

## **Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST**

*Episode #260: How Do You Feel Worthy When Your Past "Disqualifies" You?*

**Amy**

Shadia Hrichi, author of *Worthy of Love*, knows what it's like to feel unworthy.

**Cheri**

An abortion early in her life left her believing that she was unqualified to serve God ...

**Amy**

... but He didn't leave her in that untruth.

**Cheri**

Today, you'll hear how Shadia, now a powerful Bible teacher, ended her silent suffering and experienced healing.

**Amy**

Her saving grace can be yours too!

**Cheri**

Well, this is Cheri Gregory ...

**Amy**

... and I'm Amy Carroll

**Cheri**

and you're listening to Grit 'n' Grace: THE PODCAST that equips you to lose who you're NOT, love who you ARE, and live your ONE life well.

**Amy**

Today is another powerful conversation with **Shadia Hrichi**, author of ***Worthy of Love: A Journey of Hope and Healing After Abortion.***

Shadia is a passionate Bible teacher, author, and speaker who stirs the hearts and minds of her audience through personal story, illustration, and her unwavering confidence in the authority of God's Word.

Shadia holds a master's in biblical and theological studies as well as a master's in criminal justice. Shadia is the author of several Bible studies, including *TAMAR, HAGAR, LEGION*, and *WORTHY OF LOVE*.

Shadia speaks frequently at churches, conferences, and women's retreats and loves to set aside one day each week for "a date with Jesus."

**Cheri**

All of us have suffered the pain and regret of past choices.

**Amy**

The wounds of abortion are especially difficult as we often hesitate to talk about them.

**Cheri**

Yet for every woman who's made that painful choice, there is a story deep in her heart that wants to be told.

**Amy**

*Worthy of Love* is your invitation to discover the healing, forgiveness, and ultimate victory that God offers through Christ.

**Cheri**

As you join Shadia and journey through your stories together, you will find the courage to face your past, understand your present, and embrace a future of hope, healing, and victory.

**Amy**

This 8-session story-driven interactive study includes personal reflection questions, Scripture assignments, memory verses, prayer, and journaling.

### **Cheri**

You will explore such topics as:

- \* Lies we believe
- \* Secrets we keep
- \* Masks we wear
- \* Burdens we carry

...and how you can be set free!

### **Amy**

Shadia has spoken to countless of women-some who recently experienced abortion and others in their 90s still bound by the grief and shame.

### **Cheri**

Shadia says, "One thing I've found: time does not heal our wounds; in fact, it buries them deeper. But Christ came to set us free so we can know the fullness of His love and the joy-filled life He intended."

### **Amy Carroll**

Shadia, last week we talked about your newest Bible study on Tamar. Did you hear me? Did you hear me pronounce that correctly?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Yes, you got it.

### **Amy Carroll**

I'm so excited to have learned something new. So tell us about the exciting opportunity you're offering this year for women to study with you. What a great deal!

### **Shadia Hrichi**

It is exciting. This is actually something brand new I started just this year. I'm going to be doing a live Zoom Online Bible Study for Tamar beginning in September. And so, you know, when participants joined this, they're going to get you know, a copy of the book, they'll get access to all the teaching videos. But we're also going to meet each week live on Zoom to discuss the study. And I think the best part is, you know, participants, they get to set the agenda, they get to ask me the questions that matter to them. And so this is going to be a lot of fun and something new and yeah, it'll be exciting.

### **Amy Carroll**

Okay, let me ask you, if somebody is interested in that right now, as they're listening, where should they go to find that?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Ah, you know, I always joke because my name is so hard to spell and pronounce. My website is [shadiahrichi.com](http://shadiahrichi.com). However, if they just type in [tamarbiblestudy.com](http://tamarbiblestudy.com), it'll get them right where they need to go.

### **Amy Carroll**

Perfect.

### **Cheri Gregory**

All right, well, I'm excited about that. I love the idea of the possibility of going deeper into an already deep study. And I'm one of those who loves to hang with the author and to be able to ask those questions. That sounds like way too much fun.

So let's talk a little bit about your previous Bible studies. So your first Bible study is titled *Worthy of Love: A journey of Hope and Healing After Abortion*. And so, you know, one of our most popular episodes from last season, in fact, a couple of them were all about regrets. So, who specifically is this study for?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Wow, yeah. Regrets. Oh my gosh, I mean, we all have them, right. I think, you know, some of our past choices and regrets we have are harder to forget than others. And so this *Worthy of Love* Bible study is written specifically for women who struggle with the regret and shame for a past abortion. Um, you know, I became a Christian at the age of 30. So later in life, and you know, those first few

years, God helped me through just, you know, learning who He was, how to follow him. But then he led me specifically on a journey of healing, and learning to embrace his forgiveness specifically for my tragic decision I made as a teenager and so this Bible study designed to help other women experience the hope and healing that is only found in Christ.

### **Amy Carroll**

So beautiful. Yeah, you kind of answered the next question, I think, Shadia. What's your personal motivation?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Well, you know, it's interesting, um, I didn't actually set out to write a Bible study. And in the beginning, um, when I worked through my regret, and the shame for the abortion, and God, you know, brought healing in my life in such a powerful, intimate way, He actually pressed on my heart to write my story. And that was it. This was years before I went to seminary, before I even imagined teaching God's word and it took several attempts at writing before I understood what God was after, which was to speak from my heart. And so I wrote my story. And then years later, when I graduated from seminary, I took that story and developed it into the Bible study for post abortion healing, so that other women can embrace the forgiveness that comes through Christ. Because, you know, in Him, no sin is unforgivable, even the heartache of abortion.

### **Cheri Gregory**

I love the order in which that happened. Sometimes I read Bible studies where I feel like I'm being preached at by somebody who has an axe to grind, but might not have personal experience, but might actually have a bit more of an axe to grind or some judgment towards somebody that they're writing out towards. So I love that you wrote your story first. And then out of that came the Bible study.

So Shadia, the next study that you wrote after worthy of love focuses on Hagar. So what drew you specifically to her story?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Oh my gosh. Well, you know, I mean, have you ever just wished you could run away?

### **Cheri Gregory**

More times than I'd like to admit.

**Amy Carroll**

This morning.

**Shadia Hrichi**

You know, and there's times, you know, sometimes you know, we look back and there's some funny times where like, oh, I just had a hard time about that. Or there's other times when, you know, it's really something more serious and your heart's just crying out like, you know, God, do you see me? Does anybody see me?

And, you know, this is what drew me first to her story. I can relate to Hagar, you know, like you were saying earlier, Cheri, about the first Bible study *Worthy of Love*, you know, I'm in no position to judge anyone. And so when it comes to Hagar story, I can relate to her. I know what it feels like to feel unloved or betrayed and abandoned. But the other thing is, is once I started reading her story, I discovered there was so much more going on behind the scene. There's no catch phrase, again, that I use so often, because, you know, so often we see Hagar sort of as a minor character in God's redemptive story, but the reality is, God doesn't see her that way.

And God doesn't see each one of us that way. There's so much more to each one of our stories. And, you know, when we take the time to look back through our story, as I guide readers to do in the Hagar Bible study, they actually work through their own life story, as they examine their Hagar story, and I share some of mine, we discover God never abandoned us, even in those darkest moments. I think perhaps what I love most about her story is the fact that it doesn't end in despair. There's actually victory in her story, because when God steps into our life story, there is always victory.

**Amy Carroll**

Beautifully said. I heard another author say this one time, and you've kind of, you've kind of given us a picture of it with Hagar, is that somebody else's plan A is not your plan B, like God never has a plan B for us, no matter if we feel like the minor character or not.

**Shadia Hrichi**

You know, in the Bible study on Hagar, I actually have a section called, you know, this is not plan B, you know, I mean, and it's all about God speaking to me, like, you know, there is no other plan but me.

**Amy Carroll**

So, so good.

So what's – well, what's the most unexpected discovery that you made about Hagar as you were writing this study?

**Shadia Hrichi**

Oh, my gosh, there were so many surprises in her story. Um, I think what I loved the most was discovering how many profound events in her life were the first time a such an event occurred in the Bible altogether. For example, you know, if we were to choose one verse that marks Hagar his life, we would probably gravitate to Genesis 16:13, where she says to the angel of the Lord, “You are the God who sees me.” I mean, that's the subtitle of the whole Bible study, *Hagar: Rediscovering the God Who Sees Me*. And this is the first time we're told that the angel of the Lord visibly appears to someone in the Bible. And He chooses Hagar, you know, just ponder that for a moment. But there's more. You know, as I my Bible study group always likes to say, but wait, there's more.

You know, Hagar is actually not just the first but the only person in Scripture, who officially gives God a name. Elroy, the God who sees me. There are many people in Scripture, who praise God, God’s character, or describe something about God. But this is the only place in scripture where someone actually gives God a name. I just think that's amazing. And there's, you know, and I mean, there's one more – another – well, there's actually quite a few, but just one more I want to mention, as Hagar is running away, she's in her desert of despair. And God tells her that she's going to have a son, and few of us realize it, her son, Ishmael, is actually the first person named by God before he is born. And it's Hagar son. I mean, I can go on and on. But I just love the fact that God looks on her story, her struggles or circumstances, even her slavery and her own sins, and He sees what he created her to be. And there's just victory in her story. And that's the same for you and me. He sees past all that and sees what He created us to be. So yeah, her story's pretty powerful.

**Amy Carroll**

Well, I'm verklempt, because I've gotten some stuff – I've been studying women in the Bible specifically for almost two years now. And some of that is so incredibly powerful that a woman was the first one to give God a name. And I'm sure He inspired it, but He also received it. That is, that is beyond.

### **Cheri Gregory**

Okay, I'm sitting here watching you move me to tears and I've been having goosebumps just listening. So and I think one of the reasons that it's so easy to resonate with Hagar is that she's a woman. And like you said, many of us feel, as women, we feel unseen. Your next Bible study, though, is about a man. It's called *Legion: Rediscovering the God Who Rescues Me*. And my first reaction to that was, I don't know, what's my connection there? So who is this about? And who is it for?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Yeah, it's a great question. You know, surprisingly to many people, in some respects, this is actually perhaps my favorite Bible study that I've written. So, so far, I love all of them. But there's aspects about this study that just really touched my heart. And so first of all, you know, back up, it's about the man described in the gospels, who's possessed by a legion, meaning army, of demons. And so just like you said, Cheri, at first, somebody might be thinking, like, oh, I don't know if I even want to read this Bible study, you know, and I get that. But this Bible study is actually one of the most beautiful pictures, I think, of God's rescuing love. And it's also a powerful and important reminder of his sovereignty. And who doesn't need that reminder today?

And so this Bible study, you know, is presented in a way where it gives readers a chance to really, really reflect on who God is, you know, we often, we want to be, we often gravitate toward those beautiful pictures which are true and meant for us that He is, you know, father and friend, and a lover of our soul, and all of these tender things, but He is also the ruler, creator and sustainer of the universe. And that means that everything in it, including Satan, and his demons, are nothing in comparison to God. I mean, they are nothing.

And so this Bible study helps to root these truths in our minds and in our hearts, so that when we see things happening around us and the world, just kind of spiraling around us, we can remind ourselves, who is in control, not just mentally, but spiritually, we have that ingrained in our hearts. And I think the other thing

about this Bible study that's important is, it's written in a way where readers are invited to really step into the story, you know, I guide readers to really step in to imagine what it would have been like to climb into the boat with Jesus and his disciples, as they, you know, cross the sea and head into this enemy, Gentile territory, where there's a lot of pagan worship going on and so forth. And as you do, to witness his power, and His passion; Jesus, you know, He battles the storms, the army of demons, why? To reach and rescue one lost soul? I mean, one, because I, you know, for those who might be familiar with the story, after Jesus heals this man, the entire town begs Jesus to leave. I mean, can you imagine? I mean, imagine what that would have been like for this man. I mean, here he is, he's healed, he's restored, he's, you know, and the town is like, get out of here. We don't want you and, and so the man turns around, and he begs Jesus, take me with you. I mean, who can blame him? But Jesus had a different plan. And as we go through the story, we realize that through the testimony of this one man, countless souls, hear the gospel. I mean, who wouldn't want to leave a legacy like that? So I just love that that story.

### **Amy Carroll**

That one might be my next Bible study.

So last week, you dropped a hint that you're currently writing a new study and did we hear the name Rahab?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

You did. Yes, the next study is on *Rahab: Rediscovering the God Who Saves Me*. It's going to come out later in 2023. I've actually just begun exploring her story. But of course, God has already opened my eyes to some surprising insights. And, you know, in the months ahead, I'll be sharing some sneak peeks with my brave the deep, I call it, my email community, and so you can find out more about her story as I share those sneak peeks. I don't have – that's about all I have right now.

### **Cheri Gregory**

Oh, that's great. That is wonderful. We will be following along. So some Bible study writers are speakers, like natural born speakers who just feel at home on a stage and then they, you know, out of necessity they write their words down and they get published and books. And others of us are writers, who prefer to start by

writing and then by necessity we end up on a stage. So I remember right, you're in the writer who speaks camp. Am I correct on that one?

**Shadia Hrichi**

Yes.

**Cheri Gregory**

Okay. So I would love for you to just share a little bit with our listeners what it's like for you to go from spending so much time in solitude studying and writing and then to give these spoken messages to dozens and even hundreds of women because you have videos that accompany your Bible studies.

**Shadia Hrichi**

That's right. Yes. Well, as you said, I am definitely a writer who speaks. I mean, I just love spending time studying and meditating on God's word. I'm kind of a nerd at heart. But, you know, the writing part is actually very hard work. But when it comes to speaking, you know, looking back the first few years, they were the hardest, I think that's true with anything new that we embark on. And, you know, you're learning your own voice, you're afraid of making mistakes, I always joke that, unlike writing, I can't bring my red pen to the microphone. But, you know, as I began speaking more and began to meet with the women and talk with them, I realized, you know, my mistakes didn't matter. It was never about me anyway. As long as I can point my audience to the one that our souls are longing to hear from, I feel I've done my job, and, you know, now I actually enjoy public speaking. But I also know my limits. As a natural introvert, I can, you know, become easily drained if I book too many. And so I'm careful to build in downtimes in my calendar. I do find it to be a joy, but it has its own challenges.

**Amy Carroll**

Well, Cheri mentioned you have videos that go with your studies as well. So tell us a little bit about those. Are those a repeat of what's in the study, or new information?

**Shadia Hrichi**

Videotaping has a whole different set of challenges. You know, when I recorded my first video teaching series, you know, I watched the final videos, and I made a mental list of notes in my mind. And so like things like, okay, don't do this. And so I thought, you know, I would just share a fun one with you. There's this one video

where, you know, I'm wearing a very large piece of costume gold jewelry, kind of a very big, thick chain that looks very nice in person, or even on stage, because the people are kind of far away. But when the videos were produced, and they're doing that close up of you, with 50,000 watts of stage light reflecting on it, I thought, the first time I looked at it, I thought you look like a gangster.

And you have to think about those things, and videotaping, the lighting, the sound, and you know, I mean, it's not all about what you look like, but it can be distracting, you know, to people. And so you have to think about that. And then, you know, with video production being you know, it's kind of a high cost, I record the sessions back to back usually four at a time in a, just a four hour window, just to keep the costs down. And I'll be honest, that is tremendously difficult to keep those messages in your mind. But it also puts me in a place where I depend on God even more to carry me through and that's a good place to be. And, you know, when I think about video production is that unlike public speaking, at a live event, videos can be edited. And, you know, I just finished the Tamar video production this past summer, and I ended up with a terrific blooper reel out on my website, which is kind of fun.

And I just realized you asked another question about the content, the videos, they basically complement the Bible studies. But I present the material in a different way. I share different stories. I include character monologues where I dress up. I remember the first time, Cheri, when you were helping me as my speaking coach and preparing the Hagar videos, I sent you that first draft recording where I was dressed up and speaking as Hagar and I told myself, like she's either gonna love this or hate it. And I kind of laughed when you wrote back and said, you assumed I had taken acting lessons, which, you know, I never have.

### **Amy Carroll**

Cheri is all about a little dramatic interpretation.

### **Cheri Gregory**

And I'm loving this conversation because of course, it has been a privilege, Shadia, to serve as your speaking coach; and of course, Amy began as my speaking coach.

### **Amy Carroll**

And now we're all just friends.

### **Cheri Gregory**

Alright. So, Shadia, there is an interesting tidbit in your bio that I would love to have you unpack for our listeners here. And listeners, you probably noticed that Shadia's bio includes that she holds a Master's in biblical and theological studies as well as a Master's in criminal justice. Someday we have to unpack all of that, but really, the line I really want to have you unpack is it also says "And she loves to visit the ocean each week for a date with Jesus." So could you share with our friends who are listening what a date with Jesus is like for you, and be sure to tell them about the resource you've created that they can get for free on your website.

### **Shadia Hrichi**

Yeah, since I love the ocean, that's always my first choice of where to go. So, you know, my date with Jesus is, you know, it's different each time, I really – my primary aim is to go somewhere where I can completely disengage from the pressures of life and ministry, and just focus my attention on letting myself rest and hear from God, if He would be speaking to me, and so I bring my Bible and my journal, but I don't go there to study. Most of the time, it's – you know, I think the one of the best ways I can describe it is like taking a walk with my best friend, you know, sometimes we talk, sometimes I just enjoy His presence. But if I do have specific needs, I bring those with me, and I present them to Him, and I spend some time just listening to see if He would want to say something.

And, you know, sometimes I'll go and I'll realize that God had an agenda. And He's been waiting for me to be still and present, so that He can bring something up that He wants to deal with, maybe there's a conviction, He wants to gently point out or heal or hurt, that I might be avoiding. Sometimes He just wants to share His heart about something. And so it's just really finding that time, making that time, I should say, it really became an effort to make that habit to spend some time with him.

I bring my journal, I record my prayers, anything God wants to say, sometimes I'm even inspired to write a poem. I just, you know, get inspired by His creation, it's so beautiful. And so, you know, just seeing God's power and his wisdom and His beauty through creation. For me, I like the ocean; others might be the mountains, or just a quiet place or a fireplace, it just kind of stirs my heart to

worship Him. And you know, it also helps put life into perspective, you take that day, to step out of your own self and all that's going on in your life. And so, I created this guide, because many people like you, you know, have asked like, well, what does it look like? And how do you do it? And so there's this free guide, How to Plan a Sabbath Date with Jesus, on the resources for anybody that signs up for my brave the deep, it's called, email community. So I provide some prayer guide, like if you want to do specific prayer, and just some tips and ideas for how to make it unique for you and your time with the Lord because it's gonna look different for everyone.

### **Cheri Gregory**

Wonderful. We love, love, love practical resources. So we'll make sure that the link is easily found on the on the web page for this episode.

### **Amy Carroll**

So Shadi, what closing words do you have for the woman who really wants to get closer to God by going deeper in His Word?

### **Shadia Hrichi**

That's a great question. You know, in the beginning of the book of Revelation, one of the seven churches is challenged to return to your first love. You know, and I remember when I sensed that first love for Jesus kind of begin to fade a little bit, you know, sometimes people describe it as that season when you realize the honeymoon is over. And I remember just longing for more intimacy with God, but I didn't know how to get it back. I was young in the Lord, I didn't have a lot of church background, and so I would read His word, but it wasn't penetrating my heart like it did the first time. And, you know, and I started to blame myself, like, I wasn't disciplined enough. I wasn't, you know, spiritual enough. And, you know, I, I felt like God had more for me, but I was somehow missing it. And so what I did is I began to pray for a deeper hunger for God and His Word and and only now looking back all the years later, I realized God, to answer that prayer, He burst a hunger in my heart and kindle the fire in my spirit to know him more. And the way we do that is by spending time in His word, because this is his love letter to His church, His bride, and then that's us. I love the fact that we're described often, you know, as his bride, rather than wife, I mean, we are that also but there's this, this element of that fresh love, that first love, but sometimes we need a little guidance and accountability to kind of help us you know, in that season, and so, God created his church to be a community and we need each other, and so we

need each other to kind of brave the deep of these beautiful truths together. And so praying for that fresh love and praying for deeper desire to know Him. We can pray for that. It's okay to ask God to know Him more, desire to know Him more. He'll always honor that prayer.

**Cheri**

Friends, we so appreciate you tuning in each and every week.

**Amy**

And we're especially grateful to Shadia Hrichi for making this week's episode of Grit 'n' Grace possible!

**Cheri**

Check out this episode's webpage at <https://GritNGraceThePodcast.com/episode260/>

There you'll find this week's transcript; a link to Shadia's Bible Study, ***Worthy of Love: A Journey of Hope and Healing After Abortion***; and a link to Shadia's website where you can get her "Tips for a Sabbath Date with Jesus", 7 Ways to Refresh Your Quiet Time, plus other free premium resources when you join her e-mail community.

While you're there, be sure to check out her next online Bible study!

**Amy**

Be sure to join us next week when we'll be talking with Mary DeMuth, author of ***Misunderstood Women of the Bible***.

**Cheri**

For today, grow your grit ...

**Amy**

... embrace God's grace ...

**Cheri**

... and as God reveals the **next step** to live your ONE life well ...

**Amy**

... we'll be cheering you on ...

**Amy 'n' Cheri**

So TAKE IT!