

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #147: How Oneness Could Rock Your World (in a Good Way)

Multi Voiceover:

- **Perfectionism is a barrier to hearing from God.**
- **No matter how hard I try to keep everyone happy, someone is always mad or annoyed or upset.**
- **Everyone thinks I have it all together.**
- **I want to focus on my priorities, but I struggle to say no.**
- **I just want peace.**

Cheri

Do you ever hear these kinds of voices in your own head?

Amy

I sure do! And usually at 2:37 in the morning.

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

If this is your first time listening in, this is a podcast for women who love Jesus and long for the abundant life He's promised.

Cheri

But some days, maybe even most days, you feel kinda like a puppet with perfectionism and people pleasing pulling your strings.

Amy

If nothing you do ever seems good enough.

Cheri

If you try too hard to do too much for too many for too long with too little.

Amy

If you exhaust yourself spending time to keep everyone else happy and your own needs go unmet.

Cheri

If you struggle with the C-word, control.

Amy

We get it. And you're in the right place, girlfriend.

Cheri

Grit 'n' Grace brings you weekly encouragement from wise, witty women ...

Amy

Because we have the best guests!

Cheri

We do! Women who come alongside you and equip you to replace the exhaustion of self-made goodness with the rest of God's grace.

Amy

Every week we kick culture's bad rules to the curb so that we can follow Jesus' good plans for us.

Cheri

Hey, we want to say a big THANK YOU to those of you who have been shopping at our Etsy store! Your orders help us pay for the hard costs of producing this podcast.

If you haven't browsed our Etsy store yet, check out gritngracegirls.com/etsy.

You'll find lovely laminated Bible verse cards plus scripture-themed necklaces and key rings that make wonderful Mother's Day gifts.

Amy

They really do! They all got scooped up at our last event, Cheri. Amazing!

Cheri

They did.

Amy

Today we're talking to Deidra Riggs, author of *One: Unity in a Divided World*.

Deidra is a thought leader, author, speaker, and the visionary behind life-changing events for writers, artists, entrepreneurs, and other fabulous people who have an amazing dream.

When she's not inspiring you to live life to the fullest and push past invisible boundaries, you can find her frolicking in the ocean, dancing to loud disco tunes, or hosting a group of her closest friends around the dinner table.

Well, Deidra, we're so glad to have you here with us today. I have to tell you that your book is already, it's just messing with me, girl.

Deidra

Sorry.

Amy

No, it's good. It's work that needed to be done. So tell us, what led you to write *One*?

Deidra

Well, I wrote it because I believe that love is God, and God is love. I don't know that we truly ... I know I don't truly understand what that means, you know. I'm trying to daily allow myself to be taught about love and kind of deconstruct what I thought love was, or might be, or is. I think that it's work that the church can do, as well, for all of the things that we do so well, I think we still have a growing edge, and this is it.

As a little girl, I started going to a church with my family. We were the only brown family in a white church. That opened my eyes. I do believe that's the in that God had for me for this message, because, as a child, I noticed that ... I was like, "Where are all the brown people in church? Do not brown people go to church? Is this just an exclusive club? I don't understand. Why are there no brown people here?"

I had grandparents, so we'd go visit them, and I'd go to their church, and they were all brown people, and I was like, "Well, why don't the white people go to church in this state? I don't understand. What is going on?"

As I grew up and grew older, that has really been my driving question. Why can't the church figure out how to worship across racial lines? For me, as a brown female, that was the way that God was able to get to me about division in the church, in general. So He started with me with race, 'cause that was something I could see and live and understand and comprehend, I think, as a child.

Then, later as being a woman in the church, and then that just really ... I've always been a questioner, so asking questions and wanting to know people's stories really opened me to the realization that we're divided in very, very many ways. I do think that, sadly, the church is very complicit in the division that we see currently in our country and in the world. So I would love to gently and lovingly share thoughts about that, and that's why I wrote the book.

Amy

For people that are listening, the thing that surprised me, Deidra, is I really thought that the book was going to focus exclusively on race relations, but you are all up in my grill about conflict, in general, the way I see other people, so, anyway, it's great.

Deidra

I got up in my grill first, so welcome.

<Laughter>

Cheri

Episode #147: How Oneness Could Rock Your World (in a Good Way)

Well, because perfectionists have this huge desire to get everything just right, we can tend towards legalism and having a black and white view of the world, but you challenge us in your book, *One*, by saying, "When we try to minimize the love-to-gospel ratio, we are treading on dangerous turf. I would argue that what we've watered down is not the gospel, but our understanding of love in the Kingdom of God."

Can you unpack this for those of us who are afraid that we might miss truth as part of the gospel?

Deidra

I think that, yes. I am not a perfectionist, I am married to one, though, so I'm familiar with the black-and-white view of the world. And I think, there is some black and white, we can break it down to black and white in that I am either going to be a loving person or I am not. I think that's really the line that we decide to live on, that we try to figure out which side are we going to live on. Am I going to be a loving person? Or am I not going to be a loving person?

What we don't really recognize or grasp is what love is. So while your question is, I don't know, have you asked me? What is my understanding of love in the Kingdom of God? I don't know that we really know what that is. What it is not, I think, is the way that we have taken the gospel and made it a bunch of hoops for people to jump through, because what God tell us and what the gospel tells us is that love is the way.

I would challenge anyone to go through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and refute that love is not the point of the message that God is trying to share with us. So when we take that message of love and make it a list of do's and don'ts, and what you must do for me to love you, which is not who God is. He doesn't say you must be this way for me to love you.

When we take that gospel, that love letter that He's written to us, and make it a list of do's and don'ts, and also, like my certification that I'm in and you're out, right?

Amy

Ouch!

Deidra

I think then we're missing what God truly means when He's talking to us about love and the Kingdom of God.

Cheri

Okay.

<Laughter>

This is also making me realize that it's also my checklist of who I get to ignore.

Deidra

Right! Yes!

Cheri

My checklist of who I don't have to mess with because, clearly, that's just too ... Yeah. Okay. Thank you so much for all of this, Deidra.

Deidra

Sorry.

<Laughter>

Cheri

Well, another quote. You say, "If I can rest in the confidence of knowing that neither my reputation nor my identity is founded on whether I win a particular argument or choose the right side, my investment becomes less and less about proving you wrong and more about building a relationship with you.

This truth here is so key when we've invested so much in building our own reputations and identities. How can we get to the place that you're describing here, where it's less about proving others wrong and more about building relationships with them?

Deidra

Okay. Let me just set this foundation. I don't have any of this mastered. So, you know, this is still aspirational for me.

It's still a goal that I'm working to ... No, I don't have that. So how do we get to such a place? I think it's a moment-by-moment decision, a reminder to myself, of what we've chosen when we go back to am I going to be a loving person or not?

So the loving ... I don't want to say it's not about me, because I do think we need to love ourselves in order to be able to love others in this way, but the scripture teaches us to consider others better than ourselves. So I come back to that often.

I know if I get cut off in traffic, it's because that person's a stupid idiot, right? It may not be.

<Laughter>

Amy

Yes. We do know that.

Deidra

So I have to make that conscious decision to see that person as God sees that person. I don't know. Are they late to work? Do they have an emergency with a family member? Are they just distracted because of life? I don't know their story, so how do I change that judgment of them, that they are in the wrong, to a perception of how God sees them?

Bryan Stevenson, in his book, *Just Mercy*, he says that, "No one is ever only the worst thing they have ever done." My only encounter with that person on the road, probably, for my whole entire life is going to be that. And it is unfair of me to judge them based on that one encounter, judge their whole life and their identity and their value in the sight of God based on the fact that they cut me off on the road.

When I can surrender that, when I can rest in knowing who I am in God ... So anything else that is not about who I am in God, to me, is really false. It's more like my ego that I'm trying to defend, and I'm feeling like I have to protect and I'm feeling that I have to prove is right and on the right side and making the right choices, and better than you, and all of those things.

All of that is false. That's not the true person that God has created me to be. So when I can return to trying to discover how does God see me, then I don't need the other people to be wrong. No, I really don't, because there's no investment in that. We are all one. So I don't need you to be wrong for me to be comfortable and safe in my identity.

Cheri

Mm, Mm, Mm. Whew!

Deidra

Again, aspirational.

Cheri

What you're making me realize is even something as seemingly small as that sense of superiority, that at least I don't drive like the idiot who got their driver's license by correspondence school, is still training me to think that way, and to set up the right-versus-

wrong dichotomy, and what would it be like to have that thought process that you just described, even in traffic, that would change everything. It really would.

Deidra

Then what do I do with myself, then? What does that mean about me when I cut someone off, right? If that applies to the ... Whatever I've judged the other person as being applies to them, does it apply only to them in that situation? Or does it apply to me as well when I cut someone off? Because I will, I will cut someone off.

Cheri

My reasons are always reasonable. Other people are idiots.

Deidra

Of course, it's quite rational when I do it, yes. It's called defensive driving.

<Laughter>

Cheri

I see you understand.

Amy

Oh, wow! This is making my mind spiral off into all the other positive labels we put on bad behavior, yeah.

<Laughter>

So people pleasers avoid conflict at almost any cost, but you explain there's usually a higher cost that destroys oneness. Here's a quote from the book. It says, "Going straight to a person who has hurt me, and to that person only," and you talk, oh, anyway, "and to that person only, filled with the Holy Spirit and full of trust and hope is always better than the alternative. The alternative is to talk badly about that person to anyone who will listen."

My first question is are you sure about that? Do you have any personal evidence that you can offer that that's really true?

Deidra

Yeah, I do. I think we've been on the receiving end of the ... Oh, I can speak for myself. I've been on the receiving end of that, when people spoke badly about me behind my back and to other

people, and somehow, eventually it gets back to you through the grapevine. It's kind of like that telephone game where when it gets to you, it's like a whole different version of whatever happened, at least in my mind, because my intent, and I think this is true of 99.9% of people, my intent is never to harm anyone or ever to hurt anyone.

So when we hear that something, when we hear through the grapevine, either way, whether the person comes directly to us, or we hear through the grapevine that something we've said or done has hurt someone, that's a painful thing for me, because I just don't intend ever to hurt someone.

When a person comes directly to me, though, it is, to me, a gift of trust and a gift of love that they're giving me that they feel that they can come directly to me. In the Bible, it says that when you find out that someone has an ought against you ... I think that's the King James Version, so when they can come to me with that ought, I receive that as a gift.

So the same is true in the reverse, that when someone has hurt us, and love, the scripture says, "Love", this is The Message Version, "hopes the best". I can hope that the other person's intent was not to hurt me, and so I can go to them in love hoping the best. Now I may find out that that's not true, but I can really only be responsible for my side of it, and I don't want to be that person who has started a rumor mill against someone else, because that's not love. Either I'm going to be a loving person, or I'm not.

The desire to begin the rumor mill is more about that blustery thing, about me feeling like I have to defend my false identity. My identity in Christ does not need to be defended. I'm much more invested in having good relationships, good loving relationships, with the other people that I spend my life on this planet with.

I've had people come to me, and it is such ... It's hard, hard, hard, but it's such a good gift, and it's a history that you build together. You have that history with that person. So, yeah.

Amy

I think a conflict almost always starts ... like the immediate reaction, the human fleshly reaction, is anger and bitterness, and those kinds of things. You mention in that list the Holy Spirit. What part does the Holy Spirit play in turning that around to hope and trust? Because I think ... truthfully, I'm in the midst of a situation, where I mean, you might've just seen me tear up, because I'm in the midst of something, and I probably said too much to other people already. So how do I turn my feelings around so I can go directly to the source with the right frame of mind to have a good conversation instead of blaming and ...yeah?

Deidra

I think that's really important what you said, turning your feelings around, because you don't want to go to the person in anger. You want to be able to go to them in love. Not that love and

anger can't live together; they definitely can, but you want your motivation to be love, not anger, not like, "I told you so. I knew it." You want to be restoring your relationship with that person.

I have found, number one, like, I do talk to ... I'll talk to my husband, someone in confidence, not about the person, but about the situation, and how do I move forward as a loving person, a person who follows Christ in this situation, so that I can get to the place where I go to them?

So either I believe what the gospel says, which is in Matthew 18, where it says, "Go to that person yourself first." Either I believe that that's true, or I don't. Whether it feels right inside of me, whether it feels good or positive, or I feel brave or courageous about it, is not necessarily the point.

What I find is that when I go in love, that scripture always, always, always works itself out in that experience. Now, that doesn't mean that I always have reconciliation with the other person, but I always come out of it a better person. I know more about myself, I know more about human nature, and I know more about the power of the Holy Spirit in difficult situations.

Amy

That's a great distinction, because I think we all go in hoping for reconciliation, if we're really going in with love, but we know the truth is, that takes two. So that's a great distinction.

Deidra

It does. Mm-Hmm.

Amy

Lots of us spend lots of time trying to fit in, but you say that oneness is not sameness, and you encourage us to pass through our differences. What do you mean by that? Can you give us some examples of what it looks like?

Deidra

Mm-Hmm. I think passing through, let's start there, passing through is a lot like leaning in, but it's not for my benefit so much as it is for the benefit of others in the space. So passing through people's differences is just that, not setting up a line or a border saying, "This is where we differ," but more leaning into that person, into those differences, not trying to be like that person.

I think we've all seen that where someone comes into a room and they're the only whatever, only woman, only man, only brown person, only white person, only whatever, and you start

trying to become like the people in the room. That is a disservice to me, and it's also a disservice to the other people, because I'm not presenting my authentic self to them.

So when we can pass through, rather than running away from, so we'll see that room, which is kind of what happened with me and my family when we started going to that church, it was my parents who took me there, because we had moved to a new town. I was two years old. They wanted to find a new church. They found this church in the Yellow Pages. They showed up a little bit late. They opened the door, and what was there but a room full of white people, and this was in the 60's, and they were like, "Oh, no. We are not doing this every Sunday. This is too hard."

I had already gone halfway down the aisle, so they had to go get me then we ended up staying. So that initial reaction of, "Oh, no. We can't do this. I don't want to be the only ... ", that's not passing through; that's resisting. Passing through says, and I don't want to give myself credit, I was two, but passing through means entering in and being who you are in this space where you may ... because we all are the only us wherever we go, but sometimes it's more visible than other times.

Amy

That's a mouthful right there, just that sentence. What are the advantages, what do we gain when we get out of our comfort zone and engage with people who don't look like us, don't think like us, or vote like us, or dream like us?

Deidra

So I went... I was invited as a visitor to this church. I pulled into the church parking lot, and I kid you not, every single car there, was a minivan, every single vehicle. I was the only little Honda Civic pulling up in there. I did not see. I looked. I was like, "How can this possibly be a whole congregation of people with minivans?"

It made me wonder, how similar are these people, and how often do we seek that out, everybody the same as us? How boring that is. I didn't go into that church because I could not ... Now, that's me resisting, not passing through, but I was like, "What? I don't even know what's going to happen in there. It's just going to be all minivan people." I don't have anything against minivan people, but there wasn't going to be any diversity, and I'm such a big diversity person.

I think we learn a lot from other people when we allow them to share ... we respect and honor their culture, their history, their story, their background, the way they came to Christ, or maybe they haven't. I just think we miss out on a lot when we surround ourselves with people who are just like us. Right now, I'm in New England in my house, and all around outside of me is fall. It's gold and green and brown and yellow and orange and red, and it is the most beautiful sight.

If I were to look out my window right now and everything was any one of those colors, it would be not as beautiful as this. There would not be that contrast, there wouldn't be highlights and shadows, there wouldn't be a sense of high and low, there wouldn't be depth, there wouldn't be ... there just wouldn't be the richness that I see out there right now, and it's not even sunny; it's a cloudy day. It's just a beautiful experience to look out there every day, and especially now at fall, but every day it's just a beautiful experience. I think we miss that when we don't allow that in our lives, when we don't allow ... When it's all just one whatever.

Amy

Mm-Hmm.

Cheri

Our listeners are reforming perfectionists and people pleasers, and then some of our listeners are like me, a highly sensitive person. For HSPs, peace and unity sound like pure bliss, like that's our sweet spot, but they're obviously hard won. So how do we foster relational peace and unity in our everyday lives?

Deidra

I think that comes back to preferring others better than ourselves, so there has to be some time in your day ... well, for me, I don't know if there has to be for everyone. I'm an introvert, so I have to have a time in my day where I kinda get my head together and my heart together, and I remember my decision to be a person who is loving. want to carry that into my day as I go, and that, the scriptures, Jesus told us, "As you go, make disciples".

So the intent is that you're not just going to sit at home. You're going to go out, and you are going to encounter other people. So to be realistic about what that means, it means that someone is going to cut me off, someone's going to give me the wrong change, someone is going to get on my nerves, some new story is going to upset me. So I already know that's going to happen. In this world, you will have trouble, but will you be a loving person in response? Or are you going to react out of an unloving posture?

Again, it's just an intentional ... and it's not me by myself, it's me inviting the Spirit of God to do that in me and through me. Often He'll do it by someone being loving to me, and reminding me I did not deserve that in that moment, and yet there's love and there's grace.

Cheri

Your story about the mercy seat and the justice seat rocked our world. Could you tell the story and explain both?

Deidra

Mine, too. That was a mess. So I went to this retreat at a monastery. It was a retreat about reconciliation, and a friend of mine knew I was writing this book, so she invited me to go to this retreat. At one point, it might've been the second day, the leader of our retreat, who was a monk, stood in front of the room, and he had two chairs. He said, "We often think of God as being a God of justice, and God is a God of justice, but God also sits on the seat of mercy."

I was like, "Okay, well, what does that mean? I don't know what you're talking about." He said, "We often think that we sit on the justice seat", and he invited this woman to come up to the front of the room. Good grief. And he said to her, "I would like for you to sit in the ... " and he had designated which seat was justice and which was mercy. He said, "I want you to sit in the mercy seat."

She did. We were all thinking about a situation in our lives where there was brokenness in a relationship or where we felt reconciliation had not happened somewhere. He sat her in that mercy seat to consider this broken relationship that we discovered she had. She was a sister, a nun, and she had a broken relationship with another nun that had been like decades long that they had not been talking to each other.

When she sat down in that mercy seat, you could just see on her face everything about that encounter with the other with that broken relationship changed in her heart, and she said, "It's just such a different experience to view this relationship from the seat of mercy rather than justice."

The monk who was leading this said, "We are so much better as humans at offering mercy, 'cause you can never get that wrong." You can never get mercy wrong, than we are at justice, which we can get wrong. We think we know how to administer justice, and we don't. Only God knows how to administer justice perfectly, because only God knows every aspect of every situation.

Love is the motivation with which God administers justice, and that's not necessarily how I'm gonna administer justice.

Amy

Yes.

Deidra

Mercy puts me first in a posture of love, and I can never go wrong with that. Love never fails. I can never go wrong with that.

Cheri

I feel like I need to make signs that say "Mercy" and just put them on every chair in my house now. Oh, my goodness, that is such a great physicalization of what could otherwise be a heady concept. You also say compassion is the precursor to restorative justice, which is just beautiful. What's the difference between retributive justice and restorative justice?

Deidra

I got that from Desmond Tutu, and he wrote a book ... ooh, *No Healing Without Forgiveness*, I think is the name of it [The Book of Forgiving]. It's about the Truth and Reconciliation committee in South Africa after apartheid.

Deidra

So he talked about how the Truth and Reconciliation committee wanted to foster restorative justice, and so he had to discuss retributive justice first. So it's right there in the root of the two words. We're either seeking restoration, or we're seeking retribution, which goes back to me, to my foundational question of do I want to be a loving person or not? Which kind of person am I going to be?

And I always, always, always want to ... if I'm in a situation where I have anything to do with administering justice to anybody, and I hope I am not often in that situation, I want it to be restorative. My gut reaction and our human reaction is for retribution, but I think what God is calling us to, and it's really well told in that book, is restorative justice, where we want someone restored to right relationship with us and with God and with themselves.

Amy

Deidra, this has been amazing. What closing words of encouragement do you have for our listeners?

Deidra

I would just encourage people to remember that the foundation and the thread that runs through the gospel is love. God is love, and love is God. Either we're going to live as loving people or not. If we say that we are, then we are doing that in every aspect of our lives, every person we encounter, every action that we take, it's motivated by love, and not mushy, squishy, romantic love, which is a beautiful thing, but this love is gritty and hard fought, hard won, and we don't really know what it is, but we just keep living into it and God shows us more of Himself.

Cheri

We hope you've enjoyed Episode 147 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

Amy

Head on over to gritngracegirls.com/episode147 where you'll find all the good stuff. Our digging deeper download is there. It's a printable resource that helps you apply what you learned in this episode. We also have show notes where you'll find a link to Deidra's powerful book, *One*. Our transcript is there, too.

Cheri

Hey, Amy, should we read them the Introduction chapter to our book?

Amy

Well, that's a little long. How about we read them the back of the book?

Cheri

Okay, it starts like this: Move from running-on-empty to spent-and-content.

Amy

Exhale is for the women suffocating under the pressure of being all things to all people; of filling every unfilled spot at church, work, and home; of trying to do it all right, make decisions that benefit everyone else, and keep everyone happy.

Cheri

Rather than adding more to your to-do list, Amy Carroll and Cheri Gregory (that's US!!!), show you how to:

Lose the ill-fitting roles you've been trying to fill so that you can be lighter and freer.

Amy

Love your truest, God-created self with all your glorious gifts instead of trying to shove yourself into a mold.

Cheri

Live your one and only life in a way that you know truly matters.

Amy

This isn't a time-management book filled with how-to lists and calendar tools.

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Cheri

Instead, it walks you through a process that releases you from the things that have created unbearable pressure.

Amy

Then you'll be able to live the combination we all long for:

- Fulfilling the desires of your heart
- Loving your people well, and
- Bringing glory to God

Cheri

If you'd like to help us birth our book baby into the world, you can learn more about the EXHALE launch team and apply to join at:

GritNGraceGirls.com/Launch

Amy

Join us next week when we'll be processing what we learned from Diedra.

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!