surgery that she couldn't make it. So she was out for a while. And then they had shows build up and it just kind of... it wasn't ill-intended by any means.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh. Of course not.

**Laney:** But yeah, she couldn't make it, and so they needed somebody.

**Annie:** Wow. I mean, that is such an interesting anecdote for people to hear because so many of us are waiting for the invitation to do the preparation. And you're saying, do the preparation and then see if the invitation comes.

**Laney:** Yeah, yeah.

**Annie:** Wow. You learned the whole show.

**Laney:** I literally learned the whole show. And sometimes it was embarrassing. As far as, I would be up in my room for hours learning all of that and wondering, what am I doing? Of course, I had those moments where I was like, why am I doing this to myself? But I believed God.

**Annie:** I mean, it's very like Noah.

**Laney:** And even saying that sounds funny. I'm like, why did I do that? Did I really have that kind of faith? But yeah, God put something in me that went, okay, I believe somehow in this, You're gonna do something with this. And then that's what led to so much of what I'm doing now. I started music through that. I started writing through that.

**Annie:** Man, that is amazing. We were on Girls of Grace together with Point of Grace one thousand years ago. But I loved it. For our friends listening, every weekend I was on and the musicians rotated. So the two or three speakers of us, we were on every show and y'all rotated in whenever you're a calendar. So whenever I knew Britt was coming, I was like, Yes, I love Britt, I love Laney. Those were my favorite weekends when y'all were there when for KING & COUNTRY was there.

**Laney:** You were so fun.

**Annie:** Well, it was a win-win because it was Royal Tailor.

**Laney:** They still do that? I don't think so. Which is too bad because-

**Annie:** It was such a good event for girls.

**Laney:** We'll have to bring it back.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, you, me and Britt. So Laney, what did you learn...? I mean, one of my favorite things, we talked about this with CANE when they were here, is you can learn so much about what you want to be by watching other people do it. What did you learn about serving God in the public eye from Britt?

**Laney:** Man, Britt always stopped for the one. I thought about that. I think about that often because if I had not walked with her through that season, I don't even think I would know how to just kind of walk in some of the things that God has brought me into now and how to really talk to people and get to know them.

I was homeschooled all the way up and talking in front of people was never my thing, like very uncomfortable in front of crowds. But just seeing her genuine love for people and the way that she listened to God and just truly did what she felt led to do versus what everyone told her to do or felt like she should do. She trusted Him.

And I feel just watching her walk that out has helped me tremendously now in this season just to trust just that He's leading me. Even with the no's, like I watched her say no to things that some people might say, Oh, that's crazy. Why did you say no to that? But the amount of times now I've been able to look at that and see God's faithfulness and also just taking care of her and go, okay, He's gonna take care of me. And even though I don't understand why this is a no, I can say no and trust that you're gonna be faithful.

I learned so much from her, honestly. I could probably just name off a million things. But that's probably the thing that sticks out the most is just how she stopped for people and heard their stories and really stayed in touch. A lot of the people that she met on the road she actually had a relationship with and they'd come back to the show and she'd watch them grow and learn.

**Annie:** Like audience members?

**Laney:** Yes. Oh yeah, they'd come back before the show and we'd talk to them. That's how I fell in love with that, like genuine... I grew up in an amazing home, Christian home. I have generations of faith on all sides of me. But just seeing that put to action with people that she didn't even know was so valuable for my life. She's amazing.

**Annie:** She's amazing. I love seeing her reenter the public space. I need to call her and have her come on because she hasn't come on the show yet. But I just love-

**Laney:** She's awesome.

**Annie:** She's pretty public that her life changed a lot and she needed a break from the public eye for a minute. But man, because of all those things you just said, the way she sees people and the way she... I mean, her singing voice flat out I want it back in the public eye, in the public ear.

**Laney:** And I would say too she would stop the whole show. Like she would literally stop the show and have a worship moment or minister to somebody. And we'd be back there skating and dancing and everything and you'd be like, where's Britt? You know? And she is right there just having a moment, a one-on-one moment to minister to somebody. That's such a picture of Jesus and how He stopped for people. He was never in a hurry. You know, He met people where they are and truly heard their heart and met their need.

**Annie:** I don't know if you remember this. I don't know if you knew this happened. We were in Minneapolis and I was teaching right before y'all, right before Britt. I mean, the room was... it was a massive church in Minneapolis. I bet there were four or 5,000 girls there and their moms. And it's the end of the day, I'm the last speaker and they know the only thing left is Britt. Sis, when I tell you I am teaching and girls are crawling down the aisle to the front so that they can be in the front so that they could be-

**Laney:** To get there, yes.

**Annie:** The producer, Jason, has to come out on stage while I'm teaching and send them all back to their seats.

**Laney:** You know what? I think I remember that. Yes.

**Annie:** Brutal. It was so good for my-

**Laney:** But those shows were the most fun for us because it was like the crowd was so hyped.

**Annie:** So hyped. They were so hyped. I mean, I was dying laughing. I was like, what is hap...? I am teaching the Bible and there are teenagers crawling down the aisle. Not for me, for Britt. Because they have a belief system that Britt Nicole and you guys are coming next.

**Laney:** Doesn't it make you just want to turn around and walk away?

**Annie:** Oh, for sure. I want to be like, Let's just stop. Like, if Brit's ready, she can have them. Yeah. It was painful for my ego, but it was such a good experience to have of like... those are those unique ones that you go like, I'll never forget this.

**Laney:** Forget that moment.

**Annie:** Yeah, it was wild. When you left, you were really tired. You write about it in Daughter. I think it's one of the reasons this book is really important for people to read. There aren't a lot of people in there. Are you still in your 20s? Are you 30 yet?

**Laney:** I'm about to be 30.

**Annie:** Oh, you're gonna love it. 30s are great. You're gonna love it.

**Laney:** I'm excited.

**Annie:** There's not a lot of people-

**Laney:** It just feels weird mentally. I'm like, whoa-

**Annie:** Totally.

**Laney:** ...I'm gonna be 30.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. It is. Yes, you're exactly right.

**Laney:** It's crazy.

**Annie:** There aren't a lot of people in their 20s that are writing about when a dream comes true and then it finishes. I mean, I don't know if you ever dance again. You may, I don't know. But on a public stage like that, but you really talk about in the book how like you walked away, you knew this dream was done. The season was done. How did you know? How did you know when to walk away from the quote dream job?

**Laney:** I think I knew long before I actually took the step because so much of my life, like I said, I was dating the other dancer and the main route for me in that was that that relationship wasn't full of peace. I didn't have peace in that relationship. And if I was gonna keep dancing and hold hands... like we danced to a love song together and held hands across the stage and it just felt impossible to actually keep doing that and be at peace. So I would say a big part of it was that. But I also just felt like God was just saying like, I have some other things for you.

I think dance was a way I hid in the background. I always had a heart... not necessarily like I'm a vocalist, but just a heart for worship and I wanted to write songs. And for me, backup dancing was a safe way to... like I always mouth the words and saying the entire time I dance. Well, dancers aren't really supposed to do that. So they'd have talks with me, like not in any mean way or anything, but Laney stopped singing, but it was just so in me.

I just felt like God was just saying like, it's time. Like I'm bringing you into a new season. So much of just knowing that was His peace. I remember reading Proverbs 3:17, it's talking about wisdom's ways. It says her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. And I read that and I just remember thinking like, I am not living in the peace that God has for me.

And not that it wasn't there like at one point, but I've overstayed my welcome here and not because of anyone else, but because of where God is leading me. I, basically, in the same few weeks told Britt that I was done dancing and I broke up with the guy I was dating actually right before our last tour started.

**Annie:** Oh, gosh.

**Laney:** So that was kind of bizarre.

**Annie:** Because you're in a bus.

**Laney:** We literally slept on the same bus every night across from each other in the same bunk. But God really did so much in my heart, even through that last tour. And just probably the first time I remember, every time I would get off stage, I would go straight to my bunk and close the curtain and just have an overwhelming moment with God.

I remember just saying, "God, I'm so broken. My heart is so broken. Would you just hold me?" And falling in love with who He is in that season like I had never known before. And like I said, I grew up in a Christian home. I have memories with God throughout my life. Like it's not like I hadn't had encounters or moments with Him, but something was changing.

I can even remember specifically hearing Him say like, in that broken state, you're gonna share your story. And I remember thinking like, "God, what story do I have to share? I don't feel like I have anything to say. I feel like I've failed. I feel like I've ignored you. I've walked in a lack of peace for so long. How could you redeem this? Nobody's gonna truly love me again." I had believed all of those lies. In that last tour, we were on Winter Jam. It was three months long.

**Annie:** Y'all broke up before Winter Jam.

**Laney:** Literally the night before-

**Annie:** Every weekend of three months, you're together on the same bus.

**Laney:** Yes.

**Annie:** Oh.

**Laney:** But that was also the same... I met Sadie the week tour started.

**Annie:** Oh, right.

**Laney:** So God-

**Annie:** Wow. Did you switch buses?

**Laney:** No.

**Annie:** Oh, I would have been like, I'm gonna go see my best friend.

**Laney:** No. I mean, I thought about it, but even in that, I felt like God was saying no. Like, no, you-

**Annie:** Was she the speaker that year?

**Laney:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Laney:** She was still kind of starting out. So she had a 10-minute, you know, set whenever they were changing.

**Annie:** I mean, good on them. I really love Winter Jam. I have not seen them have a lot of women speak.

**Laney:** Wow.

**Annie:** So I am so excited that Sadie did that. That's awesome.

**Laney:** She's done it a couple of times.

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

**Laney:** We met in that first week and she had just broken up with a guy from a long relationship. And we both just sat on the floor and cried and like told our whole story in one moment.

**Annie:** In like Wichita or somewhere, yeah.

**Laney:** We're like, okay, we're best friends. And because the tour was so long, you're either going to be friends or you're not going to be friends. Like you're going to see each other every day.

**Annie:** That's right. So many people fall in love on that tour because you're just like in summer camp for three months. Yes.

**Laney:** That's literally what it's like. I always imagined it, I'm like, is this like what the first day of school is like? We're like, okay, who am I going to be friends with? You know?

**Annie:** That was exactly, you did have a first day of school experience-

**Laney:** I did, yes.

**Annie:** ...right at the start of Winter Jam. You're totally right.

**Laney:** But we made it and gosh, she's just been an incredible friend. We walked that season together. We were both really coming out of a lot of brokenness. For the first time, I remember just going, man, like we didn't just...

I think in friendships a lot of times you comfort each other in the way of like, I'm here too. But a lot of times it's easy to just stay there. Like just stay in the comforting stage. But I felt like for the first time and why our friendship really has thrived and been healthy and we've stayed friends through season changes and moves and all of that, is we went, okay, we acknowledge where we are, but like, let's run. Let's run to Jesus. Let's run towards freedom. Let's discover more of who He is and what He has for us and encourage each other in that. She really helped me walk that season out because I think it would have been really easy to go back.

[00:21:19] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Happy Viking](#). Now listen, I've always respected Venus

Williams. I've never been dying to be her friend until I started drinking Happy Viking every morning of my life. It's so good.

When you're trying to add a little protein to a smoothie or a yogurt bowl or dessert or whatever, there are a million protein powder options out there. So I'm always wanting to make sure that the one I am taking has the best ingredients and still tastes so good. So have you tried Happy Viking?

Listen, I feel like I'm the newest evangelist for Happy Viking. It has got everything you need in one plant-based powder, which I really love. Protein, vitamins, minerals, probiotics, prebiotics, fiber, electrolytes, and more, and only two grams of sugar. Plus 93% of customers, including your girl, AFD, says Happy Viking is the best-tasting plant protein powder they have ever had.

Okay, so the flavors. The flavors of Happy Viking include triple chocolate, which was what I had this morning, it was awesome, vanilla bean, strawberry smoothie, Greena colada, iced coffee, and cookies and cream. Y'all, that one is so good too. I actually switched to triple chocolate because my cookies and cream is running low and I didn't want to run out yet.

I mean, just mix it with some peanut butter and banana and almond milk, and it's like your own little healthy milkshake. Here's the whole truth. It is better than a Frosty. It's better than a Frosty.

When Venus Williams was diagnosed with a career-ending autoimmune disease in 2011, she created Happy Viking protein and superfoods powder to transform her health and then went on to have the longest career in tennis history, y'all.

Happy Viking protein and superfoods powder made by tennis champion, Venus Williams, who I'm dying to be friends with now—if you know her, please connect us—it is hands down the best-tasting plant protein powder out there.

Visit [drinkhappyviking.com](http://drinkhappyviking.com) and use the code TSF for 20% off your first purchase. That's 20% off at [drinkhappyviking.com](http://drinkhappyviking.com) with the code TSF. I cannot wait to hear what you think about it.

**Sponsor:** Most of you have probably heard me sing the praises of [Prose](#) and their truly custom-made-to-order hair care. But switching to a custom routine was one of the best things I have done for my hair and the results just keep getting better.

Prose has given over 1 million consultations with their in-depth hair quiz, which is how I got started because you know we love a quiz. You just answer questions on everything from the climate where you live to the issues you're having with your

hair, your hair type and texture, your eating habits. And then they analyze 85 personal factors and handpick clean ingredients that get you closer to your hair goals with every single wash.

Their made-to-order hair care is the absolute best. They've got a "review and refine" tool that you can use if any of your answers change along the way. And if you're not 100% positive that Prose is the best hair care you've tried, they will take the products back, no questions asked.

Custom-made-to-order hair care from Prose has your name all over it. Take your free in-depth hair consultation and get 50% off your first subscription order today plus 15% off and free shipping every subscription order after that. Go to [Prose.com/thatsoundsfun](https://Prose.com/thatsoundsfun) for your free in-depth hair consultation and 50% off your first subscription order.

**Annie:** Okay, have y'all listened to our latest episodes of Annie's MiniBFF podcast yet? We are having the best time getting to read some of our favorite stories from the Gospels, from some of our favorite kids' storybook Bibles. And in case you missed the announcement, you can also watch the episodes on YouTube. Y'all, we are having a great time.

So if the MiniBFFs in your life want to follow along with what we're reading as they listen or watch, Zonderkidz is offering a discount on the storybook Bibles that we're going through. It's the collection that includes the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Tiny Truths Illustrated Bible, and the I Wonder Bible.

So just visit [faithgateway.com](https://faithgateway.com) and use the code AD20, like Annie Downs, 20, for an extra 20% off any of these three products, the Jesus Storybook Bible, the Tiny Truths Illustrated Bible, or the I Wonder Bible. That's faithgateway.com, and the code is AD20 for an extra 20% off any of these three products. Make sure you grab the bundle as we have more episodes coming up every Monday.

Okay, now back to our conversation with Laney.

[00:25:33] <music>

**Annie:** Why'd you tell Britt before Winter Jam instead of the last weekend? Because a lot of people who are quitting jobs are like-

**Laney:** I told her at the end.

**Annie:** Okay.

- Laney:** No, I did. I told her at the end. I broke up with him at the beginning.
- Annie:** Gosh, you're like, Britt, sorry, I broke up with my boyfriend, who is your other dancer?
- Laney:** But I had decided. I had decided, okay, this is my decision. So when she came back and was like, how do you feel? I had already decided, you know? So that was hard and also made it easier because I'd felt like I'd already kind of dealt with it in my spirit that whole time.
- Annie:** You had a career for four years or something, right?
- Laney:** Yes.
- Annie:** Five years. And then you finish Winter Jam and you're done. You write about this on the book. What was the next week like? Did you just go on vacation? Did you do laundry and lay on your bed? Like, what did you do?
- Laney:** I think I went home at first.
- Annie:** Are your parents in Dallas?
- Laney:** My parents are in Dallas. But then when I came back... it's hard to remember now because God, it really has redeemed so much. Like just remembering even just the state that I was in in my mind. But one very memorable moment for me was sitting in my apartment.
- Annie:** Here?
- Laney:** Yes, here. Had just moved here. Because I moved here basically after I decided I was done. So I moved here without really a plan or a job. I had no plan B. But I felt like that was the whole point. Like I had held on so tightly to those things, things I had found my identity in. I was so proud of that I was a backup dancer. You know, like if you asked me who I was, I'd be like, I'm a backup dancer. That was who I was.

And I had just held on so tightly that I felt like God... there was something to letting go before I had another plan. I remember sitting in my apartment and just going like, Okay, I don't have this relationship that I've had forever and all the same friends, I don't have this dream job anymore, and I'm away from my family. Like, who am I? Like literally asking God, who am I? I just remember my mom had sent me this video of me as a little girl recently. And in the video, I'm like three years old, and I-

**Annie:** Same age as your daughter.

**Laney:** Yes, same age as my daughter.

**Annie:** So cute.

**Laney:** Which is so cool thinking about it now. But in the video, I just pick up this little karaoke mic and I say, "I love Jesus". And it wasn't necessarily about the words that I said to me in that moment, but it was just how I said it and the fact that I was just a little girl. I was a daughter. I had nothing to prove, nothing to hide, no titles, no roles. I was just a daughter.

And in that moment, I just felt like God was reminding me like, that's who you are to me, and that's the most important thing you'll ever be. And that moment really changed my life for the next, even just few months of not having anything lined up that I was doing. I just began to let Him show me who He is and who I was to Him again.

I had grown up hearing daughter of the king. I had heard the phrases and things but it never really clicked for me. And I knew that I was His, but it was like, I hadn't gone totally from my head to my heart yet. And in that season, when I didn't have anything like going for me, it was like, Oh, okay, suddenly this actually makes sense. Like you don't care if I have all my successes or if I perform really well.

And I even see that even more with my daughter is I just love her. Like, I don't care. The most important thing I want her to know is how much God loves her, but what she does with her life with that, I don't care. Girlfriend, run. Like let him lead you. And just seeing that, if that's my heart for my daughter, how much more is God's heart for me in that way that He would just want me to be His. And that's the most important thing to Him.

**Annie:** I met with my editor last week and over lunch we were talking and I said, "What's everybody writing right now? Like, what kind of books are you seeing?" And she was like, Well, I want you to answer because you read everybody's books that come through. And so I was telling her kind of what I was saying. So she starts making her list. She was like, Here's what people are talking about right now. They're talking about attachment theory, they're talking about spiritual warfare, whatever. And then she says, and the thing people are always writing is identity in Christ books.

So why is that, Laney? I mean, this isn't your first book. I mean, you have a devotional out. So it's your first like trade book, as we say in the biz. It's your first

like chapter book, is what I like to say. Why was this it for you though? Why is that statement you just said about like, I just want Rhonny to know that she belongs to God and that she is His and she can do whatever she wants with her life. Why is that the story you want to tell?

**Laney:** I told my husband literally the other day, I was like, "I think I knew the content, everything that was going to be in it before I even knew the title."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Laney:** I just feel like God has just kept putting on my heart, you know, the power of our testimony. I've known the scripture about we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony my entire life. But as I was just thinking about that recently, I felt like it just clicked. It was one of those things where I was like, man, you put the blood of the Lamb and the power of our testimony, the word of our testimony right next to each other.

So our testimony, we build our whole life on the blood of the Lamb. Like all of our faith, all of our hope, all of our trust is in the blood of the Lamb. Now it's put right next to our testimony. Our testimony must have so much power. And a lot of this book is my testimony, it's ways and moments God has just met me with His love and just through conversations with different people in my life, mentors, women ahead of me in years and just seasons, and also girls younger than me.

It's the thing like you literally just said, we never grow out of, we never stop needing to be reminded who God is and who we are to Him. I had my grandmother read this book and she's been in ministry her entire life and-

**Annie:** That's so cool.

**Laney:** She was like a teenager and saw my grandfather. And she was like, I wept, because it just brought up, even for her remembering those moments of even her teenage years and stuff like that.

**Annie:** I mean, I bet she is living to get to read books that her granddaughter wrote. That's so cool.

**Laney:** I think there's definitely that aspect too, but just we never grow out of it.

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

**Laney:** We just continually need to be reminded of that. Even though I just wrote this book, I'm like, I still need this. I still have moments with my daughter where I feel just

chaos at times in my mind and in my heart. Like last night, I was trying to get ready for today and I told her, "Baby girl, don't take my hairbrush." Well, I go in my bathroom after she's gone to bed and I cannot find my hairbrush. And I'm like, "I have to have it in the morning. What am I gonna do?" Me and my husband searched the house high and low. We're like, where's the hairbrush? Finally, I was like, "God, I need you because I'm gonna need my hairbrush in the morning." Finally, I find it under a piece of dirty clothes. It's like, Okay, there we go. Thank you, God.

**Annie:** The Lord cares about all of it.

**Laney:** Yeah. But I could feel the tension rising in me of like, man. And it's so simple. And I think often it's the thing that we're like, Oh, we just know that. We know who we are, now let's move on with life. But it's really the thing that we have to continue to go back to. And the thing that the enemy is after.

Even just since I wrote this, just thinking about everything we have in God is because of Jesus. It's because of His Son. And if we don't have that place as a daughter, what do we have? So, of course, the enemy is after our identity.

**Annie:** I've seen you twice this year at Sadie's conference and at the JWLKRS' conference. I love the Schnackys so much.

**Laney:** They're so sweet. I haven't had a lot of time with Allie yet. We've just started to just connect.

**Annie:** So tell me what you see. I mean, I thought that was really interesting. When I was reading *Daughter* and I was thinking, Laney not only is writing for me and your grandmother, you're also writing for these women who are looking up to you that are younger than you.

**Laney:** Sure.

**Annie:** I'm thinking about Easter basket. So like, man, everyone who has a teenage daughter or a college-aged daughter needs to put this book in that Easter basket, right?

**Laney:** Yes.

**Annie:** So when you're looking at Allie, who looks incredibly confident on the internet-

**Laney:** Yeah, she does.

**Annie:** ...and I'm sure she is and also has moments like the rest of us, when you're looking at the girls that are 18, 19, 20 right now that are on TikTok, that are putting their face on TikTok without any makeup as they do their get ready with me's, why do they need to hear about their identity when they look like they've got it sorted? I mean, they look so much more confident than I was at 18.

**Laney:** When I think back to being 18 and 20, and when I look at... like literally the other night, like we all do, I was going back through old pictures. So I was like, Man, I was in such good shape. My hair was so blonde. I'm like, "Look, babe." You know, I'm doing all that. And he was like, "Babe, you were 20." And I'm like, "Well, so? Like, what does that matter?"

But I would say also... I mean, I just told my whole story about how I was so insecure and not at peace and like not living confidently and while I looked great, you know? And I think it just doesn't... you can look great, you can feel great, you can smell great, but that doesn't mean that... and I'm not saying that about Allie or any of these.

**Annie:** We're just talking about that generation in general.

**Laney:** That generation.

**Annie:** Allie does look great and smell great.

**Laney:** Yes. She is incredible through and through.

**Annie:** Gosh, she's amazing.

**Laney:** But I think a lot of people thought I was confident, a lot of people thought I was secure because I really tried hard to put that off. But when my confidence and security really came was when I actually don't have it all together. I actually am really insecure in this area. And when I like admitted that, that's when I was able to encounter God's like love for me in that area and truly be secure. I've never found confidence in myself. Like ever.

Even today I'm walking in and I'm like, man, God, you're the only reason I'm here. You are my confidence. Carry me today. I can look at myself and find many reasons to be insecure and unqualified, like disqualify myself, but you have put a story in and testimony within me and it's of your strength and my weakness. And that's why I'm here.

So I think there's a lot of pressure 18 to 25 honestly to like... it's that age where I think dating is very amplified, it's on people's minds. Everybody thinks they're gonna get married too in that set of years. So there's a lot of self-focus and I-

**Annie:** Oh yeah, that's really interesting. You're really thinking about you because you're trying to get yourself in front of all the right people. Interesting. Yes.

**Laney:** Yeah. So I think all that pressure adds to that. You want to feel secure so badly, but if you just realize it's not gonna come through those. And I think that's one of the hardest things to admit, that it's not gonna come from you. We want it to come from us, but I've never met a person who was truly confident, truly satisfied, truly fulfilled that it wasn't coming from Jesus.

**Annie:** Right, right.

**Laney:** It's almost like you can feel... even walking through so much insecurity, I think I can. It's almost like I can see it now when somebody's in that state and feel it. And I'm like, I just want to hug you. I just want to take that burden off of you, that you are already loved, that you are already accepted by Him.

**Annie:** Like, You don't have to do all this.

**Laney:** You don't have to. Like don't wear yourself out. It's exhausting.

**Annie:** That's right, that's exactly right.

**Laney:** I tried, you know.

**Annie:** I have friends that I sometimes want to say that, and I'm sure people want to say that to me too at times where I'm gonna be like-

**Laney:** Me too.

**Annie:** It doesn't have to be this hard. It can be so much easier. We like you just as you are. You don't have to do all this. I know, it doesn't have to be that hard. You talked earlier, and you talk about this in the book too, you talked earlier about the older women in your life who you look up to that kind of invest in you. So I'm thinking about our friends listening who are in their 40s or 50s and think, my story will not matter to the Laney in my life. My story will not... I got married young and had a bunch of kids and that's what I've spent my time doing. So my testimony isn't that, quote, "exciting" or whatever. Will you talk about why are people's stories that are ahead of you important to you?

**Laney:** Because they've already gone before me. I'm like, you know something that I don't know yet. I always feel like with God, it's like an alternate reality that we live in. There is a new reality that we live in as daughters that's not typical or standard or the system of the world. So I can actually learn from someone way younger than me by their faith. Scriptures talk about not looking down on someone who's young. But just recognizing like somebody has the life of Jesus within them, you can learn from them.

And just to the person that may feel like they don't have a story. I would say my mom might qualify for that lady, like who feels like she doesn't have something to say. But she is the most valuable voice in my life when it comes to an older... or just a woman in my life. She is the voice that has the most authority and strength and power in my life. I listen to her. And yet my mom's not gonna be the one to walk in a room and make her voice heard. Like she's gonna be quiet and she's gonna wait till she's asked a question. I think those are sometimes the most valuable voices to listen to because they're not quick to speak.

My mom has an incredible story to tell of just how God has... she dealt with... so much of *Daughter*, honestly, could be her story too, of just how the lies of the enemy started when she was so young. Her dad was an evangelist and traveled the world. And she sang on stages when she was two years old and was offered record deals and all these things and she wanted to be a wife and a mom. That was her dream. And she's poured everything into us. She even said when we all left the house and got married-

**Annie:** How many are y'all?

**Laney:** Four of us, all married. So there's eight plus all the kids. It's just a very large family. But she kind of went into that season of, okay, what's my purpose now? Now that we had all left. And I think a lot of women can get to that stage. I even thought in writing this book, how can I write a book for all generations? That feels a little impossible. But having her in my life to speak into that and how she was like, that was a season I needed to be reminded that he takes me from glory to glory.

I remember her telling me she was like alone, everybody had left. Just our dog was at the house. And she said she just heard Rhonda, I don't do "less than" seasons.

**Annie:** Wow, I don't do "less than" seasons.

**Laney:** Because her dream was to be a wife and a mom. So in that way, her dream had been fulfilled. And then she was like, well, is it over? What do I do now? And now I think she would tell you, being eight years on the other side of being a grandma, that that's true He keeps His word. He doesn't do "less than" seasons.

My mom is just incredible. She's confident, she's secure, but she's not loud. I think we think a lot of times loud is being confident, but my mom is more quiet.

**Annie:** How many grandkids?

**Laney:** 11th on the way.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, yeah, that's right. 10 in the world.

**Laney:** Yes, 10 in the world.

**Annie:** And one on the way.

**Laney:** One on the way.

**Annie:** Man, what a beautiful next part of the story for you to show up here 28 weeks pregnant after I read Daughter. Because-

**Laney:** Did you know I was pregnant?

**Annie:** I feel like I knew it at... when I saw you, I was surprised, only because most recently I'd read the book and read about Rory, your son. But-

**Laney:** Because I finished the book before I was pregnant too.

**Annie:** Wow, okay. Because I feel like you were pregnant when we were in Florida. Were you already pregnant at JWLKRS? Or was it Sadie's? Was there one of them?

**Laney:** Yes, I was.

**Annie:** Yes, okay. There's one of them where I think you told me.

**Laney:** I was actually pregnant at Sadie's too.

**Annie:** Oh wow.

**Laney:** Which was really cool because I had lost him that weekend.

**Annie:** The year before.

**Laney:** The year before.

**Annie:** That's right, I remember you telling me that.

**Laney:** At the conference, yes. So going back, that was literally my prayer was, God, I will, but I don't want to go back in the same place. And I didn't. We actually found out literally right before.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Laney:** ...that I was pregnant. Yes, it was crazy.

**Annie:** Did you tell Sadie when you were there that weekend?

**Laney:** Oh yeah, I did. We both just cried. It was really cool.

**Annie:** Talk about how you hold that because you have Rhonny, who's three, adorable, you're 28 weeks pregnant. Boy or girl? Have you said?

**Laney:** Girl.

**Annie:** A girl?

**Laney:** Yes.

**Annie:** And in the middle you're pregnant with Rory and you lose him at 17 weeks.

**Laney:** 17 weeks, yeah.

**Annie:** How do you hold all of that? You have a son that the Lord has. You will forever be the mom of a daughter and a son and a daughter and whoever else comes along. How do you hold the joy of Rhonny? I mean, I walked in the door and she's lit up our office. I mean, how do you hold the joy of her, the loss of Rory, the excitement of the next one?

**Laney:** I think I still call it a loss because it relates to people quickly. But I will say, I don't really feel like we lost Rory and that is what God has done, I think, just in our family and in my heart through walking through that. I say all the time, I enjoy my daughter every single day. I get to experience her. I get to have lunch with her. I see her personality. I'm seeing her grow. And I don't experience Rory in that same way.

But I do feel like because of Jesus, because of the hope of heaven, I really do get to experience him every day, just in a different way. God really did so much through that season of just having him and just walking through deep heartache through

that, but also just experiencing the depth of God's love and tangible presence in a way that I had never had before.

I was actually listening to Bill Johnson. I love Bill Johnson. Me and my husband both do. And he was talking about pain. And he just basically said, pain is something that we won't get to experience in heaven. It's a side of God. It's something that we get to experience with God on earth that we won't experience in heaven. I really feel that that longing I have to meet my son is so deep, but it's brought just a closeness between me and God that I didn't have before. And just a level of hope. Like getting to share that with people and what God has done in our family, the reality of heaven that we now live with, that part of me is there. Part of me is in heaven and I'll get to see him again.

But I get to talk about him. I just did Sadie's podcast the other day and I was like, "Ask me all the questions about him because I love talking about him because what the enemy truly meant for harm, the death that we experienced on this earth, God has brought more life out of. And I would choose to carry him all over again, like with the same outcome, just to be his mom, just to experience the life.

**Annie:** Were you afraid when you were getting pregnant again?

**Laney:** Yeah, yeah. I still have moments of fear. I literally had a moment in my car the other night where I was like, "God, my life is yours. I've decided that a long time ago. Like it's not up for debate. It's not an option. I choose to trust You, but I'm scared. She just kicked.

**Annie:** She's like, "I'm good, mom."

**Laney:** "I'm good." That has been the coolest thing. I will have moments of fear and just say, "God, I need to feel her." And literally like five seconds later, she'll just kick me, like the biggest kick. I'm like, okay, I see you, girl. Thank you. You already hear the Holy Spirit. That's awesome.

**Annie:** That's right. That's right.

**Laney:** Mom, what is it? My goal is done. I've accomplished as a mom.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. That's exactly right. I think you've experienced this too in breakups where you go, I don't know if I'm brave enough to do this again. And people who have lost children, I don't know if I'm brave enough to do this again. I mean, anytime you face any kind of loss, the like, am I willing to try again, is to me one of the bravest tries.

**Laney:** I agree. It's almost like re-entering the room. It's like, okay, I have to believe you again. I very much feel like I'm back in that zone again, you know? Walking through that with Rory, I was like, okay, my faith is so strong, I'm good. Now I feel like I'm like, okay, I'm actually back here again and I have to truly trust you over again.

[00:49:13] <music>

**Sponsor:** Calling all my single friends. I want to personally invite you to come join the [Single Purpose League](#). Listen, I didn't think I'd be single in my 40s. I definitely didn't think I'd talk about it on the internet, but here we are. When I realized I had so many friends who are also single and navigating this season of life as well, I thought it was time we had our own little space to chat about it.

We've started a Patreon called Single Purpose League. It's a community of friends who wants to talk about the good, the hard, the fear, the hope, and the heartache when it comes to being single in a little bit of a more private environment. Ultimately, together, we're gonna tackle the question, what is my single purpose? And what is my purpose while single?

When you sign up, your membership includes one Single Purpose League episode from me every month, one live stream a month, we're calling it our Chapter Meeting, 50% off of anything at shopannieffdowns.com, presale access to a special AFD event in Nashville on August 11th, an advent experience that we are creating just for singles that we'll release in advent later this year, and a community of friends who totally get what you're feeling. So, are you ready?

Just go to [patreon.com/Annieffdowns](https://patreon.com/Annieffdowns) to learn more about it and come and join us. That's [patreon.com/Annieffdowns](https://patreon.com/Annieffdowns).

And now let's finish up our conversation with Laney.

[00:50:42] <music>

**Annie:** I think you know this. My sister and her husband had a baby that lived for two months-

**Laney:** Wow, I did not know that.

**Annie:** ...and then passed away two summers ago, summer of '22. And yesterday, a friend of mine called me, kind of in a panic, one of their kids was sick, needed me to come sit with the baby. And one of the things that has happened since my nephew TJ died has been like, I don't want to take care of kids. Not out of pain, but out of

like, I don't want anything to happen. Like it's been this weird lie that the enemy has planted in me of like, what if you're the person there when something happens?

So even last night when I was driving to my friend's house, I was like, hey, you babysat in sixth grade. Like, there weren't monitors. When they went to bed, they went to bed. Babies, children, you go to sleep every night and wake up the next morning. So there are also these times where I think the enemy tries to go, remember how this one time, this one thing happened? If you put yourself anywhere near that kind of loss or rejection or pain, it's gonna happen again. Right? Have you experienced that too?

**Laney:** Yes. Actually with my aunt. My aunt passed away from cancer 10 years ago, I think now. As a kid, I always believed God for healing. I remember just laying in my bed at night and just... I would pray for all the people I knew who needed healing. And I remember thinking, every time I pray for somebody, they get well. Like, that would happen. That would happen. So my faith was so strong. And then when my aunt passed away, I just went through this season where I was like, Okay, if you don't heal her, like, who do you heal?

**Annie:** Wow. If you don't heal her, who do you heal?

**Laney:** Because in my mind, she was such a woman of faith. And she was. I write about this in the book, but I remember hearing stories of her when she was a kid, she had a lump on her lip. And every night before she would go to bed, she would stand in her mirror and practice how she was gonna tell people God healed her.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh. That's cool.

**Laney:** I love that.

**Annie:** I love that too.

**Laney:** It's impacted my faith journey so much. Like I practice that. I'm like, how am I gonna tell, before this happens, how am I gonna tell people what you did?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Laney:** So when she passed away, it was like, okay, like, what now? Like, do I believe you for healing? And I really went through a few years where I never prayed for healing. One of the early things that happened with Britt, she had a friend on the road with her, and she came up to me and said, "Laney, I really feel to tell you there's healing in your hands."

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Laney:** And I just wept, of course, because I felt like God was just bringing that back to like, you can believe me for that, and that is who I am. And I think, you know, a lot of times when we go through something that we can't explain about God, like something in this world that's broken, we think He did it, you know, or that we put it on Him.

I think even just walking through this with Rory, I don't put that on God. We live in a broken world. I can't explain it, but I know that He says that His plans for me are good and to prosper me. Actually, this is in the book, but I talk about in Jeremiah 29:11-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, you like break it down. It's so good.

**Laney:** I've known that my whole life, but I hadn't known that depth of it. And in one of those moments where I was just like, God, how are you gonna make this good? I read Jeremiah 29:11, the original Hebrew, and all of that, just really diving into it. And when I got to the part about future and read that it has a meaning for past, it was like God was saying, I'm the one who can step into these things that have already happened, your aunt, Rory, like these broken things in your life and bring hope and future out of them. So, you're not the one that caused this. I can't put that on you. And if you did, I just don't see it right.

**Annie:** Right, right.

**Laney:** If this was your plan, your will for me, if that makes sense, then I'm just not seeing it right yet. I'm not seeing how it's good because you're good. And that's a promise and your plans for me are good and they're for future and hope. So that has carried me a lot, just going back to that promise that even when I can't understand it, like somehow in this that you were good.

**Annie:** I say this a lot on here, but probably one of my favorite lyrics ever is a Cory Asbury lyric. And he says, the story isn't over if the story isn't good. I carry that with me.

**Laney:** I love that song.

**Annie:** The story ain't over if the story isn't good. That's just it. It doesn't mean we even see it.

**Laney:** You're just in the middle.

**Annie:** Yeah, you're just in the middle.

**Laney:** You're in the middle of it.

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

**Laney:** And God's time is not our time. It's gonna get better.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Laney:** It has to. There's always a redemption. There's always hope. There's always a new beginning.

**Annie:** Oh man, I can't wait for people to get this book. Okay, is there anything we didn't talk about you want to make sure we say?

**Laney:** Man, I would just... do you pray at the end for people?

**Annie:** Yes. Do you want to? I would love for you to do that.

**Laney:** I would love to just pray. And you too, I feel like you're somebody who knows who you are.

**Annie:** Oh, thanks.

**Laney:** And you've walked through some hard seasons.

**Annie:** You've seen a lot of growth?

**Laney:** Yeah.

**Annie:** I feel like even just being in different seasons, like praying for the woman who is in the exact season you are, you know?

**Annie:** That's good.

**Laney:** And also, you know, just being a new mom and the fear and the things that you can go through. So yeah, if you want to pray too, I'd love that.

**Annie:** You pray first and then I'll pray and we'll be done.

**Laney:** Awesome.

**Annie:** That's good. Thanks, Laney.

**Laney:** God, thank You so much for just this conversation that has brought so much life. God, thank You for Annie and her ministry and just really how she sees people and believes in people and that she would open a space to just talk about who You are to us and who we are to You.

God, I just pray for literally every woman, girl on the other side listening to this podcast who maybe relates to just being in a season of going, who am I, what's my purpose, or I feel really broken, I feel lonely, I feel like I'm in a waiting season, I'm longing and just all the things that we can go through in different seasons of our lives as women and as our seasons change and we grow.

God, I just pray that you would meet them right there, that you would just show them your love in just a really real, tangible way, that they would wake up in the morning and just feel your massive arms wrapped around them. God, that faith would rise in their heart.

God, that they would just know that You really are a faithful Father, that You really are good, You really are who You say You are, and that You can be trusted no matter what they're walking through. No matter what life looks like right now, there is hope to come, there's hope right where they're at, there's redemption, there's restoration, God, that You can truly make anything good. And that's just what You do.

So I pray for faith in their hearts and just a realization of who they are, the reality that they get to live in as Your daughter, that even though it may not look like what they would hope for right now, that they can still believe because faith is truly substance, that faith really is evidence of things we don't see. Just bless them, Lord Jesus, and show them your love.

**Annie:** Lord, we just do pray for the people who've experienced great loss in their families, in their lives, and do not yet see how You are redeeming that. I just thank You for Laney's testimony, her and Clayton's just like powerful testimony of Your redemptive work in the midst of not having Rory with them every day. And the same true for our family with TJ and so many other families who know that loss.

So, Lord, I just ask that even today, if all our friends grieving get just like a glimpse of the end of the story, we'd ask for that today. And God, I ask that Laney's story today, the thing that just keeps coming to my mind is that this story would just flow into our lives, that we would examine ourselves and see where we are believing that we aren't enough, and that we aren't who You need us to be and that we aren't doing enough or that our lives are too boring, our lives are too unsequential.

God, would You just open our eyes, even today, a conversation at a grocery store or a conversation with a family member or at church or with a friend that we're like, Oh man, I'm needed on this planet. I'm the only one who can sit in my seat. Would you just do that for us today, God. Reestablish our identity as an important part of the story You're telling on earth right now. You picked us to be the grownups right now for some reason. So we say yes to that. So we love You, we trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Laney:** Amen.

**Outro:** You guys, isn't she so great? I know. It's just amazing. One of the reasons I'm thankful I've been in this job as long as I've been in this job now is I've gotten to grow up with people. And Laney and I grew up together. We were a decade apart, but we grew up together. And I am just so thankful for her, for the work she's doing.

I'm telling you, this book is the one you want in the hands of the young women in your life, of the women who are growing up, who have grown up and are still figuring some stuff out. It's called Daughter. So make sure you go and get a copy today. Again, put it in some Easter baskets, give it at graduation. It's a beautiful gift.

If you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box if you're listening on Spotify, or send them to us on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. We'll try to answer them there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find, Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home. Do something that sounds fun to you. Please do something that sounds fun to you, and I will do the same. Today, what sounds fun to me? I would love... as you can see, I'm sitting in Nashville. By the time you're hearing this, I'm sitting in New York, and I'm gonna have a bagel today. I love the bagels in New York.

So y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with my friend and a pastor you know and love, Nick Conley. We'll see y'all Thursday.