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[00:01:10] <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. We are talking about Lent. Y'all know I love the Christian calendar.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors. This show is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). Today, we're talking about our relationship with technology and how to have healthy boundaries, but our real-life relationships need boundaries, too. It's hard and complex, right?

We want to build connection with people, but also want to be wise and protect our mental, emotional, and spiritual health through it all. This is where therapy has been so helpful for me. It's just a place to process what I'm struggling with and how I can show up as a healthier Annie for myself and for my people.

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Intro:

Okay, today on the show, I get to talk with my friend, Pastor Darren Whitehead. Darren is the pastor of Church of the City here in Franklin, Tennessee. And we are kicking off Lent this week. Y'all know I love the Christian calendar. I particularly love Lent.

If you want to learn more, you can go back and search through the podcast episodes. In fact, we'll link some of them in the show notes. We've talked about Lent a bunch of years in a row, talking about what does it look like to sacrifice, to celebrate, and to fast during this season that leads up to Easter.

So today I wanted to have my friend Darren on the podcast. I watched last year as Church of the City did a church-wide technology fast during Lent. And because there are some of our staff that go to Church of the City, because a lot of my friends go to that church here in Nashville, it kind of permeated our community and it was really meaningful. So I wanted to talk to Darren about that, about fasting from technology.

Actually, after doing that season last year as a church, Darren has now written a brand new book called *The Digital Fast*. It's a 40-day journey that helps you detox your mind. I think this would be really helpful as you're thinking about what to give up for Lent and as you're thinking about what your church or your small group could be doing together.

All those resources are available for you if you want to do a technology fast through *The Digital Fast* and through Darren's website. So I think this conversation is going to be really helpful, really important.

And if you're in Single Purpose League, stick around until the end. You're going to love getting to know Pastor Darren. He's awesome.

So here's my conversation with longtime friend, and he should have been a guest sooner, my friend, Pastor Darren Whitehead.

[00:04:40] <music>

Annie: Darren Whitehead, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Darren: Thank you so much for having me, Annie.

Annie: Sincerest apologies that we're at 850 episodes, and it's your first time on. We did try with you and Tomlin, and it just never...

Darren: We did try. It almost happened.

Annie: I know, it came so close.

Darren: It didn't happen.

Annie: It was so close. But here you are today.

Darren: Yes.

Annie: Thank you for being here.

Darren: Thank you for having me.

Annie: I know you know this behind the scenes, but I want to say it publicly. You're just one of my favorite pastors.

Darren: Oh, you're sweet.

Annie: I just so honor how you serve every city you live in. The Whiteheads make a mark where they live. And so it makes me really thankful that you're here.

Darren: Thank you for saying that.

Annie: I'm really glad. Okay, the first question we're asking this year. It's our 10th anniversary. So because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what Darren Whitehead does for fun.

Darren: Oh, well, I am the father of three teenage daughters. You know them. So there is a lot of ladies in my house. I have no sons. I have three daughters and a wife. A lot of feelings in my house. There is always someone crying, it's usually me. But we love to travel. So there are certain things that we don't do in our world so that we are able to travel a lot. In the summers, we travel a lot. I am about to take my girls to Australia in a couple of weeks.

Annie: Oh, really?

Darren: Each of my daughters have an Australian theme in their name.

Annie: Oh, interesting.

Darren: And they're named after a different city and I'm taking them each to their own city. We have planned to do this ever since they were born. And honestly, I was waiting for them to be old enough, really, to be able to remember it, to appreciate it.

Annie: Certainly.

Darren: So yeah. So we're going to Australia in a couple of weeks. Traveling with my girls is the most fun thing. I try to educate them that their world is not the world. We talk a lot about the fact that, you know, when you travel abroad, the country you learn most about is your own because you get perspective.

We went to Rome last year. We rented an Airbnb. You know, went in Rome.

Annie: Yeah, literally.

Darren: I took them to, you know, the Colosseum and took them to the Vatican. I took them to the Vatican, I said to them, "Listen, you're going to see a lot of paintings. You're going to be tempted to be really bored. But I want you to remember something. When you're like 27 years old and someone's going to talk about the Vatican, you may be the only person at that cocktail party that's actually been there. And you'll be able to talk about the Sistine Chapel because you were in there." And to my little girl's credit, they really concentrated and focused and took it in.

Annie: Australia, people can hear auditorily, that that is your homeland.

Darren: Yes.

Annie: Have they been back a lot?

Darren: No. My youngest daughter, who's 13, she's never been.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Darren: The older two have been. My oldest has been twice, but they don't really remember it. This is the thing. You spend all this money on these kids to travel and they don't remember.

Annie: You put them in a plane for 70 hours or something.

Darren: Exactly.

Annie: I just got back from Rwanda and getting home was like a... I literally left at lunch on Wednesday and got home at dinner on Thursday. What is it to get to Australia? Do you go west or east also?

Darren: You go west. That's a fair question because it is almost as far away on the planet as it can be. So we are taking one of the top 10 longest flight legs on earth. We're flying a connection through Houston to Sydney. It's 17 and a half hours without stopping.

Annie: I mean, modern technology!

Darren: I know!

Annie: 17 and a half hours in the air!

Darren: 17 and a half hours.

Annie: Wow.

Darren: There's only a couple of flights on earth that are longer than Houston to Sydney.

Annie: That's kind of amazing, though, that once your bags make it to Houston, your bags are making it to Sydney.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: That's amazing.

Darren: That's right, yeah.

Annie: Wow. How long are you all going to stay? We're going to be there for two weeks, going to meet a bunch of family. I have a brother who still lives in Australia. They have not met one of their cousins. And so we're going to have a chance to do all of that.

Annie: The best. That's awesome.

Darren: They're really excited. I'm going to take them to my hometown. I grew up in a tiny little town. I'm thrilled that my daughters are legitimately interested in seeing where I was born, the school I went to. They're not eye-rolling it, they're actually really into it. They're like, "Dad, you have a whole other life that we don't know about." So they're really into checking it all out.

Annie: I went to University of Georgia, and our college ministry that kind of ran in my sphere during college, Tyler Reagan, who you know, Kevin Queen, David Platt, we all were college friends. You, Alex Seeley, who's been on the show, Alex and Henry, John and Christy Tyson, I mean, y'all all came from the same area and now you're all doing ministry together in the US.

Darren: Listen, Annie, we all came from the same small Bible study. We were in this small Bible study. John was in it. Henry and Alex were in it. I was in it. And who knew that we would move to the other side of the world and start church?

Annie: To the same city.

Darren: I know, it's crazy.

Annie: It's very bizarre. It's weird what happened in our college ministry, but it's the same thing that happened to you. We just went from Georgia to Tennessee. Y'all went from Australia to Tennessee.

Darren: I know.

Annie: When I think about our college group, there are those handful of us that are really public. And then the ones that I actually think... this is the genesis of my question, the ones that I actually think, I'm gonna be cutting grass in heaven, I'm getting plenty of slaps on the back here.

Darren: Right.

Annie: I'm gonna be cutting grass. The front row sitters are the people that have been living in the Czech Republic for the last 20 years that nobody knows that we went to college with and the people that are serving... they're still in our college town that are the counselors for the elementary schools.

Darren: Faithful.

Annie: Right, right. So I was curious if there are still people you think of from your time... There's those y'all that are real public that have all been on the podcast. And then

the ones that you're like, oh, and there are these others that have been faithful for a long time.

Darren: Oh, that is absolutely true. I feel like that too. I mean, we get a lot of credit being public. We get criticized, but we get credit. I tell my kids it's price and privilege. We get the benefits and the blessing, and then we have a bit of a burden as well. But yeah, those who are laboring in one sense in obscurity, in sort of a thankless environment, that's the Jesus stuff right there.

Annie: Yeah, right?

Darren: Yeah.

Annie: I think so too. I did a video for our campus ministry a couple of weeks ago, and I was kind of like, I mean, I'll do it, but you know who the real, real ones are.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: It isn't me. I'm happy to do it. I'm so thankful for where I came from and all that they built in me. Every spiritual discipline was solidified in me in college. But I'm also like, I ain't the star. When y'all see how this really tallies out in eternity, you're gonna see. You're gonna see that I'm cutting grass.

So Happy Lent to everyone. That's why I begged you to come on here. I said, Darren, please come talk to us about this. We love talking about Lent and Advent. I love the Christian calendar. If someone's jumping in for the first time, will you give us a little Lent primer? What is this season? Does everybody celebrate it? Is this a Catholic thing? Is this a you-can-choose-it-if-you-want-to thing? What's the deal?

Darren: It definitely comes from the liturgical tradition, but we are seeing increasingly more evangelical traditions picking up, particularly Advent and Lent.

Annie: Why is that?

Darren: Well, I think it is... Christmas especially just rushes past us. And to turn something into a season of preparing your heart for celebrating the incarnation, and then to be preparing for the fulcrum of the Christian faith, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, to be able to dial your heart into it intentionally, to prepare yourself for it, I think people really see the value in that.

Lent traditionally has had three components to it. It is a season of focused prayer. It is a season of repentance. And generally people are giving up something. So it's prayer and fasting and repentance. And then the third thing is an old English word,

it's the word almsgiving. And that is essentially charity. It is giving of your financial resources, and it is also giving of your time to serve those in need.

Annie: I have never heard anybody... Here you go. [wowie zowie] I told you it would happen, the wowie zowie button. I've never heard anybody talk about the almsgiving of Lent.

Darren: They are the major tenets of Lent.

Annie: Wow.

Darren: And Lent is a 40-day season, although the Sundays don't count. So it's really more of like a 46-day season. Begins in Ash Wednesday, which this year is February 14th, also Valentine's Day.

Annie: Who can deal? Who can deal? Give it up and fall in love all on Wednesday.

Darren: People are going to have roses and sweet dinners and-

Annie: And their last full meal.

Darren: Exactly. And then an ash cross across their forehead as well.

Annie: It goes until Easter.

Darren: It goes until Easter, yeah.

Annie: Okay.

Darren: Easter Sunday.

Annie: Oh, and then Eastertide happens after until Pentecost. And it's longer than Easter, it's longer than Lent, and nobody ever talks about that.

Darren: No one talks about Eastertide, that is true.

Annie: Or Christmastide. It makes me nuts. I really want to wave those flags of like, I know Lent was hard, jump into Eastertide, it's 50 days!

Darren: Eastertide is amazing, and of course is representing the season of resurrection and to the birth of the church, the day of Pentecost. And an amazing season in the scripture as well. You know, when you study the way Jesus used His time in that period, you know, Jesus... It was a 40 day period for Jesus and there was 10 more

days. But the way Jesus used His time is a fascinating study of what are the priorities to the heart of God.

Annie: Okay. Have you written that book yet?

Darren: No, I have not.

Annie: Okay, just put it on your list. Why 40, Darren? Is there a prophetic thing that I don't know? I mean, it's all over the Bible. It is how long Jesus was in the desert. It is how many years the Israelites were in the wilderness. What's the deal?

Darren: The ark, it was 40 days and 40 nights with the flood.

Annie: Right.

Darren: So yeah, there's lots of 40. I mean, it's a sacred number. None of us really know what it actually means, but it is certainly a sacred period of time. The most obvious example being the 40 days that Jesus fasted in the desert prior to the three years of ministry.

Annie: I think it's fast... I'm a big numbers person. My charismatic plays out in a handful of ways, and one of them is paying attention to numbers. Not numerology. I'm not going all the way on it.

Darren: No, no, I get it, yeah.

Annie: But I'm like, man, when 40 days happens, if I notice something on my calendar, I'm like, wait, that was 40 days ago. Oh, I need to pay attention to that. I mean, when Lent comes along, I'm always like, okay, here we go, 40. So with the Sundays, does that mean we don't fast on that Sunday?

Darren: No, it's just that Sunday being the day of the gathering is just not included in the Lent.

Annie: I grew up Methodist, so we just did Ash Wednesday. I gave up chocolate and TV and Coke and all sorts of things. Before we dive into a digital fast, Will you talk a little bit about fasting? I think there are a lot of people who, I know this, a lot of people who are afraid of fasting food. They have a history with food that makes it challenging to fast food, or they don't want to, or they think they can't, whether it's a day or a week or whatever. What is the power of fasting?

Darren: Well, fasting is probably the most neglected spiritual practice in our modern world. I think it is more potent today than maybe ever, because we are able to appease and

satisfy the appetites in our lives instantly. You're ever hungry, you don't have to go hunt, you go to the fridge. So we are seldom hungry.

There is something about having a season where you are stepping back from food, you are refraining, and it's uncomfortable. You are reminded of your humanity. You are reminded about how much our lives are centered around food. You do breakfast meetings and you meet for lunch and you have birthday dinners. And when you're in a season of fasting, it's really inconvenient.

Annie: It's frustrating. It's so frustrating.

Darren: The great irony is called fasting because time goes slow.

Annie: So slow. Right.

Darren: But there is something about fasting. You know, in Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about fasting with an assumption. He says, when you give, when you pray, when you fast. You know, He's speaking to a Jewish audience who are practicing the rhythms of the Jewish faith.

Interestingly, there's no one in the Bible that commands us to fast. And yet, Jesus is assuming it in the Sermon on the Mount. His whole idea in that section is all about parading your spiritual acts in front of other people. When you give, you're doing it in front of people. When you pray, you're praying eloquent prayers to be articulate in front of people to look so godly. And when you fast, you're kind of working it into every conversation. How are you doing? Well, I'm okay. I'm fasting because I'm so godly.

But there is something about depriving yourself of something for a season and taking that hunger and directing it towards God as the one who sustains us. And it is uncomfortable. And yet there is something where it adds a level of power. It increases your ability to be hearing from God. And if you're praying about something in particular, it really can add another dimension of potency to your prayer life if you're fasting.

Annie: I am with you. I think there is not a discipline I like less, but see the effect of more.

Darren: I know.

Annie: I have a big day tomorrow. I'm fasting today. Because I know I need to make a deposit in a bank account that I need to pull from tomorrow. And so I have got to pray. Now, the thing I can do wrong, Darren, is I cannot eat. I'm a very all or nothing. I cannot eat. But if I don't pray, what are you doing?

Darren: It's dieting.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. I'm just neglecting my hunger.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: So the challenge for me is, are you going to fast and pray? Because that actually is what shifts the atmosphere.

Darren: Well, I heard someone say, you know, if you fast and not pray, you will change your body. If you fast and pray, you will change your perspective.

Annie: Ah, yeah, that's it.

Darren: And I think God gives you eyes to see some things that you wouldn't ordinarily see, you know? And in Mark 9, there's this whole thing, this story of Jesus where he's casting out a demon in a boy. The disciples tried to do it, they couldn't do it. And in the end, they look at Jesus and say, how come we weren't able to do it? And Jesus says, "Some of these things can only come out by prayer and fasting," which gives us this idea that there are some things that we will not see unless we pray and fast. It's like God is reserving some currency in eternity.

Annie: That's where I get my deposit language from, is from that story where I'm like, okay, so there are times where we fast and it just puts something in a bank, and the Lord in the future goes, I'm going to withdraw now.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: But man, it is tough to talk to women about fasting. It's hard because people don't want to be drawn into unhealthy relationship with food if they've gotten themselves out. And maybe that's true for some men too, I'm sure. And it's not true for every woman, I'm sure. And yet Jesus didn't say this is a good discipline for dudes.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: So we have. To me, sometimes it feels like fasting food is this double invitation to women of, can you work on your emotional mental health around food enough to have the spiritual discipline effective in your life? Does that feel true?

Darren: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's good.

Annie: But fasting food isn't the only thing we can fast.

Darren: Right.

Annie: Right. Because when we're thinking about Lent, how do we decide what to fast?

Darren: Well, I mean, that is something that you need to pray about. It needs to be uncomfortable, whatever it is. It's like fasting from something that is not a pleasure to you is kind of pointless. I don't like peanut butter. Fasting from peanut butter is not difficult for me.

Annie: Right, right. You're not fasting from dating apps. That does not change your life.

Darren: I mean, when we talk about fasting, we start out every year in our church where we take the first 21 days-

Annie: I literally was just thinking that. I thought, I bet he is fresh eating.

Darren: That's right, yeah. Food is so good right now.

Annie: That's right.

Darren: So yeah, so we take the first 21 days and so we talk about it a lot. There are people who join our church and this has never been part of their tradition to be fasting. In fact, it kind of seems strange and weird and what's next? Dancing with snakes or something?

So we want to educate people and we invite people to engage at whatever level is going to be helpful for them. I think traditionally, a fast, like a biblical fast is about food. So people can certainly fast from other things, but a biblical fast is about food.

Getting into the digital fast, what is interesting is that people use digital technology in similar ways to soothe than they use food. So sometimes someone's feeling anxious or they're feeling afraid, or they're feeling shame, they go and eat. Because it's pleasure, and it makes you feel better. You distract yourself with something that feels pleasurable.

Well, we are now in an era where people are substituting food for phone. And the minute that you feel afraid, ashamed, anxious, you can just pull out your phone and start doom scrolling on Insta reels and forget all your problems.

Annie: That's right. I was at a doctor's appointment yesterday. I was nervous. And literally, I could have kept reading your book or played Tetris. And I played Tetris.

Darren: Which could be more about how not compelling my book is.

Annie: No, no, that is the opposite. That is not what I'm saying at all. It is purely, as I kept reading your book, I was being challenged and I was afraid and I wanted to be soothed. And then I thought, what am I doing? I am playing Tetris at a doctor's office because I'm afraid.

That can be true for anything we decide to fast for Lent. But my invitation to our friends and my invitation to you, one of the reasons I wanted you here, is what would it look like for our That Sounds Fun friends to really embrace a digital fast? That is your book. So they can get that today, start reading it. You've got two days till Lent technically starts. Also, if you listen to this on Friday, you have not missed Lent.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: For Pete's sake, jump in.

Darren: Jump in.

Annie: This is for all of our Enneagram Ones. Start when you want to start. You are fine.

Darren: Exactly. You're good.

Annie: You're fine.

Darren: Join us.

Annie: You've got 46 days. You could actually throw away six of them.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: So good luck.

[00:25:39] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [Shopify](#). What's the thing you love to create that you've been dreaming about selling and turning into a business? Maybe it's prints or jewelry or handmade soaps. Whatever your thing is, I hope you know Shopify is the best tool to help you get your business off the ground.

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Sponsor: Have you ever walked into someone's house and immediately had to know what candle they're burning? Listen, that is going to happen when you burn today's sponsor of the show, [The NOTES Candles](#). They're on a mission to help eliminate single-use candle vessels and give us a more earth-friendly option, but without having to give up on a beautiful, high-quality fragrance.

Here's what I've learned. The candle industry has a major problem. Almost two billion candles are sold globally each year. Almost all of them are likely to end up in landfills for the next one million years. But we all want our homes and offices to smell great, right? So there has to be a better way.

NOTES has created a refillable candle system that allows you to use your candle vessel again and again. The candles are made with fragranced wax beads. So all you do is place the wick in your reusable NOTES jar, fill it up with the wax beads, enjoy your fragrance for up to 36 hours, and then just do it all over again when you're ready for a new one.

And their collection of 13 fragrances are handcrafted by fragrance experts. I've been loving the smell of the Santal and Atlas Cedar, y'all. I mean, my goodness. Be a responsible consumer while not giving up high-quality home fragrance by making the switch to NOTES.

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Okay, now back to continue our conversation with Darren.

[00:28:29] <music>

Annie: Why a digital fast? And does that mean nothing? If you're asking us to digitally fast, are we like not opening our phones?

Darren: It's a great question. I encourage people to think about their smartphone through the lens of looking at the apps through the lens of distraction versus utility. What are the apps that are a distraction to you?

Now generally the distraction apps are things like social media, news apps, games, email, the apps that become wormholes of distraction for you. These are the apps that when you're pulling up at the lights and you have three seconds to spare, you just open it and you just start scrolling.

Annie: Why do I do that? It's awful.

Darren: It's because they're available all the time.

Annie: And there's no bottom. It doesn't run out.

Darren: That's right. So the idea of a digital fast is not that you don't use a digital device at all. Some people can do that. But you want to dumb down your phone where you only have utility apps. So utility apps are things like texting and calling the weather app or your camera or using maps to get somewhere. No one is opening the maps app and doom scrolling for 45 minutes, right?

Annie: Right.

Darren: And if you're traveling somewhere and you need to use your app to be able to get on the plane, no one's opening Southwest and getting sucked into a wormhole of distraction. So not all apps are created equal. Not all apps are distractions.

But the ones that are, we would encourage people, even something like Safari, to take that off your phone. If you have an iPhone, so you can delete apps. If you have an iPhone, you can't delete Safari. So the best way to do that is to go into Screen Time, and then you can actually make it invisible.

Basically what happens is that there's nothing cool and shiny on your phone anymore. And you or what people end up doing is they end up opening it and realizing, Oh, there's nothing cool to look at, and then putting it down.

Annie: Tell me, what is it doing to us? What are the phones doing to us?

Darren: Well, I think that we are going to look back in this time in history and we're going to see that we slowly adopted a piece of technology. It seeped its way into our lives. The iPhone was launched in 2007. There was no App Store. So there was no social media. None of the vortexes of distraction existed to begin with.

But what has happened is we are burying our attention in these glowing rectangles at the sacrifice of every other significant relationship, basically. So I'm talking about your relationship with yourself. People generally are less in touch with how they're feeling about something and exploring what those feelings are, processing what those feelings are in a healthy and ongoing manner, because we cover that over with looking at cat videos, right?

It also impacts your relationship with other people. And if you're a parent... I mean every parent, at different points has had this surge of shame. Like, what am I doing? I'm looking at this at the expense of my children who want my attention. No parent wants to do that.

I talk about this in the book, but I was watching my daughter play volleyball several months ago, and I walked in up on the bleachers, every single parent was on their phone. Not a couple, like everyone. You know, it's like fast food, right? You're tempted to eat it and then afterwards you go, what am I doing with my life? And you feel ashamed and you feel like you don't feel well.

So it's impacting our relationship with ourselves, it's impacting our relationship with others, and it's certainly impacting our relationship with God. We have all but chased out discretionary time. We've chased out all the gaps in our lives where we're asking the Holy Spirit to speak, where we're trying to pay attention to something that He is wanting us to pay attention to. Instead, we are fixated on triviality. We're just looking at junk.

Annie: When I tell you I had to throw my phone across the room where I read and pray in the morning, because I was like, what are you doing? What are you doing? You only have 30 minutes of your whole day to sit here and read your Bible and pray, and you're on Instagram?" And I threw it across the room and immediately thought, "I should just go pick it up." And I was like, girl, you have got a problem. You've got a problem. That one day, I left it. I don't leave it every day, but that one day I left it because I thought, Darren, there is something here that is stronger than me. What is it? Is it demonic? It's not demonic. Is it demonic?

Darren: I think it could be demonic. At least I think it can be used in a demonic way.

Annie: Is the pull toward it a demonic pull?

Darren: Well, I think that there's a couple of theological things, right?

Annie: You're like, Annie, we didn't set up for this.

Darren: This is the way I think about this. You know, the enemy's playbook in John 10:10, the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. These devices are doing all of those things. They are literally killing. The suicide rates, the research is in. There was a sense of, is there a correlation between depression, anxiety, suicide, and these devices? It used to be, is there? Now it is absolutely conclusive. Particularly for teenage girls. Teenage girls are the ones that are suffering the most.

Annie: I can't imagine.

Darren: The enemy's coming to kill, he's coming to steal your time.

Annie: He steals my time. I let him.

Darren: And he's destroying relationships, destroying sexuality with pornography. So yeah, I think the enemy's playbook is steal, kill, and destroy. I think the other thing is, and it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, right? You've got the very, very original temptation is you can be like God.

Now, what are the attributes of God? God is omniscient. He's all-powerful. Think about what these phones give us the ability to do. As Andy Crouch says, they give us magic. We can do these things. We can start and stop things. We can control all these things. We have power.

Omnipresence. It gives us, you know... like I can text my brother in Australia and in an instant he has it. I can take a photograph and say, This is what I'm doing right now. It's like our actual geography has never been less relevant in this time in history than now. And then... What did I say? Omniscient, omnipresent, and omniscient, all knowing. And with Google, we have access to all of this information.

Now, what I see is this is the original temptation. You can be like God. So these devices, which we carry with us all the time, they're like an extension of our bodies, are giving us this temptation to these three attributes. And what is the outcome? The end of every day, you feel utterly exhausted and depleted, and your concentration span is shrinking. It's like, you try to be God, how's it working out for you?

So these things are having a detrimental impact on us, and there is this appetite for us to be like God. And it goes all the way back to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

Annie: It is. Some co-workers and I were talking the other day, and being fresh back from Rwanda, I'm still not sleeping normally yet. And we were saying, one of the other girls said, I woke up in the middle of night, and the number one thing I said to myself is, don't touch your phone. And then I did. And then I did. And then I was awake. And I was thinking back to even... I mean, 2007 is not that long ago, Darren.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: That I would read a magazine before I went to bed. Or I'd read a book. And I wouldn't talk to my friends. I wouldn't have messages waiting on me when I woke up. It may have been you who said this to me first, but this idea that we just adopt the updates to our phones and we adopt the new phones and we never think about it.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: We just go, yeah, "I'll take the new phone. I need the new phone." We don't ever think about what we have agreed to or what hasn't been tested or proven.

Darren: That's right.

Annie: And as soon as I say it to you, I go, but what's the option there? We can't all be Dave Clayton and have a flip phone.

Darren: That's right. I respect that about Dave so much.

Annie: I do too, I do too.

Darren: The first thing that I encourage people to do in a digital fast, the first thing is do not have your phone by your bed at night. So many people, 80 something percent of people, the last thing that they touch before they go to sleep, the first thing they reach for in the morning when they wake up is their phone. This is not a healthy way to live. Have a place for your phone that is not in your bedroom, that is not by your bed.

Annie: So talk to the single people too. If it's not in my bedroom, that is a long way to go if someone breaks into my house. And I don't have another person and I don't have a gun. So can I put it in my bedroom and just put it across the room?

Darren: I think if it is a matter of security for you, then just don't have it within reaching distance. Because the temptation is just so great.

Annie: Do you feel that too? As like a pastor who runs a lot of churches, you still feel that temptation?

Darren: Of course.

Annie: Okay, great. That makes me feel better.

Darren: In fact, there are certain times that I get sucked into reading stuff and all of that, and I'm like, gosh, I wrote a book on this. I'm as bad as anyone at this. It's a little bit like an alcoholic. If an alcoholic was trying to get free from alcohol, and yet they carried a bottle of bourbon with them all the time. You can be strong a lot, but you're not going to be strong all the time.

Annie: And the difference is too, is so many of these apps are literally... I can't remember who... someone just said this at a presentation I watched. And they said, there are people so much smarter than you who spend their whole days trying to make apps irresistible.

Darren: Oh, that is absolutely true.

Annie: So we have a force pushing against us just within human to human of these brilliant people going, no, we want you to spend \$2.99 in order to keep playing this game. They're spending their lives trying to keep us on our phones.

Darren: There is a strategy that is used by particularly social media called variable ratio schedule.

Annie: Oh, I've never heard this. Now, this is the same strategy that is used by slot machines in Las Vegas.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Darren: And even the refresh is the same movement.

Annie: It is the same movement. [wowie zowie] That's horrible to hear.

Darren: I know. What's interesting about it is that it's addictive, not because it's predictable, because it's unpredictable. You don't know what's coming next. Now, of course, it has been curated to be basically exploiting your individual weakness. What are the

things that you like doom scrolling on the most? And we'll give you just tons of those. But it is a variable. Like you don't know what is coming next. So there's just this insatiable appetite to refresh again, just like a slot machine and you're pulling the arm on the slot machine, is the very next one the one where I win.

Annie: Right. Which is why you can't ever put it down.

Darren: That's why you can't put it down. Until at some point you throw it across the room and you're like, what am I doing?

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Everybody can be on whatever apps they want to be on. I'm not talking about anybody else's phone. I'm talking about my phone. I could not keep TikTok. And we don't do things on TikTok because I was not sleeping. I was getting the video that says, "Hey, do you want to take a break from TikTok? Because you've been here a really long time." And I was like, "I have no self-control in this app because it is always feeding me something else I want. I can't have it." Because I have no self-control, I have no app.

Darren: I'm telling you that TikTok is crack.

Annie: Yeah, it felt like it.

Darren: TikTok is crack.

Annie: That is wild.

Darren: TikTok stands apart from other apps in terms of its addictive nature. What's crazy is that we as grown adults have a difficult time putting restrictions or not just being completely absorbed in this. What's it like for a 14-year-old?

Annie: I cannot fathom. I know.

Darren: On TikTok, you know?

Annie: I'm thankful that God saw fit to make me an adult at the time that He offered TikTok. I'm not tough enough to have been a teenager with all this. I'm not. I mean, when people get the book, this is a big part of... I mean, it's the entire digital fast, the guide to it. But there are like four real steps within the 40 days. I think people need to hear the same happens when you fast food, the same happens when you fast TV. There is like a withdrawal thing that happens. There's gonna be some real emotions that happen when we go through a 40-day fast from our phone, kind of dumbing our phone down.

The other thing I've heard you teach on is moving everything off your homepage. If you can't delete it, just get it out of when you open your phone, it's just not there. So the things you can't delete, move them and screen time them down to zero. Warn us a little bit about what we're going to experience emotionally.

Darren: So the 40-day fast breaks down into four 10-day increments. The first is detach, and this is the idea that you are deliberately going to try to detach yourself from being connected to this all the time. What you will notice is that you have this reflex of... at least most people have a reflex, like it is subconscious. And it often comes from a utility to begin with, right?

So you're like, you're getting dressed and you're like, what's the weather? So you grab your phone to look at the weather and that's a utility function.

Annie: But then-

Darren: But then-

Annie: That's what I do, Darren.

Darren: ...involuntarily, you just like, "I wonder what's going on on Instagram?" Except you don't even have that thought. You just do it.

Annie: You just touch it.

Darren: You just do it with your thumb. And then before you know it, you are scrolling through triviality. So detaching is the first part. And when you start to remove all of the things that are distraction apps from your phone... It's a funny experience to try to distract yourself and have nothing interesting on your phone to distract yourself with. It's actually really great. I tell you, 100% of people who have done this are glad they did it. No one looks back and goes, you know, I really wish that I'd spent a few more hours doom-scrolling on Insta stories. No one regrets it.

Annie: No. No.

Darren: When you ask people if they've ever done a digital detox or a fast or something, almost everyone says this. No, but I've always wanted to. I've always thought I should.

Annie: I thought I should, yes.

Darren: So people have this sense of doing it.

Annie: So it's okay if in those first 10 days we feel like a detox feeling, like, this feels weird, I'm accidentally hitting the button and I don't even want... I mean that's one of my Sabbath problems is I'll pick up my phone on my Sabbath to change to a different audiobook and I'm like, "Instagram is not available to you, ma'am. This is your day off this week." But I touch it before I realize it. That's why I have my screen time down to zero, because then I get an embarrassed little, like, nope, timer turns over.

Darren: Exactly. So you've got to try to detach. You've got to break the subconscious cycle of just hitting these apps all the time and then numbing out and looking at all of these things. So the first 10 days is detach. The next 10 days is discover. And you will start to discover all kinds of things. This is so funny.

I interviewed a professor who has done extensive study on all of this. And she was talking about, we have to reclaim the idea of monotasking.

Annie: Versus whole time.

Darren: Yeah. And that is doing one thing at a time. And when you do that, there's all kinds of things that you notice and pay attention to. So you have this discovery process.

Last year when we were doing the fast the first time as a church, my 13-year-old daughter said, "I'm going to jump on the trampoline, Daddy, come watch me." So I didn't have my phone. That's the other thing that happens when you're doing this is instead of carrying it around all the time, you like put it in a drawer at home and not have it with you. What a crazy idea!

So I go outside and it is 71 degrees, the sun is about to set, I'm barefooted and I step on my grass and I just feel the texture of the grass under my feet. And then I can hear my daughter giggling. The air just smelled sweet. The sky was starting to change colors. There was this gentle breeze. And I'm watching my daughter and I'm fully present. And I have this conscious thought, This is a better life. This is a better life. This is better than staring at a glowing rectangle. So one of the things that I also did is I moved my phone to grayscale.

Annie: Homer says to do that in the hurry book. And it is terrible.

Darren: It's terrible. But here's what's amazing about it is that what flies through my brain every time I look at my phone when it's on grayscale is the world is in full color.

Annie: Wow.

Darren: And this is not the world.

Annie: Wow. I have never thought about that.

Darren: So why am I staring at something that is not the world when high def, full color world is around me?

Annie: One of our staff girls goes to Church of the City, and last year that is what she did when y'all did the digital fast. And she would be like, pictures aren't even fun to look at. I don't even scroll through my pictures, because they're all grayscale.

Darren: So you're purposely trying to make your phone look less addictive, less attractive. So anytime you can put some of these disciplines, these guards in place, it just helps you live the kind of life you want to live. So the second 10 days is discover, the third 10 days is delight.

And what generally happens is you get 20 something days into this, you're doing what I said earlier, this is a better life. And instead of it feeling reluctant or I'm being strong, it feels preferable. You don't feel like you're missing out, you feel like you're actually enjoying it, you're being more present. And then the final 10 day movement is determined.

And the idea is, when I am coming off of this 40 days, what am I bringing back? And what is my new digital rule of life going to be? I use in the book the analogy of Marie Kondo when she's cleaning out closets, she holds up a piece of clothing and asks the question, does this spark joy?

So when you're coming out of this and you're considering what apps am I going to put back on my phone, is Instagram going to spark joy or not? And what I would encourage people to consider is things like social media, don't have them on your phone.

And I'm not saying don't ever go on social media, but have an alternative place where you visit. So it's a laptop, a desktop, a dedicated iPad that's in your house. And the only time you're going to engage on social media is when you go and you do it in that particular place. It's the difference between having it with you in your back pocket all the time.

Same thing's true of email. And not everyone can do this with their job. But I removed email from my phone when we were doing this fast, and that created the most amount of anxiety personally inside of me, because I just thought, man, I get so much email, I don't think I can manage it. It's going to take over if I'm not checking it 40 times a day.

And that's not true. What do you get on email? You get some spam, you get some stuff that's like an FYI and you can delete it, you get some newsletters. And then you get a few important emails. But instead of checking it 40 times a day, I checked it like twice a day. And all the things I wanted to delete, I just highlighted at one time and deleted them.

Annie: My signature on my emails say, I don't have email on my phone, I will get back to you when I'm back at my computer. And people mention that all the time in my email.

Darren: All the time.

Annie: They're like, wow, you don't have email on your phone? Now, currently, when I'm flying every weekend, I do have email on my phone because I need to be able to look up my thing and what if something goes wrong?

Darren: That is exactly what I found.

Annie: Because everybody thinks it isn't on there, I don't ever look at it either.

Darren: Well, I found when I was traveling, it was difficult to not have email on my phone. It's difficult to pull open your laptop and look up an email. But I got so good at understanding the tools on iPhone, I could turn my email on and it would appear and I could just turn it off again and then it's completely invisible. So I'm not even tempted to look at it because the icon is not on my phone.

[00:51:08] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about one of our amazing partners, [Liquid IV](#). Staying in a good routine with hydration is easier during the week, right? Yeah, I know. I keep a water bottle right here with Liquid IV in it by my side all day at the office, here at my desk. But the weekends, that's when things can go off the rails a little bit, right? But it's just because there are so many fun things to do, you guys. I just easily forget to stay hydrated.

But again, this is where Liquid IV comes in. If I just put one stick in my water bottle, it has three times the electrolytes of the leading sports drink, plus eight vitamins and nutrients for everyday wellness. Liquid IV hydrates two times faster than water alone. Plus, there's no artificial sweeteners, zero sugar, and it is also non-GMO and free from gluten, dairy, and soy.

Weekends are for lots of fun, so have a game plan with Liquid IV. Grab your Liquid IV Hydration Multiplier sugar-free in bulk nationwide at Costco, or you can get

20% off your first order when you go to liquidiv.com and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout. That's 20% off your first order when you shop Superior Hydration today using the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at liquidiv.com.

Sponsor: Okay, friends, people ask me all the time for a Bible recommendation. So I cannot wait to tell you today about the [NIV Quest Study Bible](#). Hand to heaven, it is the Bible I have been using since 1995, which is a very long time ago.

It is a unique study Bible with notes written in question-and-answer format, the only question-and-answer Bible. It is so helpful for me. I love it so much. There's over 7,000 notes, 350 different articles, and it gives insight into the common, uncommon, and sometimes perplexing passages in the Bible.

The questions are sourced from real people by Zondervan and Christianity Today, and it highlights the top 100 questions asked by readers. There are reading plans and charts and maps. You guys, it is so fun. Truly, it is such a fun Bible that keeps my curiosity high for the last, what's the math of this, 29 years? For a very long time this Bible... is that math right? Yes. That's wild. I mean, it has kept my curiosity high for 29 years in the same Bible.

You can get it in regular or personal size, and the editions are available for teens and kids as well. Just visit amazon.com/queststudybible. I think you're really going to love it. Again, that's amazon.com/queststudybible.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Darren.

[00:53:48] <music>

Annie: Let's talk for just a second about what if it is part of your work? That is one of the hardest things for me, Darren, is Instagram and Facebook are a big part of my work. So for Lent, I can't give up Instagram. I can't. I can. I have things I'm responsible to during the season. So talk to us about, is there a way to, when you're at work, do this? Hear the hours, make some... like, is there a medium spice versus hot versus ghost pepper of getting rid of the whole thing?

Darren: Well, of course, everyone's job is different. I'm not suggesting that you neglect all responsibilities for 40 days.

Annie: That'd be fun, though.

Darren: It would be fun. You've got to come up with a way where it works for you. So restricting it to work hours is one way of doing that. This guy in our church who's

really an expert on screen time and all the different controls on a smartphone. And his whole thing is don't make your smartphone dumb, make your smartphone smarter. So he has all of his geo-tagged where he walks into his house and all these apps don't work anymore.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Darren: It's really incredible in the way he does it. So there are certain ways you could do it like that. My whole thing is what is healthy for you? I'm not even suggesting that you need to not go on social media for 40 days. What I would try if it's possible for people is to not have it on your phone. That's the only difference.

So if Instagram and getting messages and promoting things and all of that is part of your job and part of your world, then for 40 days only do that on your computer. It's about having access. It's about coming up with a way where technology is put into a healthy place. This is not an anti-technology message here.

It is that all of us feel this low-grade sense of shame that this is taking over my life and I don't have a healthy relationship with it. I'm not suggesting that you smash your phone with a hammer. I'm suggesting that you redefine your relationship with it. And you have these boundaries, you have this way of interacting where it becomes healthy in how you consume this technology.

Annie: It is one of the reasons I have a work phone and a personal phone. Though it's a little bit of a privilege I make some choices in other areas of my life to be able to have two phones. But my work phone is a tiny computer. That's where my email is when I'm traveling. It's where everything is. And on Sabbath, I don't touch that phone. So that's how I found to separate it, is I have a tiny computer and I have a phone.

And one of them is needed for work and one of them is personal. So when I catch myself holding my work computer, my work phone, on my couch at 8 p.m., I'm like, oh, we need to have a conversation with ourselves.

Darren: Yeah, you're violating one of the guidelines that you've put in for yourself.

Annie: Yes, yes, that's right.

Darren: I mean, you have a more developed plan than most people do. I mean, most people have lost the sense of boundaries between work life and personal life.

Annie: Well, it's because I'm so bad at it, Darren, is the truth. It is so addicting to me. Will you talk for just a second? The reason I'm bad at it, (a) is Enneagram 7's love all of

anything. So give me all. Give me all the internet. I will watch all of it. I will read all of it. Just give me all.

Also, I don't live with anyone. I'm not in love with someone who I share a house with that we watch shows together. I don't have kids that I'm chasing around or that are in bed, and I also want to go to bed. So to me, I've said this before on the show, but there are nights where I fall asleep and my phone hits my face because I'd rather that happen than be lonely.

How do we fast and deal with our loneliness? And I'm sure that's true for married people, too. There's a lot of single friends listening who go, like, after 7 p.m., after 8 p.m., when I'm home for dinner, am I just supposed to sit in a quiet house for four hours?

Darren: That's a very fair perspective. One thing that I noticed when we did this as a church, and I didn't see this coming, so this is something we discovered as we did it. Social scientists call our relationship with digital technology a collective action problem. And what that is, is we all know that these digital devices are having a detrimental impact on our mental health. But none of us want to opt out because we don't want to be left out. We don't want to have FOMO. So there's something quite extraordinary about an entire community doing this together.

Annie: Together, yeah. Which is why I love this book, because y'all ran the whole play last year.

Darren: We ran it.

Annie: You did it. I've spoken at Church of the City downtown during the digital fast.

Darren: Yeah, that's right. You did.

Annie: So I've lived this with y'all. And then you went, hey, we've tested this, now here's the book.

Darren: Well, we had a lot of churches who were reaching out going, We want to do something like this. How do we do it? There is something so powerful in a community doing it together. And it becomes this shared experience. So I would encourage... in the example that you're citing, it might be for this 40-day period where you're doing something like this, there are other people that you're deliberately increasing the amount of hang time that you're doing together because you're all on this fast together. It's a shared experience.

What I loved about this is that it brought this conversation to the forefront. I have three teenage daughters. My daughters have a phone each. Their phones are really locked down. They don't have Safari and a lot of different things, but they have a phone nonetheless. And instead of them being resentful about us doing it, all their friends were doing it as well. We almost gamified the whole thing.

Annie: It was our lunch conversation last year. We would talk about it once or twice a week here at the office because we have a couple of Church of the Cityers. So it was all over town.

Darren: It was all over town. And there were schools. So I really loved that. But certainly for this 40-day fast, and the thing that I love about having a measured amount of time is that these issues are really overwhelming. You kind of go like, where do we even begin? The way you can begin is actually by doing it fast. And you get to sort of reboot everything and then decide what are you going to do on the other side of this?

Annie: We have talked so much about all the detrimental parts of this. The question that keeps coming to my mind that I would love for you to give us the like here's why, is what could happen with God in these 40 days if we did a digital fast? What's the win here? What could happen?

Darren: So the digital fast is not just about putting something down, it is really picking up something as well. It is prioritizing a collection of spiritual practices that we lay out in the book of really trying to hear the voice of God. And whenever you take a measured amount of time, a focused amount of time to really be seeking God, it just creates this opportunity to be hearing God's voice like you don't ordinarily hear when you're living a life of distraction and fast pace and busyness and all of that.

So this is a 40-day guide where we are asking questions and as you are detaching from your phone, asking some of these deeper questions. Again, what I love about it is you're doing it with your friends or your family or other people that you're in church with. Even if it's hard, it's hard as a community. You're doing it together. I'm definitely detoxing right now, and people feel that.

Annie: We did a 21-day fast at Georgia at the Wesley Foundation every fall. And it was like, oh, I can do this because they're all doing this. I remember a girlfriend and I both did Daniel fast one year. And we went to Ryan's Steakhouse and just demolished the salad bar. But we were together because we both knew we were eating fruits and vegetables for 21 days. So it worked out great.

Darren: So to the people who've always wanted to do a digital fast but never get around to it, when a church says, here's the date, here's the time, here's how we're going to do

it, you get all of these people that consider doing it at some point, go, all right, it's time. And it's been really, really beautiful.

Annie: It was beautiful.

Darren: And what's been amazing, and I didn't see this coming either, but people have taken on permanent habits afterwards. So, for me, I didn't put social media back on my phone. And because I was asking myself the question, does Instagram produce joy in me? And it doesn't. And it doesn't mean that I'm never on Instagram, but it's not on my phone. So there are just less things that are going to suck me into the vortex of my glowing rectangle now that I don't have social media on my phone.

Annie: I've done that. Pastor Kevin gave a whopper of a convicting sermon a couple of weeks ago about being distracted, and I turned off all that. I only was watching maybe 15 people's stories of the people I follow. I turned them all off. And I've been like, I am missing out on some things. There are things I don't know.

Darren: There is FOMO.

Annie: And also, no one has called my phone and said, hey, you really missed something that you'll never learn again. I've learned everything. I just have had more time. I've read a book in this month that I don't know that I'd have read otherwise.

So I'm thinking out loud for our friends in the Single Purpose League, this will be a conversation we have in Single Purpose League about if you're unmarried, if you're living alone, or if you have roommates but you go to your own room by yourself, How do we do this well? How do we do this well? So that we will continue that conversation for that particular group in Single Purpose League. So I think it matters.

Darren: One final thing that I would say about this is that I don't think that there is anything wrong with, even during a digital fast, for you to be Face Timing with a friend at night.

Annie: Certainly.

Darren: Like if you're feeling lonely, instead of doom scrolling on social media, call a friend and chat to a friend, chat to a human being, invite someone over, hang out. There are alternatives. I'm not suggesting that you just white knuckle it and just be alone and stare at the wall. There are healthy human interactions for you to be able to step into.

Annie: This will be my last question. When we get to Easter... I remember my most intense Lent a couple of years ago, I got to Saturday night and we had a service at Cross Point and I sobbed because I didn't want it to be over.

Darren: Wow.

Annie: And I was very ready to reintroduce what was not in my life, but I was like, "Wait, Wait, I'm not sure I'm ready." Like, what God and I had established in my lack, I was not ready to give up. So when we get to Easter, whether we've accidentally opened Instagram on a day that we didn't mean to or we doom-scrolled for two whole days, and then went, I'm back, I'm back, I'm back, I'm going to be up. What are we going to call a win on Easter if we've done a digital fast for Lent?

Darren: Well, I think you certainly have to ask yourself the question, when you've had a palate cleanser, you certainly want to ask the question, what do I want to bring back? Not doing a digital detox. Let's just load it back up again.

Annie: Like we never left.

Darren: And that happens. There are many people who will say, you know, after I've done the digital fast, I'm shocked at how quickly I can get sucked back into it again. So what we've said at our church is we want to do this every year.

Annie: Oh, so y'all are doing it again this year too?

Darren: Every year. We're going to make this a part of our annual rhythm because we need to do that. These are highly addictive pieces of technology.

Annie: So will you teach through it again this year too?

Darren: Yes.

Annie: Oh, great. So our friends can get the book, have *The Digital Fast* book, but then also pay attention to Church of the City and listen through your teaching. We're going to be teaching through it again. I got a bunch of new research that I've found as I was preparing to write this book. I'm more convinced than ever, honestly.

Annie: Okay. So a win on Easter is you aren't automatically wishing for a detox.

Darren: There will be some ongoing things for you. I ended up putting email back on my phone, but I did not put social media back on my phone. So there were some things. I put news back on my phone. I could probably take news off my phone, honestly. And I definitely will when we're doing the fast again.

But the social media thing for me, I don't feel FOMO with that anymore. I miss some people's birthdays and I don't know when someone's on vacation some of the specific things that they saw. My brain is less cluttered, honestly. But I don't feel this sense of I'm depriving myself. I'm actually joyfully not having Instagram and social media on my phone. But everyone's got to work out what is right for them. And different jobs require different access as a result of that.

Annie: Okay. That's great. It feels like a real gift. Here we are on Monday thinking about, we don't have to make a decision until Wednesday or Tuesday. Technically, the way we always did Ash Wednesday was when you got to church Wednesday night for Wednesday night supper, and then you went and got the ashes, now you're going. Now you've started.

Darren: It's done.

Annie: So until you get the ashes, you're good. But we've got 48-ish hours from when we're hearing this to get the book. It's on Amazon, so we can just go straight on. Get the book, get rolling, get our people involved and kind of go like, what would a win be for me at the end of this?

Darren: Yes.

Annie: Because to me, I'm like, I would like to read a whole book over Lent.

Darren: That's great.

Annie: That I may not have read otherwise.

Darren: In the book, I've got a whole list of different things that you could, goals that you can set and some different things that you can be like... the time that you are going to free up in your life, what do you want to do with that? And there's a list of things that you can do as a result of having a lot more discretionary time as well.

Annie: Okay, Darren, thank you. Thanks for doing this.

Darren: Thanks for having me.

Annie: Oh my gosh, what a gift and what an interesting invitation for this year. I mean, it's just an experiment. Who could we be in 40 days if we tried this?

Darren: And if pastors are interested about doing something like this with their church in the future, you can go to thedigitalfast.com.

Annie: Okay, we'll link to that.

Darren: And then there is a way to bulk order the books as well, if you want to do that, and so then you can guide your whole church through it.

Annie: Brilliant.

Darren: You can give the books away, you can sell them or do whatever you want.

Annie: Okay, brilliant. And there's other resources there, so we can all dig in on that. Thank you for that. That is so helpful. So for any of our friends, whether they're digital fasting or they're gonna put away... they're gonna stop, they're gonna pray during lunch and not eat lunch straight, will you just kind of pray for us as we start Lent? Lent can be such an intensely somber season, as it should be, because we're walking toward Easter. But will you just pray for us as we go into Lent?

Darren: Yeah, let's pray. So God, as we enter this season of Lent, I pray that You would give us eyes to see, You would give us ears to hear, that You would turn up Your voice, that You would make Your presence particularly known. And I pray that You would guide us as we decide how we are going to be engaging in this very, very sacred season.

I pray that it would not just whiz by us with busyness and distraction, but that we would live very intentionally, that we would be preparing our hearts, that we would be growing in gratitude, that we would be focusing deliberately time where we would be prioritizing listening to Your voice. And as we remember the ultimate price that was paid, the life and death of Jesus on the cross, and then the victory of the resurrection. I pray that it would be fresh and new and real in our lives and in our hearts this season of Lent and this Easter. And we offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Annie: Amen.

[01:10:45] <music>

Outro: Okay, you guys, isn't he great? I'm dying to know what you are thinking after talking through this digital fast. First of all, make sure you grab the book, get your copy of *The Digital Fast* and go follow Darren on social media, tell him thanks for being on the show.

And if you're in Single Purpose League, we want to talk about this over there today. Let's talk about what healthy boundaries with our phones look like for our season of

life. It may look a little different if you live alone or in bed alone or having a different life than some of our married friends. That's one of the reasons Single Purpose League exists. We're going to have that conversation over there today.

If you're not already a member of Single Purpose League, but you are unmarried, come and join us. Just head over to patreon.com/anniefdowns. We'll have that link in the show notes. But all singles are welcome, so we can talk about what does this look like for us.

If you have any questions, no matter married or single from this episode, drop them in the Q & A box in your Spotify app if that's where you're listening, or send them over to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfun podcast. We'll try to answer them over there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Well, between two cities. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook recording this in New York city, but you're going to hear it when I'm back in Nashville. Anywhere you need, you guys, that is how you can find me, Annie F. Downs.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out and do something that sounds fun to you, and I will do the same. Let's see, what sounds fun to me today? I mean, y'all know I love Lent. So prepping for Lent, figuring out what is right for me and my boundaries with my phone over the next 40-plus days. It actually sounds really fun to me. That's what's on my to-do.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with true Instagram podcast sensation, someone a lot of you love and has a lot of thoughts we're going to talk about. We'll be back here on Thursday with Tim Ross. We'll see y'all then.