



# God Hears Her Podcast

## Episode 51 - Best Of - How God Redeems Brokenness

Eryn Eddy and Elisa Morgan with Toni Collier

**Toni:** I just now feel like stable.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Like, I know God. He's my rock. I know what He says about me.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** But I still have my moments. When I'm like, "Am I safe?"

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Okay, There's a God. He's looking after me. He's looking after my daughter. There are still moments when I can feel the anxiety rise up at night or in...in a short nap. Just small little moments.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** I'm like, "Oh gosh, am I going to be able to go to sleep? Am I going to be able to...I'm really tired. If I don't go to sleep...then...it's just a...it's the day-to-day walk..."

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and it could potentially not get easy...

**Eryn:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** ...and that's okay.

**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 for you today on *God Hears Her*.



**Eryn:** Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Eryn Eddy.

**Elisa:** And I'm Elisa Morgan... and today we want to revisit a best-of episode on brokenness... So consider this... What brokenness—or broken people—have you experienced in your life?...Let's relisten to our conversation with Toni Collier... as she reminds all of us that our past doesn't have to define us. Instead, even our brokenness can be redeemed by God and used for His glory and our good.

**Eryn:** I'm especially excited to listen to this episode of *God Hears Her* again because Toni Collier is one of my best friends in life. She was there for me in some of my darkest times, and I've been able to walk with her in some of hers. Toni is a communicator, host, and consultant at North Point Ministries. She is known for her vibrant personality, charisma, and all around welcoming spirit...which definitely comes out in today's episode... and she is creator of the blog "Broken Crayons Still Color"—a place for women to be reminded that our past doesn't define us.

**Elisa:** So let's get to our conversation with Toni Collier... this is *God Hears Her*.

**Toni:** There is a balance between being imperfect and striving for perfection, and I think the middle is hard to sit in. How do we balance that? And I think sometimes we can fall into this idea of oh we're so imperfect that there's really not much we can do, and I think also, we'll talk about this a little later, but I think trauma and hard experiences, they...they rob us of something, especially as kids...

**Elisa:** That's interesting.

**Toni:** ...um you lose the awe and the wonder and the discovery and the bigness of God...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...because of how big our trials and tribulations have been and so then we just, I mean, for me, financial poverty, relational poverty, spiritual poverty...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...when you experience those things, it makes God so much smaller, and so then we don't think there's enough available for us to win, and to prosper and to blossom and to be happy sometimes even.

**Eryn:** So would you say that um our family dynamics or things that have happened to us ...



**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...where we've found ourselves making wrong choices, all of those things lead us to a space of brokenness?

**Toni:** Man...okay, I'll start with a story. I was at the Dove Awards 2 years ago. Um Beth Moore was sitting a few rows from me and I'm like fan-girling on the inside.

**Elisa:** You were taking a selfie.

**Toni:** I'm like your mom and you and Beth. I mean, I almost broke my neck trying to see her all night. [Laughing] Well is she going to go to the bathroom? Should I go to the bathroom, you know? But also I was just like I'm not going to show it. Like I'm too cool, you know. But my husband knew because I was going through one of her studies at the time. It's called "So Long Insecurity: You've Been a Bad Friend to Us."

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** And it...it was wrecking me and changing me and healing these broken places and so my husband said, "You need to go up and talk to her afterwards." And I'm like, "No, my gosh, no. No no." He's like, "You're going to go up." And I'm like, "No, I'm fine. I'm fine." And he's like, "Beth!" I'm like, "No." And she turns around.

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Toni:** And I was like, "Hey." And my husband's like, "This is my wife and she's going through your, you know, study right now," and then she...she touches me on my arm and she said, "You know for some of us girls, it's just going to be hard."

**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Toni:** She said, "You know you'll look to your left and your right. You'll make the mistake of looking left and right, and um you'll compare yourself to people whose stories may not be as hard as yours and you'll be like, "Why God? Why are you doing that through them in that way? Why is it so easy for them and I mean, I know they have some imperfections, but gosh, they didn't go through what I went through..."



**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and the trauma.” And she said, “But...but God does something so great in the valleys.”

**Elisa:** Hmm.

**Toni:** And it was from that moment when I looked back at my story and was appreciative of my brokenness.

**Elisa:** Hmm.

**Toni:** Because I wore a different armor.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** I had more of a confidence walking into it knowing that hey, my story it may be hard for me.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** And um that was a changing part in my life because the 25 years preceding that moment with Beth, um was just brokenness. In the third grade my mom had a massive stroke.

**Elisa:** Whoa!

**Toni:** Paralyzed on her left side. She was the bread winner. She had the degree; my dad did not, so he went to work and was just totally absent.

**Elisa:** And does your mom recover?

**Toni:** So here's the story, girlfriend, just one thing after the other medically, and so I ended up taking care of my mom from third grade, 8 years old, all the way up to maybe about high school when I graduated high school, and my two older brothers, we're a blended family, they went to live with their moms because my mom was now disabled so she...

**Elisa:** Hmm.



**Toni:** ...couldn't do all the things that she used to be able to do, so our family broke apart. My dad was verbally abusive and I'm just a hard man, never proud, and so there were some validation issues there. So much insecurity. And my counselor calls it parentified child syndrome where this natural progression, you know, where parents meet kids, um and then you kind of flip it on its head and then you kind of start taking care of the parent. Well, mine happened so early...

**Elisa:** So young.

**Toni:** ...that all of my awe and my wonder...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...just, I mean, just disappeared because I had to run the house and to take care of her...

**Eryn:** You had to be the parent.

**Toni:** ...and to be the parent, and um so, I mean, gosh such a walking miracle my mom is and, I mean, went to therapy, got her, you know, feeling on her left side and started walking again, and we found blood clots and we got rid of those and she...

**Elisa:** Oh my goodness.

**Toni:** ...lost her large intestine and miraculously she could survive off of her small intestine, and I mean, it was just one thing after the other and it was so hard. I felt so unprotected my whole life. Like I wasn't safe. Um like the only one protecting me was me.

**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Toni:** And, you know, ended up with so many validation issues and at 13 I lost my virginity in high school. A guy was sexually manipulative. He was 18.

**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Toni:** And, you know, went through that and stayed with the guy and he cheated on me with my best friend and ended up leaving my parents' house at 16 thinking I was going to marry this guy, and put myself through college. I kind of separated myself from my family because it was such a broken place.



**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** My brothers got on drugs and we would have nights where we would have to go get them out of the crack house and, I mean, it was just...I mean just brokenness. One thing after the other.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And went to college, graduated in 3 years. At 19 years old I was supposed to go to law school, broke up with that guy. I'm like, "I'm back. I'm going to do it." But what really was cultivating in me was a performer's heart.

**Elisa:** Hmm.

**Toni:** Where I just felt like I had to achieve to be...perhaps to have someone be proud of me.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And I pinged back and forth between validation from men and drugs and alcohol, to well let me just do the best that I can and everyone will love me and was supposed to go to law school, but pinged up on the validation thing again and met this guy in college, dated him for 3 months, and then moved with him to Atlanta. I left Texas. I was like, "I'm not going to go to law school..."

**Elisa:** Yep.

**Toni:** ...I'm going to start a family." Ended up being in an abusive situation. Very, verbally abusive.

**Elisa:** Oh my gosh.

**Toni:** There was some physical...a lot of jealousy there and man, it just one thing after the other type thing and ah ended up getting a divorce and going to a church, getting saved, and getting hurt by the church too.

**Elisa:** Oh wow.

**Toni:** So very spiritually manipulative um...

**Eryn:** There's a lot of hurt...



**Toni:** Oh yeah.

**Elisa:** Oh my gosh.

**Eryn:** ...so when Beth Moore told you...

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** ...that you had this flashback...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...of up till 13 'til that point.

**Toni:** Yeah and it was like "Oh, it's not all in vain. I have to use this story." I thought I was going to leave ministry. God scooped me right back up and was like, "No, I want to use that broken place."

**Elisa:** So how did you get from...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...the place of this stuff disqualifies me...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...to...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...this stuff actually qualifies me?

**Toni:** Qualifies my story even more.

(music)



**Eryn:** And when we come back, Toni will answer Elisa's question about how God led her to the realization that brokenness doesn't disqualify her, but instead qualifies her and you to make the difference in the lives of others. That's coming up on *God Hears Her*.

**Elisa:** If you haven't already joined the *God Hears Her* email newsletter, now's the perfect time! Sign up today and we'll send you a free digital ebooklet called *Longing to Love Us*. You'll see how one woman came to understand the personal love of her heavenly Father, and how He lavishly loves each one of us as well. Go to [god-hears-her-dot-org](http://god-hears-her-dot-org) and sign up today! That's God Hears Her dot O.R.G.

**Eryn:** Now back to the show. Here's Toni as she answers the question how did God lead you to the realization that your brokenness didn't disqualify you, but qualified you to share your story and make a difference in the lives of others? This is *God Hears Her*.

**Toni:** I thought I was done with ministry. A super broken church and the leader there was just so spiritually manipulative and I ended up leaving and I said, "Well, that's it." I started working for Girl's Scout corporate.

**Elisa:** Hmm.

**Toni:** I'm like, "It's all good. I'm going to be in the nonprofit space. I can still do good in the world and ended up at Buck Head Church for a meeting that somebody asked me to come and creatively speak into and my now husband was there and literally said, "You're supposed to be in ministry..."

**Elisa:** Oh.

**Toni:** ...and I'm supposed to help you." And I'm like, "Well that's really interesting because I'm divorced and I've got a whole bunch of baggage and I don't even know if I believe in the church anymore.

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** And ended up getting me connected with North Point Ministries under the leadership of Andy Stanley and it changed my life.

**Elisa:** Mmm.





**Toni:** They believed in me, gave me baby steps to get back in the faith and stage. I was a youth pastor before I was ordained. I was doing all sorts of public ministry and North Point gave it back to me, and even more than that, they gave it back to me with the knowledge that I had so much baggage.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And I guess the local church saved me for the big C Church, and I...I just...every time I started telling my story, God was like, "Well, do it a little bit more."

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** "Do it a little bit more and see how people respond."

**Eryn:** Hmm.

**Toni:** And I'm in these healthy environments and I'm getting this new healthy community and people are like, "That's amazing. Say more. Tell it again. Tell it again." And now people are being saved and there's more um people coming to Christ because of me telling all my dirty stuff, and it was just a weird paradigm shift that I had to go through, a mindset shift that there was a God that wasn't up there with His finger pointing down at me,...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...but instead was like, "Put me in, coach, I want to trade your power for my weakness." And it was just like oh...it was like this new...I...I...like a new God had resurfaced, but God's like "No, no no. I have a plan for you and a direct connection to you through my Son Jesus, and I want to do so many great things through you and through your brokenness," and I look up now I'm like I'm always talking about my brokenness now.

**Eryn:** What were some like tactical things that you did in that journey, because, I mean, you surround yourself with...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...and you can do all of those things, but what are some like day-to-day things.

**Toni:** Oh man. Yeah, absolutely. I mean counseling. I mean I would...



**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...shout it from the rooftop. We have three...four counselors in our household. My daughter has a counselor. My husband has a counselor. I have one and then we have a marriage counselor.

**Eryn:** That's good.

**Toni:** And like I would just shout it from the rooftops like over and over and over again. Get counseling. Go to counseling. Go to counseling. You should go to counseling. Um, it, you know, and it wasn't just about sitting there, telling all that happened. It was doing the work.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** My counselor assigned me specific things. So long insecurity was a big one for me.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Beth Moore's study on chronic insecurity, how to heal that spiritually...

**Eryn:** Wow.

**Toni:** ...is...was huge turning point for me. EMDR was big for me.

**Eryn:** And that is.

**Elisa:** Eye Movement Rapid Desensitization. It...it's technique that you use...that therapists use with it's kind of interesting, so go Google it EMDR, but what it does is it addresses the brain synopsis that are broken through trauma and helps them reattach and heal.

**Toni:** This is the best way I have heard it explained to you, aside from that incredible thing you just gave was that our lives are like bookshelves...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and, you know, if we have our bookshelf all together, it's just perfectly all in line...



**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...what happens typically in our life when we go through trauma is that a little book comes out and it just goes “beep” just a little bit, and what happens is all of our relational experiences, emotional experiences, are now done through the filter of now this riff...

**Eryn:** Oh wow.

**Toni:** ...and if another piece of trauma and there’s just a little another book,...

**Eryn:** Another one.

**Toni:** ...just pull it out. There’s another riff. And so what EMDR does it goes back and it just “boop,” pushes them back in...

**Eryn:** Pushes them back in.

**Toni:** ...so that you can start to experience life in a way that’s a little less filtered through trauma.

**Eryn:** Wow.

**Elisa:** In techniques that God has revealed in the last centuries, in the last decades, has been huge for us...

**Eryn:** It’s crazy.

**Elisa:** ...so that we can take advantage of these things.

**Toni:** Absolutely.

**Elisa:** So those were some of the things.

**Toni:** Counseling for sure, EMDR, and then, of course, friendships.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** I needed to be fully known.



**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** When we get on platforms as Christian leaders and we hide.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** We hide that...those parts of us and um I had to get some friends that sat with me and said, "I want to know everything,..."

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and I want to love you in it and through it, and so I really had to be known by some people.

**Elisa:** One thing that I...I think happens a lot is we are broken people...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...and Eryn has shared her story. I've shared my story. Thank you for sharing your story, and it's...it's not the brokenness that we're lifting up...

**Toni:** Sure.

**Elisa:** ...and celebrating. This is what, you know, this is the greatest thing, but God's presence in the brokenness...

**Toni:** 100 percent.

**Elisa:** ...and His...His redemption and acceptance of the brokenness...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...and His recreation of the brokenness...

**Toni:** Yes. Yeah.



**Elisa:** ...is the story and...and I think a lot of feel like well I'm never going to be fixed enough, if you will, to be used whether it's a big M Ministry or a small m ministry, just my day-to-day. You know, what do you say to that woman who's...who's just going, "I'm just now recognizing all of the cracks in my being that I pretended like aren't there. What do you say to her?"

**Toni:** Well, I think the first thing we have to address is where that comes from. We say this on the blog all the time. It's, you know, the world has lied to us and told us that we had to be perfect to be used.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And media, social media, I mean, it's just this like embodiment of perfection, and I would just say that the truth is God wants to use us in the middle of our mess. It's...it's Paul and what he's saying to the church when they are, you know, kicking people out of the church and when they are being boastful about all that they have, it's him in 2 Corinthians 12:9, he says, that God is telling us that "My grace is sufficient for you."

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And your story and your mess and all your stuff and "my power's made perfect in your weakness." But it's the response that we get to have to that truth and "And therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses." Why? So that's Christ's power will rest on me.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** He wants to come into that space, but He, you know, is a sovereign God and He's a gentle God and He's jealous for us, but He's also respectful of our space and what we will allow for Him to come in. And so when we invite God into that space and when we boast about our weakness, He's like, "Oh, yep, come on. I've been waiting. I want to just give you all my power, daughter or son," and um if there was not a time, I think this is the best time to get on the bandwagon of vulnerability. Shout out to Brene Brown for bringing that wave so hard...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...but I...I think this is the time to walk boldly in it and be unashamed and fearless in this like we are broken...



**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and we've got to get it out there so that we can see God's power do something great in it.

**Eryn:** That's beautiful, Toni. Would you say that um in the midst of kind of healing, doing all these tactical things...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...when you start to expose that, because you talk about vulnerability,...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...when you start to be vulnerable and you start to expose it, you do start to feel unlovable because everything starts to become exposed.

**Toni:** Sure. Sure.

**Eryn:** And it's hard sometimes to believe, or even wrap our minds around the fact that God sees us and He hears us and He loves us when we are exposing everything.

**Toni:** Sure. Sure. Sure. This is really big for me in counseling.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Because for 25 years, again, I like pushed everything right under, just put it all under there and just tuck it down there and then shove it down.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** Oh, I did that for some long, I mean, so...I never...

**Elisa:** And then jump on it a little bit harder. Whoa!

**Toni:** Stay in there.



**Elisa:** And then cut off the pieces that tried to come out.

**Toni:** Stay in there.

**Eryn:** Use double-stick tape, glue...

**Toni:** I know, right.

**Eryn:** ...it down.

**Toni:** What most people don't talk about is when you start to expose those traumas, what comes with it? Anxiety?

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Because then you're aware of it.

**Eryn:** Yes.

**Toni:** I'm putting names to emotions.

**Eryn:** Yes.

**Toni:** I'm feeling...I'm allowing myself to feel everything and so then you feel even more broken.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** It was, you know, in those moments you're almost just like well should I have not have said anything at all...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...so I could just keep, you know, stuffing it down.

**Elisa:** Yeah.



**Elisa:** Yep. Because you function really well when you...

**Toni:** Yes!

**Elisa:** ...stuff it all down.

**Toni:** Literally, and you...and you kind of get numb to the trauma a little bit, but as Brene Brown says, "You cannot experience the highest level of joy without allowing yourself to experience the highest level of pain. And what worked for me, my counselor said, "When you open yourself up to all this trauma, it's as if you're opening up a bucket. You're just letting it all fly out." Well when there's so much of it, the top comes off and the bottom does too. So what happens is when like the good stuff starts getting put back into your bucket, your heart, your emotions...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...your life in general, the bottom is still open...

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Toni:** ...and so then it just falls out.

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Toni:** And so you can't...it's almost hard to rebuild and to believe in yourself again.

**Elisa:** That's good.

**Toni:** So she says that we got to work on not just putting good stuff in the bucket, but sealing the bottom of it...

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** ...and in order to seal the bottom of it for us as believers, we believe that's the foundation piece.

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Toni:** We got to figure out the truth of what God's saying to us,...





**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...so that could build the bottom back.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** So that when my husband says to me, "I know that you don't feel lovable, but I'm...I'm choosing you and your daughter and I'm choosing you after you've had a divorce. I'm choosing you after sexual and verbal and physical abuse.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** Like I'm still choosing you because I love you and you're beautiful," it doesn't just fall out.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** But it can stick in because of God's foundation truth in our lives and so that was just...yeah.

**Elisa:** And, Toni, just to be so gentle here, it takes time.

**Toni:** Oh yes.

**Elisa:** You know, when...when we discover our brokenness, when we identify it,...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** and choose to just gently pry the lid off or pop it off, you know...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...and we come out and the bottom goes out too, it takes time...

**Toni:** Oh years.



**Elisa:** ...to heal and learn and permission...

**Toni:** Yes.

**Elisa:** ...and grace, because, you know, I think in...in a conversation that we could have spent 29 hours in...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...when we're doing 20 minutes in or something, I don't ever want to give anybody the impression that it's just 1, 2, 3,...

**Toni:** No.

**Elisa:** ... I dream of Jeanie and you're done.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** You know, that just doesn't happen.

**Toni:** That's really good. I'm glad you...

**Elisa:** ...takes time.

**Toni:** ...brought that up.

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** It...it's real.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** I'm 28. I'm 3 years removed from my first counseling session. If I were to be just be real, I just feel stabilized.

**Elisa:** Mmm.



**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Like just now. Working through the anxiety in the calm weighted blankets. You know like meditation. Like trying the...you know like all the sleep sounds.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** I...I've...and I'm going to attest to this. I just now feel like stable.

**Eryn:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** Like...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...I know God. He's my rock. I know what He says about me, but I still have my moments.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** When I'm like, am I safe?

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** Mm Hmm.

**Toni:** Okay...okay, there's a God who's looking after. He's looking after my daughter. There are still moments when I can feel the anxiety rise up at night or in a short nap. Just a small little moment so I'm like...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** "Oh gosh, and I going to be able to go to sleep? I'm am I going to be...if I don't go to sleep...it's just you...it's the day-to-day walk.

**Eryn:** Yeah.



**Toni:** And um again it was the moment with Beth Moore where it's like it could potentially not get easy...

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and that's okay.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** That just goes to show the power of us being vulnerable...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...and just going it's going to be hard. Like it's okay that it's hard. That gives you permission to walk into...

**Toni:** Sure.

**Eryn:** ...and expose those...

**Toni:** Sure. 100 percent.

**Eryn:** ...places. Right? And that's what you do...

**Toni:** Yeah!

**Eryn:** ..with Broken Crayons Still Color.

**Toni:** Yea!

**Eryn:** Yeah. and...and you use that...

**Toni:** I just love that I get so excited. We um have this cool little ministry with a team of four including myself who are just on a mission to create a space for the broken, but hopeful woman.



**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Toni:** And that's what we press into. We're like, "Hey, we can be broken, girls..."

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...but there's going to be hope. We've got to chase after the hope.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** That's where the redemption comes in, but...

**Eryn:** Right.

**Toni:** ...and so we have a blog and we do kind a series format style where we pick a series, Eryn's written on the series, and we write about it for 3 weeks and we ask questions and we put hard things out there, but we have biblical truth and sounding and right now we're in this relationship series and we...we partnered with some just incredible like married women that are just bossing it out to give our...hopefully our women, our readers, just some little nuggets on how to be in a marriage and be broken and how to, you know, pray about a marriage that you're not in yet, and so it's...it's just weird, it's fun. We've done series on closeness and series on God's vision for our lives and so it's just crazy. I can't even believe it. So I get to lead this team, and we're just like rallying the troops. We're like "Come on."

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Toni:** Um and the reason why we started it and the reason why we got a team is because I just didn't feel like my story was powerful enough to change this narrative in our world that you're to be perfect to be used.

**Elisa:** Mm hmm.

**Toni:** And so our...our hope is that women would come out and be like authentically open and broken and hopeful in the middle of that and then it would like start this snowball effect where other women feel safe enough to tell theirs...



**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Toni:** ...and they're in the Jesus.

**Elisa:** Take just a minute...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...a minute right now...

**Toni:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...yeah and talk to that woman who is a broken...broken crayon...

**Toni:** Oh man. Oh gosh...

**Elisa:** ...and tell her she can still color.

**Eryn:** Tell her.

**Elisa:** Just speak straight to her.

**Eryn:** I love that.

**Elisa:** Which is to...yeah.

**Toni:** Oh man.

**Eryn:** Tell her she can still color.

**Toni:** I would just say ah you're just more than enough. You're more than enough. You and God have gotten everything that you need to make it through this season. He's never left you. He has His hand on you. He is literally sitting on the sidelines of your life saying, "Put me in. Don't hold on to that. Don't carry that yourself. I want to carry that burden with you. And not only do I want to carry it, but I want to redeem it in you. And I...I want you to write a new story." He's saying, "I loved you right in the middle of the brokenness and I'm going to use you right in the middle of it. And ah I'm with you in the valley." I'd also say, my friend Paul Taylor Smith says this all the time, He says, "We serve a God who who's not at the



end of the tunnel waiting to be the light, but we serve a God that's in the tunnel with us guiding our footsteps," and so I just hope that you know that you um you can still color. God still wants to make something beautiful in you.

(music)

**Eryn:** Jesus often described Himself as light in the darkness and His light brings life. Even in our tunnels of darkness, He is the light.

**Elisa:** Yes, He is. For anyone who wants to look through the talking points of today's show, the show notes are available in the podcast description. We've also included the verses mentioned, and we've included a link to Toni's blog, "Broken Crayons Still Color."

**Eryn:** The show notes also contain a link to sign up for the God Hears Her newsletter featuring helpful articles and stories from women just like you and me who are discovering what it means to be seen and heard by God...

**Elisa:** 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.

**Eryn:** Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Daniel Ryan Day and Mary Jo Clark. And we also want to give a quick shout out to Candace and Lynn for their help in creating and promoting the God Hears Her podcast. Thank you, friends!