

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #117: How to Make Magic Mix of Holy and Hustle

Amy

So Cheri, tell us about some of the things that you have said yes to in the past that you should have never ever in a million years agreed to?

Cheri

What are you implying Amy? Are you saying I'm the kind of person who says yes when she shouldn't?

Amy

I might be your twin sister.

Cheri

So where do I even start? I mean my goodness the list is so long. I suppose there's two that I can think of real quickly here. One is when I first got to the school I'm at right now, and I was brand new to the boarding school environment and to supervision and all the extra responsibilities plus we had just moved, and I was in grad school. So I was like totally overwhelmed, and then they needed somebody to teach a particular class and nobody on the faculty stepped forward and said they would do it. And I may well have gone to the vice principal and said, well if nobody else says yes, I'm sure I could do it. And...

Amy

I could solve your problem!

Cheri

I could solve your problem! I could take your problem and make it mine. It was horrible. I was the worst. It was – I deserved every miserable moment I got for thinking I needed to be the one to go in and be the rescuer. And then the other one is anything to do with finances. Like anything that involves that level of detail, just...no. Just because I was good at math does not mean I'm good at finances. So anything to do with finances should have been an automatic no, but I have been the finance person in several volunteer organizations, much to everybody's regret. How about you? What are some things that you've said yes to that you should have never in a billion years have said yes to?

Amy

Well, in chronological order, we could go on for hours, but I said yes to a marriage proposal in college that I should have never said yes to because there were ten thousand red flags that were waving in my face, and I was ignoring. But thank goodness God saved me from myself,

and I ended up with the right man. That's a God story. But then also the one that I really feel some regret about is that I wanted to help earn some extra money for our family when Anson was born, and so I thought I can take care of children in our home! I was a teacher. So I took on the care of a baby that was about the same age as Anson. So I had two babies, it was like having twins. And I was unequipped, unprepared, and un-good.

<Laughter>

I was not good at it! And I just felt angst all the time because if they were both crying, guess who I wanted to take care of?

Cheri

Of course!

Amy

My baby. I just felt guilty and like a horrible person. So thank goodness they moved right before I had to quit. But those – I should have never said yes to those things.

Cheri

That's so hard because as recovering perfectionists and people pleasers the yes comes out so easily followed by regret.

Amy

Yes, one of our listeners said something similar. She said, "Perfectionism and people pleasing leave me over-worked, overstressed, and over-tired, and underproductive. Usually from an inability to say no to any request that comes my way and to all the excess work thrown at my by all the people who know I won't say no." Oh gracious, yes. It's so easy to get in this place, and I think we all need some advice about this issue.

Cheri

Well, this is Cheri Gregory.

Amy

And I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri

And you're listening to Grit-n-Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules, the podcast that equips you to lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy

Today we're talking to Crystal Stine, author of *Holy Hustle: Embracing a Work-hard Rest-well Life*. A self-proclaimed digital missionary, Crystal has always dreamed of her perfect career: climbing a corporate ladder and achieving success, and she did. And then God began redefining hustle. Taking Crystal on a journey from striving to serving, from corporate America to non-

profits and freelance work, Crystal understands the tempting pull of striving but has learned to lean into the blessing of focusing her hustle towards serving God's kingdom.

Cheri

So if you wrestle with saying yes and no at the appropriate time, Crystal has some wise words for you today.

Amy

Well, Crystal when you put the words holy and hustle together you know you're gonna get some peoples' attention. Tell us why you wrote *Holy Hustle*. Tell us about the back-story.

Crystal

Oh, listen, I wrote *Holy Hustle*, because I needed it more than anybody else. It was the message God was working in my life for more than, gosh, more than 2 years now. It's been a long time. It honestly started more than 10 years ago, but the phrase really he put on my heart about two years ago when I found myself in a season of striving, and I was struggling, because I was one of those girls who I never dreamed about my wedding but I for sure dreamed about my career. When I was little I was like, "Oh, I am going to be wearing some cute shoes and walking down the streets of New York." And then I went to New York and I realized people don't wear their cute shoes to New York, they were their comfortable sneakers and the cute shoes are in the bag. It's not how it is in the shows. But I always knew had a heart for work. I wanted to help provide for my family, whatever that looked like. I didn't really even dream about that. I just knew that the trajectory that was in my head was I'm gonna go to college, and I'm gonna start a career. And if a family happens to be part of that then great, if not then okay. And so, a lot of that came from growing up with a single mom who worked because she needed to provide for my twin sister and myself. And so I had this example of her work, and my grandmother was a township supervisor. And my great grandmother owned a Christian bookstore in our town, and my aunt owned a printing store in our town. Now, her daughter owns a vintage clothing store. You know all of these women in my life and in my family were working, and they were using the gifts and the talents that they'd been given to support their families and so that I knew was who I was created to be. That was just something I knew about. But I didn't necessarily know how to reconcile, and it took me a long time to realize I had to...the idea of rest. How to incorporate a Sabbath into all of that because my personality is go, go, go, go, go. You know, I will make it happen, if you give me a task to get done if somebody else isn't doing their job, I'm going to do their job so it gets done. It's like a super girl, you know? So God has given me these talents of being responsible and organized and I love a color-coded spreadsheet you know? I'm the dependable one right? But like a good superhero I can use those for good or I can use them for evil right? Like I can use them to honor God, or I can use them to build my own kingdom and so I found myself in a season where I was doing an awful lot where I was trying to compete and compare and keep up. And I was exhausted, and I was burned out, and I was wondering why things weren't happening the way I thought they should or in the timing I thought they should. And I have these examples of these amazing women who are entrepreneurs in my life, and who I follow on social media. And I have some amazing women of faith who on social media are telling me about rest and soul care and about grace. And I'm like okay, well, I get it and that

sounds amazing, but if I sit in a quiet room with a cup of coffee and a candle I'm going to fall asleep. And so I don't know how that fits.

<Laughter>

I struggle because I feel like I'm supposed to do that, but it doesn't really feel like me either. So it was this journey of saying, "Okay, God, I feel like you created work and rest." I don't think there is anything that he didn't create, or he isn't aware of, or doesn't have a purpose for. Why is it that I'm feeling called to work, but I feel guilty if I admit it, but I also have this desire in my heart for rest but I feel guilty for that too, like, if I'm not doing something with my resting. And so, it was this period of my life where I had previously been fired from a job, and then I had to hurry up and hustle to find something else. And then I had been asked to resign from a job, and I had to hurry up and hustle and figure out something else. And I was like, okay, none of this makes any sense to me. Is this the cycle I'm just supposed to go in? Why is hustle this word that every body cringes from so much, and is there something that scripture says about work that can bring these two together? Is there a balance? And I know that's a tricky word. But is there a balance of work and rest that honors God and isn't about us. And there is! Spoiler alert. God has a few words to say about that.

Cheri

I love it. Well, you may or may not be describing me and Amy to a T and probably many of our listeners, so you advocate saying goodbye to striving. So can you help us understand the difference between striving and what you're calling holy hustle? How can we recognize the difference?

Crystal

So striving is when we make it all about ourselves. We do it all on our own strength, on our timeline, with the resources that we have, and we think that we're enough, right? Everything tells us, "Hey, you got this, girl. You're enough, and you can do this." No, we can't! We can't. We're not meant to be enough. That's why we need Jesus. So when we find ourselves striving, it's doing the version of hustle that's working 24/7 trying to compete with people who are doing something that looks similar to you, hurrying up and trying to get your product or your message or your work out there before somebody else does so that they don't steal your credit or your thunder, right? So striving makes it about us. Holy hustle makes it about God and about serving others. So the competition aspect of that turns into what Romans 12:10 tells us that we are to outdo one another in showing honor. So it's not about doing more or doing the most or doing it better than everybody else. It's about using the gifts and the time and the talents that we have to honor God with our work which means knowing which parts of the job are not ours to do, and it's about outdoing one another in honor. So it's looking around at the people in our life, our actual neighbors, the people who live beside us or go to our church or shop in the same grocery store or sit in the carpool line. It's how do we honor them? How do we love them? How do we pull their gifts and talents out so that we build God's kingdom instead of striving to build one that's all about us?

Cheri

Mm. Okay, great distinction. You then also say when we stop striving and start serving we begin to trust God to harvest what we're faithfully planting. Could you share with us an example of what that looks like?

Crystal

Yes, so when I have been in a season of striving, trying to put it all together myself, I tend to steamroll over those small moments that God plans for me to notice. Those moments where I could be investing in a relationship, or I could be teaching my daughter something about the way work shouldn't be all encompassing in our lives. That it's okay to rest. That she's not interrupting what I'm doing. But that she's an important part of the work that God's given me. So when I'm striving, and I'm trying to just go all the time, I'm missing out on these moments where I can have a life that really shows faith in action, so we can plant those little seeds. So whenever I'm serving, I may never see the results of this harvest that is happening in the lives of people I'm impacting, because we all have influence. We are all called to go and make disciples, so if you believe in Jesus, you have influence, and you're a leader because you have been given a commission. So if I'm so busy worrying about my own stuff and building up my own platform and making it about me, I'm missing those chances to maybe even in small ordinary, just everyday faith just serving God kind of ways to plant those seeds that maybe somebody will see that my life and my work as being a little different. And maybe they'll wonder why, and maybe they'll see Jesus in the work I do, or the way I interact with them or in the way we allow somebody else to go first, right? Or the things that are just different even if it's just letting somebody go in front of you in the grocery line, that doesn't happen that much any more. And it may make somebody realize, "Oh, there's somebody kind here who cares about people a little bit more than I thought." When we do that, when we take the time to slow down, and we stop assuming that we have to do it all and that it's all our responsibility. Then we can rest, and we can take the time to invest in people around us. And I think that really does plant a harvest for God to be able to come in and shine through those parts of ourselves we're willing to admit are weak. When we say we can't do something, or when we say that it's a struggle for us to do something, God can shine through that because when we're honest about that, that we're not enough. Then we need to rely on God every day to give us that strength, that energy, that passion, or the desire, or just the courage to do whatever it is he's calling us to do. Then people can start to recognize that we're giving God the glory for anything that happens good out of it, right? And so, he can get a moment to shine through our weakness. Whenever we're willing to slow down and say, it's not all about me, and it's not all about what I can do.

Cheri

Okay, so you've brought up the whole concept of comparison, which is one of the biggest struggles for those of us who are recovering perfectionists, and you admit to struggling with jealousy. So we would love to hear your practical advice for fellow jealousy and comparison strugglers, which again, Amy and I fall into that camp, and I know many of our listeners wrestle with this as well.

Crystal

Oh, I'm so relieved. I thought you were going to make me share about who makes me jealous.

<Laughter>

Cheri

Oh no, this is not a tell-all show.

Amy

Well, it could be if you want to share.

Crystal

Open book, right? No. I feel like I might distract from the message. But no, I think really this is something I have for a very long time struggled with. And I don't know if it's because I have an identical twin sister, and so there was always this level of trying to somehow stand out as different while looking exactly the same as someone else. While also being an introvert, and not really wanting the spotlight on me, but, "Hey, pay attention to me, but do it subtly. So it's not actually telling anybody you're doing it, because if you make a big deal then I'll be super embarrassed." I'm such a complicated mess sometimes, but my poor husband; I'm like how do you ever celebrate anything for me? I'm like of yeah, uh, no, oh. You know I want a big thing, but I don't.

<Laughter>

So he's just confused all the time, bless his heart. But you know, it is something that I think because, with the Internet, which listen, I'm gonna say right now, social media is my favorite thing. And I really, truly see it as a missions field. I think that Christians can have such an impact when we share the good news of the gospel there. We're called to go do that in all corners of the earth, in the dark corners of the world. I mean, the Internet, come on now. If there's not a better missions field I don't know what it is. There is such good that God can use there. But it's also a place where we have to guard our hearts, because unlike our grandparents generation or our great-grandparents generation where they lived in a community, and they knew those people, but they lived in a community of maybe what, 120 people that they knew, and they got to be the best at something. They were the teacher, the doctor, the farmer, the whatever, they had their role, and they were the one that did it there. And then in the next town over, there was somebody else that did it, but they never really cared about what the person in their town was doing because they had to take care of the people in their town. And so, now we go on Instagram, and I'm like well there's 800 women doing the exact same thing that I do. And I don't feel special. I don't feel like I'm doing a good enough job because look at all these things they're being given and look at their overnight success. But that's not what we're created to do, that's not how community is meant to work for us, and so being able to recognize this then. The Internet is amazing. Instagram is a fantastic tool for inspiration and encouragement and to connect with people, but when God calls us to use our gifts somewhere, he gives us a specific plot. He calls us to a place, and he calls us to a season of life where we're supposed to interact

with people. And so, whenever I am able to look at, alright, God has called me to a very small town in central Pennsylvania. This is where I live. This is where I go to church. This is where my daughter goes to the same elementary school that I went to when I was little, and it's where my husband teaches elementary school. This is the place God's given us, and it's not a mistake. Yes, I have the resources to be able to reach women all over the world because of Facebook, whatever, and that's okay. And I can be faithful in those spaces too to share what's God is doing in my life, but he's calling me to serve here. And so, whenever I can be content in this space, and know that God didn't make a mistake in the gifts he gave me, in the place I'm in, with the people he's put in my life...I can start to view the women in my life who are doing similar things as coworkers in the kingdom, right? Like we are all serving our people in our place together, so we can go and take the good news of the gospel further than we ever could on our own. We can feel confident that this job that God's given us, whether we are keeping small children alive, or delivering mail, or making coffee, or running meetings in board rooms, whatever that looks like, none of that is mistake; that all serves a purpose, using your event to honor God with our purpose right where we are. And we can start to really honor other women through that. And you can't honor somebody and encourage somebody and also be envious of them. Your brain cannot function in those two spaces.

Amy

So good.

Cheri

I love how practical that is.

Amy

And the follow-up to that is a quote from your book, you said, "Holy hustle means learning to say no and learning to ask others for help." So I hear you're already talking about connection, and now you're talking about saying no, and asking others for help. So number 1, help us! So HOW do we say no? Do you have any tips on that?

Crystal

Yes, it's very easy. You say no. End of sentence. No.

<Laughter>

Cheri

This is the number one question we get from our listeners, is how to say no.

Crystal

I know, because you don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I get it. So I've had women in my life who have taught me this. I needed to have a mentor. I needed to watch other women do this well and be able to say, when they say no, this doesn't mean it's the end of the road for them. God's not done with them just because they said no to this one opportunity. It meant that they were abiding with God. They were spending time with him, and they knew his heart well

enough to know that he had something planned for them that was so good and so great that they could say no to whatever this was. Whether it's ending a season of life, or ending a season of work, or ending a hobby or whatever it was that they could say no and make room in their lives so that God could bring something new in. And maybe that was just a season of rest, right? Maybe they were saying no so that they could rest, maybe learn something new, and get ready for the next thing God was giving them. Our fear is that is if we say no then no one is going to see us as essential or important or we're not going to feel needed. Like we want to feel needed. We want to feel important and seen and valued, and when we put all of that into how much other people are asking us to do, we're just going to be exhausted. Knowing that if God is asking me to step out of this season, that's going lay something down for him, or saying no to something that's being offered. It's because he has something else in mind. It's not because he's done. It's not because there's nothing left. And I think that once we become comfortable knowing who we are in Jesus, that we are valued, that we are chosen and loved, and made holy. And that he welcomes us. And we can be broken and not enough and all of that beforehand, we don't have to say yes to everything. We can confidently say no. And if we're doing that other part right. We're connecting and investing in the lives of the women and the people around us to know how God's made them; then we can start to connect them with those opportunities. Because when we say no, it's a yes for someone else. When we say no to a speaking engagement or we say no to helping decorate something, or no to being a committee for the 80th year, being the president of the PTO, whatever it is. You know whatever somebody is asking you to be a part of, if it does not feel like something God is immediately asking you to say yes to, because you know that, right? You know that feeling when somebody asks you to do something, and you're like, YES, I am all in! Or you're like, "Oh, I really need to find a way out of that." If it's not that first one, maybe stop and say, "God is this where you want me?" And if it's not where you want me, will you help me maybe be aware of who might be the perfect fit for it? And then we're doing one another an honor, right? So we're not only recognizing what other people are good at, but we're using our no for a space for somebody's yes, who would be truly thrilled for that opportunity.

Cheri

So one of the things that I find in my community Sensitive and Strong, is that a lot of women who are highly sensitive they want to serve, but they can't serve in some of the traditional ways because of the big crowd, the glaring lights, the big noises are literally not just overwhelming but over stimulating for them. And so, I was wondering, if you had some ideas of ways that women can serve that are perhaps a little smaller, or if nothing else, a little quieter than the ones that get so much attention.

Crystal

Yes. And I think that the ones that get so much attention are wonderful, but there are so few spots available for those. But there's so much that has to happen behind the scenes to make that all happen seamlessly so whether it's being a part of a prayer team. Right now one of the things I do is I'm the communications coordinator for our church, and so I get to see a lot of the behind the scenes that happens. We have a pretty big church so we have video announcements instead of on-stage announcements. Well, for me that's really fun, because being on stage isn't

really my thing. I mean, I'll do it if God tells me to, but if I can read off of a teleprompter and have it just be me and one other person and then they make me look amazing and edit me, then fine, you can absolutely use that. Or we have a wonderful prayer team that is always available to meet with people. We have people who come in and just help fold bulletins or we have people that take care of all of the landscaping here. If you love gardening, how can you volunteer to help serve a community garden in your neighborhood? Or maybe you love reading, maybe start a little free library that no one actually ever has to see you at it, you just put books in it. I think there are so many ways that we can honor God with our gifts. If you love to write, maybe you just volunteer to write a newsletter or an article for your church or for your community, maybe a cause that you're passionate about. You can go online and find different places that, like Compassion International, where you can use your gift to help write letters to kids that don't receive letters from their sponsors. That's something I've done before, and it's an amazing opportunity. So you can really love these kids around the world, but you don't commit financially to it, and you're not going around speaking about compassion, but you're doing that part that tells a kid around the world that somebody loves them and sees them. And once we start to realize, okay, listen this is something I really love to do, we maybe let other people know about it, and say, I love helping people get organized. I wonder if there's anybody that could use that. Well, absolutely there are tons of people who would love for you to maybe help as a virtual assistant and help organize their inbox or just delete all the junk emails. I've done that for people before. It's essential. Or maybe just responding to emails for people. That is a completely behind the scenes task, but something people need help with because it can get very overwhelming. Honestly, volunteering anytime you can to help maybe a single momma maybe watch her kids so that she can have a moment to go be with her friends or go to a bible study or something. You don't have to teach the bible study. You can just offer to watch somebody's baby for a little bit so that that momma can go get a break. I think there's all kinds of ways that we can serve that are smaller and maybe unseen to most of what the world would think is big and fancy. But listen: God doesn't make mistakes when he puts those opportunities in your life, and if he has created you to be compassionate and empathetic there are so many things that we can do that don't require spotlights or crowds or any of that, but that honor God with what he's given us to do.

Cheri

I love it. So creative.

Amy

Crystal, would you give our listeners a parting word of encouragement?

Crystal

Yes, the most encouraging thing that I would want you to takeaway from all of this is to know that the way that God has created you to do work for his kingdom doesn't need to look like what anybody else does, and the way that he has created you to rest doesn't need to look like what anybody else does either. Spend time in his word long before you spend time in anybody else's how to or help book and know how he has created you and walk confidently knowing

that where you are and how you're created is not a mistake. And you have good work to do for God's kingdom.

Cheri

Head on over to gritnegracegirls.com/episode117.

Amy

There you'll find our transcript, this week's digging deeper download, the bible verse art, and directions about how to enter this week's giveaway of *Holy Hustle*.

Cheri

We are so thankful to our Grit-n-Grace Growth Partners. You can learn more about how to become a Grit-n-Grace growth Partner at www.patreon.com/gritnegracegirls. We would love to have you join our team.

Amy

Make sure that you join Cheri and I next week, when we process together what we learned from Crystal.

Cheri

For today, grow your grit; embrace God's grace, and when you run across a bad rule, you know what to do. Go right on ahead and...

Amy & Cheri

Break it!