

***Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules***

Episode #73: Retrospect: How One Simple Word Can Help You Have Your Best Year Yet

Cheri:

Hey, 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 helps you lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy:

Hey, Cheri! This is the week. I'm so excited. We're starting our retrospect series.

Cheri:

Whoot! Whoot! What on earth were you talking about last week? Disco shoes?

Amy:

Well, I gave two hints last week. One was that our series was gonna be about specs, and that's not just because my old eyes are 50 years old, either. It's because we are going to take a close look at the last year and hope to create an examined life. I could not resist throwing in the disco shoes, 'cause you know, I graduated in the 80's and all. Those are retro.

Cheri:

Ah, retrospect. I get it.

Amy:

Our goal with this series is to work together to create examined lives. And I was tickled pink this morning to run across a scripture in my time with God that shows us this is a scriptural way to live. I Timothy 4:16. Paul tells Timothy, "Watch your life and doctrine closely." See, there's the specs. "Persevere in them because if you do you will save both yourself and your heirs." An examined life is good for us and for those around us.

Cheri:

I love it. All right. You ready to roll?

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Amy:  
Here we go.

Cheri:  
So, we are breaking up with perfect, because I have nothing ready. I have no scripts. I have nothing!

Amy:  
That is fantastic!

Cheri:  
Isn't it?

Amy:  
You know, I just never lack for something to say.

<Laughter>

Cheri:  
I did not say that, but do you notice that I'm not disagreeing?

Amy:  
Well, it was so funny, because Barry gave me a surprise birthday party. And honestly, my friend Wendy goes this is the first time I have ever seen you speechless. And I really was. I was like ... I was stunned, because I was truly surprised. It was so sweet.

Cheri:  
Barry must be feeling so smug.

Amy:  
He was very proud.

Cheri:  
Very, very cool. All right. So let's talk about the purpose of what we're doing here. We're starting a new series. So we're calling this Retrospect. And the idea came to me kind of based on how many times you've talked about living the examined life. So just, what do you mean by that even? What does that phrase mean to you?

Amy:

I think it's so easy in our busy world, in our media-saturated world, to really move through life without thinking very much about what we're doing. Are we growing? Are we achieving the things that God's put on our hearts that we just – we really live by that saying that we live by the tyranny of the urgent, that we do the next thing in front of us without really thinking much about it. The examined life is the opposite. It's slowing down and thinking and taking time, and it's so funny because it's the podcast that has helped me to do that – that we have scheduled time to think about our lives. And I've loved that.

Cheri:

Well, and that was never the goal. I mean we certainly didn't, I didn't say, “Hey, Amy, I have this great idea that will improve our lives.” But it certainly ended up happening that way. So, what we're going to be doing over the upcoming weeks, I think we've got a total of ten here, is we're going to be doing a series called Retrospect. Where we are choosing, kind of early on, to do some reflection on 2017, and also in terms of looking ahead to 2018. Now I've done some courses where in five days, at the very end of the year, you kind of look back and look forward. But the problem for me is that that's almost a little too late. And it's also a little too intense. Like I can promise myself anything when I'm in the middle of a frenzy. But what we're going to be doing is we're just going to kind of be unpacking things piece by piece. And the structure that we've chosen is, we're going to be going through our personal manifestos. I'm so excited that you did yours. And today we're going to start with looking at our one word. Because you and I have both been in the habit of choosing one word for the year. When did you start doing that?

Amy:

I started doing that four or five years ago. And it's really, because it's out of my reaction of really hating New Year's resolutions. Because, I think all of us make them, even if we don't write them down or anything, we kind of have some in our head. And they fade so fast. It's just really hard to live up to those.

Cheri:

We go into them with such optimism. For me it's always this is the year I'm finally going to overhaul everything I've ever hated about myself.

Amy:

No small project for most of us, right?

Cheri:

Well it's just like a total setup for complete failure as a perfectionist. So, yeah, I'm with you, I like the one word. What's been your word for 2017?

Amy:

My word this year is believe. And it has been, believe has been a reprieve from my year last year. Because my word last year, for 2016 was fulfill. And I was so excited about that word. I really felt like the Lord had given it to me. He gave me a verse with it. And I was like, fulfill, that is like a rainbows and unicorns word. There are going to be wonderful things that happen this year. And y'all, it was just one of the worst years in history. I mean, it was just, it was really, really hard. And there were just so many things that happened that I felt like – it shook my faith really. Not in God, but in my calling, in where I was investing, and in myself. It was just really a hard year. And so when I got the word believe, God showed me that I was getting a little bit of a do-over because my key verse from the year before was the same for the next year. And it's Luke 1:45, where Elizabeth says to Mary, "Blessed is she who has believed that Lord would fulfill His promises to her." And what God showed me is, Amy, belief has to come before fulfilling.

Cheri:

Ooh, whoa. So what does that look like for you?

Amy:

Well, that's such a great question. What I realized I had missed with the word fulfill is a scriptural understanding of what that word meant. And when I went back and did a little digging, fulfill is not a rainbows and unicorn word. Most things that are fulfilled in scripture come through pain. And God had actually done that; I just hadn't prepared myself because I had this preconception about what He was going to do. And so with believe I thought I am diving into this word. So what I've been doing this year, a little bit inconsistently, but I'm plugging away at it. Is that in my morning quiet times I just go on Bible Gateway, and I search the word believe, and each day I'm looking at the next instance of it in scripture and writing the verse out and taking notes on it and like writing prayers out about belief. And it has been revolutionary for me; because what I have realized is that my belief was in outcomes. And when our belief is in outcomes, like success or children's decisions or even healing, those beliefs and outcomes they leave us shaken. But belief in Jesus leaves us steady. He's just showing me, Amy, your belief was in your outcomes and that's why your year was so hard. I want your belief to be in me. And it has been just so good. How about you, what was

your word for the year?

Cheri:

Well you know, first of all, I'm just, I love how you unpacked that, and it sounds like your original hope for fulfill last year, was going to involve pictures you could put on Facebook and check marks you could put on your list.

Amy:

Oh my gosh, how do you know me so well?

Cheri:

I only say that because that's what it would have been for me. Like, you could take selfies with it.

Amy:

Yes, that's exactly right.

Cheri:

I love how you, oh my goodness, I'm going to have to start going on Bible Gateway dot com and doing it. What a wonderful, practical way to do a word study that doesn't sound overwhelming at all. I love, love, love this idea. Okay, so I ended up with a two-part word myself. Because last years ... Or progression. Last years word was 'Ask.' And I will admit that was actually quite a bit of fun. It was scary, but I was very convicted that whenever something came to me that I wanted to ask, and sometimes I was asking for something from someone else. Sometimes I was asking to invite somebody to join me in something. And I think that was the year I asked you to do this podcast with me.

Amy:

Oh, wow!

Cheri:

I wouldn't have asked you otherwise. I mean-

Amy:

I love it.

Cheri:

Just a ton of things. And I actually have a list called My Ask List and at some point I quit adding to it because I realized I was going to try and do a percentage of

how many yeses I got versus noes. As if doing the math is somehow going to help me, but of course, it's the control thing again. I finally realized I don't need to really keep track. What matters is the asking. What matters is the obedience. And sometimes it was asking from God, but usually it was asking from someone else. Or it was asking to invite. Or it was asking questions. And so this year's word has been listen. Last year was ask, and this year is listen. And I think part of the reason was I can ask questions, and then give me about 20 seconds and I'm done. Like, okay, move on. And so this has been a year in which I have needed to do less talking and more listening. And I think the podcast definitely fits into that since I still do the editing and I enjoy it. There's a lot of listening I do just in that, that's teaching me that the multiple times I go through it, I hear more and more each time. And, but especially in my personal relationships, I think we all know what it's like to have somebody listen to us, but just so we can take a breath, and they can jump in and say what they want to say.

Amy:  
Sure.

Cheri:  
What I've learned this year is the ... I'll listen to somebody, and I'll start formulating that response about how wrong they are, or how misunderstood I am, or, and by somebody, let's be honest, I mean my husband, okay. Or I mean somebody really close to me, but it's usually Daniel on this. And what I'm discover is, if I go into a situation and I ask a question and listen, with the commitment that I might not say anything else in this conversation. Like, I'm just going to listen.

Amy:  
Radical.

Cheri:  
A couple of things happen. First of all, I realize I can always say something again later. It's not like I will never be allowed to talk again. Where this panic comes from that I have to jump in the moment I disagree or the moment I feel hurt or the moment, whatever. The other thing is it's amazing what I find out if I just keep listening. Like I may disagree, or I may be concerned, but if you let somebody keep on talking, sometimes they talk themselves out of the very thing that I was concerned about. Or they talk their way around and circle back around. Or they talked themselves into more options, and I had nothing to do with it. And it's kind of astonishing to discover how little people actually need me to fix them,

correct them, show them the way. So, I'm going to start doing that same Bible study, because I hate to confess this, but I thought listen was kind of obvious. Like, shut up. But I really haven't done a scripture study to find out what all that listen might include. So, I'm excited.

Amy:

Well, that is such a great insight that if you allow people to talk that they can come to a different conclusion. And I really resonate with that because I'm a verbal processor. And so, especially with my kids, if they ask me a hard question, I have to start talking, and then eventually, I'll probably get to a reasonable answer. But not right away. And so that is really fascinating Cheri, I love hearing that.

Cheri:

So why would you suggest, because I'm guessing we would both suggest that our listeners do something like pick a word for the year, why would you suggest that? And how would you suggest they go about it?

Amy:

Well, so, I think the bad rule for our series is that I'm paralyzed and unable to change my life. You know, that's I've been there. And I am there on sort of a regular basis that I think, well it's, I'm 50, I'm too set in my ways. Or I, you know, I'm just not able to do this. And I think that when we pick something for growth, and we pray about it ... So the verse I wanted to throw out there today is Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed." Now the way that I've done that in the past is that I've made a plan and then committed it to the Lord. But you see how the order here is commit to the Lord whatever you do. So it's this surrender. And that's how I choose my word, I bet it is you too, that I just try to come before the Lord and say, "Hey, what is it for the year?" So He sets the plan, and then He makes it succeed. And so it unparalyzes us. It allows us to grow and move forward.

Cheri:

Girl, I would never have chosen listen on my own. You know that one. That was clearly from God.

Amy:

God ordained.

Cheri:

Head on over to [GritNGraceGirls.com/episode73](http://GritNGraceGirls.com/episode73).

**Amy:**

Where you'll find this week's transcript and a free download you can use to help pick your one word for 2018.

**Cheri:**

We'd also love to have you join our Facebook group. Just go on Facebook, search for grit 'n grace girls, and you'll find our Facebook page and our private Facebook group. We'll be doing some fun Facebook live throughout this entire series.

[www.facebook.com/groups/gritngracegirls](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gritngracegirls)

**Amy:**

So join us next week for our second retrospect conversation, because an examined life is a better life.

**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 'n' Cheri:**

**BREAK IT!!!**