



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 17 - Finding Freedom from Toxic People

Elisa Morgan and Eryn Eddy with guest Gary Thomas

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(Music)

Gary: Two of them are the nicest seeming women I've ever met. They seem so nice, and they present themselves as your friend, and you let them in. And then they become controlling, and then they can become vicious when you pull away, and they seem nice to everyone. And so it plays such games with your mind. I think it's possible to be fooled by demeanor. If you're being controlled by someone, if someone is eating away at your joy and your peace, if you just see the affects, their name comes up on your phone and there's just this alarm in your spirit...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...listen to that. Even though they're speaking in a nice way.

(Music)

Woman: 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. When I say 'toxic people,' who comes to mind? Is it a coworker? A family member? Someone at your church? Maybe it's a group of people who feed off of one another in the worst of ways. What makes them toxic? What's the difference between a toxic person and someone who's just broken and needs extra love? How do you know when it's time to walk away from a toxic person? Well today, our guest Gary Thomas will be leading us through a discussion of how to recognize and when to walk away.

Elisa: Some of you may be familiar with Gary Thomas. I actually met him not long ago at a conference that we both attended. He's the author of multiple books including *Sacred Marriage* and *Sacred Parenting*. He's also a pastor. And today, Gary is joining us to discuss his newest book *When to Walk Away: Finding Freedom from Toxic People*.

Eryn: And just a quick note: Gary happened to be in town when Elisa was not here. But, we did not want to miss out on the interview. So Elisa joined us on Skype, and you may be able to hear that as you listen. Let's get started. Here's Gary as he begins our conversation by sharing an example of toxicity from his life. This is *God Hears Her*.

(music fades out)

Gary: There was a revelatory moment in my life where I had a relationship that I just couldn't make sense of. I was passionate about doing the right thing and honoring Jesus, but I don't trust myself. And so I'm just talking with a man wiser than me who's been a marriage and family therapist for thirty-five years; his name is Dr. Steve Wilke. I said... I... I don't know how... what I'm supposed to do. Am I supposed to just... how do I engage? Do I bring this up? Do I confront this? Do I pretend this never happened? And he really surprised me by saying I recommend you don't engage him at all. And I thought that would be a complete failure as a Christian because he claims to be a Christian. And I thought, how can that happen that we would just... and he said I want you to go to the book of Luke, count how many times Jesus walked away from someone or let someone walk away from him. Well, I... I was shocked at how many occurrences I found, so I went to all four gospels and counted that up. And it was



like, I... I don't know, cleaning your windshield, cleaning your eye-glasses, suddenly I saw things so clearly that I'd never seen before that walking away isn't always a statement of failure, it's a statement of strategy and that to walk in the footsteps of Jesus sometimes is to walk away as Jesus did. I came up with forty-one citations, some referring to the same instance, where Jesus willingly walked away from someone, or let someone walk away from Him. There's a time in my life I would have counted that as a failure, but I don't believe that Jesus could ever fail.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: So I had to redirect what I would count as a failure and rethink what matters most to God.

Eryn: Wow.

Elisa: It doesn't seem very Jesus-y, Gary, for Jesus to walk away from people. So... and I... I think that's part what you were saying. You were kinda surprised by it... the, what's going on here. How is it Jesus-y to walk away? I mean, besides the fact that He did it and He doesn't fail?

Gary: Jesus was...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...so focused on a mission, he pled with His disciples, pray for more workers. What... what's he saying? There's not enough of us. This message is so important, it's the most important message anybody could ever have. We need to pray for more workers. And then he said in John 15:8, "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." And He had parables about a tree that wouldn't produce fruit, and then it was gonna be cut down. The guy said, well, let me give it another shot. Or not a parable but a demonstration when he cursed a



fig tree for not producing figs. He's going throughout His life and ministry teaching the disciples where to bear much fruit. What opened my eyes though was Matthew 6:33, when Jesus gives us tremendous words, "Seek first the kingdom of God," launching His church on the offense and then just a few verses later, Matthew 7:6. Matthew 6:33 then Matthew 7:6, but don't give what is holy to dogs or throw pearls before swine or else they'll turn and tear you to pieces. And so he's saying, here's the offense, but you also need to play defense because what you're doing is so important that if you waste your time on toxic people, not only will they not receive it, but they'll turn and try to tear you to pieces and Jesus is saying, in serving me, I don't want you to be torn to pieces. That doesn't please me; that doesn't serve me; it hurts me. And so I've given you words of warning, please walk away rather than let that happen.

Eryn: (inaudible)

Elisa: In the context that you're talking about in the Sermon on the Mount, it is so interesting, and I love what you're saying that what's Jesus-y about walking away is the kind of a boundary making effort to be self-protected. Now not... not like self-narcissistic loving or self above others, but self-loving, self-respectful.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: And in that... that passage in... in Matthew 7, you know, Jesus is talking about judging. You know, not going and... and offering your judgment opinion of what's right and wrong to people who *blah, blah, blah*, they don't wanna hear it because it's not gonna go anywhere. So in a way, this is very counterintuitive, and yet, it's Jesus-y because He's the one who said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, etc, and love your neighbor as yourself, you have to love yourself.

Eryn: Yeah.



Gary: The reason we need to learn when to walk away is to know where to walk toward.
What...

Eryn: Oh.

Gary: What... what... to walk to. And I... I think what's kept us with misplaced guilt is a lack of mission, a weak sense of mission. I don't wanna put it in a negative term, a ballerina the night of a performance, know she's gonna make many people happy with her performance, but she's not running a marathon in the... the day of...

Eryn: Right.

Gary: ...because she's gonna be too tired; her legs are gonna be too sore. And if you're letting toxic people beat you up, question your sanity, steal your joy so your just self-absorbed, make you even wonder if you have anything to share because they've destroyed your self-confidence, remove all peace so should I say something, should I not, being all insecure, then you're not gonna be able to give that performance that God wants you to give to bless others, to love others, to give yourself to others. Toxic people keep the focus on ourself...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...and we need to walk away so that we can have the focus on bringing Jesus to others.

Eryn: That's good. That's good. I wanna go back to the story that you were sharing in regards to that phone call. So when you hung up the phone, what did you do after that? And then, once you responded, or didn't respond, how did you then carry yourself through with some debris that was probably left from the toxic person responding to you not engaging?

Gary: He... here's the analogy I use when you're dealing with a toxic person, what I had to do with this person. I don't want to become toxic in response to others' toxicity. My job and my



calling before God is not to call out toxic people and to make sure everybody knows they're toxic. I look at it like I'm driving along a freeway. I might see litter on the roadway, but if there's a couch blocking the road, I've got to remove the couch so that I can keep driving forward. So I'll engage a toxic person when I must...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...but if I don't, I treat it like litter on the side of the road, to be honest, and just... cuz... it doesn't do any good to engage them...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...I've found. Sometimes you have to, but then, I... I try to do it in a way with honesty and integrity. All I can control are my attitudes and my actions and that's what I want to protect.

Eryn: Do you just like not pick up the phone anymore? Do you confront them and you say, hey, this is just not gonna work? Like we're gonna not...

Gary: Yeah. Okay.

Eryn: You know what I'm...

Gary: Let me give several examples.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: I have an example in there where a woman was with a toxic woman in an office. It was just this situation where the woman kept sharing more and more personal information, and she's... it was a Christian, so she wanted to help her, but she was over her head. And then she



was afraid to go to work. And... and it was affecting her work cuz she's kind of looking over her shoulder, trying to avoid this other woman. And then when she tried to pull back, she was getting bombarded with long phone messages and then demands. "How com... I left a message thirty minutes ago, why haven't you responded?" Or four-page, single-spaced emails with...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...thirty questions. You know, and I think at that point, what she said was we're gonna keep our relationship professional. You know, I don't... I can't give you what you need. I'm not hired to be your counselor; she didn't use those words, but it was her thinking. And so basically we're... we're just going to keep it professional. If it was a toxic boss, I think I would try to find a new place of employment if I could replace it. Usually I think when people do that, they say why didn't I do this a year ago?

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: It's exhausting. So when you can sort of quarantine it, I think that's a good thing to do. When you can flee it, I think that's a good thing to do. But it's all about preserving your ability to be the person God created you to be and to do the work that God created you to do.

Elisa: So what about when you're married to the toxicity or you have a child who is the toxicity or a parent who is the toxicity and you can't punch them out of your life the same way?

Gary: Yeah... yeah, family is where we often let the toxicity rule over us.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: And in the book I have, the story of a woman who had two daughters. One is very toxic and... and this woman that's featured is a powerful woman. I mean, she's got a great Bible



study ministry, she's a mentor formally and informally to several. She's got a strong marriage. And she's got another daughter that she works with, and she's just a really good friend. But she was canceling engagements with other people, meetings with other people because her daughter would have these crises. And her daughter had learned... she used to say, I'm gonna be on the streets by Friday if you don't help me. That stopped working. I will...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...literally be on the streets tonight if you don't help me. And so she was cancelling with everybody that she loved, and after a few years, she realized my daughter isn't getting any better and I'm not... I'm so wrapped up, I'm afraid of this phone call, or I'm lis... missing opportunities, and it... for her, it was regaining that sense of mission. I'm doing an important thing. You wouldn't call a quarterback thirty minutes before the Super Bowl and say, I... I need you to come over and... and help me mow my lawn or something.

Eryn: Right.

Gary: And... and you can say to an adult daughter, I can't respond...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...right now.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: And that's where it's a little more difficult when it's a family member. But when you look at Scripture, remember when Jesus' mother and brothers came to Him. He's in a busy time. And they said, Jesus, your mother and brothers are here. And Jesus said, who are my mothers and brothers? It's those who are doing the will of My Father in heaven. Jesus is saying My kingdom is more important than the family kingdom.



Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: Which isn't a popular message today.

Eryn: Right.

Gary: And the thing is, we don't know if they ever did get through. If He ever did get to talk to them. The Bible doesn't tell us that. He wasn't worried about how they felt about Him...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...because it was as a statement to His family. I'm doing an important work.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: I'm not gonna get involved in family drama right now. We do know that two of His half-brothers, James and Jude, wrote letters in the New Testament. So in the end, Jesus putting mission above family blood seems to have worked in their life. Obviously, they were followers; they were leaders in the early church.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah, and Mary was...

Eryn: That's so good.

Elisa: ...one of the only people at the cross as He... as He died, so... You know, Eryn, what's... what's bumping me, and I wanna see what you think...



Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...is I think women maybe have a unique challenge with removing ourselves from toxicity because we either don't know or we diminish our mission.

Gary: Yes, yes.

Elisa: Is... Oh, I'm just doing this little thing.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Raising kids or I'm just doing this little thing of, you know, working retail. I'm just doing this little thing. What do you think, Eryn?

Eryn: Just speaking from my experience and what I've... how I've made choices to be in relationships with toxic people, I don't have confidence in how... like what God has for me or what... what He's equipped me to do. So I diminish myself, and then I've absorbed unhealthy behavior thinking that I deserve it. I had to gain confidence.

Elisa: Mmhmm. Is it like we give our power away?

Eryn: Yeah. I think so.

Elisa: I wanna give an example.... I wanna give an example. I was... it was a million years ago. I was young, and I was cute, and I worked at MOPS, and I was the CEO, and I had a TV interview downtown at like six in the morning, and I had my little hair done, and my little bow and all this stuff. And I...

Eryn: (giggle) A bow.



Elisa: ...parked. There were no signs where to go, I just parked and I came out at 8:30, and there was a car parked behind my car, so I couldn't exit. And I was like, what is this? So I went into this law office, and I told the receptionist I'm... I'm in a pickle here. You now, I've got a meeting back at my office, you know, and could somebody please move their car. And she looks at me, and she goes, you did not park in Mr. Johnson's place, did you? And I'm like, who's Mr. Johnson? Well, she finally buzzed me through, and I got to go into this man's office who was like this wiry old 95-year-old cranky dude who goes, "Yeah, you parked in my place, and you can just wait until I have court at eleven o'clock, and that's your du..." and I was like, oh my gosh. And I tell you what, I shrank down to where I was like in, you know, six-years-old...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...and I went out and sat in my [chair] and locked my little feet like I was six.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: I was so terrified. And I sat there and I went, this is not right. This is not right. But I couldn't find my voice.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: And I kept being diminished. And I finally pulled myself together and I said to her again, you now, could I see him again? And I went back into his office, and he was just waiting for me; it was so funny. And I said, Mr. Johnson, I've apologized, and I'm not sure what else you're asking for from me. I need to know what it's gonna take for you to move your car. And he goes, nothing, I told you. And I said, "Well then, I'm gonna have to call the police and tell them that you're holding me here against my will." Ha!

Gary: Good for you.



Elisa: And he... his little eyes twinkled and he... he said, "You go, girl."

Eryn: Ha!

Elisa: And he moved his car! And that experience has so shaped me of how I can just count how and give over to... all my power, here's all my power! You can have it; I'm just a little six-year-old girl, you know, instead of going, here's my voice, here's my mission. As you said, Gary, what can I do in this situation? Whoa! Huge lesson.

Eryn: Wow.

Gary: And he respected you for that! He... his view of you increased by you standing up for that.

Elisa: Yeah, he was kind of cute about that but...

Eryn: You have to develop that muscle. I mean, you've gotta work out. You have to keep saying no to unhealthy behaviors. But I think it's developing that confidence to say no is the hard point for younger women. Maybe? What do you think, Gary?

Gary: Th... they're decades ago, and I love giving this perspective speaking as an older guy here in... in my fifties. As God just brought it to mind, I was recently traveling here to Grand Rapids signing a new book contract with Zondervan. So the next three books, I've... I've got so many going on. I'm just thinking of these speaking engagements, and I think of this... one of the most toxic people in my life from years ago who at one point had some authority over me, and I was just terrified that he could ruin my career and he could... at that time, it looked like maybe he could have. And I just laugh now at how powerless he is to do anything and how invisible he has become in my life. And I... I remember I felt the Lord tell me back then, this will be a blip in your life. You'll look back. But it was larger than life at the time.



Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: And it really will feel like for some of the younger women here, this might seem like hyperbole, but just as when you were a little girl, and you thought there was a monster under your bed and you look back now and laugh, my guess is when you're in your fifties and you look back at the people that you allowed to terrorize you in your twenties, they're gonna feel like those monsters under the bed.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: God didn't allow them to do to you what you thought they would do. And there might have been a momentary hurt, but in the course of your life...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...they'll be very insignificant because of the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's what... it's not because of who we are, it's not our gifts, it's not our personality, it's the power of the Spirit within us that is available to literally every believer.

Elisa: So you're touching on a little piece, and I wanna go back to there are toxic people in our lives who have deeply wounded us, and so when we look back at it, we can't laugh. We still cry because of the... the abuse or the torture...

Gary: Yes.

Elisa: ...or whatever...

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: ...and so just to touch for a moment on that. I... I agree a thousand percent that usually we grow out of that kind of control as we're doing our work and leaning into the growth that God wants to accomplish in us, but there are those times in our lives when the wound has been super deep and a person has been toxic to the point that they've really poured their poison into our beings...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...and we've become so wounded by that.

(theme music fade in)

Eryn: When we come back, Gary will not only define what a toxic person is, but will also help us think about when we should walk away. That's coming up on *God Hears Her*.

(theme music fades out)

(upbeat music)

Elisa: Hey, friends. If you're enjoying today's episode, go ahead and hit that subscribe button so you never miss a new episode of the *God Hears Her* podcast. When you subscribe, new episodes are delivered straight to your device or computer. So hit subscribe right now and remember that God sees you, He hears you, and He loves you because you are His.

(*God Hears Her* music fades in)

Eryn: We're back. This is *God Hears Her*, and I'm Eryn Eddy.

Elisa: And I'm Elisa Morgan. We're in the middle of a conversation with author Gary Thomas about his new book *When to Walk Away: Finding Freedom from Toxic People*. But before we



jump back in, just a quick reminder that if you miss anything in today's show, or if you're in the middle of doing something else, the talking points of today's show are in the show notes which can be found in the podcast description or on our website at godhearsheer.org. That's godhearsheer.org. In the show notes, you'll also find a link to a free resource titled *When Violence Comes Home: Help for Victims of Spousal Abuse*. This is an e-booklet that you can read today for free. Again, the link is in the show notes or on our website godhearsheer.org.

Eryn: Alright, let's get back into the show. As Gary begins by defining a tactic some toxic people use against us. The tactic of gaslighting. This is *God Hears Her*.

(music fades)

Gary: Gaslighting is when somebody makes you feel like you're crazy when you're speaking the truth.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Yes.

Gary: A classic example is the wife really suspects a husband is cheating, he says, "Well that's just because you're jealous; it's because you're delusional." And then she finds out he's been cheating all along.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: Are... are you sure you aren't stealing money? "Oh, come on, I'm the last person that would steal money; why would you think I...? How dare you?" And then you find out they're stealing money. So gaslighting is really attacking your sanity.

Eryn: Yeah.



Gary: Making you feel like you're crazy. And why that's so devastating, number one, is it undercuts your confidence to speak up for anyone. When you question your own sanity, they're destroying you. They're destroying your foundation from which you can reach others. And so it's a really serious and cruel mind game.

Eryn: Hmm. And so then, toxic people. How... how would you identify...

Gary: Yeah.

Eryn: ...what toxic people are?

Gary: I think it's important to point out all toxic people are difficult, but not all difficult people are toxic.

Eryn: Hmm, that's good.

Gary: There are some people who are hurt who act out. There are people who are just difficult and will let things go. Toxic I reserve for people who are destroying you bit by bit. They want evil for you. And it's, you know, we... we didn't get into the bit on marriage. I kind of dodged that question and used the example of a parent, but let me just say as a pastor, where my eyes were opened is when I realized that for a toxic person, a healthy marriage, a healthy church, a peaceful office environment would be boring. They have to inject drama, intrigue, slander, gossip. They have to turn people against each other. They don't want a healthy marriage. They like the conflict. They like the hatred. They like the negative drama, and they will try to keep the marriage alive, not because they want to love someone or enjoy the marriage. They want to keep the platform of abuse alive. Marriage offers this singular platform where they can terrorize a person, and they are great at gaslighting pastors and suckering them in using religious language.



Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: And then it's an entirely different person when they get home with their wife and we... we need to be wise about that. So an analogy I might use is that a difficult person might come along and... and take some of your food, and you're frustrated and maybe you're a little bit hungry. A toxic person is more like a cannibal where you say I don't have any food. They say, well, cut off your arm. That will do. And I'll roast that. And... and... and you're depleted and... and they're destroying you as you're interacting with them. And when somebody is destroying you as you interact with them, for you that person is toxic.

Elisa: I wonder, Gary and Eryn, if there is actually a pull toward toxicity in certain seasons. Now what I mean is when a young man and woman first marry, there is this natural kind of dance with the in-laws and the parents going, I'm separating from you and I'm cleaving unto him and suddenly they become all wack-a-doodle toxic. And they're simply setting boundaries but they are young and maybe it's... maybe the parents had never seen this behavior before and so they're suddenly thrust into a seasonal time. And maybe this... maybe toxic is too strong of a word for these developmental milestones we go through. But I just know for me, for my friends, for even my parents, what I put them through, I would become toxic at different times. And ... and maybe not the way you're describing it, but sure not my best self.

Gary: I think we need to distinguish between acting in a toxic way and being a toxic person.

Eryn: Oh, that's great. Let's...

Gary: It's a... it's a huge distinction because toxic people love to act in a toxic manner. Healthy people will occasionally act in a toxic way and when they understand it and they're convicted by it, they're appalled, they repent, they wanna change. I don't think you're hurting your parents intentionally to hurt your parents. You don't get joy out of hurting your parents.

Eryn: Yeah.



Gary: Maybe you're not applying the truth appropriately or with sensitivity or seasoning your words with grace. You're not setting out to destroy someone. You're not trying to control. For instance, classic case is if you have a spouse or a child that's addicted to drugs, it's so easy to become controlling...

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: ...which is very toxic, not out of a desire to control them but out of sheer terror that they're gonna destroy their lives. And so, you're acting in a toxic way out of good motives, but that's easier to deal with because you can repent of that.

Elisa: That's great.

Gary: For toxic people, they...they don't wanna repent of it. It's what makes life worth living for them.

Elisa: That's really a helpful distinction.

Eryn: Hmm. For anybody that's listening, and they're like, I'm in a toxic relationship, whether it's a boss, a friendship, a marriage, a dating relationship, what are some tangible ways for somebody to seek God in refuge to figure out how to walk away?

Gary: The book of Jude doesn't get preached on a lot. But in the first sentence, there's a powerful three-statement affirmation where Jude says you are called, you are loved, and you are kept. When everybody says you have nothing to offer the world, you have to say only God gets to call me names, and one of the names He calls me is called. I'm called. He has something He wants me to do. Because of the Spirit, there's work that I am called to do that only I am called to do. And second, I am loved. If my spouse rejects me, if my kids reject me, if my boss says I'm worthless, the God of the universe loves me, and I'm kept safe in Jesus



Christ. If I stand up, and if they attack me, and if they gossip about me, you know what? You are kept safe in Jesus Christ. And so I think, when I went through that passage and I... I just decided I don't get to call myself names cuz I can be toxic toward myself.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: I'm not gonna let others call me names. God is the only one who gets to call me names, and in Scripture, I'm called, loved, and kept. And those are the names I'm going to hold onto. And that's the foundation then that allows me to walk away from others. Like, you know, you can threaten me, but the God of the universe says He's going to protect me. And we're just not giving toxic people the power to terrorize us as much as we can walk away. When you are allowing yourself to be treated in a toxic way, it grieves the heart of God. He doesn't like to see His daughters abused. And walking away is actually an act of worship. When somebody treats you in a certain way and you say, you know what, every time you interact with me, you sin against me. And if you're not a Christian, that means you're going to be punished. If you are a Christian, that means you're gonna be disciplined. I'm gonna do you a favor and not interact with you so that you can't sin against me because I don't want God's anger to go against you. And selfishly, it protects you.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: But in another sense, you're loving that person because you're saving them from the consequences of abusing you. And, you know, I have two daughters and few things would grieve me more than seeing somebody terrorize my daughters, cause my daughters to lose their sanity, their peace, their joy, their security. I would want them to walk away. I'm a sinful human being. How much more does your heavenly Father want you to worship Him by walking away from those that are terrorizing you? I have such good friends that I'm so grateful for. Lisa and I have gotten together with some other couples, and there's this woman, and she said, "I've had three very toxic people in my life. And two of them are the nicest seeming women I've ever met. They seem so nice, and they present themselves as your friend. And you let them in



and then they become controlling and then they can become vicious when you pull away, and they seem nice to everyone, and so it plays such games with your mind.” I think it’s possible to be fooled by demeanor. If you’re being controlled by someone, if someone is eating away at your joy and your peace, if you just see the affects, their name comes up on your phone and there’s just this alarm in your spirit.

Eryn: Yeah.

Gary: Listen to that. Even though they’re speaking in a nice way. Sheila Gregoire who’s a Canadian blogger has said what kept her back is these toxic people that would use Christian language. And she was disarmed. She goes, they’re Christians!

Eryn: Right!

Gary: How can they speak? There must be something wrong? And she realized, you know what? Toxic people use Christian language. One of the favorite phrases that toxic people use, aren’t Christians supposed to act like such and such? You’re a Christian, aren’t you? How come you’re not acting like a Christian? Well, here’s the thing.

Elisa: Walk all over you. Yeah.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah.

Gary: They don’t want you to act like a Christian to please God. They’re using your desire to please God as a weapon to control you.

God Hears Her music



Eryn: I think Gary's right, Elisa. Toxic people want control. And they will even use spiritual language and appeal to God to try and get us to do what they want us to do.

Elisa: Mmhmm, I think so too, Eryn. And we need to watch out for that. But as I was listening back to the show, I also hope people will not miss a really important point that popped up just a few minutes ago. That every single person has the potential of acting in a toxic manner, but just because someone does something that seems toxic, it doesn't mean they are a toxic person. We need to be really careful about labeling someone as toxic unless it's very clear that that's what they are. If you think you know someone who's toxic, maybe pray and ask God to make it clear to you. And then ask God to give you the courage to know how to respond.

Eryn: And because identifying a toxic person can be quite difficult sometimes, we've been taking notes, and we've collected today's talking points and put them in the show notes. The show notes are available in the podcast description or on our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org. Not only are the talking points available, but you will also find a link to purchase Gary's book *When to Walk Away: Finding Freedom from Toxic People* and a link to a free e-booklet titled *When Violence Comes Home: Help for Victims of Spousal Abuse*. All of that information, again, is in the show notes or on our website, godhearsher.org.

Elisa: And if you've enjoyed this show or enjoyed *God Hears Her* in general, please take a few minutes to rate us and write a review. Ratings and reviews help us reach more women, and we're so thankful for your help in spreading the word for this podcast.

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

(Music)



Elisa: It takes a team to create a podcast. Today we want to thank Bobby, Daniel, and Kim for all your help in creating and sharing the *God Hears Her* podcast. You are awesome. Thank you all.