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**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. This show is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). From the outside, we may look at other people's relationships of any kind and think they are easy and effortless, and we all know that is not true. For everyone, relationships take time, effort, and communication. It can be really hard, right?

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**Annie:** 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 want 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, 15% off of anything at [shopanniefdowns.com](https://shopanniefdowns.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/AnnieFDowns](https://Patreon.com/AnnieFDowns) to learn more about it and come and join us. That's [Patreon.com/AnnieFDowns](https://Patreon.com/AnnieFDowns).

**Intro:** Today on the show, I get to talk with my new friend who y'all already know and love, Savannah Guthrie. Y'all, Savannah is an Emmy winner, an Edward R. Murrow Award winner, and the co-host of the Today Show. And tomorrow, her first nonfiction memoir comes out. It is called *Mostly What God Does*. You guys, this book, this book is so good.

I read it so fast. I loved it. I was so impressed with her vulnerability, her honesty, her forwardness about her relationship with Jesus. I just, yeah, deeply impressed. She opens up about her faith and her life and challenges and what God does, which is love us. It's just beautiful.

Okay, so I got to sit down with Savannah in New York at the Hephzibah House. You know, it's my favorite recording studio in New York City. We had the best time. So here is my conversation with my friend, Savannah Guthrie.

[00:04:06] <music>

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

**Savannah:** Oh, this sounds fun.

**Annie:** What a huge honor. Thank you for making time for this.

**Savannah:** I feel honored. I'm so happy to be on the podcast. I'm a fan.

**Annie:** Thank you. Mutual. We've been in the same place one time for a Jonathan Merritt book release party.

**Savannah:** Oh, yes.

**Annie:** Yes. And we share him. What a great friend.

**Savannah:** Jonathan Merritt is so brilliant, and kind, and thoughtful and he's an amazing human.

**Annie:** He's amazing. He's been such a gift in my New York life. Okay, so we start with what sounds fun to you. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Savannah:** Okay, right now what sounds fun is you and I, right after the podcast, go out and have a glass of wine and chat.

**Annie:** Oh, right. Wouldn't that be the dream?

**Savannah:** Doesn't that sound fun?

**Annie:** I mean, I would live for us to do that. We will do that at some point.

**Savannah:** Let's do it.

**Annie:** We will do it at some point.

**Savannah:** While you're in New York, you've got to do it.

**Annie:** It will be so fun. Okay, your new book, *Mostly What God Does*, comes out tomorrow when everyone's hearing this. How does that feel?

**Savannah:** Oh my gosh.

**Annie:** I mean, you're a New York Times bestseller, you have two kids' books out, but this is first your story.

**Savannah:** Yes, it feels really exciting, and vulnerable, and terrifying, and personal, and exhilarating, and hopeful, and raw, and emotional.

**Annie:** It is. It is all of those things.

**Savannah:** Is there an adjective limit?

**Annie:** No, keep going. No, it is all of those things. It feels like you have... My experience of reading your book is that you said, "I need to tell them all of it."

**Savannah:** Is that true? It's interesting to hear you say that. I think it's like, I have something good to say about God and I just really want to say it. Not that I need to say it or that God pressed me to say it or that I should say it, but that I just want to. I can't help it.

**Annie:** As I was reading it, one of my notes was, what is this gonna cost you to talk so openly about Jesus? I mean, you are a globally known newscaster and interviewer and star. You host the Thanksgiving Day Parade, Savannah. What is higher than that? But you're very open about your relationship with Jesus. Is this gonna cost you?

**Savannah:** I mean, I hope not. I can't say that I don't have some trepidation about just being so personal about anything. I mean, the main thing is that, yes, it's about Jesus. It's a Christian book. I hope that it's universally appealing. You know, it's not a book that's here to proselytize, per se. It's a book that I think is about... To me, it's like a call to be loved by God and to then love. And I hope that's universal and makes God and Christ appealing. That's my goal. Will it cost me? That remains to be seen. I can't say that that's not scary, but...

**Annie:** Did you measure that when you were writing? Did you think, man, I have a lot of friends who don't believe everything I believe. Should I change how I say this?

**Savannah:** No, I never did because I'm hoping that I'm saying in a way that even if you disagree with me... I'm assuming lots of people will disagree or think it's weird or... who knows what they'll think. But I just felt like I wanted to say it in a way that it's just me sharing what I've learned along the way, and not in any way that's designed to pressure or even to convince other than I think the experience of God is quite compelling, and the experience of being loved by God is really persuasive. And that has nothing to do with me.

And if you're my friend or my family, you already know all this about me. This is not a secret. I'm not like, well, turns out I have a tattoo on my belly button, you know?

**Annie:** Surprise, everybody.

**Savannah:** It's like, if you know me, you know this. And even in my public life, I mean, I've talked about my faith a lot. It always comes up. The New York Times did a profile on me a few years back, it ended up being a lot about God. It made me laugh when I looked at it and I thought, Well, I guess that's because I just... if you ask me anything, it just inevitably comes to that because it's such a humongous part of who I am. So here we are.

**Annie:** Here we are talking about it. I don't want to spoil the ending, but at the very end of the book, you talk about what your purpose is. And you narrow it down to one word. And you just said it three times.

**Savannah:** Did I? Oh, I didn't even notice.

**Annie:** I know, because it's so the center of your purpose of sharing. Like, I'm going to share. So many of our friends listening are trying to figure out what they're doing with their lives and like, what is my purpose? It's a new year, what am I going to do

with this year? Will you talk about the process of how you sorted out "share" as your word?

**Savannah:** Well, it's so funny because, you know, I write about this in the book, but I heard Oprah years ago talk about-

**Annie:** I got so tickled you said, "Call me" in the book.

**Savannah:** Yeah, I'm like, "Oprah, call me. Ringy dingy. We don't know each other, but we could be friends. Come to wine with us."

**Annie:** That's right. Oh, man.

**Savannah:** But she said that she thought about what her purpose was and I loved what she said. She said, "My purpose is to be a sweet inspiration." And I thought, "Gosh, that is so good. I would like that to be my purpose too." But you can't steal someone's purpose.

I don't know that I have a purpose that's for all time. Will this be my purpose in 20 years? Was that my purpose 30 years ago? I don't know. All I know is that right now I felt like I have something to share. I have something to tell that's a good word about God and how He loves us, and I would like to share that.

You know, sometimes I think, especially when you grow up in a certain kind of traditional Christian upbringing, there can be, or at least the way I received a lot of some teachings were kind of guilt-based or God put this on my heart, you know, this heavy-handed like I got to do this. And I could see people wondering like, After this big opportunity you've had at the Today Show, did you feel like you needed to or you were pushed to put this out?

The truth is, and this is in the book too, I mean, for most of my life... again, in my private relationships, everyone knows my faith, but it's not like something I was like out there trying. I wasn't trying to hide it, but I wasn't trying to have a cowboy hat that said it or a t-shirt or whatever. It was just like I was just going along.

So the person who's most surprised that I did this is me. And I did it not out of sense of obligation or duty, but out of joy and excitement. Like somehow God worked this miracle in me that when I was presented with the opportunity to write something about faith, I thought, "Well now that sounds interesting. Now that's something I could get excited about."

And I was passionate and alive and my ideas kept coming, and I kept writing things down, and it was this moment. And I really, all through the whole process, wasn't sure I was even going to do it.

**Annie:** Really?

**Savannah:** I wasn't even sure I was gonna... and I told the editor and the agent, "Nobody cash any checks," you know?

**Annie:** Hold the checks.

**Savannah:** "We may or may not end up with a book here."

**Annie:** That is so good, Savannah.

**Savannah:** "No promises". I mean, I did. I was like, you know, "I will try. I guarantee you. I'm a hard worker, I will work. I will try. But if at any time I feel like this isn't working or I felt that the Lord was saying, "no, no, no, Savannah, this isn't right," anything, I was ready to drop it at the... I would have been relieved, I'm sure. But I just kept going.

During that process, I would talk to friends or my husband or whoever, my mom, I'd say, yeah, "I'm writing this thing and I can't decide if it's going to end up being a book or if God just gave me this to do, because He's like, I know her, she needs a project, as an exercise to just be together and just to learn." The whole experience was so interesting and fruitful and revelatory. The experience of writing-

**Annie:** Did you write at home or did you write at your office?

**Savannah:** I wrote everywhere.

**Annie:** Really?

**Savannah:** I wrote at home, I wrote at the office, I wrote in the car driving from one place to another. I wrote at the kitchen table when I'm feeding the kids. My daughter, she's nine, she was eight then, she'd be like looking over my shoulder, "Can I read some of it, mom?" So I just did it. And I did it fast, which is crazy. You know books, they give you like two years, and I'm like, "Yeah, how about in four months?"

**Annie:** You're like, "I gotta get this out of me."

**Savannah:** It's like the journalism side. I like to be in daily journalism. I don't like having a long-term project. I don't like a deadline hanging over me. I like to go, it's done, you walk away, now we start fresh for the next day.

**Annie:** I get to read a lot of people's books, you do too, and one of the things I notice with celebrities when they write books is if they write it themselves, it's longer. And if they spoke it to someone else or co-wrote with someone, it's usually shorter. So when I got yours, I was like, "She wrote this. Savannah wrote this book."

**Savannah:** Oh, I wrote every word. But do you think it's long? Because my biggest stress was I don't have enough to write. I don't have enough words.

**Annie:** No, you did it. I don't think it's too long. I think it is substantial to say to people, I'm not doing this because you see me on TV and I wanted a product.

**Savannah:** Oh, heck no.

**Annie:** That's right. And those show themselves. Those books... You know. You read them too. Those books show themselves.

**Savannah:** I just wanted to write a good book. And when I say good, I don't even mean because it's... you know, I'm no literary savant, you know?

**Annie:** It's very good, though. It's funny. It's great.

**Savannah:** I try to write the way I talk. It's very me, for better or for worse. It's very me. A little irreverent, kind of wacky. But I want to write a good book that does justice to what I'm trying to say and what I'm trying to share.

**Annie:** I mean, it's amazing. It's incredible to watch how your purpose, that you don't get there till the end of the book, because that's where the section is on purpose. And you go, oh, this whole thing was her living her purpose and everything I watch is her living her purpose. She just bamboozled me and didn't tell me till the end.

**Savannah:** I didn't know until the end. I didn't know how it was going to end. And it made me laugh when I realized that it is truly the word I put in for my wordle starter every day.

**Annie:** I love that you said that. I love that you said it's a great word to start with wordle.

**Savannah:** It is. I use it every day. I know there are better wordle starters.

**Annie:** Yeah, it doesn't give you a lot of vowels.

**Savannah:** But I use it every day because it's got some common words. You know, A-R-S-H is a good word. But also it's a reminder. And also "share" means so much. It's like, share your heart, share what you know, share your resources, all of those things. So I try to take that word. And it's a call to action for me. That doesn't mean I'm doing it well, I'm trying, but it's a call to action. It's funny how it kind of all came full circle that way.

**Annie:** I have white tattoos on my arms.

**Savannah:** You do?

**Annie:** Yes, they're all white.

**Savannah:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** And they are truly, like your word share, it's me talking to me.

**Savannah:** I didn't even know that was possible.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, it's great, because then I can be everywhere, and I'm so pale that it stands out. But it's beautiful. I'm glad you explained that in the book, your tattoo of all my love in the book. It's beautiful.

**Savannah:** I can't believe I got a tattoo. I never thought I'd be a tattoo person, but that's brilliant.

**Annie:** Because I'm like you. The words that matter the most to me are for me. It's to remind me who I want to be, so I don't need everybody to know that I have grace on my wrist, but I got to remember when I'm in an airport I am tattooed with it.

**Savannah:** And it's not to look at it and say, I'm so good at grace.

**Annie:** No, right.

**Savannah:** It's, remember this is on your body. This is your aspiration. This is your hope. This is your calling.

**Annie:** That's right.

[00:16:32] <music>



**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our amazing partners, okay, get ready. This is a toilet paper company. It's called [Reel Paper](#). It's great, you guys. Can we talk about this? Are we allowed to talk about how we feel about toilet paper?

It's time for, actually, a brief lesson on the history of toilet paper. Did you know that the first perforated toilet paper rolls were introduced in 1890? But it wasn't until 1930 that we officially had split splinter-free tissue paper. You guys, splinter-free. Prior to that, people just used what was ever available. Corn cobs and parchment and even pages from the Farmer's Almanac. What are we talking about? Nowadays, we are clear-cutting our floors just to make something that we use once and then flush.

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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. Then they analyze 85 personal factors and hand-picked clean ingredients that get you closer to your hair goals with every single wash.

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Okay, now back to our conversation with Savannah.

[00:20:50] <music>

**Annie:** So, with your full-time job, two kids, a husband, a life, and you serve at your church, Good Shepherd, and you wrote a book, and in the book, you quote other books all the time, you must read constantly.

**Savannah:** Well, it's funny.

**Annie:** How do you do this?

**Savannah:** I don't read constantly, but this is... I don't know. I wrote it fast, but I think it was decades of keeping journals, and writing down things, and writing verses, and things that resonated with me. So, no, actually I'm not a great reader, and in particular, since I had kids, I find it very hard to complete a book.

**Annie:** Like you, my two kids' books I've written, I'm like, more people have finished those than anything else I've ever written.

**Savannah:** 100%. It's just hard to finish. I mean, I fall asleep, too, because I get up in the middle of the night. So, by the time I sit down to read a book... I mean, I think I did read the Steve Jobs biography, and I want to say it took me a year.

**Annie:** That's amazing to me. Speaking of your journals, I had a really interesting experience with your book because you talk about one of the things you dislike the most is humiliation. And then you go and later tell us about pulling out your old journals and reading through them and how you felt about Savannah season one.

**Savannah:** Yes.

**Annie:** Make those work for me together. Humiliation is really hard for me. If there's two things I want to not have ever happen, I don't want to be misunderstood and I don't want to be humiliated. So it keeps me from doing things sometimes. But you're putting together, I don't like being humiliated. It's the thing I try to avoid. And also, I'm digging into my old parts of my story and dealing with that emotion right there.

**Savannah:** I know. I didn't put those two things together. Why did I do that? Is it too late to take that chapter out? I'm just kidding.

**Annie:** No, no, no. It's a beautiful part of your story.

**Savannah:** No, I'm teasing. I think it's because it's what was required, you know? I think that it would have been... I mean, I have this whole thing in the book about like, "I don't want to talk about this and I don't want to talk about that." And it's true, I don't. But that doesn't mean I'm not gonna expose aspects of myself. It's extremely personal. I'm not telling this or that anecdote, but if you read it, for better or for worse, you'll really see my psyche, which is kind of terrifying.

**Annie:** No.

**Savannah:** There were times I called the editor, I'm like, "Do I sound like kind of a basket case here? Am I the only one that feels this way, like racked with guilt or shame or this,

that and the other, insecurity?" I'm like, "Gosh, I really am like a functioning human, but this is the journal, this is what it is."

I felt it was just important to tell the truth. And also, everything's in service of the point I'm trying to make. It's not just sharing for no reason. I wouldn't do that. That would be humiliating. But I'm willing to tell you, yes, I wrote this very dramatic and embarrassing thing in my journal when I was 25 years old because I wanted you to see what I saw. That when I went back and looked, I saw progress. I saw, wow, how did God get me from that to this? Not that "this" is have it all made. It isn't.

The whole point of writing about those journals and what you read when you go back and you look at your life and your experiences over time is that it does give you that kind of God's eye perspective. And that gives you hope for the future, that whatever you're working on and working through now, that over time, miraculously and supernaturally, God is somehow ever working things out in the direction of good. And by good, I don't mean a particular good outcome. I mean good as in closeness to Him. That's the trajectory.

**Annie:** Man, that feels like the difference between Annie in her 30s and Annie in her 40s is Annie in her 30s thought, well, God's going to work all this out. And if I do and I pray, then it's going to work out. And Annie in her 40s has been like, "Nah, girl. It doesn't go like that."

**Savannah:** Maybe not.

**Annie:** You and God should be good, He is still good and kind, but you can work very hard and it not work out.

**Savannah:** That's the thing. And it's scary. I write a lot about that because I think for so many years I was just like that. I still am.

**Annie:** Your first job where you got there and 10 days later it shut down.

**Savannah:** They shut down. I mean, come on.

**Annie:** It's unbelievable, Savannah.

**Savannah:** So classic. Nobody's like, Oh, that's a career that-

**Annie:** All your power suits. In Wyoming, is that right?

**Savannah:** No Butte, Montana. No.

**Annie:** I thought it was in...

**Savannah:** I was on my way and it was like-

**Annie:** Even that you're like... At 25 and in my early 30s, I thought, "This is how it goes. God will work all this out." And He does work all things together for good, but man, it is so much freedom in my 40s to say, but it may not go how I thought it would.

**Savannah:** No. And also, you know, in that thinking that you're talking about and that I certainly have had and probably continue to have to a certain extent, it's like, you think it's transactional. Like, hey God, to the degree and extent that I am a goody-goody and I stay on the straight and narrow, then I can control and keep disaster at bay. That just doesn't work.

And it's really unfortunate. It's very dismaying when you feel that you've held up your end of the bargain and something happens and you feel God didn't. It's a very dismaying, disenchanting moment. But also there will probably be even more likely scenarios where you didn't keep up your send of the bargain-

**Annie:** Right, Savannah.

**Savannah:** ...and you will be delighted to find that God is not transactional. I write a lot about mercy and grace and that I think it means the most to me because of all the times that I have messed up and that I have come back and found you know, God with open arms.

**Savannah:** I let my mom write a chapter in the book and she talked about this beautiful story with her grandfather, and that's right along those lines. And to me I mean, I think God's mercy is the most bonding aspect of a relationship with God. You know, it's like when you mess up and you come back and He loves you. Like, not like, well, you'll be on probation now. But just, no, I love you.

**Annie:** Mostly what God does is love you.

**Savannah:** That's it. It's so simple, but it's not easy.

**Annie:** Oh man, I just sat at my desk yesterday just wiping away the tears over that one line. Mostly what He does, mostly what He's doing is loving me.

**Savannah:** I'm so glad that resonated with you, because I read that years and years ago, and I've thought it over and over again, and I've never... how could I have ever

imagined that it would lead to a book? It's not even my line. It's Eugene Peterson. But I find it to be so profound. We have so many questions about God, and most of them really can't be answered in this life. But here's one certainty. If you're wondering what He's up to, you're wondering what He thinks about you, mostly what He does is love you.

**Annie:** One of my favorite things about the book... I grew up in church too. So for all of our friends listening who grew up in church, this is such a... I grew up with a faith background and I weaved and bobbed my way to where I am now.

You're really honest about seasons where it was disenchanting and seasons where you felt really connected. That was so helpful to me, because sometimes in seasons where I feel disconnected, I think, what am I doing wrong? And at times it is sin where you're like, Oh, it's because I'm sinning, so I need to get right with the Lord. But the majority of the time, it is just a season. How do you give yourself that mercy or experience God's mercy, I guess, in the seasons where the connection doesn't feel easy?

**Savannah:** I feel like that is one of the first things I wrote about and it's one of the parts of mostly what God does is love you that was the most meaningful to me. I talk about how, you know, I was like, I am and was a people pleaser and a goody goody, you know? Like we were talking about earlier, I think I tried mostly to be good enough or decent enough that God would have worse cases to deal with. You know what I mean? Like, yeah, you're not great, but we got these flyers over here to put out before we get to your burning embers of disaster, you know? So it's like you're trying to walk that walk.

I think that was kind of my... it's not like this was conscious thinking. That was just how I was moving and behaving. That's how I grew up was working through the world and working through my faith. Basically trying to stay just about on God's good side so He wouldn't have to come down and rain wrath upon me.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Savannah:** Well, but then life happens, you know, and for whatever reason, whether it's like you just willfully are wanting to do what you want to do, or you get distracted or busy, you fall out of touch with God. I'm like, "I'm not going to church. I know I need to find a church here in this city that I just moved to, but I don't wanna. I'd rather sleep in. That's a small thing, but I'd feel guilty about that. Or I used to do Bible study every day, now I don't. All that stuff.

I write about how I had a period of time in my late 20s when I just had a season of fruitfulness and I was doing this amazing Beth Moore study and I learned so much

and I was memorizing Bible verses and writing in my journal and da, da, da, da. And then I stopped for years. And I used to feel really guilty about that.

I would be thinking to myself, God must really be so disappointed in me. And every once in a while, one of those old verses would pop in my head or, you know, when I was down in the dumps, I'd come back, maybe write in a journal or this or that, and I'd think, I'm really coasting on fumes here. God does not have a lot to work with.

And then at some point I realized, and it goes with mostly what God does is love you, is that God understands that there are seasons of our relationship. And when we check out, it doesn't mean that we don't have faith. It just means it's like a friend that you haven't called in a while. God doesn't stop loving us. He's not gonna give you retribution when you come back and say, well, where have you been? Well, what do you have to say for yourself?

The only one that's really hurt is you because you miss out on God. You just miss out, you know? Life is much sweeter and easier to handle when you're next to God and close to God. But God understands. The Lord has compassion on all He has made. He knows that we are dust. He understands.

And I think my guilt and my inability to kind of keep up with more pious practices or the heyday of my spiritual fervor was keeping me from coming at all. And this slow realization over years that didn't come like a lightning bolt, but just over time, has been God is here, He's loving me and I'll bring Him myself in whatever form it comes and He can work with that.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Savannah:** But just you gotta come.

[00:32:17] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about our amazing partner, [Thrive Causemetics](#). Yes, Thrive Causemetics is the makeup you see all over social media in the turquoise tubes. And you know it is my favorite. Look at my lashes. If you like a real simple, natural look, or if you're all about full glam or somewhere in the middle like me, Thrive Causemetics has you covered.

My favorite product, as you know, their Liquid Lash Extension Mascara. I live for it. It is a must-have, you guys. I know I tell you about it all the time, but it is because it truly makes my lashes look longer and fuller. It doesn't smudge all over the place. Even when I'm crying in a Broadway show, as you know I do, I do not

lose my mascara. And, you know, one of my eyes is pretty watery recently. It doesn't run or smudge. I am such a fan.

Plus, when you're so past ready to go to bed at night and need to easily and quickly get your makeup off, it is super easy to remove. Their mascara slides right off with warm water and a washcloth, no soap required. The ingredients in it are really nourishing, so they support longer, stronger, and healthier-looking lashes over time. And their flake-free tubing formula dramatically lengthens and defines your lashes from root to tip.

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

Here's what I also love. For every product purchased, Thrive Causemetics donates products and funds to help communities thrive. Thrive Causemetics is luxury beauty that gives back. And right now you can get an exclusive 20% off your first order at [thrivecausemetics.com/TSE](https://thrivecausemetics.com/TSE). That's Thrivecausemetics.com/TSE, like That Sounds Fun, for 20% off your first order.

That link, as a reminder, and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in these show notes, or we'll send it to you in an email on Friday in Friday's AFD Week in Review email. You can sign up for that in the show notes below as well.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Savannah.

[00:34:28] <music>

**Annie:** I'm not married yet, don't have kids, and a lot of my peers that have young kids... It's really funny because in my hometown where I grew up, my peers have high schoolers. In Nashville, my peers have elementary. In New York, my peers have babies.

**Savannah:** I mean, I'm 51 and I have a nine... I'm like, I'm geriatric mother. You know, I'm into it.

**Annie:** It is so interesting. But there's been a narrative in the church in my experience of young moms have a hard time connecting with God. I think a narrative I didn't know I had until I read your book was, well, you're not married, so you should have plenty of time. You're not married, so you should... you don't have the young mom problem, so if you're not having your quiet time, that's a bigger problem.



**Savannah:** No. and you know what? I think as somebody that was single for a long, long time and longer than I wanted to be, and then got divorced early on, had a very short-lived marriage, which I write very briefly about, and only to make the point that it was a very trying and sad season. You know, I remember many times feeling like, It just seems like, not just the church, but our whole culture kind of just holds up moms and married people as somehow more worthy than us poor single folks. Or like, well, you can't understand if you're not a mother.

**Annie:** It's like, well, of course you can. Of course, you can, and your life is just as busy and full, and your relationship with God will have just as many struggles. And that may in and of itself be a struggle. I mean, in my 30s, I wanted to be married so bad. I mean, it was...

**Annie:** Were you already here in your 30s?

**Savannah:** In my late 20s, I came to Washington to go to law school.

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

**Savannah:** And then in my early 30s, at some point I came to New York and worked as a reporter here. But all that time I was single.

**Annie:** I can't wait for people to read about you at meeting with the judge-

**Savannah:** Oh my gosh.

**Annie:** ...and walking away from that, yeah. They'll read it but I can't wait. It's great.

**Savannah:** All the times I ruined my career.

**Annie:** Yeah, you're like, third time I ruined it.

**Savannah:** I know. I don't even know if that was particularly spiritual, but it's in there anyway.

**Annie:** It's so good.

**Savannah:** But anyway, I just remember those times and how hard that was. And I think anything where you feel like, I have a hope or I have a desire and it's just not being met, those are the challenges to faith. I mean, that's where you're like, hey God, don't you think you could at least... you know?

I don't have any great answers for that. Spoiler alert, there are no great answers in this book because there are no answers. I just have empathy and understanding for that walk.

**Annie:** And some beautiful practices.

**Savannah:** Oh, I hope so.

**Annie:** Here are some things... like even you saying today, all you got to do is show up. Just show up. I told some friends this morning at breakfast, my like 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. isn't the same in Nashville as it is in New York. My 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. in New York is very different. So it makes my mornings different a little bit. So me and God are having these conversations when I'm walking at Central Park of like, Hey, are you fine that I'm not seeing you in the mornings as normally?

**Savannah:** Yes. I know, and I think that's the thing. It's like I sort of want us to expand our beliefs about what God is willing to work with. It doesn't mean we shouldn't make effort. Of course, we should, and we should try. But our inability to do perfect pious practices should not be the obstacle to coming to God in any way that we can.

Again, we will be further enlightened and enhanced by more connection with God. It's like when I have this revelation about what does it mean to be blessing or bless me this, bless this, bless this. I'm like, what is blessing? This is my big revelation when writing the book. Blessing just means more of God. So I want more of God. That's the blessing. It's not more stuff or this or that.

So if I say, oh, bless this situation at work, it's like, I'm just saying, I need more God in this situation. I need more whatever supernatural healing you can bring, whatever love that I do not currently feel. Could you bring that?

So I think we just need to make space for God's understanding and compassion. And it's not just to give ourselves a pass. I don't mean to have some like loosey-goosey, like anything goes. It's just that the opposite. If it's an obstacle to any connection with God, then it's an obstacle and we need to get rid of it.

So yeah, you're walking around nature, talking to God, having a conversation all day, I would say that counts. I think it counts to Him too. You're building something. And there will be other seasons of life where you will be, you know, Annie the good girl getting up early and setting her alarm and writing and lighting a candle and memorizing some verses.

I just think that over the course of time, God understands that and He's just always happy that you called. You know what I mean?

**Annie:** Yeah. He mostly loves us.

**Savannah:** I mean, I write about the scene I saw in the Mr. Rogers movie. Am I giving away too much of my book?

**Annie:** No, it's great.

**Savannah:** Please buy my book. I don't care. I do care, I care, but I'm just like, that's not what this is about. But what I loved about it was it showed Mr. Rogers, who was like an old... I think is a Presbyterian or Methodist priest. The way he would pray for people, he would kneel at his bedside and just say names. I love that practice. I do it so much now.

It's not just about not having time, because sometimes it isn't time. Sometimes I don't have the words. Sometimes I don't know what to say, and I don't know what it means. But all I know is I'm saying, God tells us to pray and to pray continually. And I think there's some value to just lift up their names. I might imagine them in my head. And somehow I consider that, I hope that that's prayer.

**Annie:** Yes, I think it is. That's one thing... we'll leave that to them when they read. But your stuff about prayer and about Psalm 23 is really profound. I mean, it's very good.

**Savannah:** Oh, gosh, you make me so happy to say. I mean, you're like my first reader, so I really do appreciate it.

**Annie:** I can't believe that. I'm so happy.

**Savannah:** Actually, my mom would tell the truth, because she's Nancy and she's tough as nails.

**Annie:** I will tell you. I had to say it like this, "Savannah, thank you for writing this." That's what I would say. Instead, I'm saying, "Savannah, I cried yesterday. Savannah, people need this." I love the timing. I think books released in February do such a beautiful job of giving us a book that we want to read but we can pass off on Easter.

**Savannah:** Oh, I hope they would do that.

**Annie:** It feels like Easter, Mother's Day, like this is a gift... Because you talk about the beginning, when you write your own foreword, Savannah Guthrie.

**Savannah:** I know because I'm a loser, and I didn't know you don't write your own foreword. Did you know that? Well, yeah, because you've written a bunch of books.

**Annie:** No, I love that you did it.

**Savannah:** You should have seen my editor. They're all from Nashville. She's like, "Bless her heart," you know?

**Annie:** I love that you did, because you said, "I need to tell you something before I tell you something."

**Savannah:** Yes.

**Annie:** And you said, "Read this a little bit at a time or read the whole thing. And you just gave so much permission around it.

**Savannah:** It's so funny, because I'm like, I don't mean to micromanage you, but here's me micromanaging you. I hope you read it, but read it slow, unless you want to read it fast.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's exactly what you said.

**Savannah:** And you could read it in order or don't. But my hope really is that it's bite-sized and accessible. Like I said, I find it very hard to complete a book. So you could read any essay and the idea is just like a bite-sized little thing to think about for a day or two or a few minutes and then read more if you want to. It's a low-pressure book.

**Annie:** It's beautiful. Thank you for writing it.

**Savannah:** My pleasure. Thank you for reading it.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, I loved reading it. It was an honor. I will remember that I got to read it early in the process. That matters to my spirit. So, thank you. And thanks for being on the show today.

**Savannah:** Oh, what a pleasure. So are we going for wine or what?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. What are we doing next? I love it.

**Savannah:** We out.

[00:42:31] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, isn't she the best? I mean, we loved her on TV. We love her interviews. We love her on the Today Show. And then when we sit down with her, she's just that great in real life. That does not always happen. You know that does not always happen. And man, is she wonderful.

Okay, you are going to love this book. So go get your copy of *Mostly What God Does* and go follow Savannah on social media if you aren't already, tell her thank you for being on the show. And if you have any questions from this episode, you can drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if that's where you're a listener, that's where I'm listening, or send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast. We'll try to answer them for you there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, at the Ryman on August 11th. 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, and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me, you know what I would love? I would love to go to Baja Burrito for lunch. That's what sounds fun to me. It's one of the best places in Nashville. If you're coming on August 11th, we're gonna give you a list of all the places to try, but Baja Burrito is going to be on it.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with one of my dear friends, incredible author, hugely successful businesswoman, Jamie Kern Lima. We'll see y'all then.