

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST

Episode #230: Crushing Your Facade by Craving Freedom

Cheri Gregory

So Amy, when you were younger, what did you think this Super Christian looked like?

Amy Carroll

Well, there was a wardrobe. You know, your skirts were kind of long and your neck was kind of high. You got up at 5:30 to have your quiet time. Those were their prerequisites. When, I think about it, the caricature of the church lady on Saturday Night Live was pretty close.

Cheri Gregory

Oh my goodness. All right, well, but how long did the quiet time take? I mean, we gotta get flesh out some of these details. I mean, quiet time. If you were Super Christian, what's the minimum for quiet time?

Amy Carroll

Oh, a minimum is an hour for sure.

Cheri Gregory

And then what about the size of the Bible?

Amy Carroll

Well, my Bible gets bigger all the time, as the print gets larger, just saying. It's Super Christian status.

Cheri Gregory

Here's the whole thing about Super Christian. When I was growing up, if you had asked me what I thought a Super Christian would have looked like, I would have said something really, really holier than thou by saying that there could be such a thing as a Super Christian because only God is super and we need to be humble.

Amy Carroll

Oh my gosh. I don't know what else to say to that, Cheri Gregory.

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

Well, this is Cheri Gregory –

Amy Carroll

– and I'm Amy Carroll –

Cheri Gregory

– and you're listening to Grit'n'Grace — The Podcast that equips you to lose what you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy Carroll

Today, we're processing what we learned from Barb Roose, author of *Breakthrough: Finding Freedom in Christ*. (Laughs) I'm still giggling. Are you still giggling?

Cheri Gregory

You're allowed to still giggle. (Laughs)

Amy Carroll

Okay, who are we not, Cheri, help us out.

Cheri Gregory

Oh my goodness. I love the story that Barb opened up with, remembering her grandmother's hats, those huge hats, and sharing with us the secret that they hadn't done their hair, her grandmother and her friends hadn't done their hair underneath the hats. And that lesson that Barb took away from it, that as long as you look good on the outside, it didn't matter what was happening on the inside. And I have my own story. It doesn't have anything to do with hats, but it does have to do with hair. Because I – okay, so my lose who you're not statement, I gotta say that first so that the story makes sense: 'You're not just a facade.' And we're gonna get to the word facade in a moment. But I grew up with a mother getting me all dolled up for church. And so the night before she put pin curls in. Do you know what pin curls are?

Amy Carroll

It hurts my head just to think about it!

Cheri Gregory

I have really, really thin, completely straighter than straight hair, and she wanted my hair to be curly. And so I felt like I was being stabbed by murder hornets all night long, I swear. It was terrible. And so then she would pull them all out in the morning and I would have this this like halo of fluffy, frizzy curls. And I would wear the starched dress, like I just feel myself going into straitjacket mode, just talking right now. And then I had these perfectly shiny patent leather

shoes and people would come up, the church ladies would come up “Oh, Mrs. Elder, your daughter is so adorable!” And on the inside, on the outside, I smiled. I mean, we have pictures that prove this. And on the inside, I was fantasizing about stomping on their toes. I just wanted to step on their toes so badly.

And I'm going to pause for a moment, because that word adorable is a terrible compliment to give to somebody just because they look good. What does it imply? It implies that they are not adorable, but they should not be adored unless they're cute. Okay, sorry. Off the soapbox.

Okay, back to the topic here, which was growing up for me, one of the lessons I picked up, much like Barb, was that the most important thing in the world was keeping up appearances. And so, you know, the whole idea of a facade, you know, the old western movies where they have that main street, the general store, there's a bank, well, all of those were facades. Like, those weren't really full stores or anything, they look good for the movie, and then basically, they fell down. And the problem with living as if you are a facade, okay, I'll just speak for myself. The problem with living like a facade for so many years is that I didn't dare let anyone come in – come close, let alone come in. Because the thing is, if it's a facade, there is nothing else. It's just that false front. So keeping up appearances means keeping everyone at a distance, even God. So the good news is that you're not just a facade.

Amy Carroll

There are so many thoughts I'm having here because we know it's impossible to keep God at a distance. And yet I did the same thing for so so long. Well, my not is ‘You're not a victim of someone else's choices.’

Cheri Gregory

Whew, do tell.

Amy Carroll

That was such an aha moment for me when Barb said that, and it was interesting because our friend Lynn Cowell and I were having a conversation last week. I got to go to Charlotte in person, it was just amazing. And we were talking about when we lost this idea of a soulmate, as if there was only one person in the whole wide world that you could click with. And Lynn said, I realized that that wasn't true. Because then that meant that one person can mess up God's whole will for my life. And I was like, all these light bulbs went off in my head, because I was like, oh, yeah, I hadn't applied it to that, because I've been married a while. But I have had that kind of a thought about lots of other things in my life is if one person had control over God's will for my life. And so if that's true in any circumstance in our life, then what happens if that one person isn't following God? Does that mean that our life is ruined?

And Barb said to us that freedom principle number three is that your freedom in Christ cannot be shaken or taken away by anyone who chooses not to live like Christ. I mean, what a relief that is.

Cheri Gregory

That's a powerful insight, Amy, and I love how you're applying it, that is great.

Amy Carroll

So, this is just a freeing piece of knowledge when we consider God's will. So in the same trip, I had a hard conversation with a partner and a friend that I love dearly, but I feel like God is leading me into a new season. And so we're gonna collaborate instead of partner so it won't be quite as close of a connection as we've had. It's been such a hard decision. And she said to me, Amy, I believe that this is the right thing for you. So I'm for it. And I shared with her that years ago, I read a book by Carolyn Custis James, she told us a story about she and her husband moving to England for his job. And in this move, Carolyn lost a lot. She lost some professional connections, certainly her friendship connections. And so she processed this, this is God's plan A for my husband, but plan B for me, and as God taught her, he showed her that plan A for someone else is never plan B for us. It's always plan A for us.

And I said, you know, I know that it's hard for us to see it now. But I believe this is not just plan A for me, but it is also plan A for you. And so this is just a freeing concept that Barb brought to us because it's both for me. And for my decisions, I don't have to worry about ruining someone else's life with my decisions, because God just doesn't work that way. And I don't have to worry about someone else ruining my life with their decisions. And so I kind of extrapolated out a little bit too, because I have this overdeveloped sense of responsibility that every decision I make is a potential ruiner of someone's life. And I can let go that and relax that God is going to take care of them the same way he takes care of me.

Cheri Gregory

I love that. So your not statement is you're not a victim of someone else's choices. And then kind of the corollary is that you don't have to worry about being a victimizer, you don't have to worry about ruining somebody else. So I think that's powerful. Both ways. I love that so much.

Amy Carroll

So bring us into who we are, Cheri.

Cheri Gregory

All right, well, I'm going to start focusing on something so powerful that Barb said. She said if you've ever felt like God is disappointed in you, this is what God put on my heart to say, you can't mess up God's love for you. She said there's freedom and knowing we can't mess up

God's love. Legalism teaches us that we have to do more, do better, and do for God. God says My love for you is unchanging. And so I put all that together. And here's my statement, my love who you are statement: 'You are a recipient of God's unchanging un-mess-up-able love.'

Amy Carroll

I love a new word. Un-mess-up-able.

Cheri Gregory

Un-mess-up-able. Yes. And here's the thing, I wrestled with that word, 'recipient,' and I went to the thesaurus and I we don't have the word I was looking for in the English language because I want the opposite of facade. A facade is keeping the world, everyone including God, at a distance. I want a word – and recipient was the best I could come up with – but I want a word that means welcome or hostess holder. I want it to be someone who throws the door wide open and says come on in and fully receives God's unchanging, un-mess-up-able love. That's an amazing picture. I need to invent a verb for that, so maybe welcomer, but it needs it needs to be like fully receiving welcomer and then not only do we receive it, we invite the imperfect people that God has placed in our lives to do the exact same thing. And so then as I was kind of picturing this I was picturing, okay, we throw open the door to our heart wide open and we say come on in, and then it's almost like we make introductions imperfect person, this is God, God meet imperfect person; oh, that's right, you already know this person. Okay, I'll let you two hang out in God's unchanging, un-mess-up-able love while I go pour some lemonade. But this bears almost zero resemblance to what I actually naturally do because on my own, I don't trust God to show up and do what he does best with his unchanging, un-mess-up-able love. I think I need to show up and correct people when they are wrong –

Amy Carroll

– so that they can be left by God, right?

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

Well, I just like correcting people when they're wrong. And can I just be really honest here? Even as we're having this beautiful discussion about God's unchanging, unmistakable love, there are four ears of rotting corn in the refrigerator right now that have me fuming about patriarchy.

Amy Carroll

Oh, okay. Please explain.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so I'm not going to go down the patriarchy road very far. I'm just going to say that I am in a stage right now –

Amy Carroll

– insert Amy grinding her teeth –

Cheri Gregory

Exactly. I've done the math recently, I was 18 years old when I realized some things, that's as far as I'm going to say some things about men and women and the church. And when I was 18, I thought it was just a misunderstanding that was in the process of being cleared up. That was 18 plus 18 years ago. And so there's an indignant 18 year old living inside of me who was going, how have things changed so little in so long? And I'm reminded of Barb's words here, I'm going to quote her again, because I need to, she said, I think sometimes we're afraid that God won't work. So we want to do the work for him. So I'm here confessing, I want to do this work, I want to make things happen. But she said, we are not responsible for someone else's spiritual journey. We're not responsible for someone else's sin, and we're not responsible for someone else's repentance. God can take care of that without our help.

So the rotting ears of corn. There is somebody in my household to whom I've been married for over 30 years. And I went to take them out and throw them away. And he said, No, no, no, I only bought those three days ago. I checked the receipt, Amy. He bought them 15 days ago.

Amy Carroll

(Disgruntled noises) Oh, okay.

Cheri Gregory

He's not accurate.

Amy Carroll

So what did you do, Cheri?

Cheri Gregory

I'm still fuming about the patriarchy. Because I really want to correct him, and I really, why is it such a deal? Like why couldn't I just throw out my own stupid ears of corn that are rotting in the fridge? And here's the thing, and this is where I've landed. Okay. Thanks to Barb. Thank you, Barb. Thank you, Barb, so much. Thank you that I'm not responsible for anybody else's anything. And let me be clear, I'm not saying rotting ears of corn are sin. That would be ridiculous. But here's the conclusion: evidently, God calls us to change the world without trying to change the people in the world.

Amy Carroll

Say that one more time. And everybody let it land.

Cheri Gregory

Evidently, God calls us to change the world without trying to change the people in the world. Because the level of obsessed that I became over those four ears of corn was immediately unhealthy. And like a day later, it was beyond unhealthy.

Amy Carroll

I did notice that you said you went and searched and found the receipt.

Cheri Gregory

Are you saying that's not a normal thing to do? Amy, are you saying there might be something slightly obsessive about knowing that it was 15 days ago that those ears of corn were purchased? Yes. Okay. So it – oh, there's more. Wait, wait, there's more. So not only does God call me to change the world without trying to change the people in the world, the only permanent force of change is love. Soaking it in. Not control, not manipulation, not argument, not proof texting, not debate not being right, which includes not checking the receipt to see how many days it really was –

Amy Carroll

– or spouting scripture at somebody –

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, the only thing that transforms any of us from the person I – whether it's the person I'm mad at, and I'm not mad anymore; I was, but I'm okay now – but from the person I'm currently mad at, because give me a few more minutes. And I'll find somebody to be mad at, whether it's that person or whether it's the person in the mirror; the only thing that transforms any of us is God's unchanging and un-mess-up-able love. And this is the bottom line: you are a recipient of that love.

Amy Carroll

Do I have to follow that? I'm just saying.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, yours is so good.

Amy Carroll

But that was mic drop worthy. So good.

Cheri Gregory

Alright. So what's your love who you are statement?

Amy Carroll

Mine is 'You are a Christian. Period.' So here's my true confession about our joke about the Super Christian: most of my life, I have desire to be the super Christian. Really, I was very disappointed to hear Barb say there was no such thing. Now, I have grown enough along the way to have realized that a little sooner, but maybe not much.

You know, there was a day I remember that. And I think I might have even told the story before but I'm gonna tell it again with a new application. So I had two big meetings in one day and it was with two different groups of women who were Christian, godly women. The first meeting that I went to, I could just tell that I was way too much for them. Like, they thought I was too Jesus-y, they thought I was just over the top, it was very evident that they were a little disgusted with me, I was a little too much over the top. And so I gathered myself and I went to the second meeting where the women there were much more Jesus-y than me. So in the first one where I was way too much, and this one, I was not nearly enough, and it was quite evident.

Now, I might be still a little bit bitter about the self righteousness in both groups. But we'll just move on past there. And so I literally went back to my car after the second meeting, and I sat in my car, I put my head on my steering wheel and sobbed. Now, I could make lots of applications about that story. And I have, but today I'm thinking why was I so upset? And it was because my reputation as a Godly woman was too much and not enough in those groups. And so my pride was hurt, because I was not considered a Super Christian by either group.

So, you know, I look back on that time. And I think I wanted so badly to have that reputation as Godly woman or Super Christian, that I layered on a lot of things just to try to earn approval from people, let's be honest. And so Barb told us, there's no such thing as a Super Christian. She said, we begin to layer on some things that we say that we're doing in Jesus's name, but really, we want to be Super Christians. Paul wants to break down all of that and come back to the foundation that the gospel is about God's promises, not our performance. And you know, performance is something that I've struggled with so much, but I see it too. I feel like I've been released over time of a lot of those layers. But I tell you, right now, it's fierce in our culture. So people are I'm a Christian because of where I send my kids to school or don't, I keep them home, how I vote, what I believe about CRT, what I think about a woman speaking from the front, speaking apart, patriarchy. And so there's all this self-righteous gook –

Cheri Gregory

Is that the technical term for it?

Amy Carroll

It's the technical term is gook, but I recognize it, because I've worn it. I mean, I have and so you know, I think we've all heard that saying, Jesus plus nothing. There is no such thing as a Super Christian, we are just a Christian period, none of us are Super Christians. And this is a place, it shouldn't be a place that we feel less than. It's a place of humility, but also a place of rest.

Cheri Gregory

You know, you're reminding me of all my years in school where I would pad my grade. And you know, I would do extra credit above 100%. 105%, 110%, you know, and just that it worked, it worked in that setting. But we bring these habits to our relationship with God and it gets dangerous so fast.

Amy Carroll

That is such a great point because it does work. All those layers usually are things that we've taken on to assimilate to the setting that we are in. I just happened to be not in my setting that day, I was in two separate different settings. But that's what we got to strip it all down is Jesus plus nothing and then we can walk into any setting and feel his approval and not worry about the rest of it.

Cheri Gregory

I literally have chills. That that gives me goosebumps. I'm ready for that.

Alright, let's talk about how to live your one life well. The good part here – I mean, this has all been good. But this is the forward looking part. So I have four questions to ask. The first one is – and this this comes, actually, these all come from Barb, they all come from some things she said right at the end of our interview, and I was like, she's so good with lists, you know, these memorable lists. So number 1. Am I keeping my eyes on my own hula hoop? And I'll have to confess, the four ears of corn – I was clearly not keeping my eyes on my own hula hoop. I became obsessed with somebody else's hula hoop like, let's be really clear. I am not Suzy Homemaker. I have never worried about something going bad in the refrigerator in my entire life. And for some reason, I just had to obsess on this. So keeping my eyes on my own hula hoop. Number 2. What's the first thing I do when I wake up each morning? Number 3. Where am I seeing God working in my life? And number 4. How am I responding to it?

Amy Carroll

So here are actions to take. 1. Examine your life in the light of no one else. You know, if we're not so dependent on other people's approval, we don't need facades. If we're not so dependent on other people's, we don't think we need to be Super Christian, right? It's really an

equivalent. And so if we think about if it's just me, you know, then we can keep our eyes on ourselves. Number 2. Examine your faith in light of nothing else, no thing else. If it's just Jesus. It's really – it's funny, I heard someone on a podcast the other day, he said, when my theology was big, in other words, when every little thing mattered, he said, my love for people with small. And he said, when my theology shrunk, in other words, Jesus plus nothing, my love for people got greater. That just has been speaking to me. And I think it's the application of examine your life in light of no one else, examine your faith in light of nothing else.

Cheri Gregory

But then how would I spend my time? What would I do with all the time that I wouldn't be wasting over complicating things by obsessing over the four rotting ears of corn my refrigerator?

Amy Carroll

Or thinking about how somebody else needs to fix their life? Yes, I know.

Cheri Gregory

All right. So the scripture that Barb gave us, again, towards the end of her interview, comes from Philippians 1:6. "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." And I love the emphasis again, that this is what God is doing in us, not what we are doing for Him.

Amy Carroll

Yes, well, and the grace in that is that we rest, you know, who began a good work and you will carry it on to completion, we're not the ones working. I mean, how many times have we had to say that on this podcast? That we can rest in the work that Jesus has done and completed and what he is doing in this.

Cheri Gregory

And I think the grit in all of this is letting go of some of these habits, really, these instinctive habits of wanting to be super or whatever it might be. These are all crutches, they're all familiar, they're things that come much more naturally. And the grit is going to be the humility to recognize them as they're happening and to let them go.

Amy Carroll

So Cheri, tell us about one of the features at the beginning of Barb's book, is a gospel wheel versus a legalism wheel.

Cheri Gregory

Well, you know, you and I both love research, we both love good visuals. And so when I saw these, I was like, okay, as always Barb understands how our brains work. So the legalism wheel starts out with to do, and this is all on our part to do more, do better, and then ends up feel discouraged. And the motivation is that we believe in personal performance. And here's the outcomes. This is a familiar list: low confidence, comparison and criticism.

Amy Carroll

Okay, well, that's pretty bleak. Help, please. Let's look at the gospel wheel for some good news.

Cheri Gregory

Alright. So here we go. The Gospel wheel is motivated by believing God's promises. It starts out God loves me, God saves me, God changes me, God gives me purpose. And the outcomes are freedom, victory, and purpose.

Amy Carroll

That is much, much better news. And Barb always is able to distill things so well for us.

Cheri Gregory

Well, friends, We sure hope you've enjoyed listening to Episode 230 of Grit 'n' Grace — The Podcast as much as we've enjoyed making it for you.

Amy Carroll

And we want to say a big thank you to Barb Roose, author of *Breakthrough: Finding Freedom in Christ*, and her publisher Abingdon Press for making this episode possible.

Cheri Gregory

Check out our web page at <https://gritnegracethepodcast.com/episode230>. There you'll find this week's transcript, a link to order *Breakthrough: Finding Freedom in Christ*, and a link to Barb's website which has some great resources related to her study.

Amy Carroll

Next week we'll be talking with Shelly Rushing Tomlinson, author of *Finding Deep and Wide: Stop Settling for the Life You Have and Live the One Jesus Died to Give You*.

Cheri Gregory

For today, grow your grit,

Amy Carroll

embrace God's grace,

Cheri Gregory

and as God reveals the next step to live your one life well,

Amy Carroll

we'll be cheering you on. So –

Both

– take it!