

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST

Episode #262: How to Handle Being (Inevitably) Misunderstood

Amy

Hey, Cheri... remember in the last episode when Mary DeMuth said that in Scripture, the difference between the “weaker brother” and the “stronger brother” is that the weaker brother was the one who was easily offended?

Cheri

Oh, I sure do!

Amy

That offends me.

Cheri

ME. TOO.

Amy

Well. As usual, it seems that we have some issues to work through. I guess we should get to it.

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 we're processing what we learned from **Mary DeMuth**, author of ***The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible: What Their Stories Teach Us About Thriving***. Mary DeMuth is an author of more than forty books, a podcaster at Pray Every Day, an artist, and a literary agent with a passion for the Lord. She and her husband, Patrick, have three adult children and reside near Dallas, Texas.

Cheri

Understanding Isn't Overrated.

Amy

Ask any woman—most of us know what it's like to be misheard, mischaracterized, or misrepresented by family, friends, or strangers.

Cheri

Few of us feel deeply known and understood all the time.

Amy

Worse, many of us have endured long, painful seasons of misunderstanding in which the people around us have questioned—or worse, judged—our motives and actions.

Cheri

We have asked ourselves questions, such as:

How do I correct these misperceptions?

Amy

Do I try to defend myself—or does that only make me look guilty?

Cheri

How can I recover my joy even if someone believes something about me that isn't true?

Amy

This problem—and your feelings and questions about it—is nothing new. In fact, women have faced it since the dawn of time.

Cheri

In this engaging book, Mary DeMuth tells the tales of ten women in the Bible who were misunderstood in their own time and often still are—bringing to each of them a deep humanity that makes her, and her problems, more relatable to twenty-first-century you.

Amy

If you are struggling with feeling misunderstood, let these stories inspire you to grow and remind you that you are not alone.

Cheri

And remember: There is always One who understands you perfectly and stands ready to comfort, strengthen, and defend you through every situation you face!

All right, Amy. It's been a while since we've done a convo.

Amy Carroll

I'm so excited.

Cheri Gregory

So excited. So we're gonna dive into lose who you're not. And I happen to love mine so much.

Amy Carroll

You stole mine.

Cheri Gregory

What? (Laughs)

Amy Carroll

Can I say that? No. Oh, on the second one you did. Love who you are. Anyway, we'll get there. But that's okay.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, sounds good. It's not really mine. I mean, I just swiped it from Mary, because it was such a jaw-dropping moment when she said, and this is now a quote straight from Mary, "Your job is not reputation management." And then she went on to say, "God is the holder of your reputation." And your next words were "Wow." And then she said, "It's going to wear you out." And I'm like, you know, part of me wanted to say, I wish somebody told me this when I was younger, but I'm pretty sure wouldn't have listened.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, maybe somebody did. And we didn't listen.

Cheri Gregory

So anyways, my lose who you're not is 'You're not in charge of reputation management.' And that is really, really, really good news. You know, one of the things I mentioned briefly during our interview with Mary DeMuth is that as a highly sensitive person, reputation management is really hard, and takes a lot of time and energy. Because there's a lot of misunderstandings. I think there's a lot more coming out into the public awareness about neurodiversity. And I'm not saying I actually fall under that umbrella as much, but I think we're just becoming more aware that, you know, some people might hear things – I was about to say hear things that other people don't hear and see, even that doesn't sound right.

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

Some people have sensory processing sensitivity. And so they might be more impacted by sights, or sounds, or smells, or whatever it might be. And, you know, so I grew up with people that telling me I was a drama queen, I was attention seeker, I was overreactive. And I'm sure that all looked at that way. But I mean, none of that reflected

my inner reality at all, like I was just trying to survive, I now can look back and go, Oh, when I was melting down in tears, on day six of summer camp, I had had too much sensory stimuli, and I had no tools for managing it, like I didn't understand any of what was going on to me. And so, you know, I would try harder and harder and harder to be like everybody else and to be low maintenance. And you know from your own personal experience that when you don't know your needs, and you can't ask for what you need, you can end up needing rescue, when that's the last thing that you were looking for. So anyways.

And then the second thing that I briefly touched on when we were talking with Mary was this whole idea of letting people be wrong about you, which –

Amy Carroll

Ooh, we've talking about that between the two of us.

Cheri Gregory

This is true, this is true, I think I finally got it through my brain. And I've been practicing it more this year than in years past. And so the phrase that now goes through my mind, literally, when I'm talking to somebody, and I realize it's going sideways, and I'm being misunderstood, and I do a quick check to see: is it worth it? Like sometimes it's worth it. Sometimes it's worth it to the relationship. Sometimes it's part of a boundary that hang on a second, I am going to explain what's going on here. But more often than not, what goes through my mind is – and I would love to say it out loud, but I don't – “You have my full permission to be completely wrong about me. I will not try to change your mind.” And first of all, wow, that feels delicious to think to myself even as they're kind of going off on their tangent. And I'm just kind of sitting there going, you have my full permission to be completely wrong. And I'm not going to even stand in your way and one of the

natural results of this is – okay, in my notes I put ‘I have quit over explaining myself,’ I think I need to change that to ‘I am over explaining myself less.’

Now obviously, not with you. This is what we do. Okay, like we reflect on life together. But one of the interesting side effects of not worrying so much about reputation management and putting so much time into what do people think about me? Do I need to explain myself well enough? Because of course, the one aspect of reputation management is if I think my reputation is tarnished in some way or I've done something or said something I have to fix it. I have to go prop it back up again. I read an interesting article that I don't even know if I told you about it. I'm holding it up right now so you can see it. It's a 20 page academic article literally called *Where You End And I Begin: Understanding Intimate Co-creation*. Have I told you about this?

Amy Carroll

Ooh, no. But y'all, I'm looking at this paper. I'm like, this is what Cheri Gregory does for fun on the weekends.

Cheri Gregory

It literally is.

Amy Carroll

I love you so much, Cheri. It's all marked up and highlighted.

Cheri Gregory

But it's even better than that! Like, it explains you and me. I'm just gonna give you the little teeny tiny thing here. And it's all literally about co-creation in dyads. In partnerships, just two people, not even small groups, not big groups, but just in partnerships. And he actually uses a well known scientific partnership, one guy won a

Nobel Prize, I can't pronounce either of their names. But what it all boiled down to, is it's literally 20 pages diving into the psychology and sociology of what happens when you and me become we. And when your idea and my idea become our idea. And I loved reading this so much.

Like, I mean, I go all the way back, you've always heard me say, I've always been a BFF kind of girl. It wasn't about being best friends, it was I work best with one close collaborator that I can work with in real time. Now, that doesn't mean I don't like groups, it doesn't mean I don't like big things. But when I'm looking now at some of the big things that I used to participate in, I'm like, oh, my reason for doing those was to connect closely with certain people. But in huge, huge events, those close connections become very, very different. Whereas with just a partner, and I'm thinking about when we were writing *Exhale*, and I came to your house for a week, and we were amazing chapters to each other and eating Indian food and going through things together.

And when we did the Grit'N'Grace retreat, where of course there were lots of other women there, but it was still you and me doing our thing together. And so the point of all of this – there really is a point here – is looking at this idea, you're not in charge of reputation management, realizing, I just thought I was weird. And it's like, and other people might be like, "Oh, Cheri works best with one other person. And when they can actually work in real time together. That doesn't seem like it's very flexible." I'm like, I don't care. I mean, this is how I work best. I'm not saying I'm going to avoid group things, but I probably will not be doing big events as much in the future, because it's just not how I thrive. And there's a lot of freedom in realizing that you're not in charge of reputation management.

So what's your not?

Amy Carroll

I had that thought, because I thought this has the fragrance of freedom. It really, really does. And it comes from knowing who you are and loving who you are, but we'll get there.

So mine is sort of an ancillary as ours often are, is 'You're not who people say you are. So I think that the reason that you and I both have struggled with this idea of reputation management, we've kind of talked a lot about that in the last couple of seasons, I think, is that I've actually believed who people think I am. So if you thought my reputation was tarnished, I took that on: oh, my reputation is tarnished. And I need to believe and understand that I'm not actually who people say that I am. But you have to know who you are to be able to stand in that.

Mary said – and I was thinking of a list of our friends, because Mary said that she has had her share of being misunderstood. And I think I remember the particular incident she was talking about, because it had to do with my denomination. Awesome. That Mary has written a lot about the controversial issue – why it is controversial, I cannot for the life of me understand – but the controversial issue of church to in other words, how church is complicit in the whole sexual abuse scandal... I don't know what word to put around that problem. Tragedy is a better word. And so I remember watching that in real time and actually feeling the pain of that. I mentioned when we talked to Mary that as an Enneagram One, this is the absolute worst for us. We are motivated to to feel like we're good people and to have other people think that we are good people. So when other people think you are not a good person, it's the worst. It is so excruciatingly painful. And so anytime anyone questions my motives, especially if it's not fair, that is what really bothers me more than anything else.

Here's the other piece of this: because I was able to watch it in real time, and it was through social media – social media is such a gift and such a huge curse, isn't it? Because then we're doing, we're trying to manage our reputations. And we're trying to avoid this being misunderstood. And we're taking all the opinions on of other people who don't even really know us know in real life. So this is it. It becomes really such a... it's a bigger problem because of social media. And there's so much commentary about you. So I thought about Mary. And then I thought about our friend Carrie Scott, who has only come out and spoken about her book that was plagiarized recently. And the reason she finally spoke her own truth and took her own defense, she has stayed silent about this for years. We, both of us have known about it for years. She stayed silent about it for years, but the thing that finally drove the edge – the timing of it I think was God's timing, but was that people were accusing her of being overly sensitive about her book being plagiarized. And she should actually be thankful.

(Cheri makes angry noises)

Right? The ridiculousness I've seen, I believe –

Cheri Gregory

I believe it's called victim shaming, among other things.

Amy Carroll

Oh my gosh. And so finally she stood up and said, “That is not who I am. Who you think I am is not who I am.” I was so proud of that. And I think that this is when it comes out the most. And it hurts the most is when when we finally speak and uncomfortable truth about something that's really important to us. Now, I saw a quote on social media this morning – see, it is a blessing sometimes – and this was from Amaya Hardy. And she says “People pleasing” – because this is what we're talking about, isn't it? It's really

people pleasing at its core – “People pleasing is often a response to being trained to avoid uncomfortable feelings.” I was like, oh, yes, girl.

Cheri Gregory

That – yes.

Amy Carroll

Because we've been trained not to speak up and say “No, that's not me.” And you know, when Mary has spoken up and said, "No, that's not me.” When Carrie spoke up – Kathy Lipp, our dear, dear friend spoke up the other day, somebody shamed her about her weight –

Cheri Gregory

Using scripture.

Amy Carroll

Oh, spiritual abuse, let's just label it for what it is. That's what abusers do is they take take the moral high ground in terrible ways. And so and what Kathy did, the overflow, though, was so beautiful from her was she didn't shame that person back. She wrote about how do we love people who do this to us. I was like, girl, you're better than me, because there was about to be some gang violence happening perpetrated by the people who love her. We wanted to know who that person was and go and beat them up. But Kathy had this overflow of love that was really, really beautiful.

Cheri Gregory

I texted her and told her I was using my longest, sharpest, stabby pins on the voodoo doll. And not you know, I guess we're at the stage where I don't care about losing listeners. I don't really believe in voodoo. I don't really have a voodoo doll. It is just what

I tell my friends when I'm really mad, and I just imagine going *stabbing noises*. No, she was she was great. We were pettier.

Amy Carroll

So this is – I mean, it's the beautiful thing of watching our friends do it. And I've realized that ending people pleasing really is a muscle. And the more that we do it, the less it hurts. And so and I girl, I've been exercising my muscle too. And so I've been thinking, you know, Mary, and Carrie, and Kathi and me, we, and you because we've been in this together. We've all become comfortable with this truth. I am not who people say I am. And we stand in that and we lovingly move past those folks who misunderstand us, who judge us, who have our reputation wrong. And then we have formed our own little community of those who know us and love who we are. And, man there's so much power in that. So much power.

Cheri Gregory

Well, you've led us beautifully into the next section, which is love who you are. And so my statement is – alright, so you are not in charge of reputation management. My statement is 'You are in charge of self compassion.' And is that the one I stole from you?

Amy Carroll

Yes, but I love it. Talk about it. Let's go there,

Cheri Gregory

I had to laugh that you and Mary were in competition over if you were to take an assessment for self compassion, which of you would get the lowest score?

Amy Carroll

I'm the worst! No, I'm the worst!

Cheri Gregory

Worst of the worst competition. That was hilarious. In a way that I'm sure we were all conditioned and trained to think was righteous.

So 'You are in charge of self compassion.' So Mary said, 'You are not in charge of reputation management,' which I see is what others think of you and how others respond to you, 'You are in charge of self compassion,' which is what you think of you and how you respond to you. Now, let's be clear. I'm not saying I'm an expert on any of this. I just feel like I've made a little bit of progress. So for a while, I kind of went to the opposite extreme, where it's like, fine. I don't care what anyone thinks. But it turns out, that's kind of an impractical way to live. And it's a little bit too much like being five years old. Again, it just doesn't wear well when you're almost 55. But here's the thing, learning about – and the quote you read called it training, I'm calling it learning about some of the systemic conditioning that many of us have experienced, unaware, for decades has given me unexpected compassion for all of us.

And, you know, so many of us are trying to sort things out and figure out okay, so which of my thoughts and beliefs and attitudes and assumptions – in my case, I'm asking which of them come from legalism because that's kind of the systemic training I got – and which ones actually come from God and His Word? And this has given me the freedom to actually listen to someone else without needing to change their mind. That instinct to immediately correct them to immediately shut them down, is starting to dissipate. It's no longer a fear or anxiety response, like I'm being threatened, and I have to quickly solve the problem of somebody being wrong. I can just listen. And I can realize within myself, this is where they're at. And I disagree. And I'm going to do what God is calling me to do. And I can do that, regardless of what they think about me, even

if and this is important, even if I don't do it perfectly, because I figured, like, if I was doing something different than what people thought I should I, in order to in order to justify it, I had do it perfectly. Because to fail in any way, shape, or form would be proof that they were right and I was wrong. And it's like, no, it's proof that I'm learning.

Amy Carroll

Okay, so let's pause for a moment.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

Because I'm tearing up. Because, listen, Grit'N'Grace, we're coming to an end.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah.

Amy Carroll

But you hear how that how different that is from our beginning, Cheri.

Cheri Gregory

I do, I do.

Amy Carroll

Like listeners, we're so glad you're here with us. But this might have been about me and Cheri the whole time.

(Both laugh)

Ok, proceed, sorry. I had to reflect. I was like, we have come a long way, sister. I have you friends that are listening have come a long way with us anyway.

Cheri Gregory

100%. 100%. Well, and you know, I wouldn't have been able to say any of this four or five years ago. This whole idea of just being able to listen and do what God is calling me to do, even though it's different than what they think I should do. And here's the thing, in the midst of all of that, even if I stumble and fall, and they're like 'told you so', which often happens, whether they say it a lot or not, I can still have empathy for where they're at rather than being defensive. And I can have self compassion for myself, which leads to a word hard to use: dare I say a confidence I didn't have and I couldn't have had back in my perfectionism and people-pleasing days because I was too externally motivated back then. It was all about what others thought of me and how others responded to me.

Self-compassion is internal. Like I said earlier, I think it's about what I think about myself and how I respond to myself. Now, any of our listeners who are getting twitchy because Cheri has used the words 'self' and 'me' and 'I' too many times in the same five minutes, because it sounds really self-centered. But here's the thing: the source of healthy self compassion isn't internal. We experience it internally, but it's eternal. And so this is really where God has been leading me. When we internalize what God thinks of us and how God responds to us, we'll think what He thinks of us, and we'll respond to ourselves the way He responds to us. And that sounds a whole lot less exhausting than reputation management. Because there's a lot of people out there to manage. And there's one God and there's His word. So it just feels so much more focused. So when it comes down to it, saying, 'You are in charge of self-compassion' feels like just another way of saying, 'You are in charge of the choices you make, to better know the

heart of God towards yourself and/or all of humanity.’ And I’m just like, ah, that sounds

–

Amy Carroll

Hallelujah.

Cheri Gregory

– so much better. And – which I suspect that’s just another way of saying that learning to embrace God’s grace.

(Both laugh)

We’ve been saying that all these years.

Amy Carroll

Well, we’re tying it all together.

Cheri Gregory

I think we finally get it. So what if we pursued embracing God’s grace with the same intentionality that we’ve pursued – chased – after reputation management? Mary said to us ‘Your job is not reputation management.’ What if our job is to consciously intentionally embrace God’s grace? And then live in the natural consequences of really living in His grace? That sounds amazing,

Amy Carroll

Beautiful. And then spread it around.

Cheri Gregory

Absolutely.

So what's your 'You are' statement?

Amy Carroll

You are a radical reformer.

Cheri Gregory

Woo!

Amy Carroll

So, I don't know, we're back into the Enneagram – I kind of have been out of my Enneagram phase, but I've been thinking about it today. So the moniker attached by some for an Enneagram One with a wing Two is 'Reformer.' So I like that name a lot better than perfectionist because yes, I have moved not out of that, but beyond that, maybe? So, reformer, I really, really liked that. But really, in the past, I would say that I have really liked reforming others.

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

It is fun. They never cooperate, but ideas in our mind.

Amy Carroll

Trying to reform others. So that's a form of external reform. It's so funny how are our thoughts are tying together here. And I loved what Mary said: she said "What the Lord is calling us to is a radical reformation of the way we're doing things." And so therefore, we're able to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, meaning that it's a holy act. And as she says, He calls us to this radical reformation not to stay where we are, you

know, doing all the reputation management and trying to form who other people say that we are, but doing this personal internal reform. So we are radical reformers, but we are called to radical internal reform, external I think overflows that, but it is not our primary call.

And as I reflected on this, I thought back to *Exhale*, and writing *Exhale*, and how I fell in love with the story of Zacchaeus again. So that is just one of those stories that we remember as a child, but somehow I didn't bring it into my adulthood until I wrote *Exhale*. And I thought about how Zacchaeus in the presence of Jesus was reformed. So this radical reform, as our listeners, our friends are listening, you might be like, tensing up thinking, you gotta do something. But that internal radical reform is Jesus fueled. And that is the good news. And I think about Zacchaeus, in the context of what we were talking about today, you know, he was an outcast. His reputation was trash. And even when he turned towards Jesus, I started thinking about the people in the room and what they might have been saying, like, he's a big fake. This is just some kind of a this is some kind of a promotional trick.

You know, I was thinking about Kanye West. I don't know – Jesus knows where Kanye's heart is, but when he professed to be saved, do you remember all the people that like trashed him some more, like they had been trashing him and now they're "It's all fake. He's just doing it for attention, blah, blah." I think the same things were probably said exactly is what is that case do? He tuned them all out and he focused on Jesus, that was it. Jesus was everything. And so he wasn't managing his reputation. He wasn't, he didn't care what people said he was not, he just focused on Jesus and allowed Jesus's power to change him. And that's what we do too when we embrace this internal radical reform.

Cheri Gregory

I love it. I love it.

Alright, well, let's move to live your one life well. And Mary was talking about, you know, we asked some questions about her research and, you know, Mary's a very bright woman. So I was ready to write down the names of her books and concordances and websites, and she's like, "My best research was simply a plain reading of Scripture." Like, kind of simple, basic readings of Scripture, there's so much insight. And at one point, she said, I'm gonna go back to that really boring refrain about plain reading of Scripture. So, Mary, I just want to say I so appreciate that Mary's focus, always, you know, of course, the misunderstood women of the Bible is going to come from scripture, but that she didn't go to tons of external sources to start with. I mean, what she did is accessible to all of us. And then she challenged us to go back to Scripture and say, "What else am I missing?" And that phrase just has been staring at my heart.

And I thought you and I have both been spending in time in Scripture and finding what we've been missing. Share a little bit with us, with our friends with me and our friends who are listening, because I know you have a new book coming. Yes.

Amy Carroll

So it's interesting what you were saying about co-creating, because you know, I have said to you, like, I have no desire to ever write a book by myself again. So I have to, well, I have lots of great collaborations with you. And then I have one with my friend Lynn Cowell, and our Esther study will come out in July. We're so excited about that. So I've been studying Esther with Lynn. And then with my friend Wendy that I'm doing trips with, we have been studying women of the Bible. And so oh, my heavens. Okay, so I have a little soapbox, I told you, you're gonna have to cut me off.

Cheri Gregory

No, not happening.

Amy Carroll

The thing that Wendy and I have really had this blinding realization. And again, this may have come from Wendy. So just giving credit where credit's due. That one day we were talking, I believe it was Wendy, who said, "You know, for decades, Amy—" we're five decades old, or she's not quite. I'm five decades old. "—we've been sitting in sanctuaries, and listening to the stories of men come from the pulpit." And the stories of the men in Scripture are glorious. Listen, I don't want to take anything away from that. But we have heard the whole story of God through the stories of men in the Bible, and the stories of women had been woefully neglected, woefully neglected. And Wendy had this flash of insight, as we've been studying women, and she said, "Amy, you know, the whole story of God could be told through the stories of women in the Bible too." Like, listen, I'm not advocating for cutting the men out in some, like some kind of Thomas Jefferson act where we take a, you know, razor blade to our Bibles, not at all.

Cheri Gregory

You're taking a lens, you're taking a perspective.

Amy Carroll

But! If those stories were to disappear, the whole story of God would still be told through the stories of women in the Bible. We're totally convinced of that. Totally convinced. And if you doubt that, start studying women in the Bible. It is absolutely remarkable. And so the one woman that I have really dug into deep is Esther, with my friend, Lynn Cowell. And that has been remarkable, because — can I just confess that I never liked the book of Esther?

Cheri Gregory

Feel free.

Amy Carroll

Like when I'm at a women's conference, all the time people say, "Oh, that's my favorite book, Esther's my favorite book of the Bible." And I'm like, "Ehhh, not me," like not even 20th on my list, probably, you know. but in digging into the story of asked her have fallen in love with Esther. And I think the reason I didn't like Esther before is I hadn't done a plain reading of the Scripture. I had watched the Veggie Tales version. I had watched *One Night With the King*. I had watched the movies and videos and listened to the scripts about how the King had a beauty contest to find his queen. Much more like human trafficking, it turns out. And so the reason I didn't love it is because it had been shined up and polished to a point in our Christian culture that is unrecognizable. But a plain reading of Scripture makes the story of Esther compelling. Page turning, You cannot put it down because she is just like us. Very, very flawed. And yet her story is a feature in the story of God. I mean, amazing.

All right, so I'll cut myself off. How about you?

Cheri Gregory

You know, the thing that really resonated with me in terms of going back to Scripture and seeing what I've been missing. It isn't a particular book or character in the Bible so much as a practice that I've been doing for over a year now. And that is every Friday in my Sensitive and Strong Sisters in Christ Facebook group, we meet for half an hour of Lectio Divina, and we have a passage that has been pre0selected and there's a download for those who want to. Sarah Marie does it in three pages, because I like to take notes each time I read through it. And for those who might not be familiar with Lectio Divina, there's the Scripture is read three times, and there's a different invitation and set of questions each time; and, you know, we do it a really nice pace, and in the

comments, those who who feel comfortable, you know, kind of share what the answer is, I think the first time through it is is 'What word or phrase, you know, especially touches your heart,' and then 'What emotions do you feel' and then the last one has to do with 'What is God saying to you?'

It is such a profoundly intimate experience. And, you know, these are all passages that I've read before. You know, I grew up, you know, in a very Bible believing home, you know, sword in hand, I almost always won that competition, you know. But there's something about slowing down and going through it not just once, but twice. And again, this is – I haven't thought of it this way. But it is a plain reading of the text, because literally, I'm reading it out loud. And then we pause, and I spend time reading it again, and just seeing what the Holy Spirit brings out. And I don't go to logo software. I might make a note to myself that I'm interested in doing some research, you know, to see what this word actually means or that sort of thing. But it's just in the moment. And the two things have been so profoundly moving to me in terms of 'What else am I missing?' is, first of all, I mean, things pop out by that second or third reading, that I'm like, oh, that's been there all along. I just didn't see it. I didn't notice it the way I'm noticing it today. Because God is using it to speak to me in a profound and personal way on this particular day, which alone is so beautiful.

But then, because we do it in community, what I'm noticing and what other women are noticing are a little bit different. And so there's these incredible reciprocal blessings, where my aha moment might, you know, might spark somebody else's aha moment. And so it is so individualized and so personalized while being community at the same time. So that has been very sustaining.

Amy Carroll

I think the common thread here is that I want to encourage our friends with is listen, commentaries, books about the Scripture, all these are not bad things. We're not condemning those things, but they should be the last.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

So strip away all that stuff, and spend time with the Holy Spirit, with God, and scripture, and He wants to meet you there. You can understand your Bible. It is living and active, and God wants to speak to you through it.

Cheri Gregory

Absolutely. Love that.

Alright, so I do have a few questions to ask as we wrap up here. And these will be in the show notes. And these are just questions that we can ask ourselves. Number one, 'Will I let go of reputation management today? Or at least this hour?' Number two, 'Will I allow one person to misunderstand me and even be flat out wrong about me today? Or maybe at least for five minutes?' Number three, 'Will I grow in self compassion by focusing on the eternal perspective of what God thinks of me and how God responds to me?' Number four, 'Will I make intentional choices to better know the heart of God toward me and all of humanity?' And then number five: 'Will I take time to immerse in Scripture and find what I've missed?'

Amy Carroll

Beautiful.

And I have just one action to take with a possible second action. And the action is immerse yourself fully in God to find yourself. We don't find ourselves by navel gazing, we find our true selves and that competence that you talked about, by fully immersing ourselves in God. And what do I mean by that? I don't mean just reading your Bible, although that's a piece of it. I mean, really spending time with God, inviting Him in, spending time in His presence, either in silence or reading your Bible or talking to God as a friend, because He is your friend.

And then the ancillary thing: and maybe go to counseling too.

(Both laugh)

So I love Jackie and Preston Perry, I love following them on Instagram, they're just two of my favorites. And they have t-shirts that they sell that says 'Jesus and therapy' on it. I love it. I love it. Because a good Christian therapist can help bring you to those places that you may have been afraid to kind of open those places up to God on your own.

Cheri Gregory

A good Christian therapist will help us put less importance on the external, get in touch with the internal, so that we are much more able to see and focus on the eternal.

Amy Carroll

Ooh! Good.

Cheri Gregory

Just saying. So the scripture that Mary shared with us is Philippians 2:12, "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

Amy Carroll

I love that “continue to work out” because it gives me the grace of a process.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, absolutely.

So the grit for me is trading reputation management for self-compassion. That is hard. Because I have so much more experienced with reputation management, it comes so naturally. And self compassion is a skill that has – at least for me, it has to be learned. And if there's anything I know about myself and learning, it's that I'm a slow learner, like I fail over and over. So that's the grit for me, is enduring and even embracing all the failure that's required to learn self-compassion. I mean, it's tempting to say, how pathetic is it that I'm going to fail over and over it being self compassionate. And yet we know we know that's part of the process of being human.

Amy Carroll

Absolutely. But I listened to that phrase, self-compassion. And it makes me exhale just to say it, honestly, you know, one of my favorite passages in Scripture has been God telling Moses about himself. And it's Exodus 34:6, and it says, “The Lord passed in front of Moses and proclaimed, ‘the Lord’” – this is what he's saying about himself, – “the Lord, the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding and faithful love and truth.” And I just even as I thought about that scripture, and then when I put it in our notes this morning, I was like, oh! Compassion is the first trait that God said about Himself the very first trait that tells us it is essential to His nature. And He applies it to us. He wants us to apply it to others, but we are to apply it to ourselves as well. What grace is that?

Cheri

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

Amy

And we're especially grateful to **Mary DeMuth** and her publisher **Salem Books** for making this week's episode of Grit 'n' Grace possible!

Cheri

Check out this episode's webpage at <https://GritNGraceThePodcast.com/episode262>

There you'll find: this week's transcript; a link to Mary's new book, *The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible: What Their Stories Teach Us About Thriving*; and a link to Mary's website, which is full of amazing resources.

Amy

Be sure to join us next week when we'll be talking with Tricia Goyer, author of *Heart Happy: Staying Centered in God's Love Through Chaotic Circumstances*.

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!