

Episode #197: How to Cancel Your Happiness Exemption

So Amy, I have two questions for you.

First question, what is something that used to make you happy, you know, way back in good old 2019? that you now, miss?

And then my second question: What's something new or surprising you've discovered during this time of turmoil that brings you true happiness?

Well, I'll tell you the number one thing that I miss is hugs. I didn't realize what a Huggy person I am, until I couldn't hug people anymore. And it's so weird as two times during this social distancing era. I've had people hug me. And both times I felt so good. And then both of us like would pull back with this look of shock on our faces like oh, we forgot Thankfully, neither one of the times we infected each other. Um, but it was just like we forgot, you know. And so hugging is what I miss the most. You want to share what you missed the most?

Yeah, I definitely my hands up on that one. The you know, probably the other thing I miss is being able to go to a friend's house and just hang out. You know, I'm thinking of how badly I want to go to Kathy's Red House and just hang out in the kitchen and sit in the living room with a bunch of other people and just talk and share and not have to worry. I mean, just something as simple as hanging out. Such a source of happiness.

Oh, me too. Me too. Okay, something new or surprising that I've discovered that brings me hat happiness. I'm staying at home. I know that sounds crazy, but I am a goer I really it's funny because Barry you know travels a lot for his job or did used to travel a lot for his job. And so he would come home from being gone for a week sometimes and I'd be like, oh, let's go to dinner and maybe let's get a slot. Can we please say whoa oh, I found a home all week, you know, but I really do like getting out and doing and I get Cabin Fever kind of easily and quickly, but I have settled in and I'm actually quite happy in my home. How about you? What have you just covered?

Okay, well, mine is not a whole 30 approved answer.

Oh, that's okay. I've fallen off that wagon hard.

Okay, good. Um, I we are baking bread on a daily basis around here.

And it is a four ingredient bread. It's got white flour and wheat flour and yeast and salt and water. So I guess that's fine. If you include the water, and it makes me so happy First of all, it's a really easy recipe where you just mix it and you let it sit for 18 hours. And then you throw it in the oven and let it rise a little bit and and that smell of freshly baked bread. And then, I mean, I won't say I feel like the Pioneer Woman I realized I'm not homesteading or anything like that. But they're, you know, I've gotten to the point where I'm like, Okay, what do I want for dinner tonight? You know, blah, blah, blah, and you know, well, I can't do this. I can't do that again. Ah, there's a fresh baked loaf of bread. I will start with a slice of that with maybe some avocado or Daniels homemade jam. And it's, it's so simple. And there's something about making it myself. And it just makes me happy. Plus, it is absolutely delicious.

Makes me happy listening to it, but I sure do wish I had a piece I bet our listeners do too.

Well, this is Cheri Gregory. And I'm Amy Carroll. And you're listening to grit and grace though podcast that equips you to love who you're not love who you are, and live your one life well.

Today we're processing together what we learned from Katy or author of Secrets of the happy soul experience, the deep delight you were made for.

On behalf of all our listeners, we want to say a big grit and grace. Thank you to Katie Orr and her publisher Bethany house for making last week's interview and today's Convo possible.

Here's the Amazon description for Secrets of the happy soul. How do some people do it? they rise above the circumstances and distractions of life and remain consistently happy. Even in tough times. They have a quiet sense of peace about them,

examining the Bible and her own life, Katie Oh, has discovered that deep happiness and satisfaction are only possible when we are rooted in God and pursuing his good and specific purpose for each of us.

Secrets of the happy soul is your invitation into a deeper, more fruitful relationship with God and His Word. As Katie walks you through key teachings through the book of Psalms, you will recognize how the world's definition of happiness pales compared to the daily delights God has in store for you.

draw closer to Him, and your soul will go from lonely to connected from overwhelmed to level and lead from aimless to commissioned and unique. God doesn't promise a storm free life, but he is the anchor every happy soul needs.

Let's start with "Lose Who You're NOT."

You say we're not excluded from happiness. What do you mean by that?

Okay, well, those of those of our listeners who've been working with us for who've been listening for a while know that I can tend to, how shall we say, I can tend to perhaps over fixate on problems and as a result, I you know, happiness often feels very elusive to me like it feels like it's something for other people. So I'll have to admit, when I first saw the cover of Katie's book, my first Super spiritual thought, okay, my first bitter and cynical thought, goody goody gumdrops for all the enneagram sevens, who were born happy souls, it's so nice for them to be so wired to be happy. But then I, you know, the next I realized, you know, of course if I'm born again, then And if as Katie told us happy soul is a part of my identity in Christ, then the truth is I'm not excluded from happiness that I now feel that way, when I see it coming so naturally to other people, but it's not true. And so, you know, one of the things I was thinking about is okay, as a highly sensitive person, and HSP one of the things that it comes very naturally from my personality from my, my wiring, is to be very reflective. But sometimes it gets to the point of rumination. And for me, it's especially over the past over past mistakes. And I ran across a very interesting article. And so today is going to be another "Vocabulary with Cheri and Amy" day.

Love those days!

and it talks about regret. And that, of course, is something that I really struggle with is looking back to the past and wishing I had made different different choices like there are people that I know and many

of them are in fact Think about it. enneagram sevens were like I live life with no regrets. And I'm like, well, that must be nice. How on earth do you do that? You know, right. I regret I could be happy too. But what this article talked about was that it's not regret that is so hard but recrimination. And I thought to myself, self recrimination, and I looked up the word recrimination. And it has to do with a cube being accusatory, and that remains, it's happening over and over again. But that root, CRI M is the same root as we have for the word criminal. And I realized that when I go through self recrimination, I'm basically re criminalizing myself. So I'm not just looking back and going, Oh, I'm sorry, that happened. I'm looking back and going, I screwed up. It's all my fault. If I had known better, if only I had seen and the other thing that article said is that once we've made it through an experience that we did the best we could we look back and we suddenly see all the evidence that we think we should have seen in the midst of it. You know how we say 20 hindsight is 2020 Yeah, and we forget that that wasn't available to us at the time, because it's so blindingly obvious now. And so that's really um, I saw that friend shared this with me just about three days ago. And it has just been like, I'm still processing it as you can tell this whole idea of not just regret, which I do identify with, but self recrimination, and believing that I should have been able to see those things, I should have been able to notice them. And if only I had then things would have been better. And I'm like, wow, what would it be like to live? free from that? And, you know, here's the crazy thing is this, this ruminating over the past to see where I went wrong. I realize it almost seems humble. You know, it almost seems spiritual. It almost seems like I have this really great willingness to find more sins that I can confess than other people. So I realizing there might actually be some spiritual pride hiding underneath. This self reflective set rumination thing. So, bottle and I go ahead.

Sorry, what I hear too is the re criminalization that's been so interesting is that you're punishing yourself over and over again to Yeah, hmm.

Which makes it kind of hard to be happy if I'm so bitterly punishing myself. So, bottom line, if being a happy soul is my birthright as a daughter of God, which it is, then I need and I want to grow in that identity. Even if it doesn't feel like it comes really naturally to me right now. And to grow into my identity as a happy soul. I have to lose who I'm not. So I'm going to say it. And all listeners who might feel this way that you can say it along with me, I'm not excluded from happiness. And you're not excluded from happiness either, Amy, but I know that you have a completely different perspective on this.

I do. I mean, it's so

funny to listen to you talk about sevens and I've talked about a one on I'm perfectionist and that can make me very unhappy, I will say, but I think that God gave me this natural wiring for happiness. You've known me a long time Sherry and I've had that is not to say I'm happy all the time, but I'm sort

of a glass half full, no sunshine in my pockets kind of girl. And it's it. I don't take any credit for it. I think it's just kind of a natural wiring. And I actually when I remember, there was a period of time I think it was kind of middle school, high school where kids are just mean to each other. The big criticism I got multiple times from different people is you smile too much. Oh, my goodness. Isn't that funny? Is that to say now, let's be clear. I have you smiling as a way to cover other emotions at time, but generally that's not true. I'm just kind of naturally happy person. However, this is the crazy thing.

Sometimes my happiness makes me angry. happy

because

I feel guilty about

oh, I mean, you know, it's one of these I have a story, I will have to say a life story that is pretty cushy overall, and maybe some of our listeners can identify. I've called it my boring testimony. Yeah, I have such a boring testimony. And so sometimes because God has engaged my heart in areas of justice, and, you know, coming alongside people who don't have a voice or addressing suffering, and you know, I've been to India several times, and there's just been massive human suffering there. There's this guilt that comes with Oh, I should be suffering more, right I should be. And so

happiness makes me unhappy.

That's just nuts. So I mean,

as I listen as I listened to Katie, I was like, this is a gift that God has given you, Amy Carol and it and listen, let's be clear, I totally understand. I'm 52 I've lived long enough to know that circumstances change on a dime. Mm hmm. And Jesus said, It rains on the righteous and the unrighteous. My circumstances could change on a

dime, but I need to embrace this gift of the happy soul that God has given us do.

I love it. Okay, so for all of us, the lose who you're not is you're not excluded from happiness. All right, we're going to move on to love who you are. And, Amy, you're going to start us off on this.

Okay, so one of the words that Katie used that is in Psalm one that I absolutely love. It's a word I love is flourishing. And so I'm going to say to all of us, you are flourishing that as well. Live in Christ, we can say that we are people that are flourishing and secret number five, Katie has eight secrets of a happy soul. So her secret number five is the happy soul is surrendered to her King. Now, this is a little teaser,

we'll be announcing at the end of the show anyway. But we have an interview coming up next week with Barbara Bruce, where we talk all about surrender. So a lot more good stuff is coming on this topic. But surrender is really the key to happiness in Christ, isn't it? And I was I process this I thought we really only have two choices when we're in Christ, we are either fighting him or we are following him. So I mean, those are really the only two choices. I know it hurt for me to have this realization. So we're either

surrendered or we're not surrender.

There's really no middle ground. were either fighting him or we're following him. Oh, I mean, we can think about the results of these two things. So when we're fighting him, the results lead to exhaustion, burnout, worry, disillusionment. Because, you know, we get all mad when doing it our way doesn't work. We usually

want to blame God, right?

I mean, it's crazy, but those are the results of fighting him. But the results of following him, it leads to peace and his presence. And, you know, I was like, his presence is everything, especially when our circumstances are good, that we can be the happy soul in hard circumstances. Yeah, they're not mutually exclusive. When we are surrendered to Him, and and in even in these hard circumstances, we can be flourishing. Right? When I think about flourishing and that well water tree, you know, I love plants. And this is right. It's been raining for days here in North But which I'm kind of bummed out about. I mean, COVID and rain is just not a great combination, but my plants outside are flourishing. Mm hmm. The flowers are green and the word verdant. Let's use some more vocabulary today versus they are verdant. They are just I mean, and the The flowers are popping out all over and they are flourishing and we can live the same way as to the extent I think that we're surrendered to Him.

Hmm, I love that word picture. That is that is beautiful. So can I put you on the spot real quick? Yeah. Okay. So can you give just a really quick example of a way that you have fought surrendering recently or in your in the past? It doesn't have to be real recent and then an example of how following him has led to peace in his presence.

Well, I mean, one of the areas that I always want to fight God is writing I know that's crazy but I mean it cuz you know, he gives us these these gifts, these talent supernatural things and then why is it that it's so hard to walk in them sometimes I don't know if you ever feel that way or the listeners do but I'm writing I think as a gift God has given me but it's something that's difficult. And so I I don't like to do hard things. I just I don't like to do things. This is still the reforming perfectionist in me that don't come easily to me. And so I fight him every time I write a blog post I fight have every time I feel called to

write another book, I fight him. So I mean, but in the surrender, like even with exhale, you know, surrendering because you know, I was wrestling with God. So rendering may mean that he gave me you as my co author and it The book became such a gift. And so I hope that's a good picture.

Mm hmm. Well, I'm really glad I asked you this question because it gives me an opportunity to tell our listeners about an email I received from Amy Carol this morning. And the title of it was leading self protective silence behind. And I read this blog post you wrote, and I thought it was amazing. So knowing that it cost you something to write it, knowing that it cost you some some surrender and obedience to write it because when I read it, it was exactly what I needed to hear. We'll put it in the show now. Oh, yeah, absolutely. And

listen, I put it off for two weeks because I did I just don't want to write it

in it. So I'm going to say this without any intention of guilt. When you do write it is such a blessing. It is such a blessing thing, but I understand the struggle and I'm not trying to guilt you into writing more anytime soon.

That's okay guys. bossing me around.

All right, so Amy's love who you are. And I'm just going to state say this to all listeners you are flourishing. And I just love that. And then for me, and I'm going to say this again to you, and I'm going to absorb it myself. We're going to be rubbing these into our hearts. You are care free, huh? And it just sounds cuckoo for me to even say that right now. And so I want to be really clear that I'm not talking about living in denial, or forcing an agenda. And of course, having Anne Marie living so close to us now, I'm learning all sorts of new vocabulary words, and one of the things she's talking about is this concept of toxic positivity. I don't want to dwell on it, but I think it's worth paying attention to because it really resonates with the cliché driven way that some of us were raised. I'm not saying everybody but I at least really identify with being raised to put on a happy face for Jesus. And so here's one definition of toxic positivity and let's just be clear, this is is not what Katie was talking about at all. And this is also this is not what I mean by you are carefree. Toxic positivity is the excessive and ineffective overgeneralization of a happy and optimistic state in any situation in the denial, minimization and invalidation of genuine human emotional experience. When a person exhibits toxic positivity, they deny any and all negative experiences that make us human, and live their life this way. So this is not what I mean by carefree. This is not biblical happiness. In fact, you and I were talking before the show the kind of happiness that Katie was sharing about this happy soul. It's not fake. It's not being in denial. It can exist in any circumstance, even in the midst of grief, in the midst of suffering in the midst of uncertainty, which is like my least favorite thing, I think, I think those of us who deal with the C word that control freak word, control and uncertainty are just so hard. So, you know, when I chose this, you

are care free and I didn't even put it together like carefree. That's it, that's its own word, but I separate it out as two words care, free. This is very much me saying this is okay. This is who I want to be, as I do what you said, which is surrender to God. And you know, it's it's the craziest year to try to even wrap my head around this because as you know, and I haven't shared this with our listeners, right before the pandemic began, I actually had a book contract cancelled. It was a book I've been working on for a year and wrestled with and I could not produce an acceptable manuscript after three deadline extensions. And so there was a significant loss of money, not to mention feelings of failure associated with that. And then the pandemic hit, and all the speaking engagements got canceled and so massive loss of income. So here I am saying you are care free In the context of having failed, which cost money, having outside circumstances that cost money. And so the amount of an am back to what I started with the amount of potential for regret, and for recrimination, especially about the book that I couldn't finish, you know, it is so I can just feel myself wanting to go back and revisit the last year and year and a half and think, well, if only I had now that I know if I had only seen you know, all that sort of stuff. But Katie's secret number four have a happy soul, a happy soul is dependent.

When you choke up on this is dependent on God's provision.

And I'm not saying I'm enjoying having lost literally 10s of thousands of dollars of income, some of which was actually my responsibility. I'm not going to say my fault. I'm just going to say it was my responsibility. And my habit would be to regret and to go through self recrimination. But someone I want to read Psalm one, verses one through three here bless. It is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on His Law Day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and his leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers. And you remember how she said the original audience for this would have really had this sense of abundance and safety, that picture of someone laying in the shade of a beautiful fruitful tree in a stream of water? And she said, I love this so much. She said, Psalm one is kind of like proverbs 31 you know, it's an ideal it's this perfect portrayed. And you know, after that book contract got cancelled and I went through some of the and you were one of the people who kind of comforted me in that time of massive tears and I realized then amount of money lost was so big. It was beyond me. Like if it had been a few hundred or thousand dollars, I would have been like, Yes, I can work. But it was such a large amount, I just kind of threw up my hands and I'm like, okay, Lord, you have to have a plan for this or one way or another, either more money or less needs, or I'm just going to learn all sorts of things about living with way less money than I thought it was used used to. And then the pandemic head, and I. And so I am in the process of learning what it means to be care, free, because I can't do it. I absolutely can't do it. I am utterly dependent on God's provision. And sometimes what God is provisioned is looking like right now is the provision that says, I'm not going to pull that off the shelf in the store this week. It's not actually completely necessary. And to realize that at with it with a sense of

gratitude that you know what less impulse shopping, that means more self control. That's a gift from God right there. It's a fruit of the Spirit. Whereas when I had more money, it was so easy to go, Oh, I'm in a bad mood this week. throw throw throw throw throw in the, you know, in the in the shopping cart and so pulling back. So, so I'm not saying that being dependent on God's provision means that tons of money is showing up or anything like that. I mean, sometimes it shows up in other ways, like a contentment when I'm shopping instead of a craving for things to make me feel better. So one of the things I look ahead,

I just want to thank you, Cheri, for being vulnerable, number one, because we know that with people listening in the season, there are so many people going through really painful things. But also thank you for giving us a picture of what it looks like to live as a happy soul, trust and God's provision, when it is really hard because and I think this is what Katie was trying to teach us is that happiness is not about our circumstances. That's why we had so much pushback against it as a topic. And yet you're modeling for us what it looks like to live out the truth that Katie shared with us, I think you

well, stay tuned. We'll see. We'll see how well I do.

Well, it's day by day, right? I mean, Liz, yes,

absolutely, absolutely. But I will say, I haven't had this experience of being dependent on God's provision before because I've always, I've always Okay, it's going to come out of my mouth. I've always felt like I was one step ahead of him. Like it was still me making sure things happen and to have this much rug pulled out from under me, some of it by my own hand, some of it, you know, buy forces that I believe are, you know, are bent on destruction against humanity. What can I do? What can I do except learn to be dependent on God? And there is there is a happiness in it. That isn't the trite, trivial fluffy, kind of emotive But there is a sense of knowing that I think I have a better understanding of what Katie means by a happy soul now than I would have six months ago. And it's a good thing. It's good.

Well, you said you came up with some ways. Some. You came up with some questions that are going to help us live our one life Well, with this idea wrapped around. What is a happy soul?

Yeah, I love that. She said, Katie said we are in the process of this inward identity that God has already given us. We're in the process of this inward identity becoming an external reality. And she said these things become true as we live them out. So the first question is how and I'm asking this of myself and we're going to we're going to recommend this to our our listeners. This is all part of live your one life. Well now. Did you already say that Amy, do I need to cut that out? That's okay. Okay. I'll deal with it in editing. Okay, so the first question is How have I? How have I do find happiness? And I'll admit I have

not gone to a deeper the depths that Katie brought us to you know, I still appreciated her taking a look at it from a biblical standpoint, I thought of as being cheerfulness giddiness giggly laughter chipper, like right now people who are really chipper and cheerful annoy me, just new people who are always so looking on the bright side always up for fun, who almost seems shallow and Pollyanna. So honestly, I think I really have kind of defined happiness as being borderline toxic positivity, like I have had an unnecessarily negative view of happiness. So I think number one, we need to ask how have I defined happiness and maybe has that been too, unnaturally an unnecessarily narrow definition? Second question, how does the Bible define happiness? And you know, just to kind of recap what Katie said. She said that in Scripture according to the original language, Happiness, gladness, contentment, joy, and peace are all more similar than they are different. So, you know, when we start splitting hairs, it's not happiness, it's joy that is not in the original language. That's us playing around. And then and this next question will lead to action Amy, giving us some steps we can take. But how can my inward identity as a happy soul become an external reality? Like how can I live it out as an act of obedience, and as a step of growing into something that it may not feel like it fits quite yet, but it will fit as I take action on it. So, Amy, give us some actions to take?

Well, those are such great questions and they all kind of have to tap into what we've talked about with growth mindset, that this doesn't necessarily happen every night. It's something that we grow into attaining. But the first action to take is give yourself permission to be a happy soul. You Happy. Um, you know, I think that so many of us have wrestled with this and are we supposed to be happy? Or is that like a terrible thing or a not Christian thing, right? And so number one is give yourself permission to be happy with the definition that Katie gave us, which was so clear and wonderful. And then number two is embrace true happiness, the blessing of being in Christ, but shun fake happiness. Toxic positivity that you were talking about that? I think particularly we as women in the church have embraced this. Oh, we must be happy as a facade that has become toxic for lots of us.

Absolutely. So can I add one more action step? Yes, please. really silly. Oh, that sounds good.

Oh my, if you all could see what she was.

You need to buy palm palm. Okay doesn't have to be palm palm, but I'm serious. I thought this was gonna be the dumbest thing in the world and I bought it just to prove that pom poms could not make me happy and I was wrong. I bought these pom poms to use with some of my co working sessions that I do with people and at the very end we talked about what we've gotten done and cheer them on. And I have had more fun using these pom poms and so okay you listeners you don't have to buy pom poms. But try something like a physical something to change your state. I have the most ridiculous absurd form of fun with my pom poms.

Oh and if you have pom poms that match your shirt like Sherry does you get 10 bonus points so just saying but no I love that you know what I stood in line with a picture of a llama on a bicycle in homegoods years ago, and the lady at the cash register looked at me and looked at the pic my picture that I have hanging out with Getting rid of a llama on a bicycle and said what in the world looks like it makes me smile every time I look at it and it does so why not have a physical thing that does that? Okay, I like that idea. Okay, so Amy, you remind us of the Scripture for this episode because these these two episodes so beautiful Psalm one verses one through three blessing is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His Law Day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do, prospers.

Sherry, what's the grit and all that for you?

Okay, so the grit is not going to sound very gritty. But those of us who are control freaks the listeners who are control freaks will understand how much grit these first three words take. Relaxing, resting and receiving

your ritual abundance and safety that God provides me. You know she said that it's abundance and safety but she was the Katie was very careful to clarify that it's not necessarily always going to be emotional or relational or tangible but it's always we always have spiritual abundance and safety from God. So, you know, for me the grid is to realize whatever is happening internally, whatever is happening externally, I am a happy soul. He terminally Oh, that's good.

Well, the grace for me is it's okay to enjoy the pleasure of being in Christ. It should should be a pleasure. And then I added in even the happy spots in our circumstances, these are places that we should be building gratitude building thankfulness, taking joy basking in the happiness

it's not We depend

on those things, but we can enjoy those happy circumstances without guilt.

We hope you've enjoyed Episode 196 of grit and grace, the podcast.

Listeners, we're so grateful that you Join us each and every week.

And we're so grateful for this week's sponsor, Katie Orr, author of *Secrets of the happy soul*, experience, the deep delight you were made for, and her publisher Bethany house.

Check out our webpage at [grit n grace the podcast.com](http://gritngrace.thepodcast.com) / Episode 196.

There you'll find this week's transcript links to Katie's website and social media and a direct link to order Katie's book *Secrets of the Happy Soul: Experience the Deep Delight You Are Made For*.

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Join us next week as we talk with Barbara Roose, author of *Surrendered: Letting Go and Living Like Jesus*.

For today, grow your grit. Embrace God's grace. And as He lights the path along the one beautiful life he's planned for you. Take the next step and live it!