

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #150: The Joys and Perils of the Immeasurably More Life

Multi Voiceover:

- **It's easy for me to feel close to God with life is good. But when I'm hurting, I feel like He's abandoned me.**
- **I want to just crawl in a hole when I make a mistake.**
- **Authenticity would be great, if there's was somebody I felt safe being real with.**
- **I know I need more rest!**
- **Failure is my biggest fear.**

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

So Amy, I am so sorry! I'm **so** disappointed. I feel like I've let you and our listeners down, because last week I built up that I was going to read this great review from one of our readers of our new book.

And I couldn't get permission to do it. Since I'm a rule-follower, I'm not going to read it without getting permission.

Amy

Well, it's okay! We got an email today about *Exhale*! Can I read it to you?

Cheri

Oh, please do!

Amy

She said, "I am so excited for you and Cheri because of *Exhale*, I just started reading last night, but I couldn't put the pages down! Fired up to share *Exhale* with the World!

Love and Blessings,

Jane Ann

Don't you love her!

Cheri

I love her. Thank you, Jane Ann. That's amazing!

Oh my goodness, I got an email from Deanna. Can I read that?

Amy

Yes, please!

Cheri

She said, "Girls! I have just started reading the book and so far -"

And then she did, like, ... to create suspense, and then in all caps, "I ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT! Can't put it down."

Amy

Yay! Well, listeners, we are both SO EXCITED to share our "book baby" with you in LESS THAN A MONTH!!!

Cheri

Oh my goodness, yes!

Okey dokey! Well, Wendi talked about the uns of life: the unanswered prayers, the unfulfilled dreams, and unmet expectations. So, Amy, which one of these has tripped you up the most and why?

Amy

Well, there's a handstand winner on this one for me! And it is unmet expectations. You know, when I think back to really the root of my perfectionism is unmet expectations for myself primarily. I mean primarily for myself, I call it the pictures of perfect. In my head I have these pictures of perfection for every situation that I walk into. I joke, but it's only really a sad little, not so funny joke that as a bossy little girl I wasn't only going to try to be perfect myself, I would help you to be perfect too.

Cheri

So generous of you.

Amy

I know. I know. I'm just so misunderstood/disliked. Yeah. But yeah, it's those unmet expectations that have really, really tripped me up. It really became glaring. This is a couple years ago probably, so it was even after Breaking Up With Perfect came out. I was having this conversation with Barry. I was like, "What kind of expectations did you have when we got married?" Cheri, I mean the man looked genuinely puzzled.

Cheri

Oh no.

Amy

He's like, "Well, what do you mean?" I was like, "You know. Did you expect me to cook dinner every night? Or did you expect me to be quiet during the football game?" I'm thinking about probably all his unmet expectations. He seriously said, "Well, I just expected you to love me for the rest of our lives." I was like, "That's it? Because could I just list mine?" Poor thing. I think I've shared this here before. It was in that flash of insight that, wow, he really doesn't have expectations of me or not a long list that I thought, his greatest gift to me is to let me be.

I mean I feel that every day that I don't feel like I disappoint him and all the negative things that go with unmet expectations. So that's become my new goal is to let Barry be, to let my friends be, to let my kids be, and to let go of those unrealistic expectations that I've carried around for so long. How about you?

Cheri

Well, okay. So first of all, you stole my answer.

Amy

Shocker that we would both choose that one, isn't it?

Cheri

But I expected you to, so at least that's one less unmet expectation in my life.

Amy

Boo.

Cheri

Since you already took my number one answer, I'll go ahead with the second place answer. It is a distant second, but it is an important one. I'll go with unfulfilled dreams because I have been known to make my own dreams come true. Thank you very much. As I was thinking about this, I thought back to almost two decades ago when I was heavily involved in a direct sales company. I was on track to earn the incentive trip to the Bahamas. Of course, Dan and I had never been to the Bahamas. On a teacher's salary, we were never going to go to the Bahamas. But as the year was wrapping up, I could see that I wasn't going to hit it. I was going to be really close, but by really close I don't mean two digits or even three digits. I mean a comma. Instead of doing what a healthy, recovered perfectionist would do, which is say, "You know what? I came close. I'm going to be gritty. I'm going to be resilient. I'm going to celebrate what I did do." I was still so all or nothing. I was like it's the dream or death. There's no-

Amy

No second prize for me, baby.

Cheri

That's right. No, no. Second place is the first loser.

Amy

I have never heard that. That's amazing. Okay.

<Laughter>

Cheri

Yeah. You can probably guess what I did. I pulled out the credit card and I bought a boatload of inventory. Of course, the story I told myself was I'm going to sell it all next year. But the logic of it was so terrible. I'm having a hard time selling anything now, but if I buy things, they will somehow easily sell in January. So I wasn't thinking it through. I didn't seek godly counsel. I just did this thing. Here's the thing: it was an amazing trip. I mean we had a wonderful time. It was total luxury.

But from the time I placed those orders, I could not sleep or enjoy myself because I had that weight, that anxiety, that weight on my chest of all of that debt that I had accrued. I mean I'd really maxed us out. So on this trip, if we had forgotten something at home, we couldn't afford to even buy a replacement. Here we are at this luxurious resort, supposed to be having fun, and we did, but it wasn't worth it. I thought the worse thing in the world would be to miss the dream and what I learned was, no, it's even worse to force the dream. So, yeah.

Amy

That's so clear. I mean that makes things so clear. Unmet expectations are really usually unrealistic expectations. Unmet dreams are often forced dreams, not always, but often. It's worth some examining to look, why are these things unmet? Right? Maybe that's a whole different show.

One of the things that Wendy talks about though in the midst of those gaps that we're facing in our life is that God is immeasurably more. I've been processing this idea of immeasurably more, and I'm just wondering how does it strike you?

Cheri

Yeah. I'm not going to come out-

Amy

Okay, well-

Cheri

Go ahead.

Amy

Before, as I interrupt you, I ask you a question and interrupt you. Before we say that, let's just say that this is scriptural. So anyway, go ahead.

Cheri

Yes. Oh well, now I'm going to sound even worse because-

Amy

Well, no, I have some negative things to say.

Cheri

My problem is I'm skeptical about anything that I can't turn the package over and read the ingredients and the nutritional information for. So I struggle with this whole concept of immeasurably more because I want to measure it. I want to be able to count it. I want to be able to weigh it. I want to be able to reduce it to a checklist and then line it up next to my own plans, expectations. So all of this just ends up boiling down to having a hard time trusting God as if maybe I'm suspicious that He's going to hand me something and tell me that it's a delicious smoothie, and then I take a sip and find out it's filled with kale.

<Laughter>

Sorry, it's just the truth.

Amy

You are full of the best pictures today. Second place is the first loser. I think I'm going to get a yummy smoothie, but it's kale. All right. These are really helpful. No, but you know what? As I listen to you say that, so the thing about the back of a package too is it spells it out exactly.

Cheri

Mm-hmm (affirmative). No surprises.

Amy

So you can count on it. It's kind of like the rules. I'm thinking one of my qualms with immeasurably more is that I'm always afraid that God's immeasurably more is defined differently than mine. I believe His is right, but then what if I mess it up? Does that make sense?

Cheri

Aw, yeah.

Amy

The list of ingredients would be really helpful. I see that. It's funny because as I thought about this idea of immeasurably more I thought, well, on one hand I really struggle with that idea of immeasurably more. Now, don't get me wrong. I believe it for you. It's for me that I'm not quite sure it's all going to work out quite right. On the other hand, it's totally a thrilling idea. We're like, "Immeasurably more, that's what God has for me? That's incredible."

There have been times in my life that I have so clearly experienced God's immeasurably more. So it's thrilling. I've got this qualm with it, and then I have this thrill that goes with it. And then, is it okay if I have a third hand?

Cheri

Oh my gosh, yes. As long as I don't have to figure out where it's going to grow from your body.

<Laughter>

Amy

Oh wow. My head. Let's just put it out on my head there. With that third hand, it also terrifies me, because immeasurably more, or Wendy said super abundant, which is amazing, but it sounds amazing but also overwhelming. If I got it, would I even be able to handle it? So, anyway, these are my three arms or three hands that I was weighing all the immeasurably more with.

Cheri

That's a great question. Probably we all can relate to that question, would I even be able to handle it? The answer's no. We can't handle any of this on our own, but that's where the question comes from, almost as if God is going to give this and then leave us to deal with it by ourselves. He's the great giver, but He's not going to be the supporter in the midst of it. Whew!

Amy

Yes. It kind of makes me think about ... How did somebody ask me? I was at a speaking event last weekend. They said, "Well, how did you get to this place?" This is so funny because everybody knows-

Cheri

You mean arriving? Because, obviously you've arrived.

Amy

Right, right. Except we all know the ups and downs of our job. I did start thinking about how did I get to be a speaker? How did I get to write two books? You know what? It's just like anything else that becomes immeasurably more in our life, because I'm so grateful for those things, but is that you get them in little bits.

Cheri

So true.

Amy

I heard Lysa TerKeurst one day. She was being interviewed after *Made to Crave*, and she had just hit The New York Times Bestseller List. Somebody said, "How does it feel to be an overnight success?" That was kind of the way I got this question, too. She said, "It feels like 15 years of hard work."

Cheri

Good for her. Good answer. Good answer.

Amy

Right. But that's how God equips us for immeasurably more too, usually is we just get it a little bit at a time, one step of obedience at a time.

Cheri

I love that. I mean I also think I probably can recognize the immeasurably more in hindsight. It doesn't look scary at that point. It doesn't look overwhelming. I'm like, oh, that's what it looks like. It's trying to find it, see it, control it. There's the C word again. Figure out how I'm going to make it happen. Yeah, that's where I get into trouble.

All right. Well, Wendy also talked about living on autopilot in our spiritual lives. I thought that was such a great phrase. That's really stuck with me. What does living on autopilot look like in your spiritual life, and how do you fight it?

Amy

Well, I mean I've already referenced earlier in this episode about how I'm a rule follower. I want to know what the contents are in the package. So I'll read the list. I tend towards that in my spiritual life too. If you give me a book on prayer, and it tells me I do A, B, C, and D, then I do A, B, C, and D and maybe E also. And then if you tell me a formula for studying my Bible, I'm in all for the formula. Give me the rules. Give me the checklist. On one hand, there's nothing wrong with that. Spiritual disciplines are important. But God has really been trying to break me of some of this, I believe.

About a couple years ago, He started saying to me when I'd sit down with my Bible and my formulas and my notebook and all that. I just felt like He was whispering, "Just follow me, Amy. Just follow me." That has been a sweet thing that, yes, I still have some of these spiritual disciplines in my life, but I try to be sensitive to following God during my time with Him. That has really; it's kind of broken that spiritual stupor that I can get into when I'm just following the rules. And how about you?

Cheri

Well, moving on to the next question.

<Laughter>

Amy

Cheri? We are not moving on to the next question, girlfriend.

Cheri

All right, fine. Fine. For me autopilot means that it becomes normal for me to just keep adding more and more to my plate so that my quiet time, which is a form of rest time, so we all know that rest is my word for the year, rah rah. Yay. Go, go, rest. So what ends up happening is that my quiet time and anything that resembles rest does start to fall off just during this particularly busy week. And then it turns into, well; it's just a busy month. And then it ends up being, well; this is a busy season of my life. Isn't that a great phrase that just gives me absolution? Well, it's a busy season. As if that's what-

Amy

It sounds very spiritual.

Cheri

I know. The problem is I don't tend to recognize that I've gone into this autopilot until a friend and I are talking and she's just really naturally sharing with me something that God has shown her in scripture. My number one response is to feel completely resentful and feel like she's being super spiritual. And then I realize, wow, I fell into this autopilot that just kind of squeezed out the time for quiet time or spending time with Jesus. Then the thing that I do that gets me out of this is to break the rules, because, I, for the longest time, have had it drilled into my head that if I don't start the day with Jesus, that's it.

It's like the anvil is going to fall from the sky, almost as if nothing else counts. So it's really easy for me. If I do check email right when I wake up, well, that's it. I can have quiet time. It's like the diet mentality. I'll start over again tomorrow. Or I'll start over again next week when I can do it perfectly. So for me, getting out of the autopilot of allowing myself to get overly busy, which then becomes the autopilot of, well, I can't spend time with Jesus, because I can't do it right. To say, you know what? Right now, I'm dropping everything and I'm opening my Bible to the ... because I do keep my little marker. It's in Luke right now. It's been in Luke for too long. I'll just admit that.

But it's in Luke. I just said, you know what? I'm going to take five minutes right now. It could be 1:27 in the afternoon. I mean who's ever heard of studying the Bible at 1:27 in the afternoon? We know we're supposed to do it when we first wake up. But it never fails that something shows up in the scripture that is so sweet and so relevant for where I am in that moment that I am 100% clear that God was waiting for me and meets me there. That will snap me out of autopilot to realize, wow, even though I'm the one that was going like a crazy woman, He doesn't change, and He's not withholding. He's not hiding from me. He's there ready and waiting. The blessing that I gained is totally worth it. I mean it always is. It never fails.

Amy

Well, that transitions perfectly into our scripture this week, which is Psalm 31:24, which says, "Be strong and take heart all you who hope in the Lord." We've talked about this before, but this idea of immeasurably more means that our hope is not in our circumstances. That's where we fall into the uns I think, or that's where I get it when I get over-focused on my circumstances, when my hope has been put on my circumstances rather than in the Lord. So if we have our hope in the Lord, then we can be strong and take heart.

Take heart, it implies that there's something negative going on, doesn't it?

Cheri

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Amy

You wouldn't have to take heart if everything was all good. So He's saying, "Be strong. Take heart all you who hope in the Lord." It's like a little reminder. Remember, that's where your focus is supposed to be.

Cheri

So good. What's the bad rule that we're breaking in these episodes?

Amy

My circumstances are my reality. I think that's where all the uns are rooted.

Cheri

Yeah. That's so hard. What's the truth? What's our fact for focus?

Amy

My reality rests on hope. Our hope should be in Christ alone.

Cheri

So true. Where do you see the grit coming into all of this?

Amy

Well, I mean I'm still a girl who really struggles with getting mired in my circumstances. Last Thursday and Friday I had this little thing going on. It was precipitated by some stuff I was seeing on social media that really kind of shook me. I tossed something out and got an answer back that didn't sit quite well with me. It was a series of circumstances that really started to undo me a little bit. I was sitting in the airport getting ready to go to an event, a place where I needed to be focused on the Lord. I could feel this downward spiral.

It was from being a little shaken to being misunderstood. Suddenly, I was spiraling, Cheri, into this shame. I've realized, we've talked about body stuff; I get a tingling on my scalp with shame. I was having this major tingling. I seriously I was even thinking about my marriage and going, "Oh my gosh, poor Barry." I mean it was just I had spiraled down to, "Nobody loves me, everybody hates me. I'm going to eat some worms." It was just crazy. I have this tendency to do that and spiral. I'm trying to take some steps to really break that. That's the grit for me when I start to feel the tingle on my scalp. Isn't that weird? That's so weird.

Cheri

Hey. No, but it's great that you've noticed it.

Amy

Or when I start to get this one negative thought after the other that I need to do something intentional to break it. A couple Fridays ago, I was also in a spiral. What is it about Fridays? Anyway, I started to realize it. You know what I did?

Cheri

What did you do?

Amy

I said, "Alexia, play '80s dance music." Let me tell you, I just turned it up really loud, and I started singing and dancing. When Barry came home he was a little like, "What is happening here?" I was like, "Hey, I wanted you to have a happy wife this afternoon. You gotta do what you gotta do."

Cheri

Okay. I want a video of you dancing to '80s music. We should promise this to our Patreon supporters. I think they would love it.

Amy

I think we should promise not to send it to them.

<Laughter>

Cheri

That is hysterical.

Amy

Any grace in all this?

Cheri

Well, okay. I'm going to hop on a quick soapbox. I saw a meme the other day that really made me cringe. It said something to the effect that if I don't sense God blessing me, maybe it's

because I'm making my circumstances all about me, and He won't choose to bless me until I make my reality all about Him. Here's the problem. I can't make my life all about Him, no matter how hard I try. So the day I saw that and started getting ... I think I probably had a shame reaction to it. For me, it's a wrinkly feeling right between my eyes. Yeah, that's probably what was happening.

It was one of those days where I was like ... It was probably 4:00 in the afternoon that I opened to Luke. I was reading a commentary on the centurion that Jesus healed his servant. I'm just going to paraphrase this commentary. But they said our only claim on God's grace is our great need, not our own perfection, not our own performance, not our own ability to make our reality all about Him, but our great need of Him. So all of our un circumstances remind us of the reality of, and this is another quote, "Our utterly helpless condition without Him and that our hope is in Him."

For me, that whole picture that it is my need, my neediness, that actually is my claim to God's grace. I had to stop and read it five times and go, "What? This is so countercultural." And then to get to that phrase, "My utterly helpless condition." Compared to that meme I saw, which I know was well intentioned, but when I saw it my heart sunk because I was like, but I can't do that. I cannot make my life all about God without God. So to realize the grace that we live in, and the hope we have because of that grace, as needy as we are, as completely helpless as we are. We are in Christ, and we have hope because of who he is and what he's done for us - nothing that we do ourselves.

We hope you've enjoyed Episode 150 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

Amy

Head on over to gritngracegirls.com/episode150. There you'll find our digging deeper download, a printable resource that helps you to apply what you've learned in this episode, and our show notes. There's a transcript for those of you who love to read.

Cheri

If you've enjoyed this episode of Grit 'n' Grace, we would so appreciate it if you would leave us a review. If you go to gritngracegirls.com/review, you'll find a button that will lead you straight to iTunes and even a little video showing you how to leave a review.

Amy

Join us next week when we'll have a very special GUEST HOST, our friend, TONYA KUBO. And Cheri, we'll be sharing something one-of-a-kind. Right? About a month ago, some of you saw the video and photos about our first ever Grit 'n' Grace Girls Getaway. Next week, you're going to get a little peek and a virtual trip to join us there!

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!

Outtakes

Cheri

We all know that rest is my year for the word. I'm very excited about it. Rah rah.

Amy

Go back and say we all know that rest is my word for the year. You said my year for the word.

<Laughter>

Cheri

Outtake material right there.