

# Grit 'n' Grace — The Podcast

## *Episode #217: You Have Permission to Be Fully You*

**Amy Carroll 00:00**

Today as we continue our series on spiritual disciplines, we're focusing on receiving permission, maybe even an endorsement to be exactly who God created us to be.

**Cheri Gregory 00:11**

What is it about receiving permission, I can just feel my shoulders relax hearing you say those words.

**Amy Carroll 00:19**

certainly true. I think permission gives us the competence and courage to step into what we've always longed to be.

**Cheri Gregory 00:26**

And I think you're right. And friends, we think that you are going to love Bethany Howard, who is here to share thoughtful and creative ways to be your fullest God created self.

**Amy Carroll 00:38**

And she's going to share not just one but two poetry readings that will set yourself soaring. Well, this is Cheri Gregory. And I'm Amy Carroll,

**Cheri Gregory 00:47**

and you're listening to grit and grace, the podcast that equips you to love who you're not love who you are, and live your one life.

**Amy Carroll 00:56**

Well. Today we're talking with Bethany Howard, author of permission granted, embrace who you are, cultivate courage impact your world, Bethany, Howard has a passion for words, encouraging hearts, earrings, music, and fun. She used to be fearful of learning, but in recent years, she has run toward it. As she has learned more about God and the world he's created. She has also learned more about who she's created to be. Bethany's discover that she's more than the roles that she fills. She has a passion, purpose and possibilities. She does brave things like self publish a book and take sphere on the ride with her. Bethany has been married for over 20 years and has three kids, one cat and a dog.

**Cheri Gregory 01:38**

We are absolutely giddy to have Bethany here with us today, partly because we've both had the privilege of coaching her

**Amy Carroll 01:46**

and we would both love to take credit for the beautiful book that we're holding in our hands permission granted, embrace who you are, cultivate courage, impact your world.

**Cheri Gregory 01:56**

But after just one look, it is obvious that this is 100% Bethany Howard, from the gorgeous cover with that wonderful suede feel to it, the spiral binding that opens smoothly and the whole book lies flat.

**Amy Carroll 02:11**

It's really a combination of a poetry collection and interactive journal that combines Bethany's beautiful words and the poetry that she writes to space for our own words, she just gave us permission to write in her book,

**Cheri Gregory 02:24**

whoa, I was taught not to write in books as a child, this is great. Permission granted is an invitation to move into greater intimacy with the God who created you on purpose for a purpose.

**Amy Carroll 02:38**

So without further ado, we are tickled pink to introduce you to our friend Bethany. Bethany, we are super excited to have you here with us today.

**Bethany Howard 02:48**

Oh, my goodness, I'm probably more excited. Thank you so much for having me.

**Amy Carroll 02:53**

Well, one reason that I'm so excited Sherry and listeners, if you could see, we're both like waving around our copy of your beautiful book like crazy. Okay, so I'm excited to hear the answer to this, because this is such a unique book permission granted that you wrote for us, Bethany, and it has your beautiful poetry in it, but also lots of journaling. So tell us like, what was the inspiration for this? How did you come up with the format? Give us the lowdown?

**Bethany Howard 03:20**

Okay, well, last summer, I was in a mastermind with some other women. And they were doing some big projects and dreaming big. And I just kind of wasn't sure what was next for me. But I did know that the things that I saw other people pursuing were not for me. So I didn't know that part. But I didn't know exactly what it was for me. And so I kind of threw out this idea of, oh, what about if I write a book? What if I put a book together and everybody like, I mean, it's all on zoom, of course. And so everybody's like, you know, like being crazy on the zoom call. And it was met with a lot of enthusiasm. And I was surprised pleasantly surprised. But I was kind of like, Okay, this kind of feels right to me. And Sherry actually was the one that mentioned, she said, I want a physical book, and I want to be able to interact with your poetry. And it was I said, Okay, so I kind of took that to heart. And I wanted to create something that something that when a woman saw it sitting on the table, or saw it in a bookstore, that she would be drawn to it that she would feel special just by touching it and holding it and feel that like

just feel a little bit of a connection to it. So that was why I kind of went all crazy with the cover and was able to choose the cover and the spiral bound and all of that. And the final word is that I came to the point where I couldn't come up with a good enough reason not to put a book together guys. And so that was kind of like the final straw where I was like, why not? That was where I ended up. And for me, that was the reason to just go ahead And do it not with 100% confidence. But each step I was ready to take

**Amy Carroll 05:05**

Well, it's a spectacular and resolve to Bethany, it truly is. and Sherry and I agree with Sherry, because I've gotten to hear you read your Poetry Out Loud. And we're going to do some of that today. We feel so like coffee shop cool. You know, to have it where I can read it over and over again. Now is such a gift. Oh, I

05:24

love that.

**Cheri Gregory 05:24**

Absolutely. So can you explain your tagline? permission? Granted, I mean, I just as Amy says, I just want to rub that into my heart. It just speaks to me. But can you explain in your words, you know, where did that come from? What does it mean to you and Who is it for?

**Bethany Howard 05:40**

It's for everyone. But it is specifically for women who might struggle with who they are, or struggle with the idea that they can be who they are right where they are, without apology, that there's no reason to hide. And I feel like this tagline is still something that I need very much. But I also wrote it for the Bethany of 10 years ago, because this is what she needed 10 years ago. And so I'm writing to the woman who was me or is me or however you want to say that. But permission was granted for us to pursue all that we are made for the moment we existed permission was there. And so sometimes we hold ourselves back. And we forget that and this little book is just full of reminders that permission was already granted.

**Amy Carroll 06:26**

For the moment that we existed. So powerful, and you're a wordsmith. And one of the phrases that you use a lot I follow you online, too, that has really ministered to me is you talk about taking up our space, take up your space is something you encourage us with a lot. What does that mean to take up your space? And what does it look like in the everyday life of a woman? Oh, gosh,

**Bethany Howard 06:49**

yeah, that's a great question. Well, for me right now taking it my space, you can't really see it. But I'm kind of just embracing my gray. And that is part of me taking up my space right now. Because otherwise, all of a sudden, I just was like, I don't need to pretend that that part is there, I'm just, it's great, whatever, it's just hair. So in daily life right now, that's one of the ways I'm taking my space, but taking up my space, and for anybody is to do the hard work to be all that we're created to be, and to make no apologies for who we are. So your quirks are invited, your leadership skills are required and your tender heart is necessary. We need everything you got and the world needs everything you've got.

And so the invitation is there for you to step into who you've been created to be and take up the space that you've been given.

**Amy Carroll 07:39**

Well, and the alternate idea, right, is that when we don't take up our space, is that we leave a vacuum of some kind. So I love it. Yes,

**Bethany Howard 07:48**

yes. Because there are some things that are meant for us to do, there are things that are meant for Sherry, for Amy, for Bethany to do. And when we don't do those things, that's exactly right. There's a vacuum there. And there also, the flip side of that is also that when we try to do too much, we then infringe on other people's spaces. And so we're supposed to take up our space and then at the same time that we're doing that we encourage others to take up their space so that everybody is living how they're supposed to be and taking up their space individually.

**Cheri Gregory 08:26**

You know, this is so countercultural it is, you know, my story or, you know, our friends who are listening, know my story have an eating disorder when I was a teenager, and you know, my goal, my goal, you just if you were to read my journal, my version of your book here, it would have every day it would have said just lose three more pounds, just lose three more pounds. I mean, that was just the message. And I think women throughout, you know, at least our modern history, it's always get smaller, get smaller fit into the next size down, you know, can we move from you know, from this size to this size? Can we cinch our belt in even further? Can we suck in our stomachs even more? Can we hunched over rather than stand up tall? And so I love this idea of taking up our space. It feels a little scary, guys, but it feels good at the same time. Absolutely. Well, you say that permission granted is equal parts grit and grace. So we'll of course love that. What do you mean by that?

**Bethany Howard 09:21**

Well, permission granted isn't just about like, eat the bowl of ice cream or go buy the new pair of shoes, but it is those things. But it's also more than that. It's the idea that we have permission to learn to grow to do what we're created to do. And we're supposed to be changing at every age and at every stage. And so grit steps in when we pursue growth and when we pursue hard things. And so sometimes that's listening to a podcast that maybe espouses different ideas than you usually listen to or grid is there when we decide to have the hard conversation or to go back to school or take the new job. We need grit to grow and we are created to grow. And then for grace, we can be who we are right where we are. And we can celebrate that without apology. without shame. We are enough because God is in us. And it's that simple.

**Amy Carroll 10:15**

Okay, well, all of this again, I'm with Sherry, it sounds so good. There's something that draws us. And then it also sounds so scary in some ways. So how do we go about cultivating courage to step into all the things that you're talking about?

**Bethany Howard 10:31**

Yeah, I think I'm still figuring that out, honestly. And I think that's part of the fun of this is that we're constantly growing, we're constantly changing. But to cultivate courage, we have to dream possibilities, we seek possibilities, and we don't let fear keep us from stepping into the possibilities. And one thing that I've discovered, because as a nine on the enneagram, stepping into things is hard, it's challenging, and usually I'd have to be kicked in the butt to make any movement. And so what I have found, and there's a piece in the book about this, but what I found is that courage takes our hand when action wins over doubt. And it can just be an incremental little step over doubt. And the courage meets us there. So courage is going to meet us when we step into possibilities. And that can be as simple as signing up for a training on something that you've always wanted to do, or dragging the easel into the kitchen, where life and light are so that you can draw when you have a moment to spare.

**Amy Carroll 11:31**

The examples that you're giving us. And the word pictures are really helping me because now the next time I take a step that I feel shaky about I can know that as I'm taking this step, the courage will take my hand that's gonna really help.

**Bethany Howard 11:45**

Yes, it's been a gift for me for sure. Because I you know, often I thought that we'll have fears there. That's a no if fears there. I can't take the next step. But fear just has to go along with me on this ride, because otherwise I just stay stuck.

**Cheri Gregory 11:58**

Absolutely. You know, one of my favorite quotes and I don't know if I'm even quoting it accurately is that fear is just excitement that forgot to breathe. Oh, I like that. Sometimes taking that deep breath and exhaling is part of this. Well, Bethany as a highly sensitive person, and I know that you are also an HSP I find your peace feel at all especially resonates with me. So we were hoping that you would be willing to do a reading for us and then just share a little bit about your journey as a as a highly sensitive person.

**Bethany Howard 12:30**

Yeah, of course, I'd be honored to share a piece this is called feel it all. Go ahead and feel it all. The world won't come crashing down if you go ahead and feel it. I know it seems like it might be to allow yourself to sink into all that is in your heart is asking for an enormous wave to crush you. Flip you disorient and scare you. How's the heart supposed to hold it all? The regular daily stuff, the big daily stuff, a friend who is sick families torn apart by policy by systemic racism, by bitterness by trial after trial. If you feel at all, if you let the wave take you for a ride, you will feel unmoored, undone and unsure. That's what waves do. Waves also have a way of redirecting recentring us to what actually matters, and what our part is in it. The wave will put you back on land in a place that you may not recognize. It will take you where you are meant to be in. Your lungs will gasp for air, your legs will be tentative and your hands will reach for the texture of solid ground and your heart will feel first and direct your steps. So let the wave of all that is in your heart move you be confident that you are on purpose for a purpose and you replaced exactly where you are on this shore. This exact span of sand to walk towards the needs of your world. May your steps be propelled by love? May your hands be open and your passion burning and your gifts and talents engaged and go ahead and feel it all?

**Amy Carroll** 14:13

out? Would they do that coffee houses?

**Cheri Gregory** 14:17

I love it.

14:18

I love it.

**Cheri Gregory** 14:18

snappy. One does not applaud poetry especially not with hsp. It's too harsh.

14:24

Yeah.

**Cheri Gregory** 14:25

Thank you so much, Bethany, that is just such a beautiful invitation.

**Bethany Howard** 14:29

Thank you. Thank you. So yeah, I'm discovering as an HSP, that my sensitive side is actually a superpower instead of a flaw. And I'm discovering that somehow my words or the way that I see the world helps others connect to themselves to God and the world around them. And so the way that I think and feel and the way that I communicate means that overwhelm will come and that when it does, it will move me to where I'm supposed to be and that it's not a bad thing to be an HSP.

**Amy Carroll** 15:02

so beautifully said and your poetry is so accessible. Bethany I think, in fact, sharing our kind of messaging back and forth that your style reminds us of who Amanda Gorman who did her poetry at the inauguration right. The youngest Poet Laureate ever was she amazed? Oh, you have to practice your hand motion to go with your reading because she was

**Bethany Howard** 15:27

so amazing. Yes. so fierce. I'm a big fan of the whole package the whole package?

**Amy Carroll** 15:35

Well, you are. So we're excited to have you. All right. So my favorite poem was one that I think is so it spoke to me in this time of COVID. So much because it speaks of beauty and a hard place. So would you read to us the audacity of blooms, which moved me to tears when I read it. And then would you tell us about the season it came out of for you?

**Bethany Howard** 16:01

Yeah, of course. The audacity of blooms. blooms caught me by surprise. I certainly wasn't expecting to see them. The foggs been a bit heavy. And recently, it seems I just see gray. So the flowers snuck up

on me. I was shocked at their presence. And I wanted to shout, how dare you bloom in this very gray space. They demanded to be enjoyed and acknowledged, but I kept walking and obvious denial. They kept shouting and fine. I turned around and snapped a picture of the audacious blimps, just so they would leave me alone. But they won't leave me be. They keep talking. And they insist that beauty and joy exist outside of my circumstances, such grace, beauty and joy won't bow to my emotions. I'm thankful blimps can shout and thankful that I'm not in control. Keep talking beauty. I appreciate you showing up joy. Thanks for not letting me walk away.

17:04

It made me cry again,

**Bethany Howard** 17:06

I had to work real hard to not cry. That one, it's still a little rock guys, that won the resolution to that situation in my life came just a few weeks ago. And so I can't go into too much detail because it's just Rostow, but that tree that I mentioned, is outside of the building that was the source of my discomfort, my pain and my challenge. And who I saw this tree and I was straight up mad. I was utterly shocked at the pure nerve of the blooms and ready to just go to battle with this tree. And it kept shouting at me and I literally turned around, and I took a picture of the tree. And you can find it on my blog, the picture of the tree along with this piece. And it was a beautiful and brutal realization that hard moments and joy and beauty can coexist, even when that seems impossible. And that is such a grace to me

**Amy Carroll** 18:06

so much what we need right now just so much. Yeah,

**Cheri Gregory** 18:10

thank you, Bethany, thank you, on behalf of us and our friends who are listening, I'm just going to give us a moment of pause to receive because I feel like what you're giving us permission is the complexity of what it means to be a human right now. And thank you, thank you for putting it into words and into emotion. It's a gift. So we asked you for a focal scripture and you shared some 145 16 you open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. Could you unpack for us how this first speaks to you?

**Bethany Howard** 18:44

Well, the verses prior to 16 talk about how the Lord provides food at the proper time, how he upholds those who fall. He's faithful to His promises, and as loving towards all he has made. And then we have verse 16, he opens his hands and satisfies the desires of every living thing. And this scripture has become for me a reminder that God doesn't give us passion, purpose and possibilities. And then ask us to hide them to bury them, disown them, or pretend they don't exist, because that would be so cruel. He doesn't do that he opens his hands makes away and he guides our steps and satisfies our hearts at the same time. And all of these verses here in this chapter, it shows that he cares about every part of us and sees every part of us including the unique ways that he made us. And when we step into those ways, we honor God and it's just it's just amazing every time I stop and think about it.

**Amy Carroll** 19:45

That was a moment. So Wow, I've got to look up that verse. I don't think I've ever I mean, I've never noticed it before, so

**Bethany Howard 19:56**

I hadn't either until just about a year ago and I just keep returning to it. I just keep coming back to it because there's something about it that speaks to me and especially this, you know, even the word picture of it just imagining God holding his hands open to me and inviting me into what I've been created for.

**Amy Carroll 20:16**

Amazing. So what closing words do you have for our listeners who want to embrace who they are, cultivate courage and impact their world?

**Bethany Howard 20:26**

Our dear friend? Sometimes we are the only ones that hold ourselves back. Are you letting fear or doubt make your decisions? Because who you are the gifts and talents that you possess are desperately needed and your family, your community and your world? So go ahead and step into all that you are created for? Take up your space permission has already been granted.

**Cheri Gregory 20:52**

Take up your space permission has already been granted. Oh, yes,

**Amy Carroll 20:59**

indeed. Well,

**Cheri Gregory 21:00**

friends, We sure hope you've enjoyed listening to Episode 217 of grit and grace, the podcast as much as we've enjoyed making it for you.

**Amy Carroll 21:09**

And we want to say a big thank you to Bethany Howard, author of permission granted, embrace who you are, cultivate courage impact your world for making this episode possible.

**Cheri Gregory 21:20**

You know, I was just thinking this beautiful book would make the perfect gift.

**Amy Carroll 21:25**

So true for Mother's Day or graduation or Sherry International Women's Day is on March the eighth so our friends could get a copy for a woman who inspires you or who you want to encourage to send it to her just as a kind of out of the blue surprise.

**Cheri Gregory 21:41**

I love it. You could also for those who plan ahead, you could get your Christmas shopping done way early this year.

**Amy Carroll** 21:48

True give her the gift of permission. So check out our webpage at [grit and grace, the podcast.com slash Episode 217](#) there you'll find today's transcript, a link to Bethany Howard's book so you can buy it as a gift, permission granted, embrace who you are, cultivate courage, impact your world and a link to Bethany's website.

**Cheri Gregory** 22:09

If you're not yet a member of our Facebook group, we would love to have you join us just search Facebook for [grit in grace the community](#) and you'll find us

**Amy Carroll** 22:18

next week we'll be talking with Sherry rose Shepherd, author of [beyond the white picket fence](#), what to do when your life is dismantled.

**Cheri Gregory** 22:26

For today, grow your grit, embrace God's grace. And as God reveals the next step to live your one life. Well,

**Amy Carroll** 22:35

we'll be cheering you on. So take it