



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 52 - Best Of - No Longer Defined By My Past Eryn Eddy and Elisa Morgan with Liz Curtis Higgs

Liz Curtis Higgs: And we...we want to identify it not to shame ourselves, not to feel less-than, but simply to marvel at the grace of God that forgives all of it; every bit. And here was the big "ah-ha" for me. He has not only forgiven me for my past—all, all of my past. Stuff that I will never say in public because it's...it's just abhorrent. He is forgiving me for every mistake I'm making right now. Even in our 30 minutes together I have surely said something that was a little out of line, a little out of Scripture, a little something. And, oh my goodness, if I'm going live another 10 or 20 years, think how much more sin I have ahead of me!

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: Except here's God. His grace covers it all.

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. And I think it's safe to say that we've all made some bad decisions, and as a result we've all experienced the regret and sadness that comes with those mistakes. So today we want to revisit our conversation with Liz Curtis Higgs when she shares with us about her own past mistakes and how she went from what she calls "a bad girl" to finding freedom in Christ.

Elisa: That's right, Eryn. And she'll also help us discover ways in which we can move forward from our own brokenness to a life of wholeness in Jesus. But first, just a little bit of information about Liz Curtis Higgs. She's an author, speaker, and well, I'd call her a comedian 'cause she's hilarious. She's most known for her book: *Bad Girls of the Bible*, and it's through some of the stories of women in the Bible that Liz discovered freedom from her past and hope for her future. So let's get to it! This is God Hears Her with Liz Curtis Higgs.

Elisa Morgan: So Eryn, this is Liz and I'm just delighted that you guys get to know each other too.

Liz Curtis Higgs: What a blessing...



Eryn Eddy: Oh Liz, I can't wait to hear your story. I have so many questions and thoughts and just reading about your journey I know there's so much that I can...that I can learn from you in this conversation.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Oh bless you. I hope so.

Elisa Morgan: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: That's really the point isn't it? To encourage one another and maybe teach by example. Mo...my life is mostly what not to do. But...but I think that's the real deal is what does God do with a bad girl? You know, the...the...the whole idea is not to be identified as a bad girl and stop there, but it's like, if you're a bad girl, former bad girl or still a bad girl, what does God do with that? And it's...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...such good news. It is such good news.

Elisa Morgan: And you know, before we go into your story. I want to make you comfortable by challenging Eryn and me. Let's just tell a story of when we were a bad girl so that...so that Liz knows she's in safe company here and as do all of our dear friends listening.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Yeah

Elisa Morgan: So I'll start.

Eryn Eddy: Okay

Elisa Morgan: Okay, it was a Halloween night and I don't know what I was dressed up as but we were trick-or-treating and I know I was in high school and I should have totally known better. But...but...

Liz Curtis Higgs: I heard that *but* th...

Elisa Morgan: ...I rang that door...mhm! That but. But I rang the doorbell and the door opened and it was actually one of my friend's homes. And her mother answered the door and I hurled a raw egg into their entryway and it cracked and landed, *splat*, on her avocado and cream flocked wallpaper and ran down the wall. While I dove into the bushes to hide. What in the world was wrong with me? I mean, I knew better than that. Bad Elisa! Bad Elisa. Isn't that terrible?



Eryn Eddy: Oh my gosh that's awful.

Elisa Morgan: Oh my gosh that's awful...that's awful. Okay, Eryn.

Eryn Eddy: Okay, well...

Elisa Morgan: When were you a bad girl?

Eryn Eddy: Well before I go into, like, cause I have so many stories of me being a bad girl, I want to know what the definition that you guys are thinking is a bad girl.

Elisa Morgan: Oh, just be as bad as you want to be. But we'll get that out with Liz later. But you've just got to dive in like I just did, girl. Come on.

Eryn Eddy: I mean, well I mean, like, are we talking like, I mean, yeah I, like, TP-ed people's yards and I...I have stuck forks in people's yards and broke them off so it would be really hard. I've...yeah, ya'll I've done that...

Elisa Morgan: That's terrible.

Eryn Eddy: ...but then...but then I've also done things that haven't been good for my heart and making choices and entering into relationships that weren't healthy so that's why I'm trying to figure out what are we defining as bad?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Yeah

Eryn Eddy: Cause I could tell you a few stories.

Elisa Morgan: I...I...I think it all counts.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Well, all I can say is if eggs on the wall and forks in the yard is as bad as you guys get bring in some real bad girls because so far I am not...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...impressed.



Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Elisa Morgan: Yeah

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Elisa Morgan: I...I got worse. I was just teeing it up...

Liz Curtis Higgs: I know.

Elisa Morgan: ...but, you know what Liz, you're here and we really want, if you're willing and...we want this to be your comfort zone. Can you tell us why you've ever seen yourself as a bad girl?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Well...

Elisa Morgan: How did that phrase come to you?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Yeah, and I appreciate your comfort zone statement. One of the things I think for me because I did not...I went all through my teen years, my bad girl years, about a decade of really bad—17 to 27—where it was all the stuff. It was sex, it was drugs, it was rock and roll, it was a man after man after man after man. It was one night stands with men whose names I never knew and I was so proud of being a bad girl. I mean, what I...I should have been ashamed but I actually was really proud of myself that I was bad-er than anybody else. I would keep track of how many different men I slept with in any given city. It was that bad. So all your listeners just went *good grief*. But see...

Elisa Morgan: Liz, do you know what that was about for you?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Sure

Elisa Morgan: Wanting to be as bad as you could be...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Oh yeah!

Elisa Morgan: ...and keeping track of that?



Liz Curtis Higgs: It's...it's a desire to excel. I'm not kidding. I wanted to do the best I could do and when I realized that sadly, sadly I had an experience at 16 where a man...I won't go into details. Let's just say I came out of the other side of it no longer chaste, pure, and I was so naïve I didn't even understand it.

Elisa Morgan: Oh man...

Liz Curtis Higgs: But on the other side of that, you know, you start going *well, I guess I can't be perfectly good so I...*

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: *...might as well be perfectly bad.* I also was such a rebel. And I still have a bit of that in me, that rebellious heart. God uses it in...particularly in reference to your comfort zone. I have no comfort zone. I will tell anybody anything if...if it will point them to the grace of God. So if telling you how bad I was gives comfort to my sisters who are listening and going *oh, well gosh I only slept with four guys I guess there must be hope for me.* You see what I'm saying?

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: So...so comfort zone for me is I am comfortable in the arms of my savior who has forgiven me for all of it. And that's...it's the...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: *...all of it* that takes my breath away. Everyday. And that never ends. I was plunged under the grace of God 38 years ago but I n...I never forget what Liz at 26 was like. In fact, someday I always said I was going to write a book *Liz at 26: The Year Before I Met the Savior* because I never want to forget that woman. I remember what drove her: insecurity, a...no sense of worth, *it's too late.* I was all about *it's too late, I'm too far gone, there's nothing that can save me now so I might as well just be as bad as the bad-est girl out there and at least excel in badness.*

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: And God is so good. What he does...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah



Liz Curtis Higgs: ...with bad girls is He woos them back into His embrace. He just woos them.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah.

Liz Curtis Higgs: And He...

Eryn Eddy: Oh Liz, I so connect with that.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Yeah, yeah. And in my case He did that with me with coworkers. I was in radio and doing rock and roll radio and a couple came breezing in from Los Angeles. They were brilliant, funny, cute, they were all the stuff. But all they talked about was Jesus. I had never known people like that. I thought they were totally weird. But they loved me. See they took me as I was. They saw past all the ick and said *at the heart, she's a woman who needs to know Jesus*. And so they just loved me into the kingdom.

Eryn Eddy: Wow

Liz Curtis Higgs: And they did.

Elisa Morgan: How long did that take? That process?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Well you know, amazingly not very long. I met them in September and I threw myself into the baptistry in February. So five...five months, five and a half months. But you know, it's a little bit and a little bit and a little bit. The Scripture says "The path of righteousness is like the rising dawn." Step by step you...you know, each day you get a tiny bit more light and then one day you go **gasp* oh! It's YOU Lord. You're the one I've been looking for all these years*. And then, of course, you step back and go *oh my goodness, you are so righteous and I am so unrighteous. There's no hope for us to be together*. And that's when His son says "I AM the way, the truth, the life" *it's going to be through me, Liz. It's not going to be you cleaning up your act. You just keep coming to church*. Cause I was going to church and then going home and smoking a joint, you know? I just didn't get it.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah, right.

Liz Curtis Higgs: I did not get it.

Eryn Eddy: Right.



Liz Curtis Higgs: But...but God, in His faithfulness, waited.

Eryn Eddy: So, Liz, I want to go back to a little bit when you were talking about going through that rebellious time at that age and...at 26. How long...but what was that journey like? Was it an evolution of becoming rebellious or was it an...something that happened that caused you to...to start diving into these areas of life? Or...tell...unpack that a little bit for me.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Sure. I...I think at first I always wanted to be part of a crowd. And ideally it would have been the *in crowd* as we used to call it. But I didn't have what it took to be in the *in crowd*. I wasn't quick pretty enough; I wasn't quite popular enough. I was funny and so they put up with me. You know, they'd have me around as the class clown. But when it all came down to it they were dating and I wasn't dating, all that kind of stuff. So I found a crowd that would take me exactly as I was and that was the party crowd. And, you know, when you're stoned everybody's cool.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: So...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...so that's how it was, you know? We...we all found ways to numb the pain of not being part of the *right crowd* and created our own crowd. And then once you feel accepted in that crowd, well, you're just going to hang there because you already know the other crowd's not going to take you. So if this group will, then you'll do what you can to stay there. This was my story...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...this isn't everybody's. But for me, I'm a girl who likes community and I wanted that above all.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah, yeah. And that's where you found it.

Elisa Morgan: When you came to know God, you know, when He grabbed you and threw you into the baptistery, I could practically hear a splash there as you said that, you know? But when that happened, I'm pretty sure this just didn't go away. I...I'm pretty sure your struggle with thinking *I've been too bad* continued. That *I...maybe I want to still be best at being bad because that's familiar and comfortable*. You



know? Those kinds of things. What was that process like of...of how did God meet you in your experience of being bad and ween you off of it, maybe?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Well here's the funny thing: much of my life changed dramatically. I mean, right away. This is so wild for me to remember this. But I did come home the day I was thrown in that baptistery and professed my new life in Christ. I went home to smoke a joint to celebrate because that's what I did. But then...then sitting there that Sunday afternoon, February 21, 1982, I remember it, I remember everything about it. Sitting there high I thought **gasp* what if my new friends from church call me? I'll be so embarrassed. So I think I don't want to do this anymore.* And, you know, when it says in Scripture "He gives you the desires of your heart," it doesn't mean He gives you every little thing your heart desires. It means He places in your heart the desires He would have for you. And so my desire came to be I... *I want to be sober.*

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: And so, you know, I...okay, I did finish that little baggy of pot because, you know, because I'm frugal. But...

[all laugh]

Liz Curtis Higgs: It didn't take but a couple days and it was gone and it was never replaced. And the guy I was seeing at the time came over that afternoon and had an expectation of what that Sunday afternoon was going to look like. But I sat Him down and said *oh my word I just have to tell you what I'm learning.* And, oh, if I just had a tape of this. I took him from Genesis to Revelation. I don't know how, I don't know what I said, but I actually did. I laid the whole thing out as you can imagine...

Elisa Morgan: Wow

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...by the time I was done, any ardor that was burning in that man's heart was gone and he said *so what you're saying to me is we're not going to be doing what we've always done?* And I said *that's what I'm telling you.* And he left and that was the end of that. So some of it He dealt with, honestly, very quickly.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah



Liz Curtis Higgs: But that's because that's what I needed. Everybody is different. Some of us are, kind of, weaned off the old life and that doesn't mean that you didn't hear the Lord correctly or you're disobedient; I don't think so. I think...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...the path for each of us is unique. The Savior, though, is one in the same.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah. That's so good.

Liz Curtis Higgs: And so He is going to speak to each of our hearts. He's going to get us where we need to go. But they might look a little different for the first, early steps. And I think that's okay.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: I think we have to be so careful not to say *this is exactly how your new life in Christ should unfold*.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: Because then people will doubt *well then I must not know Him because I did this*.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: And that's not fair.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah.

(*God Hears Her* Theme)

Elisa Morgan: And when we come back Liz will share, not only how God continued to rescue her from her past and provide hope for her future, but she'll also help us tackle the shame that comes with our mistakes. That's coming up on *God Hears Her*.

(cut)



Eryn Eddy: Want a free booklet that tells about God's amazing love for us even when we feel unlovable? For a limited time, sign up for our *God Hears Her* weekly newsletter, and we'll send you a free digital ebooklet called *Longing to Love Us*. It's one woman's story about how God loved her through all the messiness of her life including broken relationships, teenage rebellion, and attempted suicide. Go to God-hears-her-dot-org and sign up today! That's God Hears Her dot O.R.G.

(cut)

Eryn Eddy: And now back to our conversation with Liz Curtis Higgs, as I ask Liz to help us process the shame that comes with the mistakes we make. Shame that can sometimes feel overwhelming. This is God Hears Her.

I...I resonate so much with your story. And I know we joked a little bit in the beginning about throwing eggs and putting forks in yards but I...in...in my past, you know, I...I grew up as a Christian and then I got married and then I went through a divorce and then after my divorce I went through a time of just rebellion and seeking attention in bars and guys and dating. And it was all to fill voids. All to fill things in my life because I wanted to badly to be seen and loved and accepted. And I had a moment where I felt like the Lord just was like...He hit me upside the head in a good way and was like *I love you*. It was, like, a love smack of, like, reality. I woke up one day and I...I chose to make different decisions and start, you know, aligning myself with different relationships and it was more of a slow fade out of rebellious living. But one thing I struggled with in that season was the shame that the enemy wants to press on us and the shame that he wants us...to keep us in. And it has been a continual...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Sure

Eryn Eddy: ...years later still. I, you know, you recognize, *oh! This popped up. This is out of fear or shame from my past choices that I've made*. What have you learned in wrestling...have you wrestled with shame and then...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Oh sure.

Eryn Eddy: ...if so, like, what did...what would you share with com...like, with women that are listening that may find themselves having those moments...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Right

Eryn Eddy: ...still pop up?



Liz Curtis Higgs: Of course. And I would never suggest they don't for me. Of course they do. But here's...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...the thing, God is so good that what He did for me instantly, in fact, before even I stepped forward and was thrown in the baptistery, I was beginning to get involved with people who really loved the Lord and loved the Bible. So I was into Bible studies before I even knew what I was doing. And, sidebar, I was teaching Bible studies within a few months which you...you think about that and it's like *what?*

Eryn Eddy: I love it.

Elisa Morgan: Amazing

Liz Curtis Higgs: *What?*

Eryn Eddy: I love it.

Elisa Morgan: Oh jeez...

Liz Curtis Higgs: And well...

Eryn Eddy: That's so wonderful.

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...and I knew I didn't know enough. But I knew the one who wrote the book and He called me to teach. It's my heart's desire. And so because I was so in the Word, I quickly began to discern the difference between God's voice and the enemies voice. And so I think that's what has helped me out the most because, of course, the enemy comes after me with shame stuff. I just...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...recognize His voice.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah



Liz Curtis Higgs: And I do what any good Christian girl can do: I tell him to go to Hell because we can say that.

Elisa Morgan: That's right. That's great.

Liz Curtis Higgs: That's...that's where he came from so it's the only time you can say those words and not feel guilty or blush or anything.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: As soon as we know his voice we recognize the voice that tempted Eve. We recognize him—small “H.” I never capitalize satan in my writing. I just hate it. He doesn't deserve it.

Elisa Morgan: That's so good.

Liz Curtis Higgs: He's just an enemy. But he does have a very recognizable voice cause he always comes back with the same voice and the same lies to each of us. And so once we know that, you can stand back and say *that shame isn't from God so it's obviously from the bad boy.*

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: So we're going to send him packing. And it is amazing how the Holy Spirit comes rushing in to fill all those empty places and you can move forward in confidence.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: Part of it, too, for me is I began speaking and teaching by sharing my testimony. So right from jump I put it all out there. And the thing is if you put it all out there, satan has no arrows left in his hands to throw.

Eryn Eddy: That's right.

Liz Curtis Higgs: No fiery darts.

Elisa Morgan: Yeah. *What if they find out?*

Liz Curtis Higgs: You...



Elisa Morgan: Yeah

Eryn Eddy: Yeah. Exactly.

Elisa Morgan: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: No.

Eryn Eddy: That's so good.

Liz Curtis Higgs: There was none of that. It was like...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...you know, I always said I could run for public office because anything they wanted to dig up I'd say *hey babe, that's in page four of my third book*. You know?

Elisa Morgan: You know, I w...I want to speak to the...the women listening who don't have, you know, a Valerie Bertinelli, made for TV past, movie kind of life who've been good girls. Just for a second because I've certainly...am a bad girl. But I was a good girl. I really tried hard to be a good girl. And the badness I carried around really wasn't about me. It was about my...my parent's struggles and I thought it was my fault. You know? They divorced, my mom struggled with alcohol. I thought it was my fault. So when I went into therapy after knowing Jesus and I got that corrected and I...I've learned *oh that wasn't my fault. I...I wasn't bad*. So that's the way I attack satan. But guess what? I started getting really proud of being such a good girl.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Such a good girl.

Elisa Morgan: And...and so when, I mean, I really, really, really wanted to do life right with Jesus.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Of course.

Elisa Morgan: And so...so when I would make a mistake or my family looked different than I thought it should, I was like, so dumbfounded until I realized I'm proud, you know? I...and that is gross. And that makes me a bad girl, you know? And...and so I just want to speak to us, we're all...share a, kind of, badness. And we all...



Liz Curtis Higgs: Yes

Elisa Morgan: ...struggle with shame around our badness. And my badness may not look like your badness. And yours might not look like mine...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Right

Elisa Morgan: ...but we share it. And if we could just love each other in our badness...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Elisa Morgan: ...you know? And accept and not judge each other's badness in our badness, wh...wow what a world this would be. Because God sees all our badness and He's made provision for it. Okay, I'm preaching. But...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Sure

Elisa Morgan: yeah. I just feel like I needed to say that here.

Liz Curtis Higgs: No. It's absolutely right. The Scripture I hang on to is the words of Jesus "No one is good except God alone."

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: And so part of my encouragement to my sisters in Christ, especially those who've not walked a path like mine, who actually did do the good girl thing.

Elisa Morgan: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: They fell in love with their high school sweetheart, got married, it's the only man they slept with, he's now a deacon, you know? And so...

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...it all seems good. But we have to read the whole Bible and see the things that God doesn't like and ooey there's some stuff there.



Eryn Eddy: You...

Liz Curtis Higgs: Gossip is on the list.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Elisa Morgan: And my snarky little selfishness *no I don't want to share the remote control. No I don't want to watch golf again today.*

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: Yes.

Elisa Morgan: Yeah, There's plenty of badness still there.

Liz Curtis Higgs: There's plenty there. And we...we want to identify it not to shame ourselves, not to feel less-than, but simply to marvel at the grace of God that forgives all of it. Every bit. And here was the big "ah-ha" for me. He has not only forgiven me for my past—all, all of my past. Stuff that I will never say in public because it's...it's just abhorrent. He is forgiving me for all of that. He knows of it. He is forgiving me for every mistake I'm making right now. Even in our 30 minutes together I have surely said something that was a little out of line, a little out of Scripture, a little something. And, oh my goodness, if I'm going live another 10 or 20 years, think how much more sin I have ahead of me! Except here's God.

Eryn Eddy: Yeah

Liz Curtis Higgs: His grace covers it all. That is breath-taking to me. And what that leaves us is grateful and humble. And that's what He's looking for is grateful and humble.

Elisa Morgan: Liz, the title of the podcast is God Hears Her. And you actually wrote the forward to the sequel *God Sees Her*. And...and I think all three of us have such a passion for women to know that God hears them and sees them and knows them. How do you know God hears and sees and knows you?

Liz Curtis Higgs: Well for me I...it sounds so trite. I don't know how else to put it. I feel seen. I don't feel alone. I feel seen. And I feel heard. I have such a sense of peace when I talk to God. And though I do pray like in, you know, kind of a formal *Heavenly Father, let's talk* most of my conversation with the Lord starts out *oh and another thing*. You know what I mean?



Elisa Morgan: Yeah.

Liz Curtis Higgs: It's like an...an ongoing...

Elisa Morgan: Yes

Liz Curtis Higgs: ...conversation. So I...I don't think I'd go there if I didn't feel heard. I just know that He's listening. And if I feel like He's not listening, *will you please see me? Will you please listen to me?* Cause He is a still, small voice so we have to be a bit still and a bit small too. Humble, quiet, and not demanding. And then He comes rushing in, He does. So I hate to say feeling because I believe faith is a fact. It's the fact of what Christ did for us on the cross. But God has given us feelings. He has given us the ability to...to sense His presence; to sense it in the room. We've all been there when we've felt Him just show up. He's just present among us. You're filled with such awe and such a sense of smallness but seen-ness. He's incredible.

(God Hears Her Music)

Elisa: It's in the stillness that we often experience being seen by Him. I love that because even when we don't have stillness around us, God can still provide peace in a setting that is far from peaceful. This is God Hears Her.

Eryn: Before we close out today's episode, just a quick reminder that the show notes are available in the podcast description. The show notes not only contain the talking points for today's episode, but you will also find a link to connect with Elisa and me on social. So check out the show notes on our website: God hears her dot O.R.G.

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

Credits:

Eryn: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Daniel Ryan Day and Mary Jo Clark. And today we also want to recognize Alisha and Gabby for their help in creating and promoting the God Hears Her podcast. Thank y'all!

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