

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #05: Embracing Each Step of Our Race
(Instead of Agonizing Over the Finish Line)

Amy:

That is water to my soul Suzie Eller. ***It's not about the finish line. It's about the race.***

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Hey, this is Cheri Gregory, and you're listening to Episode #05 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

This week, my de-LIGHT-full co-host, Amy Carroll, and I are talking with Suzie Eller about her new book *Come With Me: Discovering the Beauty of Following Where He Leads*.

As we get started, Suzie is sharing how she came up with the idea for this book in the first place.

Suzie:

You know, it was never meant to be a book. About two and a half years ago, I was waking up in the middle of the night. I think that sometimes that's where the Lord knows he can find me. Around 2:00 in the morning I would wake up and I was just wrestling with him, because I wanted more. I didn't want more stuff because we're drowning in stuff. And I didn't want more favor because we have so much favor. I actually wanted more of Him and less of a whole lot of other things. But I didn't know what that looked like. One night as I was laying there wrestling, I took a sticky note out and I wrote the word *deeper*. I felt Him calling me to a deeper place in Him, even after thirty-five plus five years of walking with Him. To go deeper meant that the next day I got up and I just, I stepped into the book of Luke. I thought *I'm just going to sit here as if I've never heard this. I'm going to watch him and I'm going to listen to him and watch how he interacts with people.*

That two weeks turned into almost two years. It challenged my faith, it brought rest to my faith. It simplified my faith because I began to ask myself, "If I lived as the thirteenth disciple, as if I'd never heard these words before and I begin to live them, how would that change my faith?"

And it changed everything.

Amy:

These twelve disciples, one of the things that I loved about your book was remembering all over again that they were flawed, they were so flawed. Yet, how does God ... I loved that you talked about even how God used their flaws. It wasn't even just that he used their strengths but how is it that God uses our flaws and our imperfections to meet the needs of the world around us?

Suzie:

One of the things I really wanted to do as I settled in for what I thought was two weeks and went well over two years. I just wanted to see these men — who had no idea what the end of the story was — I wanted to see what that looked like as they walked with Jesus. What I realized, and this delighted me, is that most of them remained true to the characteristics that they had.

What I mean by that is like, for example: John. I love the fact that he called himself *the beloved disciple* and we never hear Jesus saying that. Ever.

We just hear John calling himself that. He grew into it. There's a verse, where Peter and John are running to the tomb after the resurrection. John puts in there, not only that it was the beloved disciple and Peter running towards the tomb but the beloved disciple got there first.

He had to make sure that that was there. That that somehow was recorded in history: *"I beat Peter to the tomb."* This shows such the humanity that John when he, the only disciple of the eleven that didn't (sans Judas Iscariot) he was the only one who wasn't martyred for his faith. At the end of time, he began to talk about, 1st John when he was an old man about the beauty and the knowledge of knowing who Jesus was and knowing who you are.

I thought to myself, "Still John. Still John, who was impulsive. Still John, who wanted to be first, but still John who saw himself as a beloved disciple to the point where he became a beloved disciple and in the believed in so firmly that it carried him through the loss of the brother, it carried him through prosecution, carried him through isolation and he could still stand and say, "I am John, the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ."

Amy:

It just strikes me too as I hear you talk about that: the epistles of John are some of my favorites. They make me feel so loved. In knowing how deeply Jesus loved him, he was able to share with us how deeply we are loved too, that's beautiful.

Suzie:

Absolutely a deeply flawed man, but a deeply used man of God. What I realized is that God uses our strengths, and I'm thankful for that. But he just as effectively uses our weaknesses.

Amy:

That's so amazing. Since you walked with these guys for two years as the thirteenth disciple, Cheri and I started this [podcast] to talk to perfectionists and people pleasers and highly sensitive people. It's kind of like the people that we are. Do you think any of these guys fell into those categories at all?

Suzie:

You know what's really funny Amy? The Lord announced the choices of these twelve men. You would think that since they were chosen for some of the most important leadership roles in the church that there would be just tomes written about them, but more than half of them kind of faded into obscurity as far as their name being in the light. There are some like James the son of Alpheus that we know little about him, except that he was short. That's what we, except for he walked with Jesus. In Revelations we know he's there and that he literally was part of changing the world but his name wasn't in the lights. Some other ones that were ... like Matthew. Matthew was chosen to write the book of Matthew, was chosen to record events. He had something within him that was a giftedness from the Lord that was used when he was a tax collector that now was fully used in this leadership role in the church, recording events.

He was one who was educated and used. Then we look at one of my favorites, Peter. I don't know if "People-Pleaser" is the right word for him but I know that he longed to please Jesus. Sometimes that was amazing and sometimes it got him into trouble.

Amy:

He did say some things that were kind of unexpected and Jesus had to set him straight sometimes. It was probably the Sunday school answer that he was trying to give.

Suzie:

It was the guy waving his hand in class trying to get attention, "Lord, see me? See me, here I am!" Which I love that impulsiveness about him.

Then we look at James. This was, he was a pretty intense guy. He and John, both. They wanted to be first. I don't know if they were hypersensitive but they certainly, they wanted to always know that there was a place somewhere for them. The lord taught

them all in spite of those things that could have been looked as weaknesses but in many ways were used as the greatest strengths with him.

Amy:

I wanted to turn back to Peter again because he's one of my favorites. I love his high emotions. One of the things that I got the pleasure of doing recently was to going to India with you. I got to hear you speak and talk about this phrase that Jesus said in the midst of the gospels: "one more time." How does that phrase help people that are trying to overcome creating their own perfection? "One more time."

Suzie:

You know what I really loved about this is? It doesn't say in that verse where Peter had fished all night ... it doesn't say that he caught "a few fish" or "a few less than his quota." It states very clearly, he had fished all night "and there was nothing, absolutely nothing" to show for it. When Jesus said, "I want you to push out into the deep. I want you to cast out your nets one more time." Everything within Peter, the logical, his experience, everything looked at Jesus as if to say, "You know what? You are a Rabbi, you maybe the Messiah, I'm not sure yet, but I am a fisherman. I know that if you fish all night there are no fish to be caught. I have nothing." I love his response to Jesus. He said, "But if you say so." You can hear the conflict in that. *I don't get it. I don't think anything is going to happen, but if you say so.* Amy, can I tell you how that changed me?

Amy:

Yes, please.

Suzie:

This was not too long after I was doing this. Again, on the personal journey, had nothing to do with the book. Somebody came to me and asked me to do something. I knew instantly it was of the Lord. That doesn't always happen. But instead of saying yes I said, "That's awesome. I will pray about that..." And I'm telling you there is these *ouch* moments for the Holy Spirit just talks to you. I realized that even though it sounded super spiritual, I actually was offering a delay to Jesus. It wasn't about prayer or I needed counsel — this was my delay.

That's when I realized that if the Lord is the one asking, my response is going to be, "I don't get it, I don't see it, I wish I had the plan from A to Z but ***if you say so.***" I began to whisper *yes* where *no* one wanted to take root. If I knew it was the Lord, I didn't need to go through counsel, I didn't need to take ten hours to pray about it. I could just say *yes* and then trust that he would show me the next step.

Amy:

That is so helpful. You let Jesus interrupt your to do list?

Suzie:

I did.

Amy:

That's amazing. I love that.

Cheri:

So, for those of us who are really results-oriented. One of the quotes I pulled out of your book: "This is often the hardest part of trusting Jesus. There is no blueprint, there is no peek at the final product. Simon Peter could not see the end result, instead he was asked to live moment by moment and day by day walking with Jesus."

For those of us who are so used to having the checklist and knowing before we start that we are going to be successful by our own standards, how do we make that kind of shift? What do we stop doing and what do we start doing instead?

Suzie:

You know what I really love about this question is it's still asking our stop and starting point, and it's still asking for results.

Cheri:

You noticed that, huh?

Suzie:

I did. I did!

So, I'm going to shift you back to where I had to shift to myself and that was, **He asked us to live moment by moment and day by day, walking with Jesus.**

It doesn't mean that if God wired you to be goal oriented or result oriented that there is not still a finish line and there is not still things that task and goals. What it means is we stop looking at the finish line and we start enjoying the race. One of the coolest aha moments that I had was when Peter did push out and he did cast his cast his nets and suddenly the nets are overflowing and he calls over his fishing buddies and their nets are overflowing.

What I really love about this is that it was never about the fish because Peter walked away from the fish.

Cheri:

It's true.

Suzie:

He left those nets hanging from the boat, filled with fish. He didn't set up a shrine to the fish, he didn't start some kind of, "Here's How You Can Catch Fish, Too" [program.] He didn't get cash for the fish. Because in the deep — and this is where it's key — Jesus didn't say, "Push out into the shallow, or you just hang out here and I'm going to command the fish to go into nets." He said, "I want you to push out into the deep." When Peter pushed out into the deep, Jesus met him there and he was awestruck because he rediscovered who Jesus is. He followed him from that day forward. It was never ever ever ever about the fish. It's never ever ever ever about the finish line. It's about the race.

Cheri:

I don't know about you, but for way too many years, I believed just the opposite.

I obeyed the bad rule that goes, "What really matters in life is crossing the finish line first."

So while listening to Suzie, I got chills when she described out how Peter just walked away from the fish because it wasn't about the fish. It's all about following Jesus. It's not about the finish line, it's about the race.

We've got some great resources for you, from Suzie, on the web page for this episode at CheriGregory.com. You can enter to win a copy of Suzie's book *Come With Me*. You can download a free chapter and companion study journal from Suzie. And we'd LOVE it if you'd share this episode with your friends on Facebook. You'll find easy one-click buttons for sharing right there on the web page.

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You've been listening to Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules with **Cheri Gregory** and **Amy Carroll**.

Next week, Amy and I will be sitting down and chit-chatting the take-aways we each had from today's conversation with Suzie.

For today, grow your grit ... embrace God's grace ... and when you run across a bad rule, by all means BREAK it!