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Annie: Hi friends and 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](#). Listen, I know we're always having to juggle our time and figure out what our priorities are. And I'm telling you, therapy is something you will not regret making time for. Is it hard work? Yes. But is it worth it? Yes. Therapy can help you find what matters most to you. So you can do more of it. I know it's done this for me.

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Intro: Today on the show I get to talk with my friend, Amanda Jenkins. Okay, you know her husband, he has been on the podcast before. Dallas Jenkins has directed and produced over a dozen feature and short films before he created *The Chosen*, which is currently one of the most-viewed TV shows in the world.

Amanda is an author and lead creator of *The Chosen's* additional content, the latest being a beautiful interactive Bible study called *God's Goodness for the Chosen*. It serves as a companion guide to Season 4, but as you'll hear us talk about, it is mostly about suffering. It is really beautiful and deep, and I think you're really going to enjoy it.

As for me, after we do the *Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal* in April, this is going to be my summer study. So if we want to team up and do the same study for our Bible study time this summer, I'm going to be doing *God's Goodness for the Chosen*.

Amanda and Dallas live in Texas with their kids. You're gonna hear all about them today. Amanda and I love being friends. You're gonna hear it from the start. Our personalities are very similar, you guys. Buckle up.

Here's my conversation all about Jesus, *The Chosen*, this new additional content, this interactive Bible study, and just everything else me and Amanda think of. So here's my friend, Amanda Jenkins.

[00:02:59] <music>

Annie: Amanda Jenkins, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Amanda: I'm so glad to be here.

Annie: This is how I feel. Dream come true because we just want to hang out as much as we can.

Amanda: I know.

Annie: This gives us like built-in hangout time.

Amanda: I know. Texting through the winter of, are you going to be here when I'm here? No? Okay, but maybe this date? No? So now I'm like, fine. Let's do it. This is fine. We'll do it this time.

Annie: Fine. In front of God and everybody. Fine. If this is how friendship happens, this is how it happens. Okay, it's the 10th year of That Sounds Fun, so we are starting every episode by asking, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you, Amanda.

Amanda: A nap. At this moment in my life that is literally the first thing that's coming to my mind is a nap.

Annie: Well deserved.

Amanda: Otherwise, normally, Dallas and I are like, dinner and a movie is the most fun thing. Or Disneyland. That would be my list.

Annie: Right? In that order?

Amanda: In that order.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. A nap that leads to dinner and a movie that leads to Disneyland. Will you remind us how old y'all's kids are?

Amanda: Yeah. 22, 20, 19, 17.

Annie: 22, 20, 19, 17. So you're like doing the adult parenting part of this.

Amanda: Yeah. And it's not for the faint of heart as it turns out. I was warned that, people saying, "I know you're tired when you have littles, I know it's hard, but it's easier than when they get older." And I couldn't understand that. Now I really super do. The adult problems.

Annie: So tell me the difference. I mean, I'm not doing it at all. So what is the difference? The adult problems? Is that the difference?

Amanda: Yeah. Adult problems you can't just do for them, things that aren't fixed just by a rock and a pat. I remember those days.

Annie: Or like a sandwich.

Amanda: A Band-Aid, it's all better. No, it's stuff you can't fix and you'd have to surrender constantly to the Lord. Then you have to watch them do certain things well and really screw other things up and you're at their mercy now. Yeah, it's not easy.

Annie: My nephew is about to be four and I keep thinking like... My sister was telling me a story about him at school and how he and this little girl... he said, "She hugged me today," and I thought, "Someday somebody is going to hurt his feelings. What am I going to... I am a helicopter aunt but what am I going to do?"

Amanda: I now have adopted a broken heart for all of my kids' friends. I've adopted broken hearts for their exes. I hate it when people are sad.

Annie: Parenting is holding other people's sadness for 18-plus years?

Amanda: Yeah. I think forever. According to my mom, she's like, "Oh, you're not even halfway."

Annie: Right.

Amanda: Man.

Annie: So how many of the kids are still in your home?

Amanda: Well, isn't that a funny question? Because I have some friends that are grieving their absence, the kid's absence. No, we aren't doing that yet, which I'm thankful

for. Our oldest graduated and came back just for a year. He'll be leaving this summer. But he's figuring out life and he's like, "Okay, I'm not quite sure where I want to live." So he's living with us just for a minute.

Amanda: Then my second born came home for some health issues. So she's back until the fall. I only have one away right now at college. My other is still in high school. So I'm like, aren't you supposed to be living?

Annie: Your oldest son works on *The Chosen*, right? Yeah. Aren't y'all supposed to be gone? So you're also seeing him in your work environment and in your home environment and surprising.

Amanda: Yeah. And I like them all. I do. But you do get to the point where you're like, Oh, there is a natural thing taking place where I'm like, I'm ready to go and do things, but I'm still making you dinner. So that's interesting, you know?

Annie: Yeah. Do you know a thing I couldn't have predicted, Amanda, that you and Dallas are right in line with is we all at the age that my friends who have been unable to be social for 18 years are coming back out. Like, everybody's back out. And they're like, "Annie, do you want to do dinner?" And I'm like, "Dinner? You haven't been able to do dinner for 18 years." So it's something all of y'all are like, "Hey, I've got time again." And I'm like, "I still do, too. So let's get back to it."

Amanda: Totally. Totally.

Annie: Do you feel that a little bit socially?

Amanda: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. People that we want to go hang out with are getting excited about it. Although it is different on this end because I'm like, "Hey, it's 9 p.m. I got to get home." I do feel that.

Annie: Oh, ma'am, me too. Just to be clear, when you and me and Dallas hang out, it starts at 6. So don't worry.

Amanda: I'm like, early bird specials make more and more sense to me. I'm like, oh, that's how that happens.

Annie: I'm like, now I understand y'all wanting to be there at 5:30 because you have to drive in the dark. And why am I even considering driving in the dark? But I do.

Amanda: I get it. I get it. All the things. I am heading strong into those years of embracing it. You don't even care anymore. That's when you really know you're there. I don't even want to do it differently. I am very excited about being home.

Annie: That's right. Now, all the mom jean jokes people used to make, I'm like, Oh, I get it because I'm going to wear skinny jeans in my coffin. You're going to have to pull them off of me. I'm never letting go. They're the new mom jeans.

Amanda: They will be. Just give it some time. It's coming back around. I'm fine with it.

Annie: Okay, so your husband has been on the podcast before, which is great, and I loved hearing his story. This morning when I was thinking about getting to talk to you, I thought I would love for you to tell your side. You're the wife who watched your husband fail a lot in the job he wanted and the thing y'all we're going after. Will you talk a little bit about what was your role from the beginning... because you're really involved with *The Chosen*? Was a role like this in every movie y'all did? No?

Amanda: No. This evolved with *The Chosen*. He had his job and he would talk to me about things and maybe run some things past me sometimes, but I don't even know how it happened. Maybe out of total failure, maybe out of like, "We're desperate. You're my only person, let's talk through this stuff." I don't know. But it lined up with the kids being more independent.

I had started writing a number of years before, and so it just made sense that I was on the extra content outside of the show, that team. And then I'm super opinionated all the time, and he's just like, Let that in. So he's giving me ground, I would say, in my opinions. It's not like I have a credit on the show. My name isn't going to go [inaudible 00:09:40], but man, I'm all over the place, yeah.

Annie: I mean, so many of our friends listening have probably experienced this. What is it like when your husband or... Some of our friends listening are guys that are married to women. But what is it like when your partner fails professionally and you have to be there? I mean, y'all couldn't have known *The Chosen* was coming. So Dallas has these movies and these shows he's trying that aren't working and he's still coming home and eating dinner at the dinner table. What's it like on your side of that?

Amanda: I mean, truly heartbreaking. You're their person, you're their cheerleader. I always felt like I was the first one to know how great he was. I've always kind of felt that. You know, like, man, they just don't know how great you are, you know? So that was hard and scary too, because it came with an income problem.

I'm actually the one who pays the bills. So God really had to deal with me on that front where... There were other factors involved besides just the failure of the films, but he just didn't have a lily pad to jump to, which is how this business works, right? You go project to project and there were no more lily pads at all. So you're just kind of floating.

And then the Lord's saying, "Go in this direction." You're like, "Uh, there's nothing there to step on, and I have literal bills that we have to pay." Then in the first year that we really took the walk of faith into this project, we had health crisis after health crisis. And probably to be on the safe side, I won't overdo the number, but like \$150,000 in doctor's bills within the first six months of having no income.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Amanda: It was like God pushed me to trust and to go forward with no income in the midst of failure and no one returns Dallas's calls. And then to the pile on of actual crazy things that could never, ever be paid by us. And then one by one miraculous provision. You learn really quickly that when you're wilderness walking and you're relying on mana that it's terrifying until it's amazing.

So it was this deep end of the pool lesson and how to do this. But I would say that it was heartbreaking, but also really, really just genuinely scary for me because he was the... I know I was momming for 20 years. What was I going to do to help, you know? Turns out a lot. But we didn't see that.

Annie: What were you praying during all of that? Teach us how to pray when we're sitting in that, where we're struggling financially and our partner's doing the best that they can and the ends aren't meeting. What are you praying?

Amanda: I mean, that's a funny question for me right now, Annie, honestly, because I feel like I'm learning the same thing in a new vein with a kid who's chronically ill. So it's a good reminder for me that, you know, we learn lessons and then they're applied in a new way and we totally forget the lesson.

But I would say at that time and now, my prayers are desperate and honest. I tell people that I've learned God doesn't want our pretty prayers. Like the ones that are really tied in a bow. I mean, I have learned to just be angry and to vent and to plead and to praise, and that it's this kind of intermingling. I'm not sure I have a prescription other than like, hands open, gotta roll in the place you're at. Truth, you know?

Annie: Yeah. Does illness feel like spiritual attack?

Amanda: I would say carefully, yes. But maybe not the sickness itself. A lot of other people conclude what's causing. I mean, it's amazing since Job people still are like, "Well, you have a sin problem. You have a generational sin problem. You haven't asked with faith for healing." Listen, man, we have taken account of all these things.

So a lot of people say what they think is causing it. And I would just say, I don't know, except that God's allowing it, so He's in it. And I would say it is probably definitely where we're most vulnerable emotionally toward attack. I know that's happening. I don't know what I would call the sickness other than the sovereign decision of the Lord, really. But yeah, we're just struggling our way through that new thing, too. It's always something that keeps you clinging, I suppose.

Annie: I think that's really helpful. Even I was texting with a girl I disciple this morning, who's like, "I'm anxious again, and I don't know why, and I don't know what to do. I don't know if this is something I'm... am I holding something like it's an idol or is this demonic? Like, am I being...?"

But your language of like, what we know is God's allowing it. And so that is what we walk forward with, is what we know. There's a lot of things we don't know. We can search our hearts, we can do all the things, but what we do know is he's allowing this. I feel this. I mean, Amanda, one of the scariest things about moving forward in a calling is that I can't control whether the spiritual shrapnel hits other people. Right?

Amanda: Yeah.

Annie: So you and Dallas are running after what God has you do through *The Chosen* and other things. I have a book releasing tomorrow and we have a staff member who's really sick. As soon as I got the text at 2.30 in the morning, I went like, "Man, I am afraid." I mean, I could cry saying this to you. "I'm afraid this is because of what they have signed up to do with us."

Amanda: Okay, yeah. But you know what? I will say the thing I've held to since the beginning of this calling, I was super... I mean, I had a moment... It's a journey, but I had a day, a moment, a meeting with the Lord when I was going from not surrendering to surrendering. And He was asking us to go forward. He was asking us to go without a safety net, no income.

He wanted us to go forward in this *Chosen* thing and I was wrestling because my kids. And I was like, "We were going to lose healthcare." We were in all things. And I was crying and pleading and I would have ripped my clothes if it had been a

thing, right? Old school lament. I heard so clearly from the Lord when He's like, "Your kids are not a casualty of my plans. My plans are as much for your kids as they are for you."

Annie: Wow.

Amanda: And I was like, That is amazing and I've held onto it. But also it's true for everyone that we come into contact with because God is so much bigger. Like, it's not like someone slips his notice. Like, oops-a-daisy, you know, that person got hit with this other thing. It's not like it can be unintentional. That's been a real helpful clarifier for me when things are hard because of the show. I go back and I say, "Okay, wait, they're not a casualty of this calling. So we have to just give it time to see His purpose in all of it."

Annie: That's very helpful today. Often I make the joke with my COO, I'm like, "I'm tied to this ship. Y'all can jump off anytime you want. I'm tied to this calling, I don't get out of this. This is my whole life." Y'all are signing up to go through this storm and I'm tied to the mast."

Amanda: The storm that is Annie.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. But I love what you're saying because it's true for so many of our friends whose kids can be experiencing this too, or employees can be experiencing it, or their staff on church is that, no, God's placed them there with their own masts they are tied to. That has to do with what He's doing with them.

Amanda: I remember when we went through adoption, and we brought this whirlwind of a kid home, and our parents, you know, grandparents, stepped into some of that breach. And I remember going, "Oh, you're called to this too, turns out." I hadn't done the math. Because obviously siblings are called to it and extended family, but it's funny how it doesn't occur to you. Of course, it's probably a bit of our narcissism that causes us to not realize that it's not really just our thing. It's the Lord's thing. And all the people, you know? It's a good check in our sphere.

Annie: I mean, all I'm doing is exposing my desire to control and thinking I can handle it. So that's what I'm exposing to you as my friend in front of everybody listening is like, I just want to be able to control everything and keep everyone safe. I think I should be able to do that, and that is not mine to do.

Amanda: I am your kindred spirit on that.

Annie: Oh, man. Okay, so we're at season four of *The Chosen*. And then next week I think it's on the app for everybody, right? So Season 4 you could have already seen in the theaters. And then coming in March, it'll be on the app sometime.

Amanda: I don't actually have the release date. I don't think there has been one announced yet. But it is coming shortly, I would say.

Annie: How do you feel at Season 4? I mean, this is kind of when... I mean, we're on the backside of this seven-season arc.

Amanda: Wow. I hadn't thought of that. I'm thrilled with where we are in the sense of the people being changed by it, it just doesn't seem to stop. So people will say, I know you're so sick of hearing these stories. I'm like, "No, it is fuel and it is exciting." And I would say seeing more languages around the world and more people being exposed to the gospel for the first time or coming back to the church, or whatever it is, never gets old. I'm thrilled about it. I'm dreading a little bit where the story's going, as most people are.

Even as I'm writing, I'm now writing about these people, the followers of Jesus with a just different... like everybody, a different attachment. I feel like I know them more than I did before the show. So everything's more real. Everything's more heightened. Everything's more sad. Everything's more beautiful. You know, it's all those things. I'm right along with the audience and that stuff, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

[00:19:53] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Ritual](#). I know there are so many health trends we see floating around the internet, it is hard to know what to trust and what actually works. But we've got a legit option for you in one of my favorite multivitamins.

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stomach, which matters a lot to me, like remembering to take them when I wake up and get ready in the morning.

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Remember that link and pretty much every other link you can ever hope for are in the show notes or in Friday's AFD Week in Review email that we will send you. You can sign up for that in the show notes below as well.

Sponsor: As long as we're talking about good things to take for our bodies, let's talk about our kids too. I have another incredible partner to tell you about, Hiya Health. I want my MiniBFFs to stay as healthy as possible. Our friends at [Hiya Health](https://hiyahealth.com) have got the children's vitamins they will love, and you, as a parent, can trust.

So often kids' vitamins are just candy in disguise, which is what I remember, because they're filled with sugar and other gummy junk kids don't need. But this is why Hiya Health exists. My MiniBFFs actually like it. It's actually made with ingredients parents can trust.

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Now back to our conversation with Amanda Jenkins.

[00:23:43] <music>

Annie: What do you know about Jesus that you didn't know before y'all made *The Chosen*?

Amanda: That is maybe one of the best questions I've gotten since we started this thing. I would say, and this is gonna be weird probably since this is super specific to where I am right now, but Jesus' the man of sorrows-

Annie: My answer too. My exact answer too. I did not know how sad He was.

Amanda: Yeah. I mean, it's life-changing because I think it changes how you do life, like the purpose of life. I think we're always trying so hard, and it's that control piece for sure, always trying so hard to have a good life and have things go well. And whether that's being kind to others or to ourselves, I think we run from sorrow so much.

And to realize that He ran to it, that He understands it, that there is no, whether it's socially, you know, anxiousness or betrayal or feeling alienated or physical or whatever it is, like there's no stone unturned when it came to His sorrow. So it changes the way I feel like I live. And not in the morbid way that it sounds at first, but fundamentally what is the purpose of what we're doing here?

I do feel like the more we suffer, and the more I understand how much He suffered, the larger my heart grows towards those who are suffering, which is really where we need to be more engaged, right? So, yeah, that.

Annie: I'd like to thank Jonathan Roumie for how he plays it, for starters, because he just shows us with his face what Jesus might have looked like in those moments, too. But I've thought, how many times have I read Man of Sorrows, that Jesus was a

man of sorrows? I mean, what a terrible title for an Enneagram 7. I would be like, bleh.

Amanda: Not one we chase after. That's not the title we're going for.

Annie: No, not at all. I mean, I have found myself thinking how brave people are that stay in the suffering. Because I don't. Unless I'm in my most mature moments, I try to get out of suffering as quick as I can. And they don't. People who suffer sit in it. I mean, like-

Amanda: This is so funny, but the picture that I have now, if you've ever seen Disney's *Inside Out*, is of sadness. The emotion of sadness. I'm always joy. I'm like, we're fine, we're good. What can we do? How can we distract? And God's like, I'm gonna need you to lay in this. Like, you're not moving for a while. So stop bouncing against the wall. It is that exact picture. Like, that character lays flat on her face, you know?

And there's something to that, especially when we realize He meets us there. It is the joy aspect of... I mean, joy is good, and He gives joy. I'm learning His joy instead of the one I usually pursue. But the idea of not only accepting grief and sitting in grief and not trying to escape grief but also sitting with other people in grief and recognizing that's exactly what He's doing.

It's all very like, okay, slow down. Slow down for the pain, slow down for even the joy that He will bring from it, right? Because we miss that, too. I think we pursue the wrong things and miss the fundamental great stuff He's got, too. Funny thing to have in common with you.

Annie: I know. It just says a lot about our personalities as well.

Amanda: This is turning into a lot of confessions.

Annie: That's right. When my friends and I talk about *The Chosen*, one of the things everyone is dreading is watching Judas change as well, is to go from being a guy that we like to the guy.

Amanda: Yeah. And to see how it happened, and to even be having some compassion. To go, man, I get why he chose that route. I wish he hadn't. We need to warn others from doing it, and scripture warns us from doing it. But it is so... it makes sense.

Addictions make sense. You know, hurt people hurt people, and materialism change and all the things that were warned about in Scripture. But you can actually see to watch him and the way he's thinking and that it actually came from a place of

wanting to see the ministry be different and be bigger, but he wasn't surrendered, right? It's quite a cautionary tale. In a way, I never identified with Judas until now.

Annie: No.

Amanda: I'm like, Oh man, I can kind of see...

Annie: It's those blue eyes. You're like, you're such a nice-looking person, but I know who you are.

Amanda: I know. I know. It's so great. It's so great. Luke is so sweet. The actor who plays Judas...

Annie: You're right. Back me up to when you started writing these companion Bible studies. The new one that is out is called *God's goodness for the Chosen*. I'm so excited to do this, Amanda. I'm starting this ASAP. What I think I'm going to do is I think I'm going to save it for May because we're doing a certain thing in Let's Read the Gospels in April. But I think I want to do it as my summer study. It's meant to be six weeks, right?

Amanda: It's eight weeks.

Annie: It's eight weeks. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Amanda: It doesn't track with the show's storyline, but it tracks with the show's theme. And what's interesting about it too, it's called *God's Goodness for the Chosen*. The working title for a long time was Suffering for the Chosen.

Annie: It's about suffering.

Amanda: It's about suffering. It's really hard to not write right where you are. So I was working on this Bible study with Doug Huffman, our Bible scholar, and he has been through a tremendous amount of suffering in the last year as well. So it's like, Okay, what are we going to talk about this time?

Of course, this season lent itself to that and our seasons lent itself to that. I'm sure that's not a coincidence. So the operating title was Suffering for the Chosen. And I'm like, not only is that not a great-selling title. I don't know how many people are like, yes, let's really dive into suffering, right? Same as you and me. We're like, no, thanks. I'm going to bounce right off of that.

But what I started to find, as I started studying it, is that our suffering, when we're doing it with the Lord, is always eclipsed by His goodness, not removed. So that's the picture of it. And there's actually kind of a running eclipse throughout the study just to get this idea in our minds that we suffer, and it's not always removed just because we ask. It's not always removed because we make good choices or we power up. But the idea that it remains, but God's goodness actually eclipses it.

And in all the ways that it does that, it really helped me walk through this season that we've been in. Again, that's why I answer the question the way that I do, because I'm seeing Jesus in my suffering. And then my eyes are off my suffering and onto His, actually, which was a lot worse. So it truly is about God's goodness for us, but in tandem with the ways that we suffer.

Annie: You said you were writing even before *The Chosen* started. So was this always kind of your path? Did you always want to write or do Bible studies?

Amanda: I was always a Bible study teacher, and I started to write about 2010. I mean, I had little kids. Honestly, I started writing as an exercise because God was really taking me to the mat on some things, and I literally couldn't even keep track of all the things He was correcting in me. So I started journaling.

But I'm married to a filmmaker and I was watching a couple really fun shows at the time. So it was kind of morphing into this Bridget Jones's diary meets... Well, I feel funny saying this to this audience, but meets sex in the city, but not the sex part, just the narrative and how they wrote that show. And then meets Jesus.

Annie: I love that combo.

Amanda: It was just kind of an interesting way that I was writing things down. It was really taking me through these vice idols that I had in my life and kind of stripping them away. Around what became chapter three, Dallas was like, "You know you're writing a book." And I'm like, "Oh, no, this is my super secret diary, so it's not a book. It's like all the worst things about me." And he's like, "No, I think you're writing a book." And then God really started to convict, No, you are writing a book.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Amanda: So I really did jump into writing feet first and accidentally, but it was released by Tyndale in 2013, and then did a couple kids' books with a girlfriend of mine. I had the gears turning with writing. It comes naturally to me. I'd always been teaching so that when we started the show and in between seasons, people, you know, they wanted more of the show, but also they were diving into scripture in a new way

because of it. So it just made sense. They were like, "Let's give them something." And then that turned into devotionals and Bible studies every season. So we're now on this very fast-moving train. So I now write like this.

Annie: You're like, Annie, one hand is writing a Bible study over here. Best and worst parts about working with your husband every day.

Amanda: The best part is that we do not work in the same room.

Annie: It helps, I hear, okay.

Amanda: I have an office, he has a film set. No, that is not the best part. The best part is we are so aligned on our passion, on our vision, on our rejoicing at cool stories, at us, you know... He and I, if we ever walk into a room full of fans or a new set location, are looking at each other just like, "This is amazing." Because when you share the journey with someone that... like we get it more than anyone else like where God has brought us from. So that's the best part.

Worst part is about this particular thing is that it just doesn't stop. Like we live, eat, breathe this stuff. We actually have to choose to be really disciplined around the dinner table with kids. Sometimes you're like, there's something huge happening, but we'll be like, "Tell us about your day." Because we always used to be like, you know... it came easier, but now he and I just want to like, and then this happened and we got to do this. And how about this? And we're juiced about it. But we still have other people in our lives and we need to talk about other things. So, you know, it's all-consuming. And sometimes that gets in the way of normal things.

Annie: There's been a couple of times where men I've dated we've had similar-ish jobs. So it is very fun to just be like, let's just chop it up. Like, let's just talk about work. Like we can talk about it. It lights me up too. So I totally get. But then when there are four other people who need to be seen and there's sports to talk about and there's-

Amanda: You know, things. There's lots of things.

Annie: Current events. Other things besides *The Chosen*. Speaking of seeing things, what was it like the first time you got to the set, the one in Texas? Like the first time you see the rebuilding of Capernaum and Jerusalem and all the places that that one set is, what did you think?

Amanda: I mean, from a distance driving up, you can actually see the dome from a distance, which was breathtaking. But I'll tell you, the first time I was there, in the process of

it being built, there was a man who was a professional, I'm not going to say it right, but a professional chainsaw guy. He did things with a chainsaw. That was his life. I don't know if you're chopping down trees.

Annie: Like in competitions or for his job? Both.

Amanda: Yes.

Annie: That's what I was hoping you'd say. I hope your next answer is, and he's not married to anyone yet, so Annie, I'd like you to meet this professional chainsaw guy.

Amanda: You might even have about 20 years on you. But he was this salt-of-the-earth guy. He was working for us because he was taking every single plank of the dock that became the front of our set and carving into it to make it look aged and period-appropriate.

He put his chainsaw down and it was... I mean, you're talking plank after plank after plank. It's a huge amount of wood. And he, with tears in his eyes, this lumberjack of a man, was telling me how he feels like his whole life has led him to this in order to be able to serve the kingdom in this way.

He was the chainsaw guy. And I was like, this is so cool and so crazy and so of the Lord, including so many people. I could never weatherboards for a doc. That took that guy, that skill set, his testimony, his life story that got... you know, it was just... Across the board, those are the stories that we hear of people who are working on the show.

So to me, every time I think of the set, I think of that guy. I know the bones of that place. There were construction guys there who their Bibles planted around the set because they were intentionally praying over and dedicating the land. And these were like the guys in the orange construction vests. Like this is a place that has been bathed in prayer and purpose. So to me, I see the bones of it, you know?

Annie: I mean, it's amazing, because as we're talking about what Dallas does, and what Chainsaw Guy does, and what Jonathan Roumie does, and what Lucas does, and then what you do. I mean, it is like the Lord has pulled all these people in their gift set and said, here's what you're going to do around this project to make it complete.

I mean, these studies you're doing, as I was flipping through it today, Amanda, I was just like, this is so deep. I mean, it's just so deep. Because this one is particularly around 1 Peter, correct?

Amanda: Yeah.

Annie: So then you're also like, Peter, I love him.

Amanda: I know.

Annie: I love him.

Amanda: I know. It feels different writing it now. Like I said, I feel like I know them a little bit better. My co-writer on the studies was my Bible professor in college.

Annie: No way.

Amanda: Dallas and I went to college together, and we both were Bible majors. And this was one of our favorite humans, like not just his classes, but just he and his wife, we adored and stayed in contact with for 20 years. So that's just another piece of like when it came to writing studies, I have a lot of experience, but I really did want to go deep on these studies and I didn't want to get anything wrong.

So I approached Doug, who is actually one of our scholars who gets all the scripts as well. He's in our Bible round table discussions and you can see him there. But he's just this wealth of information. So I get to mine all of his incredible expertise. And then I joke with him, I'm like, "And then I'm going to say it like a human." That's my role. "You're going to give me all the smart stuff, and I'm going to say it like a human, and we'll be great."

Annie: Well, I mean, just about every section, there's a *For Bible Nerds Like Us* section.

Amanda: That's the Doug stamp. I love it. I am such a nerd. I know, I know.

Annie: I am too. For our friends watching on YouTube, there's like a chart for the Bible nerds like us, which is us here, that sounds fun too, of every Old Testament... So it says some of the Old Testament prophecies. Some of the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the New Testament. So it's the Old Testament scripture, the New Testament scripture, and how Jesus did it in a chart. I was like, this is my nighttime reading tonight. I'm just going to lay in bed until it falls and hit me on the face reading through all of this.

Amanda: I'm that way, too. I get so excited about that stuff. I go on rabbit trails where from a word, from a verse, I'm like, I want to know more about that word, you know?

Annie: Same. I know. Okay, do you know how to read Hebrew or Greek? I do not.

Amanda: No. No. That's why I need Doug.

Annie: Yeah, we've got a Doug for that.

Amanda: Yeah, no, I'm not that committed, to be honest.

Annie: Well, I mean, it's just amazing. I genuinely don't know this answer. It's called an interactive Bible study. What part is interactive? Because it goes with the show.

Amanda: It goes with the show. In the beginning and end of every single lesson, there are script excerpts. So you can see how it's interacting with the show. We make reference sometimes to the storylines. But the interesting thing for us, and that I felt so convicted of when I started writing, is some people have complained that we're not following the show more closely because they really just want to keep talking about the show.

And I'm like, listen, the show is absolutely steeped in scripture, but we don't have all of these conversations from this location to that location or how different storylines tie in. That's really this biblical narrative that the guys have created. I don't want to study what they're fictionalizing essentially from historical fiction and the biblical truth of it.

So we really decided these studies are not a supplement to the show. The show is a supplement to the study. So the whole point is that the show leads people back to Scripture because it's just a show. So we love the show and we love what it's doing, but the end game is Scripture. So we really heavily focus on that.

[00:42:26] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Liquid IV](#). What is your reason for wanting to be more hydrated? Do you just forget to drink water? Are you working out a lot? Do you feel run down or are you often on an airplane?

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sugar-free flavors that you are going to love. The lemon lime, the green grape, and the white peach. Y'all, they are so good.

Liquid IV has three times the electrolytes of the leading sports drink, plus eight vitamins and nutrients for everyday wellness. And it's all in one single sugar-free stick, so it is easy to take with you on the go. We keep them in the office. Everyone has a different flavor they like the most. Mine is the lemon-lime, but also that peach. We definitely have some fans of the green grape.

There's no artificial sweeteners in it, and it's non-GMO and free from gluten, dairy, and soy. Use it every day, or before a workout, or when you feel run down or after a long night or on long flights. Literally everywhere, you guys, everywhere.

However you hydrate, grab your Liquid IV Hydration Multiplier, sugar-free, in bulk, nationwide at Costco, or 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 Better Hydration today using the promo code thatsoundsfun at liquidiv.com.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Amanda.

[00:44:12] <music>

Annie: It's been my favorite thing this spring to tell everybody, like, here's another thing to put in an Easter basket. I'm like, oh my gosh, this is perfect in an Easter basket of anybody who's a Chosen fan or not yet, if they haven't been exposed to it yet. What a great eight-week study. It's beautiful, Amanda.

Amanda: Thank you.

Annie: I get to read a lot of things in my job.

Amanda: I bet you do.

Annie: When I read things that are deep, I'm just so appreciative because we need things that are lighter. We need intro things. I mean, if we're going to talk marketing, we need top of the funnel. Even Jesus needs top-of-the-funnel content to give to people.

Amanda: Absolutely.

Annie: This is not that to me. This is like, hey, have you been around this a little bit? You want to talk about suffering? Let's talk about suffering. It's just beautiful.

Amanda: I'll say a cool thing on that note, as we're talking about calling, too, is in Season 1, Episode 4, we show the miracle of the fish and all the fish jumping into the boat. Jesus was talking to Simon about... He had told a parable about how fishermen catch fish, and then they sort the good ones from the bad. And then He says to Simon, "Did you get my parable? Did you understand it?" And Simon's like, "Not really." And he said, "Well, just like they do this and they catch, they gather the fish, I want you to gather people. I want you to be a fisher of men." He's like, "And at the end of the age, I will sort them out."

Dallas has had his calling on his life clarified for him where he's like, I'm a gatherer. I am not the one sorting them out. A lot of people want him to sort out. A lot of people want to say, no Catholics, no Mormons, no charismatics, no whatever. However we've delineated, Dallas is like, that is for the Lord to sort out. I'm to gather people to the story of Jesus. Okay, so he had his calling very clarified.

Well, I really felt like my calling was to disciple the ones who stayed. So he's gathering, and I feel like I'm standing behind him going, "You want to go deeper? We have content for that. We can take you deeper." So that, I think, most characterizes the working relationship that we have. I give tons of opinions all the livelong day. But my actual role, I feel, is I'm here to disciple people who want to stay, and who want to go deeper, and who want to read a For Bible Nerds section because you can't get enough. And that's not everybody.

Annie: How did you get that sentence of, I'm supposed to disciple the ones that stay? Was there a day? Was there a scene you were watching on set? Did you and Dallas have a conversation? Or did it come over time that you're like, oh, now I get this?

Amanda: People always ask, what are your other ideas outside of writing for the show? And I'm like, Oh, I'm not a creative person. I don't have ideas. When I sit down to write without heavy prayer and like pleading with the Lord to say something, I'm like, there's like a tumbleweed rolling through my head. I'm not bursting with ideas.

So it came in one of those times where I was just, Bible open in the Lord, waiting to hear from the Lord, waiting to learn. I have to learn this stuff first. The reason there's a Bible study on suffering is because I was suffering. So I'm like, okay, Lord, I need to learn what you... I was like, I don't have anything on this topic because I'm just mad at you. I feel abandoned. My daughter is suffering. It's worse than if I was suffering.

So it was truly out of desperation, this last one. But that's kind of how I write in general. I kind of write desperate. I kind of sit with the Lord and go, It doesn't happen unless you're going to give it to me. So in one of those sessions, you know?

Annie: I taught at a conference this weekend, and on Saturday I said to the Lord in the morning... and I said this from stage afterwards, but I said to the Lord in the morning, are you fine with me getting up and preaching when I feel this mad at you? Are you fine with this? Are you going to be all right? I am going to do my job. Also, you and I have some things and I don't know if I need to wake up an hour early and we need to get right. Is this like a don't go to bed while you're angry moment?

So I had to do that thing that you said of like, Hey, I'm going to pray kind of messy and I still have to do my job today. And then I'm going to come back this afternoon and we're going to work through this.

Amanda: Right. I love that so much. That just resonates so deeply. But I also feel like there are things that make me mad, but I am past the point of questioning who He is. I know who He is. I just get mad at who He is sometimes or mad at what He's choosing.

And that's one of the things that we've been doing as we've been walking through this season is like, okay, what is actually true? Because it's all I got. I have all these feelings and I have all these opinions and I feel like I'm talking to the wind. I feel like I'm being overlooked, I feel like, whatever, all those things that we do. But I know what's true, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Amanda: So when you go back and you focus on the truth, I can actually say what's true and have it not be at all hypocritical. It's like, no, I know this is true. I'm just a little ticked about it at the moment.

Annie: I'm mad, but He's still good.

Amanda: But He's still good. And I can't make those ideas do this right now, but they do.

Annie: I mean, I've kind of stopped asking why to the Lord, because I'm like, actually, this is just a waste... This is a tumbleweed. If I ask you why, it is a tumbleweed into our relationship because I don't find the Lord answers that one very much. And the only reason I'm asking why is it if I'm mad or if I'm not happy with the result I've

experienced. So instead, I'm just kind of going... it's that same, like, I'm not questioning who He is.

Now I need you to tell me, what are you about to do with this? You must be on the move if all this is happening. So what are you doing? Because "why" is not serving me. It just feels like it keeps me mad for another quiet time 30 minutes, you know?

Amanda: Yeah. I need to write that on a Post-it note and stick it right to my computer: "Why" is not serving me.

Annie: "Why" is not serving me.

Amanda: That's a good one.

Annie: That's how I feel.

Amanda: That's so true.

Annie: Okay, so tell me this. When you are talking to the Lord, what is it like talking to Jesus when you are part of a show about Him? Has it changed your prayer life? Does He talk to you differently because you make a show about Him? I don't know. Is it different for you now?

Amanda: It's really funny. Everybody pictures Jesus as Jonathan, but I know Jonathan. That hasn't happened for me as much. I'm not really praying to Jonathan.

Annie: Probably good, everybody. Everybody put that sticky note on your computer.

Amanda: That's the number one takeaway of the day, if you get nothing else. But I would say that I feel like the thing that has made me pray differently is how I'm seeing what He's doing impact across all demographics. It's the closest thing. I would say it's the closest thing for me.

I didn't grow up charismatic. I was a good old Baptist girl. So I didn't actually experience a lot of that... you know, some of the spicier sides of the faith. How am I saying that? So I would say that when you have old people down to two-year-olds to special needs people, to people in other languages before it's translated into their language, understanding things about Jesus through the show, I'm like, this is the closest thing to like Acts and the tongues, you know, people went out and heard it in their own language.

So I kind of have this new wow factor. So I would say, I'm actually praying some bigger prayers. I would say that's how it's affected because I'm like, I'm watching something supernatural taking place. I'm not always getting yeses to my big asks, but I am asking more of them, you know? And then I go through the anger, and then I go back through theology, and then I tend to land back in the same place.

Annie: Yes. Right.

Amanda: With an inch may be gained. But I'm praying bigger prayers because I'm seeing this miraculous spread that is just so cool. It becomes undeniable so that when you're praying, that's who you're praying to. You're praying to the guy who just made sense to a family in China that doesn't speak the language. That's not us. That's him. So we're just going to keep going forward. And man, we're praying to the God who speaks all the languages and who does all the things. That's the main difference for me.

Annie: So when our friends listening are watching *The Chosen* or listening to this, see an interview with Dallas, and they think, Man, oh yeah, I'm going to pray for Amanda and Dallas, what do you want our friends praying for your family?

Amanda: That is always the kindest thing and I would say the most coveted thing. You know, you hear that a lot in the Christian community, "Oh, I'll pray for you". Now I'm like, "Oh my gosh, please do. Thank you. Please do." Right now, we're being really honest, and our kid is letting us be honest. Pray for Maya. Because that's our current challenge.

From a more macro level, my kids love Jesus, and I'm so thankful for that. Every one of them pursuing a relationship with the Lord. But they are getting hit. I mean, weird things. So just steadiness. I would love for people to make them steady, like anchor them. Because I am learning to get past asking for relief, right? I'm not asking for that. I do think that the suffering and the struggle is keeping me clinging to Jesus, and it's helping us not get this wrong, quite frankly. And I'm guessing that's part of the sovereign plan.

If you enjoy this too much, you might run ahead, right? And I think He keeps me clinging to his thigh through some of the suffering. So I'm not praying for relief, but I do pray for steadiness in our marriage, steadiness in our kids' hearts so that we can just manage the high winds, you know?

Annie: We will pray that I promise. You know I do, but I'm speaking on behalf of all of our listening friends.

Amanda: Thank you.

Annie: Okay, I want to finish by pitching a merch item to you, a merch idea.

Amanda: Ooh, I'm in.

Annie: Listen, when Taylor Swift started the Heiress Tour, all these... uh-huh, stay with me. Did I already tell you this in person? I can't remember. I may have already pitched this to you.

Amanda: No. But it was a really good lead-in, so I'm like-

Annie: Okay. One thing a lot of fans did is they had these big posters of every song on every album, and they marked off when she did her secret songs. You know, because two songs in every show, she switches up. So they knew which ones were in the show, and then they went and x'd off kind of like a big bingo board of songs.

Amanda: Okay.

Annie: I have a dream in my heart to have a bingo board of every story in the gospels and I get to x it off as y'all do it on the show.

Amanda: Oh, cute.

Annie: I would go back and start from the beginning if I could x it on a bingo board of this is every story in the gospel and see if y'all... Y'all may not get to hit them all. We certainly aren't holding you to hitting them all, but I wish there was a bingo board I could purchase.

Amanda: That's really cute. I'm actually going to pass that on.

Annie: If there's a world where I can buy a bingo board, I am your first and maybe only customer. But I wish I had a bingo board that went along with every episode or every season.

Amanda: We get a lot of suggestions that I have to go-

Annie: I'm sure you do.

Amanda: And they don't necessarily get passed on. That one I'm passing on. That's a good one.

Annie: I'm just submitting it. I understand I have an advantage because I can go right to the top here, but I'm just submitting that as soon as I saw that for the heiress door, I was like, that is what I wish *The Chosen* had.

Amanda: That's a great idea.

Annie: Thank you for doing this. I hope you and or Dallas will come back in the winter when y'all have another fun project coming out.

Amanda: I'll come back for you anytime. It is my goal to get in an actual one-on-one lunch before our next this.

Annie: This. We just said in front of everyone. We have to have a table not recorded conversation over food. Okay, I can come to Texas.

Amanda: It would be completely the same.

Annie: Literally. I just probably would have said more details is the only difference and maybe a cuss word if I'm just telling the whole truth.

Amanda: I was going to say and a few more swears. I love Jesus, but I curse a little. Is that what they say?

Annie: That's it. Amanda, thanks for doing this. Thanks for *The Chosen*. I can't wait for people to get this interactive Bible study to go along. It's beautiful.

Amanda: Thanks Annie.

[00:57:16] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she great? I know. She's so fun. Now, listen, when I ask our guests what we can pray for, I hope you will scribble that down on a sticky note or write it in the back of your journal or add a note to your phone and say, Okay, I'm going to remember to pray for the Jenkins family during this process of creating this show and these resources.

So it's just the most fun though. I know. Putting her and Dallas together... you need to go back and listen to that Dallas episode. We'll link it in the show notes as well. But putting the two of them together, it's awesome.

Hey, make sure you go get your copy of *God's Goodness for the Chosen*. It is great to go along with right now as we're watching Season 4. But if you want to save it,

go ahead and grab it and save it and let's do it all together in May. I mean, we won't do a group or anything. I'm just telling you what I'm doing. I'm going to do this study for my summer. If you want to do the same, go ahead and order it.

Amanda doesn't really do social media, but if you want to tell her something, you can leave it on my post. You can go over to Dallas and leave it on Dallas' Instagram. If you just want to encourage her today, you can do that on his social media or on mine, and I promise the message will get to her.

If you have not watched Season 4 yet, you guys, you can see it in theaters. It's getting ready to come to the app, so get ready. But in the meantime, go back, catch up season one, two, and three. Also, if you head to my YouTube, [youtube.com/AnnieDownsTSF](https://www.youtube.com/AnnieDownsTSF), like that sounds fun, we have got some behind the scenes interviews I got to do with a lot of the cast, including Jesus, our friend Jonathan Roumie, and Dallas, a lot of the people involved with *The Chosen* behind the scenes during season four.

That is available now on YouTube. A lot of people are finding it and watching it. If you want to go find it, it's there for you as well. So make sure you catch up on season one through three of *The Chosen* in the videos we have for you on YouTube and get ready for Season 4 coming to the app and everywhere we love to stream it.

If you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener or just send them straight to us on That Sounds Fun podcast on Instagram. We love answering your questions there in the DMs and in comments.

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

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you, and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me, well, we're recording this on Monday, you're hearing it on Thursday. So I'm getting to go to Carnegie Hall tonight. Lillian is playing violin there. I think you heard me talk about this on Monday and my friend Travis Cottrell is singing, and it is the day before our Devo releases, *Let's Read the Gospels Guided Journal*. It feels like a perfect way to celebrate this book is to go listen to Travis sing about Jesus at Carnegie Hall. So that is what sounds fun to me.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday with my dear friend and the woman I call America's spiritual director, Emily P. Freeman. We'll see y'all then.