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**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. Happy November. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1](#). Listen, the pep in my step you here today is I got my AG1 this morning. Listen, if you've been thinking about trying AG1 or you're looking for a Christmas gift and know your sister-in-law or mom would love to try it, now is your time because right now AG1 is already running a special Black Friday offer for all of November.

AG1 is a daily health drink packed with nutrients to help alleviate bloating, support sustained energy and whole body health. I truly love starting my day with it. It just makes me feel really clear-headed and I love knowing why I'm getting all the nutrients I need to start my day off right.

So this holiday season try AG1 for yourself or even gift it to someone special. This is a perfect time to focus on supporting your body with an easy and surprisingly delicious daily health drink. And that's why I've been partnered with AG1 for so long.

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**Intro:** Today on the show, y'all, I get to talk with my new friend, Bethany Joy Lenz. You may remember Joy from *One Tree Hill*. She was Haley James Scott on the show. But today she is being so generous with her story of faith and freedom and identity as she talks about the journey of finding herself in a cult, the manipulation she experienced — while we were watching her on TV, she was in a cult — and the empowerment she has found when she broke free from it all. It's incredible.

She shares even more of this story in her brand new memoir, *Dinner for Vampires*, which y'all it is right here beside me. I could not put it down. I could not put it down.

We got to sit down in person together at the Hephzibah house in New York City where I get to record and talk all about the book and about her faith life. I think you will really love this. For your knowledge, we are the only faith-based show that she made time for when this book launched. So she got to have a place to talk about her

faith. I thought that was really an honor to me and honor to y'all that she wanted to talk to us. So I cannot wait for you to hear more of this conversation with Bethany Joy Lenz.

[00:02:45] <music>

**Annie:** Okay, Joy, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Bethany:** Thanks for having me. I'm so happy to be here.

**Annie:** What an honor.

**Bethany:** We've been working on this for so long.

**Annie:** I know. I'm so grateful. We share all the people. First of all, Jonathan Merritt is your agent.

**Bethany:** I love Jonathan.

**Annie:** He's amazing, right?

**Bethany:** He has just crept in. He came into my life really fast, all of a sudden. It was a quick introduction when this book came up and my boyfriend said, "You know what?" He has spent a lot of time in publishing. And he was like, "There's one agent. There's only one agent that I really trusted this story. Let me make a phone call." I met Jonathan, we hit it off instantly. I knew based on his own history and what I've been through that this was the right fit.

And not only has he been an amazing agent, but he's a good friend and the way he shows up in and gives advice in ways that are... he'll talk the work stuff, but he's like, "What's the underbelly? What's really going on? Let's really talk about the real heart behind what's happening or how you're feeling." It's like a therapist and an agent.

**Annie:** He is a therapist and a friend. Therapist is looped into whatever work he's doing relationally.

**Bethany:** I admire him so much.

**Annie:** You didn't ever have to tell this story. So as I was reading the book, I kept thinking, "I'm so thankful to read this. This is so deeply personal." Even if you change names and details for the protection of yourself, I hope more than anybody else.

**Bethany:** And there were other people too that I just don't... I didn't write it to be vindictive. I didn't write it for any reason other than just to share something that I think can help people.

**Annie:** So why did it become a yes to do it? What was the timing about?

**Bethany:** I think when I said on my podcast, Drama Queen, somebody had asked... it was a fan had written in a question, would you ever consider writing a book? And I made this offhand comment: "Well, yeah, I was in a cult for 10 years. I sure would have a lot to say, but I don't know if I would ever get around to actually writing that."

I had talked about being in that environment on the podcast before over the last two years, not frequently, but on occasion, and so I didn't think it was new information for anyone. Otherwise, I wouldn't have said it so flippantly. You know, I joke in the book, a slow news day or something, you know? Everybody just picked it up.

So the opportunity came up. And just because somebody offers you an opportunity doesn't mean you have to say yes. And considering that my daughter's 13 and we're just thinking about where I was in my life, if this was good timing or not. But I am a writer. I knew I could handle it. I also-

**Annie:** Are a writer. Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

**Bethany:** Thank you. I started to get a vision for how it could help people. I had been away from it for long enough... It had been 10 years since I'd been out. Well, I guess actually 12. And I had enough of a handle on it to be able to say, I think objectively there may be some moments where it's painful, but I think I could write this without too much emotional weight pulling on me, and I think it could really help. I like writing. So I'm going to go for it.

And the worst thing that happens is I make a book deal, I sit down and I can't write it, and then I just have to call them and say, don't-

**Annie:** Give them the money back.

**Bethany:** "Don't send me a check."

**Annie:** Don't send the check.

**Bethany:** You know what I mean?

**Annie:** "Wait till you see the manuscript." I mean, so many people listening want to write a book. All of our lives involve other people. How did you decide how to write your

story in a way that... cause you do actually more than I probably would have. You do honor a lot of people in the book that you didn't have to.

**Bethany:** Thanks.

**Annie:** Talk to the listener who's like, "Yeah, I have an abuse story or I have a cult story or I have a wounding story, even a friendship wounding story that has changed me. I want to write it in a book, but I don't know how to do that when other people are involved." That's so hard.

**Bethany:** It is hard. It is hard. There's two different ways for me to answer this. On a practical level, I got a lot of advice about the structure of memoirs and how people do this, what's okay, what's not okay. I don't want to write things that are untrue, but I don't want to write things that are so clearly true that it's easily identifiable for people.

So there were these fine lines where I was constantly calling Jonathan or Sean Manning, my editor, and saying like, "Okay, can I make a composite character out of two different people?" So that the story arc remains the same, there's nothing untrue in terms of the arcs, like what-

**Annie:** It's still a true story.

**Bethany:** It's still a true story. All these things happened. Some of them happened in a little bit of a different order. Some of them happened to different people than were ascribed to the characters. Some are composite characters. But as long as it doesn't interfere with the integrity of the story, I think you can do that. So that's on a practical level.

On a spiritual level and emotional level, for me, I had to go into this and constantly encounter my own anger or entitlement or feelings around suffering and make sure that there wasn't anything I was writing or that I included in the book that was coming from any vindictive place, from a need in me to sort of like, you know, dig back.

So really what I did was I just did a major brain dump on the computer and then went back in and started pulling out all of the things that were not constructive.

**Annie:** That's it. I'm finishing a first draft this week, we hope and I wrote about a breakup. And I was like, First draft. I'm going to write the exact truth. I'm going to use his name. I'm going to put the restaurant names. I'm going to do everything. And then next week I will-

**Bethany:** Be classy. This is it.

**Annie:** Joy. This is the language. I will be classy next week. I am not classy currently. You're like, It wasn't Chili's, but I will change it. That's exactly right. That's a beautiful thing to teach because it's just so hard when... especially in *Dinner for Vampires*, there is a deep betrayal over and over technically, and yet it is... This book isn't about them. It's about you. And so I think teaching that is really challenging and writing that way is really challenging.

**Bethany:** It's a great point. My editor mentioned that to me. And Jonathan too. They were a few times when I was wrestling through like there were things that absolutely happened that were so clear to me, the language around... even things like lawsuits or things like that, that I wanted to be able to clarify, like, this is what happened. And the legal department was like, We need all this documentation and things that... we were moving this book forward so fast that I didn't know that until two weeks before it had to be... actually, we were in London and it was overdue. By then it was like five days before it was due for print. And I just didn't have time. All the documentation I have, but it's all in files on other computers. I got to call accountants. I got to call all these things.

**Annie:** Like the envelope you handed your dad.

**Bethany:** He handed me.

**Annie:** Yeah, all the stuff.

**Bethany:** So it's like having all that and having to be reminded it's not about them. It's not about him. It's about you. And really just coming back to that, like, okay, that's right. That's right. That's not what the story is. And I had to be okay with it. But it wasn't a perfect process.

**Annie:** No. I mean, the beautiful thing about memoirs is they are a story set in time and you will continue to grow and write as a person. And the next one will be set in a different season, a different time. They're yearbooks. They're yearbooks that are doing the best they can.

Okay, *Dinner for Vampires*. Will you give us kind of, why is that the title? Give us a little overview for... I feel like I got to jump right in because I finished it and I loved it. But tell us what is *Dinner for Vampires* and what is the overarching story of the book.

**Bethany:** There's a couple of things. The first thing is... all right, well, I'll start from the story. The story is I was 20 years old, moved to LA, got involved in a small home group Bible study, like probably so many of your listeners have been involved in,

Wednesday night, Bible study, Saturday night, whatever, in somebody's home, you know, 12 to 15 to 20 people, depending on the night of the season.

And it slowly morphed as a pastor without a church from another state came to visit. He was a mutual friend of some people in the group. We just didn't know his history and we were all pretty young and didn't have the wherewithal, the wisdom to be able to recognize the signs of narcissism. This man who I believe is a malignant narcissist, if not a sociopath... I'm not a doctor, so I can't credibly diagnose that.

**Annie:** I can't either, but I can make some guesses based on...

**Bethany:** My suspicion. Yeah, exactly. And he probably saw a bunch of young Hollywood professionals got dollar signs in his eyes and moved toward us in a predatory way and really gained a lot of control. There was a lot of using very familiar Christian terminology, environmental, comfort zones, like things that we're used to as Christians or people who grew up in the church. In fact, the one girl who got out had been raised Catholic. It was all a little loopy for her anyway, you know, the charismatic non-denominational.

Cut to 10 years later and I'm living in the Pacific Northwest with the rest of the group. We'd all moved up there. It wasn't a compound.

**Annie:** While you're going back and forth to Wilmington.

**Bethany:** That's right. So I had gotten *One Tree Hill* and I was back and forth between nine months out of the year living in Wilmington. Every long weekend that I had, I would go home to the Pacific Northwest and then I would be there for the summers and really started to isolate myself from anyone else outside of the group. I didn't trust anyone else.

There was so much mental, emotional, spiritual, psychological abuse happening, not just to me, but to everyone in the group. But I got hit the hardest because I had the biggest bank account. And so the need to control me was probably the biggest priority on the agenda.

So narcissists are historically called vampires. They suck the life out of you. Psychic vampires I think is the term. I and many other people involved in this group was, were... how do I... this is a bad sentence. So I had become dinner for vampires.

**Annie:** It's an unbelievable story, except it's believable and it happens to people. But though the process you walk through... I mean, you grew up in this. Psalty the

Singing Songbook!, Joy. I was little salty singing *Take My Life And Let It Be* in third grade.

**Bethany:** You were?

**Annie:** Blue face and all, sister.

**Bethany:** Oh my gosh. So good.

**Annie:** So you grew up in that. I think there are so many people, like you said, who go to a Wednesday night Bible study that friends are throwing. What warning side should they be looking for today? If they're at a para-church thing that is not connected to a Sunday morning church, is there something that you're like, looking back, this was a tiny red flag in my head or was there none?

**Bethany:** There really weren't. I just wasn't old enough. I didn't have enough life experience to know anything about boundaries or red flags or any of that. For anyone listening now, I would say there's several red flags. One of them is any sort of sense of superiority where they talk about other churches or other groups or denominations or anything in a derogatory way. Even if it's a joke, I have no tolerance for it.

I think some of the others would be watching how people in the leadership behave. It's hard. You were talking to me before we started this about hearing God's voice. And I can't say that there's just a checklist. I mean, there's plenty of checklists you can look at online for narcissism and they're all true. But the check that you would get in your spirit is something that you just have to partner with God, the God of your understanding at that point, wherever you are in your life, and just feel it out, like ask for wisdom.

It's a check I just get in my spirit. I'm not always right, but if I... I mean the preacher's and sneaker's syndrome, I have a really hard time walking into a church and I see a pastor who's 60 years old and he dresses like he's 25. I'm like, why are you trying so hard? And I don't want to be judgmental. Maybe you like skinny jeans and Yeezys. But I just don't believe that's necessary to a job. So I don't know. There's lots of little things like that.

But I've also been wrong. I've met people that I thought at first were... I was put off by. And then the more I got to know them, I was like, "Oh, this is actually a really humble, lovely person." It's hard to tell you, but I do think people should be on guard because the biggest thing is that there are more people than you think who are trying to manipulate you. I'm sorry to tell you. But it's true. It's really true.

**Annie:** We both live in Nashville and I am doing my training to volunteer at the Tennessee Prison for Women as part of God Behind Bars.

**Bethany:** Oh, awesome.

**Annie:** It's awesome. If you ever want to go with me-

**Bethany:** I would love to.

**Annie:** Girl, I'm telling you, it has changed my life to go on Thursday nights to the church service. I mean like 150 out of the 500 or so go to church on Thursday nights. But in the training, there's like a two-hour Zoom you have to sit through. The whole first hour is of things. What you do if this happens, what you do if this happens, what you if...

The second hour of the training is what do you do when you're manipulated by a prisoner? And the thing they keep saying is, it happens to everybody. It happens to everybody. It's not even that the "prisoners are". It's not a negative thing about the prisoners. Manipulation happens all the time. And there is no shame. Instead, here are the steps to what you do next.

**Bethany:** What are those steps? Do you have any?

**Annie:** The first, as soon as... Well, they were giving you these tips of like, if someone asks you for this or ask you to do this. So the first thing is you follow the rules. If you follow the rules, their attempts to manipulate you are really limited. But the first thing you do is tell somebody. You tell the authorities. As soon as something has happened... I gave my water bottle away yesterday. I'm really sorry. I can't find one of the keys on my key ring and I let someone hold my keys while I was picking up my bag.

**Bethany:** There's a photo of my daughter on the key chain. She wanted to see it.

**Annie:** A hundred percent. So you immediately tell the authorities. And it has been so-

**Bethany:** Awgh.

**Annie:** Right?

**Bethany:** Yeah. That's so hard. It's so hard. Because you want... I mean, it's what happened in the book is you kept believing the best about everyone in the family as y'all called it.



**Bethany:** You just keep doubling down on believing the best. It's gotta be me. If I just doubled down, if I just keep, keep going.

**Annie:** And the leaders kept telling you, in the book, the leaders kept telling you, "Anyone who disagrees with us, that's a Jezebel spirit. Anyone who disagrees with us is of the enemy." And I just thought, You and I would have sat next to each other every Wednesday night. Like I would have thought, Oh yeah. Because I don't know how to determine that and I'm 20.

**Bethany:** And it wasn't that language. They were smart enough not to say "if you disagree with us," because that's obviously polarizing language. It's more that this is how the world does things and we are spiritually minded. And so if you want to be moving with the spirit, then these are the things that you need to adhere to and believe and don't let doubt in and don't ask illegal questions, and don't say things to each other that are going to tear each other down. You just only reinforce the positive, which means you can't tell someone about their blind spots unless you're in a basement meeting.

**Annie:** Listen, the girl who was gambling away your money and you just had to go, "I forgive you and I love you." And there was no accountability. There was no... I just thought... yeah, all that blew my mind. There were a couple of times where I had to set the book down and be like, "What?" I mean, like, that's just-

**Bethany:** The amount of self-betrayal that I had to continually deny my instincts and just shut it down, just shut it down. "Don't feel that. You're not allowed to feel anger. You're not allowed to feel that frustration. You're a sinner too, Joy." And the irony of looking at the other side of this now where I say, "I am flawed. I am someone who doesn't do things perfectly. I can't judge another person, but I'm doing it... I'm saying that from a healthy place where it's not betraying myself to say that and giving somebody a free pass. I have reverence around the justice that will be happening to them. And you know, hopefully, I don't get what I deserve either in my own.

**Annie:** I mean, that is one of the questions I wrote down is how did you learn to trust yourself again? We're going to talk about God too, but how did you learn to trust your own ability to be friends with people, to be in spiritual community with people? I mean, to date someone who I adore as well, your boyfriend. So, I mean, how did you learn to trust Joy again after you have had to deny your own gut for so long, Joy?

**Bethany:** Isn't that wild like to start that at 30? Because I didn't even trust my gut when I was a kid. The only place I ever trusted my instinct was on set or on a stage.

**Annie:** Really?

**Bethany:** I knew I had instincts that were good and I used them throughout my life, but only in a work environment because I would go with my instinct and get praised for it constantly. And I was always booking jobs and I was like, Okay, I'm good at my instincts in this environment, but in my personal life, I don't know.

I made a lot of mistakes and I became okay with making mistakes. And really not just okay with it, but I really embraced the mess. Like what is grace worth if I'm not willing to really show up in my full authentic mess and let God guide me, heal me, grow me in that place? It doesn't work. Clearly, it doesn't work for me to show up with all my makeup on and in my nice Sunday clothes and doing everything on the checklist. It doesn't work.

**Annie:** It doesn't work.

**Bethany:** What's the next best thing? I'm going to do whatever I want. But if you speak to me, if you tell me like, go this way, go that way, then I will listen. And that was the sort of deal that I made with God after I got out of the group. "I don't know how to trust myself. I know you care about me. I know you're there. So I'm just going to go with my instinct in every moment. But if I hear you, if I hear you... like clearly you're capable of speaking to me without me having to go search for you. I'm tired of searching. You come find me. You come tell me."

**Annie:** That is the thing, right, is that the Lord looks for us more than we look for Him. And I've always-

**Bethany:** I wish I'd known that long time ago.

**Annie:** Same. I mean, we were both salty as kids. So you and I have the same length of how long we've been in a relationship with God. So I'm actively trying to learn what does it look like when I do nothing? And what is God actually teaching me when I'm not chasing God or anyone else and when I am going like, my right spot is to let love come to me. And I have never done that. And it is like practicing it in multiple areas of my life is allowing God to come toward me. And I feel like both you and I, though it played out differently, both you and I spent a lot of, it seems like, from *Dinner for Vampires*, of time going, what can I do to step toward God in order to be in a relationship with Him? I want to be in a relationship with Him.

**Bethany:** Totally.

**Annie:** So I want to step toward Him.

**Bethany:** What's the timer on the amount of prayer time I have to like... how many people do I have to have conversations about God with? It's this arbitrary checklist that is never-ending? It's a ladder that you just... it's a circular ladder. I don't know.

**Annie:** But also we're gonna call it a circular ladder, because I like that better. Circular ladder feels so much harder than a hamster wheel. So I am with you because it's on the outside. It's a circular ladder if we think it is ours to keep relationship with God fully when He is constantly saying, no, I came to rescue you. I came to rescue you.

**Bethany:** It's so hard because we're wired for ambition. We're wired to achieve, accomplish things. There's something inherently human and beautiful about ambition in a healthy way that to be able to have the power to name things, to see what's going on in relationships and speak life into someone and encourage them to raise your children, to be really succeed and excel at work and create things and be a genius and invent things. I mean, we are creators. That takes forward movement and ambition. And, man, to know that the Lord... I just show up and he's there. Yeah.

**Annie:** Yesterday, we heard the same sermon at Church of the City from Jon Tyson. And one of the things he said... I mean, I could just get my journal and we could just read his sermon yesterday. It was so profound.

**Bethany:** It was so good. My boyfriend said that too. He was like, I need to transcribe that and send it off to people.

**Annie:** Literally. But one of the things he talked about was partnership, not passivity. And in the midst of living in this season of letting God walk toward me, I still felt Him saying, your job is just show up. It's not passive to not do the work. It's passive to not show up. So show up, respond to me is what I felt God be like, respond to me but you don't have to do the work. I feel like I have felt like I had to do the work to make relationships work with God.

**Bethany:** We're wired to do work.

**Annie:** Is that like a female achieving thing? Is that like, because you and I are built like this?

**Bethany:** It might be. It might be. I write about this in the book, that high demand is a turn-on. Like someone having a demand of you, an expectation of you is... there's a lot of people that that really lights up, especially intelligent creatives. Like give me a chance to show up and prove what I can do, what I'm capable of. So to be in an environment where the high demand is like, just surrender.

**Annie:** Dude, the high demand is surrender.

**Bethany:** But you have to surrender in a healthy way and not in a way... like, who are you surrendering to? Because isn't that the thing? We're all surrendering to somebody, to something, somewhere. So to what can you surrender that will produce the most fruit, the most love, the most compassion in your life? Because it's going to be something not to quote Bob Dylan, because you know what I'm going to say. But you know, you're going to serve somebody. I said it.

**Annie:** You did. Thank you for saying it. I was going to let you.

[00:28:52] <music>

**Sponsor:** All right, friends, I'm interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Great American Family](#). Okay, it is no secret that we love watching Christmas movies around here, and tis the season to start watching them all. So I am thrilled to tell you that we are partnered with Great American Family this holiday season, and we have so many fun things coming up on the podcast soon. You know, we got a deep dive about some of these movies with my friends, Jen and Jamie, and you may even get to hear from some of the actors in these movies as well.

Y'all Great American Media is the place to find quality faith and family entertainment and both the television network Great American Family and the streaming service Pure Flix. Great American is bringing you the most original faith and family Christmas content available, offering more meaningful and quality stories than they ever have.

And you know what else? They're bringing you a cameo from your girl, AFD. I got to make an appearance in the new Christmas movie, *A Little Women's Christmas*, which was filmed right in Franklin, Tennessee. It comes out November 23rd. Please mark your calendars. We are all going to watch it together. It was so much fun. I cannot wait for y'all to see this movie.

For all the Great American Family goodness, go to [PureFlix.com](#) to start your free trial. That's PureFlix.com to start your free trial today.

Remember that link, pretty much every other link you could ever hope for, all the stuff we've got coming with Great American Family, it'll always be in the show notes or we'll send it straight to you every Friday in the AFD Week in Review, which we hope is the best email of your week. Sign up to get that in the show notes below as well. You do not want to miss this Friday.

**Sponsor:** Y'all know we love resources that help kick off our time with God in the morning. And when I find something I love, I want you to know about it too. Have you heard of the [Glorify app](#)? Okay. Glorify is the number one Christian daily devotional app.

Here is how it works. You can start your morning by reading the Bible passage of the day, and then it takes you into their daily devotional. And then you wrap up with an immersive experience called daily walk with God. They also have guided meditation. So you can start your day with those two or use them as you sit in the school pickup line or are stretching at night or washing your face. You're going to love their curated worship playlist too.

To end the day, you've also got to check out Glorify's sleep meditations to help you wind down. It is such a simple way to help you calm down before you go to bed and shift your focus towards rest. Join over 20 million people who have downloaded the Glorify app.

The Glorify app is free. It is really easy to get started. Just visit [glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun) right now to download the Glorify app. That's [glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun). It is free. You're going to love it. [Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun).

**Sponsor:** I am always looking for easy snacks to keep around that have a lot of protein too, and I love that I get snacks like chomps, meat sticks, and protein shakes from [Thrive Market](#). I love that I don't have to question what I'm getting from Thrive Market either. I know I can trust the ingredients of what I'm buying.

Instead of standing in the grocery store aisle, reading through all the labels to see if it's full of junk or words I can't pronounce, Thrive Market's already done all of that work for me. Certified organic is always their first choice and Thrive Market studies every label to search for the best wholesome ingredients that have been vetted for safety. They even restrict a thousand-plus ingredients that are found at conventional grocery stores.

Their mission is to make healthy and sustainable living easy and affordable for everyone. So they seek out brands and products that follow ethical practices. Want to shop at a grocery store that actually cares about your health? Go to [thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun) for 30% off your first order. Oh my gosh, you guys, 30% off plus a free \$60 gift. That's [thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun).

Okay, now back to our conversation with Joy.

[00:32:58] <music>

**Annie:** How did you relearn God's voice after being in an abusive spiritual situation for a decade where repeatedly in the book, your spouse, your pastor, and some of your friends said, "This is what God is saying." I mean, the *Beauty and the Beast* story, Joy, is just-

**Bethany:** I know.

**Annie:** That is the only time I teared up in the book. I mean, the book has a lot of emotion to it, but for me, that you walking away from this, I found tears in my eyes thinking of what that all could have... and God is in control and the story is not done.

**Bethany:** My daughter wouldn't exist if I had taken that job.

**Annie:** That's it.

**Bethany:** So I'm okay.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's it. So how did you relearn God's voice?

**Bethany:** It was a lot of that. It was just a lot of making mistakes and just saying like, I don't know that I know what you sound like. I'm going to live my life. I'm going to move with my instincts the way I want to, I'm going to live in the open mess and you come find me. If I'm in the middle of something and you speak up in my spirit, and I feel like you're saying this is not the right move, I won't do it. But I'm not going to preemptively be walking around in fear, looking for all the traps and all of the things that are going to trip me up and make me a bad Christian. And I didn't even know if I called myself a Christian at that point.

**Annie:** Why didn't you walk away? Why didn't you quit the whole thing?

**Bethany:** I did. I mean, I did for a while, for sure, for a couple of years. I couldn't walk away from God for one of the reasons that I write about in the book. I had had a supernatural experience when I was 19 that I just could not explain. I consider myself to be a pretty reasonable, rational person, especially after everything that I've been through. I'm more cynical than I would like to be. And I get uncomfortable in spiritually swirly situations where there's like prophetic stuff happening. I don't discount it, but I'm much more on guard.

**Annie:** You've done your time.

**Bethany:** Yeah. I'm so much more on guard now. But I had had this encounter with God that made no sense. I wasn't in crisis mode. There's no reason for me to have manifested

it. It wasn't like a kid dream. It was real. At the end of the day, like the only thing I can tell you is it was real.

So when I got out of the group, the only thing I knew was that there was something somewhere out there bigger than me, that he, she, it showed up and cared about me. Like saw me, heard my thoughts, my inner voice, and showed up for me in a way that... like I said, I couldn't explain. So I knew I was cared about and I was seen by a larger being.

**Annie:** That's interesting. Because you're like, "Before I got into this Bible study cult, I had seen God. Jesus had shown up for me. There was a thing. You could go back to that.

**Bethany:** Exactly. And it was particularly connected to the name of Jesus. And so it wasn't like I could say it's the universe morphing itself into some version of something that I could understand. If I just look at it objectively and logically, there's really just no other explanation. So I think that having that encounter put me in a place where I wasn't sure about Western Christianity at all. I wasn't sure about... I didn't know who wrote the Bible, where it came from, if it was just a big political tool that had been used for years, which it was used as a political tool in many environments and still continues to be, unfortunately.

There are plenty of other religions that I explored curious about different ways, but ultimately the more that I explored and researched and watched all the things and the documentaries and read the books and listened to the sermons and visited different temples and different and whatever. The thing that made the most existential sense was the Christ story.

And it was singular in the fact that I didn't have to do the work. God came and did the work for me. And now all of the things that I do that are good deeds, quote-unquote, in life or good thoughts or all those things are meant to... and do sometimes and sometimes I'm still wrestling with performances, but come from a place of gratitude and an outpouring of just gratitude for the grace and not a faux humility of like, Oh, I'm so bad. I've got to do all these things because I feel bad that you saved me. You know, it's just another weird road of Christianity a lot of people think of.

But yeah, the more I researched, the more I did, I was just like, I really think this is what makes the most sense. There's still a lot within the Bible within Christianity that I don't have a grasp on or understand, but the big, big fundamental questions, I think they're existentially answered most satisfactorily — I've been working on my vocabulary this week — through Christ. So at that point I was like, well, what am I

going to deny? My instincts again? Just because this has the same label as the other thing-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, Joy. That's it.

**Bethany:** I can't.

**Annie:** That's right. Even yesterday, Tyson said, This is not a quick thing. If you are the same person in 30 years and this actually hasn't... this faith actually hasn't... you haven't been sanctified was the teaching. But instead, it is this long changing that is happening in us. So I'm thankful I don't know everything and still have questions. When I don't have questions anymore, please call me and be like, Hey, Downs, you don't know everything.

**Bethany:** That's right.

**Annie:** You actually don't know everything. Settle it. You know?

**Bethany:** That's what's scary.

**Annie:** With the book coming out this week, I know you are in a lot of places. You aren't getting to talk to a bunch of people who share your faith like you're going to with us, which is really kind. So I have two questions around that. Number one, how do you want us to pray for you this week?

**Bethany:** Oh, that's awesome. Thank you. Please pray for true humility, not false humility. It's really easy as an actor and a performer and somebody who's used to very comfortable on stage in front of camera to sort of flip into the performance mode of like, I know it's expected of me. I know how to do this and just function from a place where I don't have to actually be emotionally vulnerable. And I don't want that. I didn't write this book for that reason. I wrote the book to be vulnerable because the people in my life who have been vulnerable in the face of hardship have affected me deeply and inspired me. I just don't want to be closed off. I want to be open, which is hard to do because now I've got all these boundaries and I'm all like, you know, trying to figure out how to stay soft in good ways. But yeah, so I would say that would be to just still have access to that emotional vulnerability.

And then protection for my family. Yes, I would really love to not overthink things. I would love some just clarity in moment to moment. So those are three actionable items.

**Annie:** That's beautiful.



**Bethany:** Thanks. Thank you for asking.

**Annie:** Yeah, of course. When I was talking to Jonathan yesterday, he said, you are doing so much press because so many people love you. I mean, you were on a cult TV show while in a cult, right? It's the subtitle of the book. And I thought then, then we have a responsibility that the other places don't. I have a responsibility that the other hosts don't to make sure you have covering.

**Bethany:** Thank you.

**Annie:** We get to do that here. I hope everybody that you talk to is caring about your story and not everybody believes everything we believe. And so we know that there's a covering that a great cloud of witnesses brings.

**Bethany:** That's beautiful.

**Annie:** And so I wanted to ask that. And then I'm curious, as the book is coming out, what you think about what Hollywood is going to think or feel? What are your friends... You have a lot of friends. You've been in a lot of shows and have people started reaching out to you? Is it kind of like, I love you. I remember? I mean, what's that side like?

**Bethany:** I've gotten some of those messages for sure. I think because I really worked to write the book from a perspective where if you are a Christian and you've experienced any version of these church environments, you will relate to it on one level. And if you're not, you have no history with religion whatsoever, there's still so much that you can relate to just from a pure level of narcissistic abuse because it's everywhere.

So everyone's been really loving and kind around it. And also because of the journey, the spiritual journey that I went through after the book and brought me to a place where finally I'm at a place in my faith where I don't sit in any kind of judgment seat. I try not to. Listen, it's a day-to-day thing. I mean, believe me, you don't want to sit in the car with me sometimes.

**Annie:** I don't want to sit in the car with me sometimes. So I get it.

**Bethany:** But I'm hoping that people feel that welcoming heart from me, people who don't believe the same thing that I do, because I don't want to... I'm not trying to be callous to say like, I don't care. Because I mean, of course, I want everyone to believe something that's going to produce an immense amount of compassion and love and grace and peace in their life. But we're all at a place of a God of our understanding based on where we're at. It's not my job to go tell somebody how

they should be living their life, how they should be figuring out their faith. If somebody has questions and wants to bounce ideas off, I love to share that stuff.

But I think because I'm coming from that place, it's been really well received because I'm not trying to convert anyone. I'm not trying to push anything anywhere. And I just want people to feel invited in. And hopefully, that's what this story will do.

In Hollywood, in terms of that, um, my friends have been really loving and open and encouraging. I don't know what people will think. I don't care. I'm not reading comments. I'm not reading reviews. I'm just-

**Annie:** We say a lot around here that editors are for authors, reviews are for readers.

**Bethany:** Yes.

**Annie:** Reviews are not for authors.

**Bethany:** Totally.

**Annie:** We cannot do anything about the books we've written when by the time it's a good... reader, they're important. Readers need to see reviews.

**Bethany:** That's right. If there's something that comes up that is important enough, and it's being talked about enough, and there's some issue that's repeated over and over that I need to address, my PR team will come to me and say, There is something we have to talk about. Otherwise, I am making peanut butter and jelly for my daughter and we're going to watch *Gilmore Girls*.

**Annie:** And the book is done.

**Bethany:** Except I will tell you there is one major error. And I literally bought-

**Annie:** What?

**Bethany:** I went on Vistaprint and I ordered stamps so that every time I'm in a bookstore or whatever, I'm just going to go around and I'm stamping the correction thing in this book.

**Annie:** Wait, are you going to tell us or do we have to?

**Bethany:** Yes. No, I'm telling you because I'm all officially giving you as an audience member permission to go make these corrections in my book, in any bookstore that

you walk into. It's page 302. It says, I'm thanking, in my acknowledgments, Tim and Kathy Keller and the work that they do in The Gospel Coalition. And it's not. It's Gospel in Life. And my brain, for whatever reason, tied that in. I wrote it. I typed it fast. I sent it in and nobody caught it. And I didn't remember.

So I have a stamp now that I go in every book I see. It's 302?

**Annie:** 301.

**Bethany:** 301. Sorry.

**Annie:** It's the last page. Say it again. What is it?

**Bethany:** So the last sentence on page 301, it says The Gospel Coalition and that's not what it is. It's supposed to be Gospel in Life. And it's so meaningful to me because Tim Keller was such a hero in my life of faith and reason and objectivity to be able to look at my faith from a really clear perspective without all the googie-googie emotional, spiritual stuff, which is a place for it. It's great. So I felt really, really bad that made it through.

**Annie:** That'll only be in the first run.

**Bethany:** It's only in the first run. It'll fix it. But yes.

**Annie:** We'll buy them up this week. Next run will come that says New York Times bestseller and fixes in the back. We'll get both of them knocked out next week.

**Bethany:** But audience, you have my full permission. Go into any bookstore you see my book, just go to page 301 and just rewrite it.

**Annie:** She'll be like, no, no, no. She told me to do... Sorry, Joy's a friend of mine. She told me to do this.

**Bethany:** Let's start a movement.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. That Sounds Fun audience is going to go. I want to ask you about Nashville and then what sounds fun to you? Is there anything about this that you did not get to say, or I didn't ask you?

**Bethany:** There probably will be later, but I don't think so.

**Annie:** You can just text me, voice memo me and you can just tell me and we'll just clip it in.

**Bethany:** Well, wait. I feel like I still didn't fully answer your question about hearing God's voice again. I feel like maybe there was one extra thing that I could say. I don't have it yet. I'm finding it. It's like, I think through making all those mistakes. I guess the second half of that would be... there was just a continual process of... it's the sanctification that Jon Tyson was talking about yesterday, that the slow process of making mistake... trusting my instinct. Sometimes even trusting my instinct over what I felt like I was hearing in my spirit. And then paying attention to the results that came from those specific decisions and choices.

Some of them took years to untangle from. One moment I felt God being like, don't do it. And I was like, Nah, it's fine. How bad could it be? Took years. Some of them were just quick moments that I was like, Ooh. And some of them were moments when I did what I wanted to do instead and realized it and was able to backpedal and get out of it fast enough. God's grace is there in multiple different ways, but it's a long process. It just doesn't happen overnight.

So I think we really have to become okay with making mistakes and living in the mess and just expecting that we need the gospel. Because what else is it for?

**Annie:** What else? This is a Jon Tyson fan pod. One of the things I wrote down yesterday is I want my friendships and relationships to be a safe place for sanctification. I want to be in relationships where people let me change and let me make mistakes. And I want to say to people, "Hey, if you're in an intimate relationship with me, this is a safe place to be sanctified," which means it has to be a safe place for people to make mistakes. And I have to have relationships where I'm allowed to say, "I think the Lord said this or invite me to do this. And I missed it." We just have to have those relationships that are safe to be sanctified in.

**Bethany:** We have to. And just in your own personal relationship with the Lord and with the Holy Spirit, it's hard to admit that... like there's a pride that comes from being able to make all my own decisions and do everything right. And like, yeah, I'm good. So to realize that I'm going to be stumbling all the time and tripping and falling all the time and needing to be caught all the time is... I'm learning to start enjoying it more because that's just the human experience. This is just what we're doing here. I can't try and pretend like we're here for some other reason.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. That's exactly right.

**Bethany:** So now I'm starting to kind of get into a groove with it. The other thing you had said about warning signs and someone who gets really close really fast, and whether that's a pastor, a friend at church, a church group, like everybody just is up your butt suddenly all the time. Like, how are you checking in? It can feel really

great because like you say, you want these relationships that feel totally safe and you can make mistakes and they're still showing up for you and all that. But I have noticed a consistency in the pattern of people who... not people who are nice and check in with you, but like who really are kind of aggressive about showing up for you before the relationship has been built and established, before the trust has been established. It's a red flag. I'm not saying that's always an unhealthy person or bad, but usually, that's codependence of some kind and it could be more than that. So I'm always a little wary of that too.

**Annie:** My counselor taught me this slider, particularly for dating, but it helps in friendship too, is there's four sliders: emotional, physical, commitment, time. Now, in just friendship, you remove physical, right? But they should all go up at the same time: Emotional, physical, commitment, time. And I'm great at spending a ton of time and getting very emotional in a relationship. And doing both of those fast is culty behavior. But it makes you feel really connected, but there's actually no commitment.

**Bethany:** Well, I don't know if it's even culty behavior as much as it is... That's a codependent and a manipulative behavior. But they're not usually at the same time. Like I could be codependent and a manipulative person is attracted to a codependent. And so that person, the narcissist gets their highs off of doing the behavior that you're talking about. Like the sliders are going at all different directions at different times. And I'm getting fed from the feeling like I'm getting really close really fast and getting... I can feel like it's codependent because it looks like it's altruistic or like you're just showing up for another person. But as a codependent, you're actually getting fed by it. That's where you go and all this stuff.

So yeah, the codependent and the narcissist are often attracted to each other. So if there is that, the sliders are not all going up at the same time. There's an imbalance there that should just be checked.

**Annie:** Checked. Worth paying attention to.

[00:52:41] <music>

**Annie:** You know, I've been on a bit of a hair journey lately and went for a fun fall, dark brown hair color, but I never actually have to worry about the health of my hair because [Prose](#) custom care has been a game changer for me. I love it so much. I keep it in both my Nashville and my New York apartments.

Since 2017, Prose has transformed traditional hair and skincare with a made-to-order custom model. They combine the expertise of their team of in-house cosmetic chemists with an advanced AI algorithm that personalizes your formula

based on 80-plus unique factors. So you're truly getting a custom-made-for-you product.

Prose also offers custom skincare. So go give that a try too, because with the Prose promise, if you don't love your first order, it is on them. So there's never been a better time to switch to custom.

Prose is so confident that they will bring out your best hair that they're offering an exclusive trial offer of 50% off your first haircare subscription order at [Prose.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://Prose.com/ThatSoundsFun). So take your free consultation, get your one-of-a-kind formula and see the difference that custom hair care can make at half the price, you guys. 50% off at Prose.com/ThatSoundsFun.

**Raj:** I'm Raj Nair, host of the Can I Trust the Bible? podcast. Now did the events recorded in the Bible actually happen? Is the Bible trustworthy and reliable? Well, join me on this comprehensive Christian apologetics journey as we talk with experts and renowned apologists to provide compelling evidence that will strengthen your Christian faith. Make sure to follow Can I Trust the Bible? on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we discover why you can have rock-solid trust in the Bible.

**Greer:** Hey, I'm Greer, host of the Unfinished Idea podcast, where listeners and I get to journey together to better understand the neurodiverse world. Together with my husband, we have two boys and two dogs and raising a child with additional needs. Our day-to-day experience isn't being talked about in everyday life, and I see a gap in those leading people who are neurodivergent. Whether you're a parent, a friend, a teacher, or a neighbor, the neurodivergent world is all around us. So this podcast is for you.

I have conversations over a cup of tea or coffee, helping to bring awareness about how neurodivergent people experience the world, as well as families who are raising children with different needs. This podcast will share practical help, tips, and the joys, struggles, and differences in being neurodivergent or raising a child who is.

Each week I will spend 30 minutes talking and interviewing others in the neurodiverse space and giving you the opportunity to learn and grow and feel seen and heard by how we interact with each other and the world. Search for the Unfinished Idea in your favorite podcast app and come learn about the neurodivergent world. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Joy.

[00:55:47] <music>

**Annie:** Okay, how'd you end up in Nashville? Let's finish here.

**Bethany:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Annie:** We share Angie Smith.

**Bethany:** Oh my God.

**Annie:** She loves you so much. She's texted me about you five times just in life, being like, have you hung out with Joy yet? I was like, "No, we've met. She's coming on the show." She just loves you. I think she's like, Joy's my new sister.

**Bethany:** I love her so much. She is really such a genuine, fun, really smart. She drops right in. You know, she's so great. Our daughters are really good friends.

**Annie:** So are you living in Franklin? You don't have to give us your address, but did you end up in Franklin?

**Bethany:** I'm in Franklin. We moved there after COVID because I had this beautiful ranch house in LA that I'd finally saved up enough to buy this amazing house. And we had horses and it was so great. And during COVID, it was a sanctuary. But I don't like LA. I like to visit LA and I have friends there, but I'm not a... my sensibilities don't really work with the people in LA. I just don't understand the... and I have a bit about this in the book too, the way this constant self-congratulatory communication and you never know where you stand with anybody because everybody's booking you all the time. I just am so confused.

**Annie:** Well, you talk about being in meetings and people being like, "You are the best thing that's ever walked into this room when they have three meetings in a row."

**Bethany:** Yes. And it's like, Okay, they're trying to hype me up so I have confidence about the audition, but now I just feel like you're [inaudible 00:57:25] me. So now I'm confused because does that... yeah, I don't like not knowing where I stand with people. I'm much more of a New Yorker in that way. And East Coast. And even Southern people. You know where you stand with people.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Bethany:** Because if they don't like you... it's not that they're not sweet, but there's so much saccharine on it that you know-

**Annie:** She wants you to know. Yeah, that's exactly right.

**Bethany:** Bless your heart.

**Annie:** That's right. That's right. That's right. Has your daughter done well in Nashville? Does she like it?

**Bethany:** She loves it. She's so happy. That's one of the reasons why I wanted to move. It was like, I'm ready to leave LA. Casting rooms are all closed because of COVID. It's fine. We'll get out there. She has been thriving. I thought I had a safe Haven in LA with a couple of horses. Now it's everywhere. I drive around and it's just rolling hills and so, so pretty.

And the people are really lovely. I remember for the first year we would leave a coffee shop at the grocery store and she just... I wish I had a quarter for every time she said it, "Everybody here is so nice." And it's true. There's really a lot of really kind people.

**Annie:** And there's a real... something's going on spiritually and impact-wise in Nashville that it's almost like God's like, um, the tide, everyone's coming together. Like something's going to be sent out. You know, like it just feels like this pool of a bunch of us who do similar-ish jobs.

**Bethany:** So much creative energy. It's a great pulse there. I know-

**Annie:** People are starting to make movies. They're starting to mean all that. It's kind of-

**Bethany:** That's right.

**Annie:** We're going there.

**Bethany:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Really interesting.

**Bethany:** It's really interesting. Spiritually it's hard for me. I've had a hard time finding a church. There's so much traditional... I don't know. I don't know what's my baggage and what's just not for me. Or maybe I'm just uncomfortable. I don't know what it is. But that's been hard. It's also the area that we're in was so straight White. Like everybody is kind of the same, like income, same vibe. That also feels hard. I would love to be in an environment where there's a lot more diversity, but I have to drive to East Nashville to get that, which I do. And we travel a lot, so that's fine.



But to your point, there's enough people that I know who are moving in from other places that really care about that, care about the diversity, want to be able to see the creativity coming from all different ideas and perspectives. And in this place of wanting to support spiritual growth in people that I'm starting to see some things shift and move. And that's really exciting too.

**Annie:** It's fun. Being half there and half here kind of lights me up and all the way, you know?

**Bethany:** Yeah.

**Annie:** I'm getting a lot of that diversity of thinking here. And then a lot of the piece of people I've known for 15 years there, right? And diversity in both places. And there's peace here too. So it's both of both. But here is like new. And home is like in Nashville... I call both home, but Nashville feels very like, okay, here's where you're rooted. Here's where Angie is. Angie's known you for 20 years. Here's where Angie is. And you can go back and you can go to their house and you can sit on the couch and the girls are going to run around and whatever.

**Bethany:** My daughter spent so many hours on that couch.

**Annie:** I know. Okay, the last question I always ask because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you. What do you do for fun?

**Bethany:** I was thinking about this yesterday because I was like, what sounds fun is going back to living in New York in 1999 and 2000 for cell phones. And we could just sit in the street and you've just told somebody you were going to meet them.

**Annie:** You just wait,

**Bethany:** You made a phone call from the payphone and you just stood on the corner and you waited and you beeped somebody and hope they called the payphone back on the corner.

**Annie:** It had to have been so different.

**Bethany:** It was so different. When I walk around the city, I'm like, man, this place is so not what it used to be. That sounds fun to me. Someday I would like to have a moment of going back in time. But for me, what I do for fun is, I mean, I have these two giant dogs that take up so much of my heart and my time and we have a lot of fun just playing around. And I paint.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Bethany:** But I love to write and I love to storytell. You know, my job is fun.

**Annie:** Okay, great. More books.

**Bethany:** There's more planned for sure.

**Annie:** You did go back in time, ma'am, in the Asheville Christmas movie. That was so good about the Biltmore.

**Bethany:** Oh, thank you.

**Annie:** That was such a good movie. I think I saw you at *The Unsung Hero* premiere right before the movie came out.

**Bethany:** Yeah, that's right.

**Annie:** I texted your boyfriend, I was like, "That movie, the Asheville Biltmore Christmas movie. That was so good where she turns over the..." what are they called?

**Bethany:** Hourglass.

**Annie:** Hourglass. Yeah. It's a great one. She being you.

**Bethany:** Yes. No, I loved it. It turned out really well.

**Annie:** It's really sweet. That's one of my favorites.

**Bethany:** What do you do for fun?

**Annie:** What sounds fun to you? Thank you for asking. I love when people ask. Currently, what sounds fun to me, I'm going to Vermont next week and it's my 50th state.

**Bethany:** Oh.

**Annie:** So I'm going for like two days just to take it off. And because it's a couple of hours from here. So I kinda can't wait to have like two days in a new place. Because I've been budgeting to live in two cities, I only go to those two cities right now. So all my vacations are staycations, which is totally appropriate at this time in my financial life and with what God has allowed me to do. So Vermont's the only place I've been to this year, not for work that isn't New York or Nashville. So Vermont sounds fun. Have you been before? I'm sure.

**Bethany:** Never been.

**Annie:** Well, if you're not busy next Monday, Tuesday, you want to meet me in Vermont.

**Bethany:** I'm going to be in LA on book tour.

**Annie:** Because you've got book stuff to do.

**Bethany:** But I would love to go to Vermont. I don't think I've ever been to New England at all. Well, I've been in Nantucket. Does that count?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Bethany:** But only twice.

**Annie:** I'll let you know. I'll let you know what I think. I'm sure Vermont's great.

**Bethany:** Especially this time of year. Right?

**Annie:** Everybody keeps telling me to have maples creamies or something. I don't know.

**Bethany:** [inaudible 01:03:50] tree and just bring home some syrup.

**Annie:** This is what I'll do. This is what I will do.

**Bethany:** It's going to be so great.

**Annie:** Thanks for doing this.

**Bethany:** Thanks for having me.

**Annie:** And thanks for writing this book. It is a labor of love that you have done for yourself. I hope it feels that way. I hope you feel like you are going back and hugging your 20-year-old self in some ways, but it is also for us. And that's a real gift. So thank you.

**Bethany:** Thanks so much, Annie. Bye everybody.

**Annie:** Bye friends.

[01:04:14] <music>

**Outro:** Okay. You guys, I am dying to hear your thoughts after that podcast. I have got to hear your thoughts. After you listen to this episode, after you buy and read *Dinner for Vampires*, we just have to talk about it. Go get your copy of *Dinner for Vampires*. Go follow Joy on social media, tell her, thank you so much for being on the show. And don't forget to drop into the comments because I'm dying to hear what you think.

If you enjoyed this episode, let's keep it running on that one *One Tree Hill* cast member episodes and go listen to Episode 501 with Jana Kramer. I love Jana Kramer. That one is also linked below for you.

If you got any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q& A box in your Spotify app, if that's where you listen, like me, or you can send them to us on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. We'll try to answer them there. Make sure you're following there with a lot of your friends. There's a lot of fun stuff going on over @ThatSoundsFunPodcast on Instagram.

If you need anything else for me, you know embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. Anywhere you may need me, that is how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is getting ready for those Christmas movies. So get your great American Family going, get your Pure Flix going, y'all. We are going to have a great holiday season.

So speaking of have a great week, we'll see you back here on Thursday when we talk with Dallas and Amanda Jenkins all about their new Christmas movie, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Y'all, we also cry. It's going to be fine. We'll see y'all on Thursday.

**David:** Hey friends, I'm David Magee. I'm a little crazy, and aren't we all? I want to tell you about a podcast I just launched. It's called A Little Crazy. I teach you how to manage and channel your mental health issues into strength, recovery, and lasting joy.

What are my qualifications to lead this conversation? I was once lost and lost it all before I learned to manage better and walk confidently against the grain, becoming a bestselling author and change-maker.

I dig deep on this podcast to reveal inspirational stories and valuable tools for management, recovery, and personal insight from the perspective of family. Mental

health is a family story, as is recovery and finding joy. From crazy faith to love and everything in between, my entertaining guest and I vulnerably smash the stigma and bring down the walls that hold us back.

I hope you'll join me on this podcast. Subscribe now on your favorite podcast app by clicking "follow", or watch all the episodes over on YouTube. See you soon. See you soon.

**Eric:** I'm Erick Stakelbeck, host of the Stakscast podcast. If you want truth and a bold take on what's happening in our world, then listen to the Stakscast now. From thought-provoking conversations about the current state of America, the impact of global events, and issues facing the body of Christ, this podcast brings you today's biggest topics that affect your life. Make sure to follow the Stakscast on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we have candid, thought-provoking conversations on issues that matter to you.