

# Episode 253

[00:00:00] One of our bestselling studies just got a refresh, both in design and in content. This study is called it is well walking away from anxiety and into God's word. This is a three week study that will encourage you to rest in God's peace. Instead of staying stuck in anxious thought cycles, it's going to help you to trust God as your source of hope. When anxieties arise. [00:01:00] It's going to remind you that God can redeem every fear and worry for our good in his glory. This study will equip you with scripture that will remind you of God's love and care for you when you need it the most.

To find out more about the study, visit our website, the daily grace code. com or check out the link in the show notes.

**Krystal:** Hey everybody. Welcome back to the Daily Grace podcast. This is Crystal and I'm joined as always by my friend and co host Shelby. Hey, Shelby. Hi

**Shelby:** everyone. Super glad to be back for another episode. Yeah.

**Krystal:** And today's going to be a really good one. We're excited to introduce to you, Julie Bussler.

Julie, thank you so much for joining us today.

**Julie:** Thank you for having me.

**Krystal:** So Julie, if you don't know her, she's a Bible teacher and author. She's involved in her local church and women's ministry, and she is here to talk about a topic that we have been looking forward to for a while. This is something we've wanted to talk about in the podcast and we have in some different capacities, but it's a topic of mental health.

And I feel like this conversation sometimes around mental health, especially in the church can feel one sided, you know, pursuing help has [00:02:00] to. Look this certain way or has to look like that and so I think it could just cause a lot of confusion and maybe Even avoidance. We just don't know what to do with it.

And so we just avoid it. We don't talk about it And so I'm excited for us to talk about it So I do want to say at the top of this episode we are talking about some sensitive topics as it relates to mental health So please check the show notes for

timestamps just to listen with care If there's anything that you want to know that we're talking about that's all gonna be listed there Is there anything else that you would want to add to that Julie?

**Julie:** No, I mean, it's definitely a sensitive topic, but it's also very full of hope. And so, I hope that the ladies aren't immediately scared away, that they'll stick around because there's lots of hope.

**Krystal:** absolutely, absolutely. And I think your story is definitely one of hope. So we're excited to talk a little bit more.

**Shelby:** Yeah, absolutely. And I know, Crystal, you know, kind of more of Julie's story and are acquainted with that, but I'm just learning alongside our listeners. So I'm really excited to jump in here.

Um, Julie, would you [00:03:00] share just a little bit about your story when it comes to mental health? 'cause we can talk about it as a topic, but for many of us it's personal. Mm-hmm. , it's a, it's our, it's our very own lives. Yeah. And so we're so thankful that you're willing to share your story with us today and, uh, wouldn't give you the chance to do that with our listeners.

**Julie:** so I really have to start back like at childhood, very, very young age. So my family growing up, um, it wasn't one that talked about death or feelings or grief or really anything. that was below the surface. And I think that can be normal in lots of families, but it's a really unhealthy way to grow up.

And so when I'm eight years old, this is like my existence. And then my mom is diagnosed with breast cancer. So when you're eight, you're old enough to know something's wrong, but you're not old enough to really understand. What's wrong? And if no one pulls you aside and explains what cancer is, I mean, that's just, there's lots of questions, it's a really difficult thing to grapple with, and so I see my mom declining, I see her appearance changing, and [00:04:00] all I know to do is just pretend like everything's okay.

And just put on this happy face and kind of stay out of the way. Um, I do really well in school. I'm, I'm a great kid. I look like this on the outside, but inside I've got lots of sadness, lots of questions. Um, I'm also really involved in ballet. I, I went on to dance professionally, but, um, in ballet, I would spend my summers dancing in major cities like the Juilliard or Boston Ballet, and you're taught in ballet that no matter what's going on, like if there's pain in your feet or in your body, that you make it look effortless.

And so I was in ballet class almost every day of the week. Like that's like where I put all of my energy into, which only made this whole idea of acting like it's perfect on the outside while inside it's not, it made it worse. And so when I was 19, I went to college, um, in Oklahoma. I'm from Kansas originally in Oklahoma.

After my freshman year, I go back home to Kansas and my mom actually dies from cancer. And it was one of those traumatic experiences that [00:05:00] You don't, you leave from that experience a different person, like you never really go back to how you were before trauma, and it wasn't handled in the most healthy way, like hospice wasn't involved.

I'm this new 19 year old trying to figure out what's even happening and then she dies and so I'm so traumatized but I don't have the skills, I don't have any coping mechanisms on how to handle that. I don't know who to talk to. And so I just shove it deep down and no one would have any idea. Um, like the darkness and despair that I'm just plummeting into inside.

So I go back to college. Um, she dies and we bury her in July. Then I go back to college in August and no one really knows what I've been through. And so these, you know, these thoughts start happening because I'm, I feel so much despair. I don't have the vocabulary of like depression and PTSD and anxiety or counseling.

I don't even know really anything about that. Um, I was raised in a family though, where like counseling wasn't even an option. I know that my dad was, was against [00:06:00] it. I, I'm wondering if they kind of thought it was like a sign of weakness. I'm not really sure, but it was not allowed. So I have this idea that it's wrong to get help. And so I started having these thoughts that are pretty passive suicidal thoughts that are like, I wish I just wouldn't wake up in the morning or if I got in a car accident, that would be okay. Um, I didn't realize the danger in those thoughts and that there's help for those thoughts. And so I just let those thoughts kind of run wild for decades.

Um, but I do become a believer in college. I've become a true follower of Jesus. And so I had this new hope, this new joy, but there's still so much trauma. And now I know it's depression and PTSD that I've shoved down. Um, and so I'm really in an unhealthy place, but no one knows. I meet my husband in college.

He's this amazing godly man. We get married after college and he doesn't even know what's going on inside of me because I have been trained from childhood to just appear okay. And a lot of Christian women I think are really good at this,

wearing this [00:07:00] mask that we are good. Everything's fine. Um, and so he didn't know what's happening.

And it's not that I was trying to deceive him or be this like, Secret of life. It's I didn't know how to tell him. And so we start our life together. Um, we're in our twenties and I have a three year old, a one year old, and I'm pregnant. And that's when I get this email that was my dad's suicide note. And I learn right then that he has just taken his life.

So here I am in my 20s, I have no parents, um, no help, like, emotionally, and I've got, I'm pregnant with two babies, and I don't know how to survive that. And so I just do what I have been doing my whole life, and I shove it deep down. Um, but those, those suicidal thoughts in my own mind just kind of start increasing, and suddenly suicide is very real to me.

Someone I know and love has And so it's not just this far off idea that became like, Oh, people actually do this, which I think was detrimental to my mental health, [00:08:00] obviously. And so, um, the same time that all of this is happening, my husband and I, we feel led to go overseas to share the gospel because we are dealing with my dad's death and my mom's death.

My husband didn't know my mom, but, um, there's lots of grief and we are grieving. My dad's death with our own hope because we have hope in Christ, and we're realizing, Oh, my goodness. There's a whole world out there that is in pain and losing people, and they don't even know who Jesus is some of them. And so it was really awesome that before I'm still in this very broken place, but God has already started using.

My dad's death to spur us on to share life because God can redeem anything. And so we are, um, in our late twenties and that's when we sell everything. We give away all of our possessions and we relocate to Turkey, to Istanbul, Turkey and ministry is great. Like we are, we're totally committed, but mind you, I still have lots of emotional issues that are shoved [00:09:00] deep down.

**Krystal:** You know, it's interesting if you know you're telling your story and that's where it ends. It could sound like, wow, it's so wrapped up, you know, like she got saved, she went into the mission field. I think there's a preconceived notion of the type of person that goes into missions or the type of person that goes into ministry.

You do have it all together. You, you're mature enough to step into this space. And yet the Lord does a lot more in your life, and there's a lot more that

happens. So I would love to hear a little bit more about that, and just the, the turning point that you experienced when you were overseas. And then even with that, I would love to hear what the Lord taught you during that season.

**Julie:** Yes, I don't think people mean to necessarily, and I'm guilty of this as well, but when you see a missionary or a prominent Bible teacher or someone that you look up to spiritually, you can place them on a pedestal, but that's so unhealthy because all of us are broken. We're all humans, and so that almost makes the person on the pedestal think that they aren't [00:10:00] allowed to struggle.

Like it's a problem if they struggle. And so that's, I think that was my mindset because we're from the small town where this family that has gone to this country that, you know, isn't always the safest country. I mean, it's, we love Turkey, but there's unrest in the country. And so everyone's like, wow, you're like a super Christian is basically what we felt.

So we get there and we, we genuinely, we are there for the people. We love them and we are serving. We're sharing the gospel. There's joy in the work, my kids, that's home to them. We're speaking the language, but then at the same time, there's so much sadness and depression in my heart. And so there's only so long that you can pretend.

So about six years after being overseas, um, this is 2018, I just got to this place where I just had really lost my will to live. And I, I didn't quite understand that because these suicidal thoughts had been going on for, I mean, like two decades. And so that had become just this... Soundtrack in my mind that I didn't even always recognize was there.

I did not take those thoughts captive [00:11:00] Um because it was just so ingrained in my mind and and you know I just desperately wanted to follow through with it And so really I a didn't know how to take my thoughts captive, which i've learned through therapy I can talk about that in a minute, but b I just didn't um, and so in 2018 My mother in law came to visit us in turkey and we were so excited but I remember how my kids were like all around her and laughing and so happy and I felt Just nothing inside.

And, you know, now I know that numbness is a sign of trauma, but I didn't know that, and then this intrusive thought came in my mind, which I didn't have control over. Um, now I know I have control with what I do with a thought, but the initial thought just came to my mind. And it was now's a good time to just

end my life because she's here and she can get my husband, kids, and my body home from Turkey.

And that was a good plan in my mind because depression, it warps reality. And so things that are evil can look good and good look evil. And it reminds me in Isaiah, he even says like, woe to those [00:12:00] who call evil, good and good evil. And that is where I had become because these irrational thoughts seemed rational because I needed help.

I mean there was an illness going on so I wrote a note and I was going to do this and then I didn't Um praise the lord. I didn't I don't know why it was just the spirit of god in me. I guess something in me God had a plan. I didn't do it. Um, then she went home, and she wrote this post on Facebook that I detail in the book that I wrote.

And it's really wordy, um, and it was very, like, appraising me. Um, which she doesn't normally do on Facebook, but it was just like, what a wonderful mom I am, and how loving I am, and I'm this woman who reads her Bible, and I was! And she's like, we can all learn from Julie. No mother could be more proud and I remember reading that and realizing oh my goodness That's how the world perceives me and they have no idea That I was planning my death while she wrote that and that was like this big wake up call that my outsides don't match my inside So there's like this cognitive dissonance and if I [00:13:00] don't get help, I'm not gonna survive this.

So I finally told my husband And that moment, hey, I think, I don't really know what I said because it was so scary, but I know I told him enough that he made me an appointment with a psychiatrist.

**Krystal:** Yeah.

**Shelby:** Wow. First of all, thank you for sharing that. It's incredible, to hear you tell it from this side of it with such perspective into what you were feeling at that time. I imagine there's many people listening who maybe don't have that much perspective on some of these thoughts or feelings that they might have.

And so I hope that that has been maybe helpful or illuminating. ~~Um. Sorry, do you want me to ask that question? ? She just highlighted the question.~~

**Krystal:** ~~So we used to do this remotely and we would talk in like Google Docs. So now that we're in person, it's a little bit harder. . Okay. Yeah, if you wanna ask that.~~

~~Okay. Or I can ask that. Yeah, you, no, you already start talking, so you ask. It'll be easier for him to edit.~~

**Shelby:** ~~Yeah. Sounds good. Um,~~ can you talk to us a little bit about what God was teaching you during that time?

**Julie:** Yeah. So during this time, my husband makes this appointment with a psychiatrist and for a lack of better words, um, this is not true, but ~~I thought only psychiatrists, those are only, sorry.~~ I thought only crazy people go to psychiatrists, not Christians and not someone in ministry. Um, so I went very reluctantly, but I did go in Turkey and there around the room.

I remember seeing all these [00:14:00] other women waiting to see the doctor as well. And it was this very humbling moment, um, where God needed to humble me, where I realized, wow, I'm just as broken as the women I came to reach. I'm no different than them. I'm no better than them just because I know the Bible and we are all broken.

We're all, we're all humans and we all need help sometimes. And so that was, that was like the first step in me. Accepting help. I still didn't know what I believed about is mental illness an illness. Is it a faith problem? I didn't know what I believed. Um, but the doctor very quickly saw that I needed hospitalization.

So she puts me in this turkish psych ward it was about as bad as it you might guess it was not something that was easy to go through I mean, i'm the only christian there the only english speaker. I'm not a lot of bible. And so I mean it was a very difficult time Um, but they also showed me brain scans And so God was so good to let me have this experience because I didn't know if I needed to accept help or not.

And so in these brain scans, I could see where certain colors [00:15:00] and activity would light up. They're like, this indicates depression in your brain. And this activity indicates trauma, like PTSD. And so I started to think. Okay, maybe this isn't just a faith problem. Maybe I actually should accept help from medication and and therapists.

And so that was a big turning point in me accepting help. Um, but after I got out of the hospital, we moved home to Oklahoma almost immediately. And this is where, um, I just, I couldn't deal with the shame. I was so wrapped up in shame from being this, you know, woman in ministry who everyone thinks has it all together.

And then now I'm back home and we weren't supposed to be home yet. And I'm thinking, what will our supporters think of us? I'm a failure. And so I ended up, going to take my life and I ended up in the ER and back in the hospital. And at this point I'm thinking, God must be done with me. I'm literally at the lowest.

Bottom of the pit. God, he, where is he? He's abandoned me. He doesn't care about me. I'd really fallen into those traps. And so while I'm sitting there in the hospital in Oklahoma, [00:16:00] this is where God showed up and some friends from church were going to visit me. And one of them, they didn't come preaching at me, which I appreciated.

Like I definitely needed scripture. That is what has transformed my mind more than anything. I needed, I needed prayer, but they didn't come. With that in mind, they came to sit with me in my pain in this place in the psych ward. I mean, that's pretty awkward to do sometimes. And so they came, but one of my friends did say, Julie, I think you're in the valley of the shadow of death.

And I had been without scripture for a while now. I couldn't have a Bible in the several weeks in the hospital in Turkey. And, so I thought maybe she's right. Like something inside of me kind of came alive because scripture is alive and active. And I thought, okay. Maybe I am. And then, um, they left and another patient who you would, I've never expected to know the Bible necessarily.

She stands up and walks past me and says to no one, I will fear no evil for you are with me. And that finishes that verse in Psalms 23, even though I'll walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you're with me. And [00:17:00] I'm thinking what in the world is the Lord talking to me through scripture?

Like I don't have a Bible, but I'm still hearing these scriptures. So I go to sleep, and I wake up, and the doctor is going to see me for the first time, and, and he says, the first thing he says to me is, Julie, do you know Psalms 23? And it was in that moment that I thought, I am not abandoned by God. I may be locked away in the darkness of my own thoughts and of the psych ward, but the shepherd knows where his sheep are, and the sheep know their shepherd's voice.

And so even in a mind that is, you know, has mental illness, depression, has flashbacks from PTSD, has anxiety, God can still reach that. Like there's no mental illness that can block the voice of God. I truly believe that or else he wouldn't be God. And so I started to see that I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be and I'm not forsaken.



I can hear God's voice. And at the same time, so I'm realizing something inside of me is coming alive, knowing that God is there. ~~But at the same time, I'm also seeing medicine and therapy start to really stabilize my, my, my brain at the same time.~~ I see that God has not forgotten me. [00:18:00] At the same time, I'm starting to see medicine is stabilizing my brain.

And as I'm starting therapy in the very beginning, I'm starting to see that it is helping me recognize irrational thoughts and behaviors. But medicine and therapy, while they're great gifts that I still utilize today, They're incomplete without Jesus because they don't produce fruit, fruit, like joy and peace.

Those are from the Holy Spirit living in you as a child of God. And they're supernatural. They don't depend on their circumstance. And so that is where God really started to show me that yes, medicine therapy, a good gifts. There is an illness in my fallen body, but Jesus alone is my hope.

**Shelby:** Thank you, Julie, for sharing that. And I think this is one reason why we specifically invited you on to talk about this space, because I love how you're talking about how God uses many different avenues and pieces to kind of draw you out of the darkness. I've heard you talk about community, medical professionals, therapy, scripture, doctors, [00:19:00] medicine, you know?

And so I think just hearing you. Share the way that God was present and working in and through all of that in a moment where you maybe felt just totally Abandoned by God is really really encouraging. Yeah, you know, we do also want to talk about your book It's called joyful sorrow breaking through the darkness of mental illness and it details this journey some of which you've just shared with us But also some difficult seasons of life in the joy that can be found in the midst of sorrow So, how is it possible to experience true joy?

In a season where you're also experiencing deep

**Krystal:** pain.

**Julie:** So this was, um, it's been a journey for me to kind of discover this idea of what I call joyful sorrow. Like that's like my way of describing it, but I used to think, especially when I was new in ministry and a new believer, really, that. You had to be happy all the time as a Christian and we are to be people of joy like our joy should be evident We have joined the Lord at all times but I thought that if you had any type of sorrow that that meant that [00:20:00] I don't know like you weren't a good Christian and As I started reading the Bible in depth and just you know all the time like saturating my mind with scripture I started to see

this theme especially in the of the Apostle Paul's writings were like in 2nd Corinthians He describes himself as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

Um, in second Corinthians, he also says that in all of our affliction, that he was overflowing with joy. And so I started to see, you know, Paul talks about joy and sorrow. Coexisting, and if you know his life and how he's been traumatized and imprisoned and shipwrecked and stoned, all these things, and yet he talks deeply about joy and hope and thankfulness, I mean, those things really can coexist, and so I started to really process this and think, okay, Sorrow really deepens the joy.

I mean, that makes the joy so much sweeter. And the joy really makes the sorrow endurable. Because like Jesus, like he had joy on earth, but it was also for the joy set before him that he endured the cross. And [00:21:00] so I have joy now, but I know that my joy someday in heaven will be unpolluted. It'll be perfect.

No sorrow whatsoever. And so the excitement about that joy. Gives me joy now and then gives me endurance in the sorrow. And it would be pretty ridiculous, to think that I would never be sad after losing my parents or after someone loses a child or, you know, their family falls apart to think that there will not be grief, but that's not even human.

And so I think it's healthy to say, Hey, it's okay if you do feel sorrow over these things, but the joy of the Lord really can be your strength in that sorrow.

**Krystal:** I appreciate how you're talking about. The ways that we see it in scripture, joy and sorrow coexisting. So we can look at Paul and say like, well, yeah, but that's Paul, you know, like he's kind of the, like the super Christian that, you know, we talked about the beginning. And so, of course, he's going to find that.

But for me, how do I do that? And it comes back to what he does talk about. What you're talking about is it's not the joy in the circumstance, but it's joy in the Lord, knowing that we might experience sorrow in our circumstances, [00:22:00] but ultimately pour ice to Christ. And that's how that, that joy comes. And so I think we often.

Can believe the lie like I just got to fix if I can just get through this This is why I tell myself if I can just get through this then I'll be okay As I get the end of the week once I get through this week, then I'll be fine But it's finding joy in the circumstance and not in the Lord. So

**Julie:** ~~Can I add something? Oh, I'm sorry. I just cut you off. Sorry.~~

**Krystal:** ~~no, no.~~

~~I was done. Go ahead.~~ I love that you brought up Paul because he is like the apostle Paul to us, like, a hero. But then it's been studying his life where I've really seen his humanity. And it's like in Romans seven, like he's talking about, like, I do the things I do not want to do and the things I don't want to do, I do.

**Julie:** And, um, he's talking about the, the tension between our flesh and our spirit. And that has been so huge in my walk to realize, like, we have this flesh part of us that will crepe in, that will crepe suicide whenever... You know, our pain is so great that we just want to escape it. And so while the suicidal thoughts, the initial one might not be sinful, dwelling on this and making a plan and carrying out that plan, I believe it's absolutely [00:23:00] against the will of God that that is sinful.

And Paul in this whole section where he's like, I do not do what I want to do. It's kind of like a tongue twister. He finally says, Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? And. I love this because it's actually really interesting. Some scholars believe that he has in mind this Roman form of execution, where it's actually awful.

But they would take a criminal or someone they're going to execute, and they would attach this dead body to them. And they would do it like face to face, arm to arm, like with exactitude. And then they would feed the person. So that they stay alive and this dead corpse will end up killing them. And so whenever Paul's talking about sin and our flesh and like, Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?

He doesn't say like medication. He doesn't say therapy. And those are awesome. I use them. But he says, praise be to God, you know, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, it's Jesus that will save us from these sinful fleshly. Desires that come [00:24:00] along with mental illness, like unbelief or bitterness or death. And so, yeah, Paul's very, actually very open with how weak he is.

And he boasts in that weakness, like God gets the glory.

**Krystal:** Yeah, absolutely. I love that. And then it goes into Romans 8, which is just like all about life in the spirit and being set free from the bondage of sin and death. And so, uh, yeah. So I think that is an encouraging thing to think of

looking at Paul, looking at the Psalms. We just see honest examples of weakness and sorrow, but also finding joy in the Lord.

So I know you've mentioned a few of these, but I wanted to give you a chance to share if there were any other Just examples of God's common grace, just that you can see throughout your story. I think we can often look at something like counseling or medication as. Is that something that God can use in my life?

And I think you've said it. I know we've said it in the podcast. Like we would say, yeah, God can use that as a common grace, but I would love to hear if there's just anything else that just stands out in your story that you can see, like, this was [00:25:00] God's grace to me in that moment.

**Julie:** medicine, there's therapy, there's community, there's. Even like lab work, like I had to learn that my thyroid was underactive and that can affect your mood or I was deficient in vitamin D and that can affect your mood. So, I mean, we are a whole person that I've had several different types of doctors help me, but I wanted to give an example of how God can use therapy because people might say, yeah, I get therapy, but how on earth can that Go along with Jesus because Jesus alone is our hope and saves us, but he does use things like therapy.

So for instance, I didn't know how to take my thoughts captive because I couldn't differentiate between my thoughts and emotions. trauma had really disconnected me from my emotions. I didn't really feel much or know what I was feeling. And my therapist said that a feeling is one word like sad.

Lonely, happy, excited, but a thought is like a string of words, but it gets tricky when you put the word feel in the thought. So if I'm saying I feel like nobody loves [00:26:00] me, I'm thinking that's a feeling. I don't need to take that captive, but really the thought is nobody loves me, and that's a lie. I can sit in that feeling of sadness, and I know it'll pass eventually, and it's not going to take me down, but the thought Is what is a lie.

And so then I go, Hey, well, what does scripture say? And I find the scripture verse about God loving me. And I preach that truth to myself until I believe it. And so I had to have a therapist really helped me know the difference between thoughts and feelings. And that helped me immensely in, you know, applying scripture to my mind.

**Shelby:** Yeah, that's a great example. Man, I thought that was helpful to me. I know. Just to hear that, I'm like, man.

**Krystal:** Yeah, when I feel sad, that is a thought. That is really interesting.

**Shelby:** so talking about mental health, and I think we mentioned this kind of at the beginning, I think there can be a lot of misconceptions around mental health, especially in the church.

In kind of living in this space, speaking about this space, writing into this space, um, what misconceptions do you think we have around mental health?

[00:27:00]

**Julie:** Um, I hear from a lot of women and a lot of them tell me that someone in the church has told them that if they had more faith, they wouldn't struggle. And I have compassion for the person who told them that and that I also thought that at one point until I started learning about mental illness. And so I think mental health is such a.

A big topic these days and so many people are struggling. I mean, the CDC has just now released information that suicide was the, at an all time high, like in the history of the U S in 2022. I mean, this is a big problem. Um, but until we learn about it, we don't know that it's actually an illness, that there's, there's so many aspects of this that are genetic or just due to trauma history.

There's there's, it's very complex. It's just more than a faith problem. We definitely need faith in the battle from, you know, with. In the battle for mental health, but it's not all faith that there's a sickness like cancer or allergies. Those are sickness I believe mental illness is the same. I've also seen like the self help movement Because [00:28:00] the more we talk about mental health and the more we normalize these conversations I think even like the younger generations can kind of be like, well, I have anxiety it is what it is or I have depression I mean, I can't help my behavior.

And so some generations, I think we need to say, Hey, it's okay to get help. There's help. But then some generations, I think we need to say, Hey, we're not going to conform to the world and how we do life. That includes how we treat mental illness. We still need Jesus. We still need a life of obedience and we need to, you know, talk about sanctification and becoming someone who desires and loves what God loves.

And so. It's pretty complex, but I think that we need to decide, just say right now, it is not only a faith problem, but then give people hope in that there is hope in Christ in the middle of the problem.

**Shelby:** Yeah. So as believers, imagine there's probably people listening who personally struggle with their own mental health. I mean, that's all of us at times, right? or maybe they have someone that they love dearly [00:29:00] who is going through a mental health struggle right now. What can we do if we're in either one of those places?

**Julie:** Yes, I feel like God has uniquely equipped me. It's not something I wanted equipping for in the beginning. But, um, as someone who has had a parent now, he wasn't diagnosed with mental illness, but he took his life. So there's an obvious mental illness aspect. So I, I have loved someone who struggled and then I've also struggled myself.

And so. I kind of know the tension of both places, um, and I just want to say that there is hope. I think for the caregiver role, that the more you can learn about mental illness, to recognize the signs and symptoms, um, the easier it will be to recognize whenever your loved one needs help. And then for the one who's struggling, um, I think we have to learn that It's okay to be vulnerable and that we need community and that there is help.

And so part of my problem was I was suffering in silence. I didn't want my friends to know. I didn't want my husband to know. And I didn't even know that [00:30:00] there was help available. And so I think that. Women, that there is, there's so much help available. There's so many resources available, and you're not the only one.

Um, there's 988 is the Suicide and Crisis Hotline. It was rolled out a year ago, just in July. It's like 911, but for mental health crises. And the, the stats say that in that first year, nearly 5 million people in the U. S. reached out to them. And so, people are getting help, and it's okay to seek help, and there are resources available.

**Krystal:** So, as we're talking about your story, we would love to hear just, Where you're at now with the lord's doing now and then just for anyone that might be experiencing something similar to what you've experienced Maybe they're struggling currently with depression or anxiety.

Maybe they're having those same intrusive thoughts Um, just as you're sharing where you're at now, I would love for you to encourage them and remind them of their hope in christ

**Julie:** I think a lot of people will look at me today because I'm posting on social media and I'm, you know, speaking places and they're [00:31:00] like, wow, like

I wish I could be like that or I'll never be like that. And I, people aren't seeing who meet me now are not seeing me five years ago. When I'm laying in bed, not wanting to live anymore, not really wanting to read scripture.

And so it's a journey. So you can't just look at me now and be like, Oh, okay, well, there's no hope for me. Um, so whenever I came out of the second hospitalization where God really showed up and showed me that he was my shepherd, I knew I had to get back in scripture. And so I did. I started waking up every morning and walking through it chronologically, and I didn't always want to, um, but I knew I needed to, and so the more I did it, eventually God just captured my heart, and it was my greatest delight, um, but it was through that I started journaling all these lessons, and I still very much felt like, um, there's no place for me in ministry.

I even had someone in the church tell me during this time that I was unsuitable for ministry because of my mental health struggles, and I believed them. I thought, let's just try and read the Bible and just survive. Forget ministry. [00:32:00] I'm like, I'm discounted for that. But, um, as the Lord took me through the Word, and as I journaled these lessons, eventually a few years later, I started to say, Maybe I could tell the story and it could help somebody.

And then I'm like, no, I'm not going to. And I told my husband, I will never tell anyone, not one person. Like, don't you dare tell anyone my story. And I would get like forceful. And then in 2020, I just felt like so compelled by God to share my story at this women's event at my local church. And I was terrified, had no idea how to verbalize it.

And I did, it was an online event. And I had so many women reach out to me, and I thought, okay, it's one time thing God used that I'm done, um, but I wasn't done, and God showed me, he, he like, put it in front of my, my heart that all these journal entries that he brought me back to life through is a scripture.

Those are really ready to become chapters of a book. And so I never wanted to be an author, never [00:33:00] wanted to talk about this. But as I started to see the purpose that God could bring through the pain, um, and if he can save me, I'm a regular woman. I'm not a trained therapist. I'm not a doctor. I didn't, I'm not a scholar.

I'm just a woman who loves Jesus. And is searching for hope. If he can save me, he can save anyone. And so that's really how I became this author and mental health advocate. It was, I said yes one time to God. And said, okay God, your

will be done. And he just ran with it. And so here we are today. And so there's, oh my goodness, there's hope for anyone.

If God can use my story, he can use anyone's story.

**Krystal:** ~~Yeah. Yeah.~~

**Shelby:** ~~Oh, I'm the last question. I'm so sorry. We don't usually do two podcasts in one~~

**Krystal:** ~~day, my brains. Well, and we've had three interviews. We did one yesterday, and we had two today, and three's our max. I think we've learned.~~

**Shelby:** ~~I don't know. Okay. I apologize. I was like not paying attention. I'm also really invested in, in just listening.~~

~~I know. I know. Um.~~ That's really encouraging. Um, it's, it's really encouraging both to hear how God has worked in you, but also through you. And, I mean, that's the gospel, right? That God saves us, but then saves us so that we can be someone who makes disciples and shares the gospel. And I just, I love that that has come out of your story, and I think that that can come out of any story.

Yeah. God is just that [00:34:00] good. Um, Julie, as we kind of wrap up this interview, we have one question that we ask every single guest who comes on the Daily Grace podcast, and it is, at the Daily Grace Co., we always say that the gospel changes everything. And Julie, we would love to know, what has the gospel changed for you?

**Julie:** Oh, it has changed everything. I could talk about that for an hour, but essentially it's just, it's given me hope. I mean, Jesus, he transferred me from this kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. And so I realized that even if life is hard and circumstances are confusing or sorrowful, that my hope is not in this world.

That I'm, I'm brought into the covenant family of God, like, I might not be a daughter anymore on Earth, like, that's a lot of sadness in my story, but I am a daughter of God, and there's hope for our perfect eternity together, where there's nothing but joy. So it's really that he's given me hope.

**Krystal:** That's beautiful, and what a way to end this conversation. So Julie, thank you so much for joining us today on the Daily Grace podcast.



**Julie:** thanks [00:35:00] for having me.

**Krystal:** We are going to include links to Joyful Sorrow and any other ways that you can connect with Julie in the show

**Shelby:** notes. Don't forget to subscribe to our weekly newsletter while you're there in the show notes, so you can receive free resources related to the podcast straight to your inbox.

~~We hope that you'll join us next week as we talk about another really important topic that~~

**Krystal:** ~~the gospel. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. I was like, what is the~~

**Shelby:** ~~topic? I know. I don't know the topic. I don't know what the next episode is, so I was just gonna say something~~

**Krystal:** ~~about the gospel. Oh, okay. Sorry. One more time. A tickling false belief.~~

**Shelby:** ~~Yeah. Or you just not say anything, so we don't. Am I gonna say anything? Yeah. Um,~~ until next time, you can come join us as we continue this conversation over on Instagram at Daily Grace Podcast. We'll see you next week. Bye.