

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #87: Walking it Out: How a Scripture-Shaped Life Satisfies

Amy

Such a cheery topic for the morning.

Cheri

I know. You know I shouldn't write these things late at night. I shouldn't come up with these ideas when I've just been exhausted from a weekend, and the Internet has gone out. So, alright you want to come up with something different? Or you want to run with this?

Amy

No, no. I was just teasing you.

Cheri

Well, for better or for worse, talk to me about an early failure, I was about to say scarred, that left you scarred, but I think the word is here scared. Talk to me about an early failure that left you scared to try new things.

Amy

Well, I think scared and scarred are both quite appropriate. It's so funny how we have these memories that are these overarching memories, and when I think about, this is in third grade. So, this is so long ago, but I was in third grade and had a gaggle of friends, and I was trying to lead slash boss my group into creating a skit for our classroom. And at one point everybody looked at each other and walked out on me. Every girl in the group left. What I should have learned from it is don't be so bossy, 'cause I was being really bossy. I remember it that way.

Cheri

Oh no.

Amy

What I took away from it is people don't like me.

Cheri

Awe.

Amy

That was... Oh, I know. I feel pitiful even saying it, but it was this formative thing that made me very tentative about being myself in groups like that. One-on-one not so much, but in groups for sure. I kind of learned to shut down. How about you?

Cheri

I had something similar happen in sixth grade. I went to a little Christian elementary school, and I volunteered to give worship one day, and my mom helped me prepare. And, I just remember it had something to do with puppets, and then there were discussion questions. And I was so excited about leading this class discussion. The only problem is when I had finished my little presentation and started asking questions all of my classmates were silent. Like, this awkward silence descended over the classroom. There weren't even crickets chirping. It was so silent! I didn't know what to do. Like I was totally unprepared. It was the one thing I hadn't, I wasn't ready for. I ended up in the girl's bathroom crying which just made things worse; I mean that's even more awkward when your male teacher is in the girl's bathroom trying to coax you out of the stall.

Amy

Sorry to laugh!

Cheri

That was so good, that was so good. And, I'm like, "No, it couldn't have been. They wouldn't talk to me."

Amy

They hate me.

Well, and when I reflected on my episode, and like yours, I could think of episodes in different settings throughout my life that were similar to that, but I took away the wrong take away every single time. And we have a listener who said something very similar. She said, "My biggest struggle is the feeling of not measuring up, of not being enough and fear of failing."

Cheri

Oh, yeah.

Amy

And that's just shut me down so many times. It's definitely something we have to learn to conquer.

Cheri

Well, I'm 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 Tricia Goyer, author of *Walk It Out, the Radical Result of Living God's Word One Step at a Time*. Tricia Goyer is the author of more than sixty books, homeschooling mom of ten, grandmother of four and wife to John. She is the founder of Hope Pregnancy Center and leads a teen MOPS group.

Cheri

Tricia's here to share what can happen to our fears when we read God's Word and actually do what it says.

Amy

So, Tricia most of your books have been novels, so what prompted you to write *Walk It Out* which is a non-fiction book?

Tricia

It came to me when I was talking to a friend, and we were sharing about just the things God had been doing in my life recently. We hadn't seen each other in a few years and in that time we adopted kids, and we were serving in inner-city teen mom's group, and so really just sharing about that. And she just started asking me good questions like, "What made you know that you were supposed to adopt and that you were supposed to work in the inner city?" And it really came down to those times where I was sitting with my Bible, talking to God, pouring my heart out to him. And then just being willing to say, "God what are you asking me to do?" And it's not these moments of you know the heart-music is playing in the background, but really wrestling with God and saying, "God, are you asking me to do something, because this scripture will not leave my mind?" It's those moments of really wrestling with him and talking with my husband. And as I started sharing, just through my life, I could see these points where God, just through His word, just spoke to my heart. And it came to that moment where we had to either say, John and I, had to either say yes we are going to follow you, or no, we are fearful to take those steps. And so, as I was sharing with my friend she's like that is a book, and you need to write it. And the book is *Walk It Out*. And it was just like that moment where I was like I think you're right. It was just like a great conversation of really just pouring out what's in my heart, which is what ended up in the pages of the book.

Amy

Wow, and what a friend who gave you a great title, too.

Tricia

Exactly.

Cheri,

One of the things you say in your book is you talk about your first novels and being glad that those were never published. What was wrong with some of that early writing that you did? [You said that there was] something missing from those early manuscripts.

Tricia

Absolutely. When I first started writing there was so much of my past that I was still hiding. So, I had been a teen mom. I had an abortion when I was fifteen, and then I got pregnant again and had a baby when I was seventeen. And for so many years I just tried to go on and do the good Christian life. I had married, and my husband adopted my first son and then we had two more. And I was going to church and teaching Sunday school and kind of going through the motions, and didn't want to ever bring up. I mean, like my friends knew that I had been a teen mom 'cause they could add up how old I was and how old my son was, but even my closest friends hadn't known about my abortion. And once I really went to a bible study, post-abortion bible study, and found healing in Christ and was able to let him work in those deepest parts of my heart. Then that started coming out in my writing, too. So, I think that was part of the process of when we write, it's not just a story, but it's what's inside us and what we can get on the page. And, so my first novel is about a Nazi officer's wife, based on a true story, who had been abandoned by her husband in her pregnancy and ended up caring for Holocaust survivors. And, so, my friend who went to the bible study with me, at the time, she goes it's like your book or your story in the pages of a book. And I'm like what are you talking about? This is a Nazi officer's wife. She was like thinking the themes of abandonment and finding forgiveness and pouring yourself out to others in the places where you've been hurt. She's goes, "That's all in your novel." And I'm like, "Oh, I guess you're right." So, it does dig deeper than I think we ever think we need to, 'cause it's fiction. We think, "Oh, it's just made up stories," but really God wants us to go and dig into our hearts for that.

Cheri

One of the things that you said specifically that just really struck home, sometimes we must pause and allow Jesus to speak to us about the pain in our hearts before we proceed and other times we need to journey forward before the healing is complete. Wholeness doesn't mean perfection. And that just really hit home. You probably know that many of our listeners are reforming perfectionists. So, what do you mean by wholeness doesn't mean perfection? How are those two concepts different?

Tricia

You know, I think so many times, especially when I was trying to live this perfect life. I was trying to do everything right. I tried to have the perfect home, the perfect family. And I was coming up short, because it was all on me and all on my own strength and trying to put on this mask that I am wearing for other people, which I'm still feeling like I'm not measuring up. I need to do more. I need to be thinner. I need to do all these things. And God was saying forget about the mask, forget about trying to be perfect I have places in you that I want to bring wholeness to you, bring it to your life, and to peel back those layers. And I think my greatest moments of wholeness is where I'm sharing my weaknesses, and when I'm sharing where I can't have my

act together. And I can't do things in my own strength and in my weakness God is able to come in and bring in his strength and bring in his wholeness into my life and that has made a huge difference in my ministry, but even in my life. Everything that I do now, it's, you know, I can't be perfect. I have all these kids in the house. I can never have the perfect home. My writing is never perfect. But if I'm there, and I'm showing up, and God is there with me. That's exactly where I need to be.

Amy

One of the ways that we find in our own lives and in our audience's lives that perfectionism manifests as busyness. And in *Walk It Out* you share an absolute genius strategy that your husband used to help you clear your calendar. So, we want to know two things: Why did you need to clear your calendar? And how did you do it?

Tricia

Yeah, it was during a season in my life when I thought okay, this is how a good family lives, so we had our kids, and my son was in T-ball and my daughter was in ballet. I was serving in church. I was cooking for the Wednesday night supper. I was teaching a Sunday School class, volunteering in children's church. I mean it was just all the things we think we need to do in our lives. I was completely overwhelmed. Stressed out, cranky, yelling at my kids. They were unhappy. And, I remember one day my husband came home from work and he said, — Umm, you know I walked in the door. I had just gotten there five minutes before him. I dumped the grocery bags on the floor and groceries are spilling out, and I'm like I cannot do this. And, I'm crying, and this is too much for me. And he says, "I think we need to look at the schedule." And so then after dinner, he said, "We need to write down everything that you are doing in a week." I said, "We don't have enough paper to write down everything."

<Laughter>

And he goes, "No, we really have to." And I don't even know where he came up with this strategy, but it really helped. So, we wrote everything down from folding laundry to feeding the kids to, you know, homeschooling them. All the activities, and we wrote everything down. He goes, "Okay, we need to separate these between one to four." Ones are the things we have to do. We have to feed the children every day. Twos are the things we should do sometime during the week. We should do laundry some time. Our kids need to bathe at least three or four times a week. So those were twos. Three were things that I was doing and enjoying, but we didn't know if it was the right season so they weren't bad things but they were things, like Bible study, that I was doing. And then fours were things that we were doing, because I didn't want to say no to someone. I felt guilty 'cause all of the other women were doing it, or it was something that I thought we should be doing, like t-ball and ballet. And so the fours there were a lot of those. T-ball was on there. Ballet was on there, because my kids really didn't enjoy it. My son in t-ball, he was seven at the time; he would sit in the outfield and pick grass. My daughter, and we were doing other kid's activities, too, but those are two that really stood out. She, we would drive forty-five minutes to her class, and then she would run laps around the room, the dance

room, while the other girls were doing their little moves and stuff, so obviously she was not into it. So, t-ball went. Ballet went. Leading a Bible study, it just wasn't the right season, I just didn't want to say no to someone. Cooking our Wednesday night supper went. Helping volunteer at the church, and pretty soon I had huge white spaces in my life. And it was just like I could breathe again, and I realized I didn't miss any of those things once they were gone. I did miss Bible study. But just homeschooling the kids, it wasn't the right season. And, I've done other Bible studies at different times, which I love. I still study my Bible at home. But just it makes me realize, we think we have to do it all. And we think we have to do it all in the season that we are in. Later my son played basketball which he loved a lot better. My daughter took piano and now she leads worship in a church. So just because something is a good thing doesn't mean it's right for us or for our kids.

Amy

That's so insightful. And I'm just thinking about even with kids and with parenting how insightful it was that you were watching for it sounds like you started watching for their gifts and investing in their gifts instead of just doing what so many of us do. I've been there, too, where we're doing what everybody else is doing to fit in.

Tricia

Right. That doesn't mean if they don't like something, we shouldn't. I mean there was a season where my daughter was super excited about piano, and then there was a season where she really wanted to go play with her friends. But talking to her, I mean I knew that passion had been there at the beginning for one, and then her teacher said, she just picks it up so naturally. She can go through the book twice as fast as other kids. I just knew there was something in it. So, it doesn't mean that just because they don't like it or they are get bored with practice; they just give up. But yeah, that was the thing we focused on with her, and so we didn't do a lot of other things. So, it is, it's searching and saying what are their gifts? What talents has God put in them? And then, being okay with your kid not being the only one that didn't sign up to do the church play or something like that. I mean it's okay if we say no to these other things.

Amy

That's good. That sounds like it takes a lot of grit. We talk about that a lot.

Tricia

It does. And it gets easier. I mean now I'm like no, no. Usually, I have to pray now, and I'm like, oh, should we? I get so much better about saying no that sometimes I'm like I really should pray about this. Maybe it is something God wants in our lives.

Cheri

One particular section in your book where you were talking about how you had all of your bible study books piled up. And you said, as I opened one of my study books I sensed God's spirit whisper are you done learning about me and are you ready to connect to me? So, what I was hoping you could do is unpack that for those of us who tend to live in our heads.

Tricia

Yeah, and I love it. I could spend two hours in the morning if I had it and just read God's Word. Look up what this word means and look up these other scriptures. I've never gone to seminary. So, this is like my time on the couch with God with some really good books. And it does get to a point where we just read more books and read more books. But then instead of just reading about loving your neighbor, there comes a point when God's saying, "Okay, are you going to do this, are you going to follow me?" I really felt like that was what he was saying in this season as I was studying all about how to do these things, but I wasn't doing it. And it came down to times when I said, "Okay, well what do you want me to do?" What is going on?

So I'd pray, Lord, is there someone I'm supposed to reach out to today? And he would put the name of, maybe, a couple on my mind. There's one couple in particular that we invited over for dinner, and they were just ripe for wanting to know more about God. They walked in the front door and just within minutes she was asking about church and what we believed. And that came just from me saying, God who do you want me to reach out to today? And also, I started working with teen moms and mentoring them. I still do it. It's every Thursday night. I go and work with the teen moms support group, and I'm tired when I go. It's been a long day with kids all day. I just got dinner on the table for everyone. I'm heading out and honestly the idea of like staying home, turning on Netflix and watching a show, because I'm literally tired. But then I get there, and I start pouring out. And I start seeing their needs, which are so much bigger than anything I worry about and then loving on them. I leave there so filled, because God is able to flow through me to them, and so I think that's what it's about. It's about pausing and saying okay I've read about what to do. I've read about you and your word. How you were there and you want us to comfort others. Now give me the strength to do it, even when we are tired, even when we don't feel like we have the right words. You know, God talks about he gives us the words when we need them. And all of a sudden these words are flowing out, and it's just what someone needs to hear. So, being willing to do that is a huge step.

Cheri

Now I'm one of the people that's in our audience that's called a Highly Sensitive Person, and I tend to have a smaller capacity than the average person and this is something that kind of new to me. I just learned about it in the last four to five years, and it explains a lot of my life. But now I'm kind of faced with this dilemma. It's good to know I'm an HSP, but I also don't want it to be an excuse. Reading through your book, you started a crisis pregnancy center. You work with teen moms. You've adopted, how many children have you adopted?

Tricia

We've adopted seven.

Cheri

Seven children. Not one, not two, seven children.

Amy

My mouth just dropped open, 'cause you can't see it.

Cheri

I read this. You know, I see you on Facebook. And, this is going to seem so petty. One day you were on Facebook, and you were talking about the word count you had reached as a writer while on vacation with all of your kids and family in the same vehicle with you. And the first thought that came out of my head was I could never do that. You know, there's just no way. I'm just not that kind of person. And yet I recognize that to be excuse making. So, I'm guessing I'm not the only person who's ever told you, Tricia I could never do that. Whatever that might be. So how do you respond to people like us? Because I'm looking at you; you seem pretty normal to me. And reading your book, I know all of this has come because God has led and given you the strength, and yet, wow, seven, seven children and homeschooling ten. These are big things. Talk to those of us who find you, can I, can I admit a little bit scary?

Tricia

I think that's... people said when they read *Walk It Out*, "Oh no, what is God going to ask me to do?"

Cheri

Yes. Yes!

Tricia

I think, you know, part of it is. I share in the book, twenty-eight years of what God has done. So, my oldest son is twenty-eight. So, I have three adult kids. They're 28, 25 and 23, and sometimes it's easier to see what God has done over many, many years with someone and think that is all going on. So, like, I haven't worked in the pregnancy center, oh in ten years. You know, so I was able to get that up and going, and then God moved me over to working with the teen moms. So the center is up and running, and they're doing ultrasounds. They're doing all these amazing things. I'm not involved in that anymore, but I was there at the beginning to help get it started. Our teen mom support group is one night a week where I'm there pouring into them. And, the thing is that I've always had kids at home as a writer, because as a teen mom I had my third when I was 22. In fact, I attended my first writer's conference when I was twenty-two and pregnant with my third. So, I've always had kids at home. So, it's either figure out how to do it, or it's not done. There's no middle ground. There's no quiet time. My quiet time is really time with God in the morning with my Bible but, during the day there is always kids around, so it's either have to figure it out, or I have to hire a babysitter, which costs money, or all these things. Which still, I mean I do hire babysitters at times. Today, I will have like two hours to myself to write so there are things, but it's just trying to figure out what works. And I've learned through these seasons of just being able to sit down and concentrate on my computer in front of me with all the noise in the background, 'cause the noise isn't going to go away. If I have a deadline, just knowing that God is faithful. If he calls me to a project, and I feel that passion inside, he's is going to make a way for me to do it. But really, I'm an introvert. I love quiet. And God has given me not only, we have adopted seven that are still at home.

They're ages seven to seventeen, but a lot of them are very loud. So, in that, we have like two introverts and the other five are extroverts. There's days, I'm like, really God?

<Laughter>

But I know it is. So, there are times, I mean even before I got on the computer with you, they were all up eating breakfast. I'm like, I'm going to go in my room for ten minutes and have some quiet and space to get my mind refocused before I get on this interview, because it is, it's a lot. Just because something is hard, doesn't mean God hasn't called us to it. And I've found often the hardest step is just that first step of saying this is what God's called me to. Once I do it, He shows up and gives me the strength and gives me the peace and gives me the willingness to continue to follow him. And, also, what I've discovered with my kids is it's one thing for us to say, "Oh, we want our kids to grow up and follow God and love him with all their hearts and serve Him," but we need to show them how it's done. So they're in the other room right now. Hopefully. They're being pretty good so far.

Amy

They have been.

Tricia

Mommy's going to go talk to people and tell them about Jesus. Or when I travel and speak, I'll say I'm going to this conference. Mom's going to be gone, but I'm going to be telling them about Jesus. Or when I'm working on a book. When the books come in I show them. Or we talk about things. We talk about what I'm writing about at the dinner table, so they are involved in the process. So, they see, okay this is what it is to follow God, to give our lives to him. And so, while it would be easier to hire a babysitter forty hours a week and have all these things, my kids wouldn't be able to see me following God and walking out these steps. So, I think that's been really important to me.

Cheri

You know the other thing I really appreciated that you pointed out is that God didn't call you to adopt until your marriage was at a place and your own personal healing was at a place where your marriage could support this stress and strain of adoption. And you listed several other things where the chronology of how God called you to do things was preceded by healing or preparation or groundwork, and I think you pointed out that some of us tend to be all or nothing. At least, we talk about that a lot. Okay, we want to do this big thing for God. So, we're big and huge and impulsive, and you just pointed out taking ten minutes or taking the first step. I think that's huge. I think that's real important.

Tricia

It does. It makes all the difference. And, once you're willing to take that step and then God will be there for the next step. Like we don't have to think about step five, ten, and twenty-five. We just think of step one and know that tomorrow he'll show us step two. And I think that's with

anything; with writing; with raising kids. I mean it's just the dailiness of it. I love that verse God's mercies are new every morning. It's just the dailiness of getting up, doing the work, turning to God, being obedient to him, loving others and then next day, repeat.

Amy

So, what would be closing piece of encouragement as you visualize our listeners out there. What do you want to tell them to send them off on their day?

Tricia

I would say that God wants not only you to impact your family, but there's a world out there that needs your impact. Maybe the world is across the street. Maybe it's your church or a neighborhood across town. But God has chosen, and the way he works for us as weak humans to impact the world around us, and so sometimes we're so fearful like we're going to mess up. But if God is asking us to do something he's not going to leave us behind. It's not like, oh, go adopt these kids and go talk to these teen moms, have fun doing it, and you know, go on with your good self or whatever. But really, he's like, no, I want you to do this and I am there. I've already prepared it for you. I've already prepared the message, and those who need to hear it. I just need you to be willing to take this first step. And so many times when we think about our calling, or we think about our gifting, and we think about it's one thing, and God's saying, "Yes, it is that, but also there's someone else, maybe across the street, who needs to hear about me, too, and that's part of your calling." So that's just my encouragement today.

Amy

Great challenge.

Cheri

Tricia, you also have a quiz on your website that's associated with your book. Tell our listeners about that.

Tricia

Yeah. On my website I have a quiz just about finding your purpose and what is your purpose. And, how are you seeking God. Are you willing to take the steps? And then, after they go through the quiz, I send a little email that talks about next steps they can take to finding their purpose.

Cheri

Yeah, I had fun taking that last night. Amy and I are quiz people.

Tricia

Oh, good.

Amy

Yes, indeed.

Cheri

So, we'll put the link to that in our show notes. Tricia, thank you so much for spending time with us this morning. You've given us a lot to think about and talk about and do.

Amy

Yes.

Cheri

Head on over to Grit n Grace Girls dot com backslash episode 87.

Amy

You'll find the transcript to our interview today, this week's digging deeper download, bible verse art and you'll have a chance to enter to win a giveaway of *Walk It Out*.

Cheri

If you've enjoyed this episode of Grit n Grace, we would love for you to leave us a review on iTunes. If you go to the webpage for the episode, you'll find a link that will take you straight there.

Amy

Join us again next week when we will be processing together what we learned from Tricia.

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 and Cheri

Break it!

Outtakes

Cheri

I set a timer 15 minutes ago, turned off my heater, like off, off. It kicked off, and it kicked back on 5 minutes ago. And I pulled the little chain, that in 2 to 3 minutes; it's supposed to turn itself off. So, I will have to, yeah, we're just going to deal with it. I...

Amy

Demon possessed heater.

Cheri

Oh my gosh, I swear it is.

