



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 113 – Moment by Moment

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy with Katara Patton

[Music]

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[Music]

Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

Elisa: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Elisa Morgan.

Eryn: And I'm Eryn Eddy. What do you do when you find yourself feeling down? Do you curl up in a ball and watch a movie? Read a book? Sleep? Pray? Open your Bible? Or maybe eat some good chocolate?

Elisa: Today we're talking with a lover of chocolate, Katara Patton, who will help us in navigating our blues with some practical advice from the Bible and her own experiences. Katara is a senior editor for Our Daily Bread Publishing, and an author of many books. She currently lives in Chicago with her family.

Eryn: We are so excited for this conversation with Katara. Let's get to know her on this episode of *God Hears Her*.

Katara: For me, growing up Sunday mornings meant you got up, you went to Sunday School, you went to church, you came home, but it didn't stop there. I really saw my parents live out their faith in the difficulties of life. We prayed together as a family every Sunday morning. And as a parent now, I realize just how much commitment it takes to do that.

Elisa: Oh, no kidding.



Katara: And here my parents were doing that in the seventies, when I grew up in their home. I mean, when I talk about a foundation that was very solid, secure, blessed and wonderful, that's what I had. I had a brother and a sister who were older than me, I always talk about how they were really smart and on task, so, I kind of had no other choice but to follow them or totally break off.

Eryn: Right. Right.

Katara: From there, I went off to college at... Dillard University in New Orleans. Dillard is a historically black college and university. One of the best decisions I probably made, because my best friends, the two that I consider my girls, literally I met at Dillard University...

Elisa: Oh wow. That's so...

Katara: ... along with many, many other people. At Northwestern I got accustomed to Chicago. I moved away for two years, but I got back here. And then from there, I've been here.

Elisa: This is such a bubbly, exciting... I'm watching God work in my life conversation, and all that is so powerful for anybody who is listening. But you've also recently written deeply on the topic of the blues, and I'm not meaning the music genre...

Katara: Right.

Elisa: ... I'm meaning the blues... of emotions. And so, as... as we turn our conversation, that might surprise a listener who's taking in this conversation and going, *what does she know...*

Katara: Right.

Elisa: ... *a... about the blues?* I mean, look at her. It's all that and everything she wants. And... how did the topic of depression, anxiety, that kind of stuff, find its way into your sweet, hopeful heart?

Katara: It's amazing I have to say, the first time I spoke about depression, I said, *y'all, I didn't sign up to be a depression speaker, let me tell you. I got about fifty other topics I'd rather be talking to you about than depression.* But depression hit me. Depression hit me hard. Even with what could look like success and a nice resume...

Eryn: Yeah.



Katara: ... One, I think burn out probably contributed...

Elisa: Okay.

Katara: ... to it. I went to seminary full time, as well as worked full time, as well as so many other things. My mother died in 2006, major grief, even as a woman who's a believer. That sideswiped me in a way that... I would... not have ever imagined. Because, after all, eternal life is what she lived for. Eternal life is what she talked about. But I don't think I fully... I didn't know what life would mean without her. And that hit me at the same time a relationship ended, I was single at the time, and yes, all kinds of... So, it was several different, for me, circumstantial things happened, and then, I think, environmentally, just, many things happened to really pull me down in what I consider to be about a three-year it's hard to get out of bed struggle...

Elisa: Oooh.

Katara: ... It's really hard to get out of bed. I prayed, and prayed, and prayed. I would go to work and come home and just lay out on the couch. That's all I could do. That's all I had the energy to do. And I made a deal, one day I was about to come home, and I was like, *all I want to do is go to sleep*. It was like... *if that's what you do, if you go to sleep today, you have call a therapist tomorrow*. So, that was the deal I made with myself, and I had a really great friend say, *let's pray that you can find a therapist that is helpful, that's a Christian, that's all these things*, she just laid out for me. Because it was a struggle for me. And... that was just a very rough time. And even in the book I put that I'm naturally cheerful. Optimism...

Elisa: I can tell. Yeah.

Katara: ... and positivity...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... extrovert is my natural lean. But I wear the mask well. And when I... I kind of almost feel sometimes I swing on both sides of the spectrum because of that. Because it's... I'm so high, and so happy, and so morning person let's go, that when it hits, it hits, and I know it. And when it's continuously you can't get out of bed without...

Eryn: Yeah.



Katara: ... something... help there. Without tricking yourself or giving yourself a...a treat. Like, for me it was chocolate. There was a period of time I had chocolate next to my bed. And I knew something was wrong...

Elisa: Yeah. Yeah.

Katara: When you're having chocolate for breakfast...

Eryn: [inaudible]

Katara: ... as much as I love chocolate. That's... that... that was a drug for...

Eryn: It's an antioxidant. No [laughter], no, but...

Katara: Let's get some chocolate.

Eryn: ... making light of it, but... but I, you know, I am so grateful for your honesty and vulnerability, because it is... I mean, that's something, that's been part of my past, where I remember waking up in the morning and thinking, *what do I want to do today?* And I'm thinking, *I would like to sleep.* You know? *I think I'd just like to stay here and just sleep.*

Katara: It's a numbness, too.

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: And when I spoke, like I said, I spoke... I did my first speaking piece around 2000, 2000... Maybe 2003, 2004, I can't remember the exact date. But the audience, you can look people in the eye. When you describe the numbness, the not being able to really get out of bed, the amount of people who look like they've got me. And then even in my inbox, like, I started posting a little bit about it on Facebook, and so many people anonymously sent me notes, *I'm sending you this anonymously, but you really helped me. Hearing you say this helped me. That resonated with me.* So, I knew there was an audience out here who needed these words, who needed to hear some of this story.

Elisa: So, you... you went... then you sought out therapy, and I love that kind of deal you made with yourself...



Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Elisa: ... *If you're going to go to bed now, you're going to call a therapist tomorrow.* I mean, that is, like, super smart. So, you did that. But what other steps did you take, and how did you finally find your way, digging out of this... And you're cutely calling it the blues, but it's depression. Yeah.

Katara: It's depression. It's really focusing on mental illness. Like, the depression, the anxiety, the blues, whatever has you really down. So, that's what we're calling it, but I... My first therapy appointment, my... my therapist is like, *this is depression.* She was like, *it's...* And I had told her it had been for at least, at that time I don't even know the years, they kind of blur sometimes. I think I told her one to two years. She was like, *if you've been feeling this way consistently for one to two years, that's depression.* And we then tried all kinds of things, from something as simple as over the counter, it's the first time I had heard of Saint John's worts. She thought I could try that...

Elisa: Which are not warts, just to be clear it... it's a herbal supplement.

Katara: Yes, absolutely, that you can buy over the counter. And I felt comfortable beginning there, because I have to be honest, I did have some intrepidation about taking medicine, and I had a good friend in my ear who was kind of against that. She was kind of against the therapy, too, because, you know, people always have opinions on it, so, she was... she sounded okay with Saint John's also, she had heard of it. And because it was a natural, herbal, something you could get over the counter... So, I started there, I don't think I felt much difference, and in all of these therapies it's so hard to put your finger on what works, because you really have to do it for a while, and...

Elisa: It's a process, yeah.

Katara: ... yeah. And I also incorporated lots of different things. I can tell you the therapy definitely helped. Doing that over and over, I would do it weekly, and then we moved me to another drug, and I probably took that for six months and I can't say I thought that helped either. But I was slowly getting better, and I... I don't know if it was primarily from the therapy, the prayer, and just working through some things. But honestly, my therapist, I still actually call her for check-ups today. She became, just, a vital part of me unpacking so much stuff that probably had just been buried and...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... and just needed to be voiced in a lot of ways.



Elisa: What's interesting is you've described your childhood, and your amazing parents, and your phenomenal education, and this career that blossomed, and I guess I... I'm just like Eryn said, I'm so grateful for your honesty, because we can find ourselves unable to get out of bed even when our lives have been good. You know, maybe it's the burn out, the... the incredible energy that you had to put out all the time and our... our beings... in other conversations we've talked about our souls feeling so trapped and hurried that we lose... we disconnect. So, even that can tip us...

Katara: Yes, definitely.

Elisa: ... into a place of unhealth mentally. And I'm so grateful that you are bringing your story forward. Because I think it's one many can identify with.

Katara: I also have a theory, which is only a theory, and I try to share this when I identify other people... I think sometimes high achievers like... it... It's a part of that burn-out piece, but it's also, I expected life to always be grand. I expected to be high forever. I was born high...

Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: ... Look around me, my family loved me. I got A's, I did the... I got scholarships, I got invited places. And life is not always high. And so, either you're going to learn how to deal with it now, or perhaps later, and I believe it compounds itself to lots of different things hitting you all at once, or whatever. And we know mental health can be chemical, hereditary, life circumstances, many different things can contribute to it. But I definitely have been through depression, and I recognize the signs and I try to fight it. It's been a journey for me.

Elisa: I'm really glad you brought out the high achiever piece. I'm one as well, and Eryn and I have talked about that a lot together, I... I'm a three on the enneagram, you probably are as well...

Katara: Me too.

Elisa: But, you know, saying that and... and I've suffered from depression in different seasons of my life, too, and I do have some abusive elements of my past. But when I really unpack the things, I became pained, deeply pained over, often it was a lack of control. Often it was the reality that I had fought to accomplish not fixing everything around me, you know.

Katara: Right.



Elisa: And... so I really, again, appreciate that. It can come to us in such unexpected packages.

Katara: Absolutely.

Eryn: Something that my therapist reminded me a couple weeks ago, I was just unpacking some past stuff, as we do in therapy, we bring all of our suitcases in, and we say which one do we want to undress today. And I was sharing some shame that was really feeling heavy on me. The shame was coming from choices that I made, and I made these choices because I was trying to protect myself, but I did it in a way that I... the choices were unhealthy.

Elisa: That's good.

Eryn: But it was still the way that I was wired, the way that I go after something, the way that I challenge something, it was the only thing that kept me safe, even if it was an unhealthy choice. And I think about when we're talking about high achievers, the thing that may have run you into the ground, maybe experiencing burn out, maybe not recognizing things that are going on internally, cause you're on to the next, is still the thing that will also help you get you out of that, you know? It's the thing...

Elisa: Yes. Yeah.

Katara: That's interesting.

Eryn: ... the thing that got you there is the thing that also will help you get you out. And... and it was good for me to hear that instead of villainize that side of me...

Katara: Yeah.

Eryn: ... and be like, *that's a wrong thing of me*. It's like, no, it... it got me in it, but I... It... it also got me out of it.

Elisa: So, Katara, a... as you've learned yourself, and say, you know, your best friend's... is speaking to you and they're struggling with it, you know. What would you offer, and what do you offer, you know, in terms of what you write about. What kind of hope or hand-holds, yeah... How do we pull ourselves up, or what do we do to get out of bed, you know, how do we...

Katara: Right.



Elisa: ... respond to the depressions that we face?

Katara: My main take away, if I summed up what I wrote, it would be one moment at a time. Not even one day, not even one... It is like one step or one moment at a time. Sometimes you're looking so far ahead, how will I get this accomplished, how will I even do this at the end of the day. That can overwhelm you, and you know, one of the other things I say here is when we're really depressed, everything is distorted.

Elisa: Oh, that's good. Yeah.

Katara: So, that small little piece is huge, it's a mountain. And it really is a mountain, because for you, your perception is real. Right then it's a mountain. So, if you can take a deep breath and try to just do one step, one level on it. You don't have to climb or scale the entire mountain today. Find what you have to do. It's... It's a very practical book, it's driven by Scripture, but also my practical life experience. Find the one thing you have to do. If you're a parent, get the kids up, get them cold cereal, because we lower the bar here...

Elisa: Yeah, baby.

Katara: ... you do not have to cook...

Elisa: Nothing wrong with that, yeah.

Katara: Unless, of course, cooking is relaxing to you. Some people could, actually, push through...

Elisa: Right.

Katara: ... but cold cereal works on those days. It's finding ways to ask for help. A lot of times we don't... and a lot of times our friends honestly want to help, and I... I talk a lot about friends who say, *snap out of it, just blink out of it*, that's, like, right. Of course, we would always snap out of it...

Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: ... if we could just snap out of it, right? A lot of times people really want to help and they just don't know how.

Eryn: Yeah.



Katara: So, I talk about the ways I've been helped. By the time I got married, I had been through a serious string of therapy, which actually, probably helped me, and put me in a position to be married, but one time when I was married, I do remember a little bit of sadness seeping in, and I went straight to bed after work, and my husband came in with a plate of food. That plate of food looked like gold. Someone giving you food to eat in bed...

Elisa: Just a gesture, yeah.

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... right. That... that... just remembering that... that made my heart leap just a... And it probably wasn't even anything special, he probably hadn't gone to the store to make up a gourmet meal, it was just the care of serving someone a meal in bed. So, your friends can do that. I mean, I know people who are struggling with depression, we... tend to isolate ourselves, but I bet if you told two of your friends, *I could use a home-cooked meal*, they'd have a delivery thing right there at your house to be able to help you. Because honestly, people do want to help. They just don't know how a lot of times.

Eryn: Yeah. That's right.

[Music]

Katara: So, those are some of the small ways I... And it's all very small, because like I said, this thing is overwhelming, it's so huge it can consume you...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... just understanding it's one thing, do one thing, one step... I even suggest getting a playlist when you're feeling well...

Elisa: That's smart.

Katara: ...of your favorite songs, so you can go to it right away. Because you can't think when you're in the midst of depression a lot of times. You're just... you're numb, again, like I said. So, having some of these things on ready, creating a list of things or activities that do give you joy, so you can go to that list and find one, as opposed to trying to think about, *what would make me happy right now, what would help*.



[Music]

Elisa: We want to take a quick break in our conversation to let you know that if you're struggling with feeling any type of the blues, it's okay to seek help. Find a therapist in your area or go to [mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov) for helpful information. That's [mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov). You can also call or text the number 988 to speak directly with someone.

Eryn: You are so loved, and we want everyone to feel supported when facing the blues.

Elisa: Yeah, we really do. Okay, now let's get back into our conversation where Katara will share with us how we can help ourselves and the people we love going through a hard time.

Katara: Many people are different.

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: Like, what I would consider helpful to me, even the plate of food, might be annoying to someone else. So, asking and I always also suggest people who are going through it sharing what could be helpful. Can you pick the kid, can you do this? I also think not isolating yourself, as hard as that might be...

Elisa: That's so hard, yeah.

Katara: ... because all you want to do is be alone under the covers and have this dark cloud pass away. As it's working on passing away being around others can be very helpful, and so I do encourage that in the book. I tell a story that I shared with a friend just yesterday, her daughter is fifteen years old. And my friends gave her a baby shower. So, this was fifteen years ago, so every time I see this young girl, I'm reminded of the time I had to trick myself to go to the baby shower. I rearranged my schedule so I'd be closer to her house at the time of the shower, because I knew I wouldn't go...

Elisa: No excuses. Yeah.

Katara: ... I just knew it. You're right. But I went to the later church service, which pushing yourself to church service can help too. I went to a later church service which was closer to her house. I went there and we played so many games, and I'm a huge game person, that I lost myself. But I remember the feeling...



Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: ... of enjoying competing. Cause that's what I love. I lost myself in that, and I went home feeling just a little bit better.

Elisa: That's awesome.

Katara: My depression didn't leave me totally, but just a little better. So, that fifteen-year-old daughter is a... a beautiful reminder, my girlfriend's daughter, of...

Elisa: Wow.

Katara: ... fifteen years ago it was tough for me to get out of bed.

Elisa: I'm very moved by your comment that it's not just one day at a time, it's one moment at a time...

Katara: Yeah.

Elisa: And... and you then yourself wrote out ninety moments, you know, to take in. And honestly, we know that God is truly the author of our health, and as we turn to Him, He is going to provide what we need to move towards it, therapy, medicine, et cetera. Talk for a minute about how... how God reaches to us. How you've watched Him show up even in your blues and wedge you out of bed.

Katara: One of the main things, and I think Eryn spoke just a little bit about it earlier, is I had to unpeel back the shame, too. This whole mental health, mental illness, depression, blues things carries so much shame with it. And one of the main messages that I speak about, it comes through with reviewing characters in the Bible who actually went through depression.

Elisa: That's great.

Katara: Elijah is a huge one. I mean there's a story in there where he's like, *Lord, I'm ready to give up here*. And so, we can look at his story and see, okay, one, he's in the Bible, he's a huge prophet...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... he's a man of faith, you know, he struggled here. And God gave him some pretty practical tips.



Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: Take a rest.

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: Get some food. And don't exaggerate. *Look! I've had about seven thousand...* right there...

Elisa: Talk about distorting, yeah.

Eryn: I love it, He said don't exaggerate.

Katara: We know depression will do that to you...

Eryn: Right!

Katara: ... I tell you what, he's walking around, *nobody's here working for the Lord but me*. Really? You missed all of those people? But, you know, it's true.

Eryn: That is so... I've just never heard somebody actually say that before. We... We've talked about depression and anxiety a lot on the podcast in different depths. And that is so... As somebody that has gone through it...

Elisa: Very refreshing. Yeah.

Eryn: ... that is so true. It is refreshing.

Katara: It helps take that load off of you...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... of the guilt and shame around it. Then we even go to Jesus. I mean, you know, when He faced His mission, He cried out and... and that is some serious pain, and those were some serious words, and



serious emotions. So, one, this has helped... God has helped me get to a position of not being ashamed of it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... which is huge. That's about half of the healing right there, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: You can begin to say, you know, *my emotions are not right today.*

Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: Or, *I'm whatever*, and be okay in that place. So, that has been extremely helpful for me. It's reviewing your testimony, looking to other saints, all of these messages throughout the Bible have actually played a part in helping me understand my healing. Even understanding, I think there's one place in there where the... in the New Testament where the friends bring their friend to Jesus because he couldn't walk, and they lift him up through the roof. And I think of that as it's okay to need the help. It's okay to rely on others, cause sometimes you can't do it.

Eryn: Yeah. Right.

Katara: He could not walk into that house and get his healing. Sometimes I'm going to have to rely on others, and that's a huge piece for us. We're not used to truly relying on other people.

Eryn: We're scared, sometimes, to rely on them especially if we've been burned or hurt in our past...

Katara: Absolutely.

Eryn: ... to rely feels more scary than doing it on our own.

Katara: Absolutely. And then just the whole, I can't underscore enough for me, the grief piece. Grief as in my mother dying, grief as in some dreams not coming to realization, that whole five-year plan piece, even when you're praying about career direction, you might expect something like this to happen, and it doesn't happen quite like that. Or worse yet, it ends. That's a lot to have to deal with...



Eryn: Yeah.

Katara: ... And, again, coupled with so many other things, it's... It can be really rough.

Elisa: And even that, taking that and looking at some of the characters in Scripture who grieved deeply...

Katara: Yes. Yes.

Elisa: ... you know, whether it was Mary at the cross, or, you know, the widow bringing her son out from Nain, or we can go on and on, David in the Psalms, and yeah. If we could just strip back this self-imposed shame, and instead...

Katara: Right.

Elisa: ... receive the nudge from the Holy Spirit of, *Sweet Pea, you are not whole, and I love you so much to allow you to feel it. Now, come to Me and let's get you some help.*

Katara: And acknowledge your emotions, also there's a passage, I just take the simple passage of, "Jesus wept." And realizing Jesus coming to grips with His emotions and releasing them. How do we release our emotions? It's crying, and there are many other ways, healthy ways, that we can employ, and... and we need to encourage ourselves to make sure we're doing that so emotions won't add up and build up and burst and fester...

Elisa: Yeah.

Katara: ... into what can be depression and anxiety.

Elisa: You know, Katara, sometimes we ask our... our guests to pray as we conclude...

Katara: Yes, absolutely.

Elisa: ... our conversation, and I... we want to ask you to... to pray for that woman, maybe she is a high achiever, maybe she's in the throes of grief, maybe she can't get out of bed, but would you pray for her for this moment-to-moment hope that God wants to give her, yeah.



Katara: Gracious God, we come right now acknowledging that You are a healer, a fixer, a mind regulator. God, I lift up the listener right now who is going through her own depression, caused from whatever, we don't know. I ask that You send Your sweet Holy Spirit right now to descent upon her and help her to find what she needs to make it one more moment. God, I ask that You introduce whatever healing agent is needed to her right now. And give her the courage to grab hold of it as she grabs hold of Your hand and knows that You are watching over her. That she's Your child, and that wholeness is in Your will. We thank You and we praise You for Eryn and Elisa, too. In Jesus's name, amen.

[Music]

Eryn: What a beautiful prayer, Katara. Thank you for that insight and the reminder that people in the Bible are examples of living through hard times.

Elisa: Isn't Katara wonderful? Okay, well, before we go, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description. You can also find a link for Katara's new book, *Navigating the Blues*. Find all of this and more when you visit our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Eryn: Thank you for joining us. And don't forget, God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His.

[Music]

Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Gabrielle Boward and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to recognize Will and Dave for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

Eryn: *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.