



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 80 When We Disagree

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy

Elisa: If you can kind of be gentle in how you approach the conflict, I mean we're going to be different each of us in how we respond to conflict. We talked, do you want to fight, I want to flight. You know you want to use it. I want to hide from it. But if we can see each other's motivations, really underneath both of our responses, under yours is, you know, you want to poke at it and you want to know more. Because you want to be in relationship. And I want you to leave it the heck alone, because I want to be in relationship.

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. When it comes to loving people, we don't always think about the conflicts that can come up from that relationship. They shouldn't. But sometimes conflict with those we love even surprises us. So what do we do when conflict comes up? How do we handle it?

Elisa: Today, Eryn and I are talking about what to do when we have disagreements, and we'll talk about the differences between healthy and unhealthy disagreements.

Eryn: Let's talk about disagreements on this episode of *God Hears Her*. Elisa, have you ever had a disagreement with somebody that negatively impacted your relationship with them?

Elisa: No, no. Do...do you disagree?

[laughter]

Eryn: I disagree. I feel like you probably have.

Elisa: Yeah, I think I kind of have. Yeah, in fact I know that I have.



Eryn: Is there one...is there one like one thing that comes to mind immediately when you hear that, a relationship that comes to mind?

Elisa: Yeah, there're...there're probably 20. But I think of one, and maybe it's safest to talk about it; because this person is with Jesus now. You know and so I just know that they're whole and things are well. But yeah, I mean she viewed me in a certain way that shocked me. I learned a lot from the reflection that she showed me. I learned that I was selfish. I mean she actually said to me, Elisa, do you realize every time you come into this room for a meeting, you always sit in the best place? And I was like, what? Cause there was this loveseat, and I always plopped down on the corner of it. And I had learned to view that as my spot, you know, you know how you always kind of take your spot whether it's in the pew, or you're at the dinner or in the family room? And I didn't mean anything hoo hoo about it. But it struck her that way. And maybe because she liked that spot too. I don't know. But when she confronted me about it, I felt embarrassed, mad.

Eryn: Yeah, called out. You got called out.

Elisa: I did...I...yeah, yeah. Even though...

Eryn: It's embarrassing.

Elisa: ...she did it in private. But I still felt so humiliated. But I also felt like I was wrong. And I think that's what's at the core of a lot of disagreements is like I'm right, you're wrong. And so I'm up, you're down. I'm in power, you're not. And...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...that's not comfortable.

Eryn: Right, you can feel very judged I think sometimes too in disagreements. Did you feel judged in that moment?

Elisa: Yeah, yeah. I felt like I wasn't very spiritual. I felt like I was super-selfish. And I felt honestly the way it impacted our relationship, which I think is what you asked, is I didn't feel safe. Because I...I felt like when she looked at me, she saw my blemishes, not my best intentions. And you know I...I couldn't make her change that view. And yet I didn't feel safe coming as I was if that's how she was going to view me. Cause we don't like to be disliked, right?



Eryn: No, or viewed in a negative light ever. But if I think that when you have a disagreement with somebody, it does feel like that can take up the whole relationship instead of looking at the other pieces of the relationship that you are in agreement to. But I also think that you can find unity in disagreements.

Elisa: Wh...how? I mean I was just like run for the hills. I don't ever want to be around you, you know. How do you find unity? Yeah.

Eryn: Well you know that phrase, agree to disagree?

Elisa: Yes, I have used that a few times, yeah.

Eryn: Let's just agree to disagree. But there's still this like a little bit of tension when you agree to disagree cause you d...you like you so badly want that person to still kind of agree with you. And do you think that comes from a space of control, like desire for control? Where does that come from?

Elisa: Where do you think it comes from for you? Or I mean do you get uncomfortable with disagreements, Eryn?

Eryn: Oh yes.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah?

Eryn: Yes, but I also appreciate somebody sharing that they disagree with me. Cause that feels very loving to me. Because I've had relationships where they've disagreed with whether it's been a political stance, whether it's been a religious stance, they disagreed with me maybe in the way that I live my life or maybe how I am as a daughter. Or for some women listening, it could be how you mother or...or how I lead. I have had people disagree with how...the way that I lead my team. I think the thing that's been more painful for me is when somebody disagrees but doesn't tell me, and they allow division to take place. I can't walk towards disagreement with somebody and create unity if I don't know that they disagree with me. So sometimes when people lovingly confront me, which I've had happen and it does feel like you're like oh my gosh, I want to run for the hills. I want to hide. I want to...I want to...

Elisa: And sometimes they don't lovingly confront you.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: They just confront you, yeah.



Eryn: When they confront me, I have a tendency...my pride just wants to write them off cause they didn't...I feel like they didn't take time to really value our relationship to be so like rrrrr at me. But when somebody does lovingly do it, I do feel loved. Because I...I'm grateful that they cared enough about the friendship to confront it even if I disagree with what they said. It still makes me feel like they value me.

Elisa: And...and maybe you're different from me. But it's really hard for me to go from A to Z like. To me, what we just described here in our conversation is you know the way disagreement first hits us is we feel rejected. We feel wrong. We feel less than, out of control, you know, not safe. And then what you're describing is I'm calling Z is when you learn to receive disagreement in such a way that you can grow from it, that you actually can feel loved by it. And...and to me there is a chasm, you know, between those two experiences. And I wonder how we get from one to the other. Is it personality, or...or is it you know that just it always hits you as this was loving? Thanks for doing that. Gosh, that's awesome. Or...or...

Eryn: You know I was just...

Elisa: ...or is it growth?

Eryn: Maybe a combination of both. I, you know, I was talking with somebody. Okay, so if we're going to take about enneagram which we have mentioned a few times on this podcast, I'm a seven wing eight. Eights do value honesty, even if it's painful. We like it, cause intimacy grows with honesty. And so if someone's honest with me, even if it's painful, I'm s...I'm like so grateful for it. I'm like great, we called the elephant out in the room. So now we can like actually have a relationship and...

Elisa: And be intimate and honest, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Eryn: Yes, yes so I do think that, you know, there is some piece to like our wiring.

Elisa: To the personality? I love that. And I'm a three. And for threes, I heard Jen Hatmaker say it's like conflict is like my death, you know. Just the...the...the earth just swallows me up, and I cease to exist if somebody has conflict with me. And that's how I experience it. It's like I am just dead, you know. I've just been gunned down, and I don't want to exist anymore. It is so terrifying to me.

Eryn: That is so interesting. We're so...we're wired so differently.

Elisa: Yeah.



Eryn: I love it.

Elisa: Yeah, and you know you think about that saying, fight versus flight. It's the same kind of thing we're talking about when you come to a conflict, when you come to an obstacle, when you come to something that's an adversary; our basic human responses are to fight or flight, you know. So I'm going to say flight, flight away. And you're going to say, fight, fight, fight. And I truly do get this. My grandson, my son, my son-in-law are all eights. I mean my grandson is like oh, you disagree? Yes, I've got this. You know and he just loves it. I mean it's amazing. He's just like you can watch him come right up out of his seat, he's so excited. Whereas I'm like in the pothole, dive, dive, dive down in the manhole and put the little lid over it clanking it into place so I'm safe. Yeah.

Eryn: Oh my gosh. That's so true. You know though, I will say that your perspective also offers this desire for peacemaking and to see the other side because you know it's painful. So you have this empathy for the other person probably that's in the disagreement too. Sometimes I don't see that. I'm like we need to talk about this. And I'm almost like I'm a challenger to it. And I can come across aggressive. It's something I've had to learn and maybe that there's maturity that is taking place in me, growth. There's a lot of growing for me in that space. But I kind of want to poke at the disagreement a little bit and be like, but why? Well tell me more. But why? And that is annoying for somebody that doesn't enjoy debates.

Elisa: It's maybe scary. I guess it's annoying for some people but scary. You know I...I liked how you put that, Eryn, is that if you can kind of be gentle in how you approach the conflict. I mean we're going to be different each of us in how we respond to conflict. We talked you want to fight, I want to flight. You know you want to use it, I want to hide from it. But if we can see each other's motivations really underneath both of our responses, under yours is you know you want to poke at it. And you want to know more, because you want to be in relationship. And I want to leave it the heck alone, because I want to be in relationship.

Eryn: Oh so good.

Elisa: And so if you can tease those apart those responses that are really the...on the surface, we have the same goal. We want to be in relationship. We want to respect each other. We want to know each other. We want to go deeper with each other. But I need to respect that that means you're going to dig at it. And I'm going to go dive, dive, dive. But that's really helpful right there. And you know sometimes we're going to be the same. Some are both going to be diggers. Some are both going to be hidiers.

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: But if we can look below the surface of what's going on when conflict appears in a relationship, it's either fight or flight usually. But is there the same motivation of I want more, better, honest relating.

[musical interlude]

Elisa: When we come back, Eryn and I will be talking about the differences between healthy and unhealthy conflict. That's coming up on *God Hears Her*.

Eryn: If you're a fan of this podcast, sign up for our *God Hears Her* email newsletter and find even more inspiration and encouragement from women just like you. These weekly emails are filled with stories you can relate to and other fun goodies that will brighten up your walk with Jesus. Go to godhearsher.org and sign up today. That's godhearsher.org. Now back to the show. So that brings me to the question cause there's healthy disagreements.

Elisa: You bet.

Eryn: And then there's unhealthy, where it's like you're spinning your wheels in conflict that's draining you. How do you decipher between the two of those?

Elisa: That's tough.

Eryn: That is hard.

Elisa: Can...can you maybe come up with an example of unhealthy disagreement? I'm thinking too.

Eryn: You know I've had unhealthy disagreements where no matter the solution or reconciliation that I've pursued is still not good enough. I've recognized it's more maybe the other person has the...has an ego or a desire, maybe that's harsh to say, but a desire to be right instead of a desire to reconcile.

Elisa: We should probably say right here at the get go that we're really talking about relational disagreements more than disagreements on truth, if you will.

Eryn: Right, yeah.

Elisa: Although those come into relationships for sure. But you know we're not so much talking about truth arguments as we're talking about relationships. And so in other words, when we get back down into the motive of what's going on, you know, healthy disagreement still has that common motive of wanting godhearsher.org



to be closer. But that example you just gave I think is a really good one. When someone is just about winning or just about being right or just about using power, you'll probably experience those round and around and around and around circular argument that never ever you seem to be able to get out of. Here in the States, we tend to have this kind of circular thinking that is fixed. It is a circle. It is a merry-go-round. There's no entrance. There's no exit. It's...you're just stuck going round and round. But in Europe and other countries that use roundabouts, I love this illustration. The roundabouts are where you come to yield signs in a circle and traffic just continues to flow, and people can get on and off all the time without stopping. You know we would benefit from looking at some of our arguments that way. That we can get off at any time. We don't have to stay in that circular pattern. We really don't make any progress at all. So when you find yourself stuck in a circle where there's no movement, question yourself. You know, can I view this as a roundabout? Where can I choose to step out of this conversation for a while? But what I'm wondering about now in some of these unhealthy ones or back to our question that we asked a minute ago, how do you get from identifying conflict and either wanting to fight it or flight from it. How do you get from that to really seeing it build a relationship? Eryn, can you...are there some kind of principles, suggestions, life lessons that you've learned about disagreements that would help us here?

Eryn: Yeah, I think you know kind of going back to what we were sharing earlier about creating a safe space for the disagreement. So what does a safe space look like? I think it's when you're able to thaw from heightened emotion.

Elisa: Wow.

Eryn: Right?

Elisa: That's descriptive. Now help me understand that *thaw*.

Eryn: Thaw? Cause I think in the heat of a moment, you can respond with heightened emotion maybe not clarity or care for the other person. So that doesn't create a safe space, right? So creating a safe space would be to allow your emotions to thaw, not be so icy. Right?

Elisa: Okay. To warm them up?

Eryn: Yeah, so I think...I think acknowledging the elephant in the room. Like for instance for me, I talked about like honesty. I feel so loved when somebody's just very honest, because that means that they want to develop an intimate relationship and connection with me. And they recognize that something has been severed or something has been stopped for the evolution of our friendship or evolution of our relationship. And so when somebody can acknowledge that, so I think it's calling out the elephant in the room. Like



there's a friend that I have and we have a lot of differences, politically, I mean just all over the board. And I love that we can still have a healthy friendship and acknowledge the "agree to disagree" that we have. It's like, okay, agree to disagree. I know that this person that I have a lot of disagreements with has amazing character and is in pursuit of the Lord. And so if that's the foundation, I don't allow the differences to impact the way that I view that person. Cause I view them as a child of God, and I trust them. And I trust developing a relationship with them. Cause I know that they're going to care for me, because I know who they get their care from.

Elisa: We're going back to that, what do we agree on in...in a way? And there is a mutual respect, you know, whether or not they have a relationship with God. But if they do have a relationship with God, then there is a degree of trust there. If they don't have a relationship with God, is there a mutual respect that they really care and they're really invested in seeking what's honest and right in the world. And maybe they're on their journey, you know, to discover more. That's a great principle. I also hear within that, that the principle of...of believing the best, you know, mutual respect and then believing the best. You know I really...when I think everybody's out to get me, when I believe that my husband is trying to slay me or win, you know, or trap me, or when I think my friend who said I was sitting in the best spot is out to judge me like I concluded; then I enter every conversation with that assumption at the front. And it's like this shield, and nobody can get through it to really access me. You know whereas if I'm confronted with you know something that I need to grow in like I'm choosing the best spot, I would be helped so much by saying I don't care where you sit, you know. But I've noticed this. And I just...I've felt like it's not honest if I don't say that. And then the next time I come in say, where do you want to sit Elisa? Oh, oh, you know, and just lighten it up, would help me a lot. So to have mutual respect, to believe the best rather than get stuck in these again circular thinking or these ruts of ickiness.

Eryn: So would you also say another principle would be maybe it's to reflect on your posture of is it a defensive posture, or is it an open-handed posture?

Elisa: That's good.

Eryn: Cause as you were explaining you know you said like don't get close to me, and you had your hands up, like don't get close to me. Which it is a defensive posture. So maybe it's the palms up posture.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.

Eryn: That's so hard to do.

Elisa: Well yeah, the reality is that...



Eryn: That's true though.

Elisa: ...when we're stuck in defensiveness, we're building barriers. You know I'm building a wall. I'm going underground. I'm in a place where nobody can reach me. So if that's my posture, I'm going to be stuck alone. And disagreement can shove me there. Or like you're saying, Eryn, with your personality; disagreements can build bridges if we dare vulnerably to go across them. Ask for what we need if we're the delicate type like me. You know and...and ask for what we need if you're the more "proby" kind like you and make commitments to hear and to listen. I think another principle that's coming up to me, and this is hard to talk about. But I have watched God do this over and over and over again. When there are really black and white issues that people think in our world, you know, you're either going to believe A or you're going to believe B. It's one or the other, and there's no in between. And I kind of think what God has shown me is there is. There is often an in between. There is often a middle place that when, say I'm A position, and you're B position. And I express my A position, and then I invite you to express your B position, and then you listen to my A position. As we listen that way, as we express in honesty and vulnerably and as we listen, I kind of think and I'm pushing my hands apart from each other outwards now, I think God creates a middle place where we can discover understanding. And it may be that I agree to disagree, but I really hear your position now that I didn't before. And it...it requires this generosity of laying down my right to be correct, you know of A is the only position and B's idiotic. You know, it...it...it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...requires me to lay it down and listen to you. Have you discovered that? Have you ever been in that place where God almost created a whole new place for you to stand in relationship where you could see from that other person's perspective and they could see from your perspective, and new understanding grows.

Eryn: Oh yes. I...one relationship comes to mind immediately. And we had a debate over some chips and salsa and...

[laughter]

Elisa: That's a great illustration.

Eryn: And it got heated. It was a heated debate. But I don't know how to explain it other than it was a healthy heated debate, cause you could tell we both were passionate about our point of views. You know, and to me, when you're passionate about something, it means you care about something which is why
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you're defending the thing you're passionate about. So I was able to see she cares about this so much, and I care about this so much. So there is mutuality of us both caring, but we see differently. And I felt this like vulnerability like exposure of like oh no, did I expose too much of this point of view you know? How is she going to view me moving forward? And she wrote me a letter and thanked me for being a curious person and a student to her perspective.

Elisa: Oh I love that. Love that.

Eryn: And I thought, that's what she took away from?

Elisa: Yay.

Eryn: I was like that's such a success that I wanted to be a student to her point of view. But I also was very passionate about mine.

Elisa: Eryn, that is so rich. That is so rich. And see what was gleaned out of that instead of it being negative and damaging, it became edifying. You know I'm almost thinking...I want to make a challenge out there to...to all of us who are listening and having this conversation right now. What if, Eryn, in your small group or your book club or your lunch gathering at work or your family, what if you took a topic, a topic that is silly and so you can safely argue about it. Like should we have, you know, sweet or salty? Chips and salsa or smores? You know and...and you...you make your argument using these principles of mutual respect, of listening, of building bridges rather than barriers, of being generous and believing the best. And you practice. And at the end of it then, you kind of sit back and you think, where were you offended in this conversation? Where did you feel edified in this conversation? Where was it so important to you to be in control and to be right? Where did that goal...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...become less important? I wonder if we might help each other in our disagreements if we practiced on something that was less costly than some of the other things we're passionate about in life like our faith, like our politics...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...like our cultural persuasions or our taste in music or whatever it happens to be?



Eryn: Oh yes. Well cause for me, like that debate that I had with her, I was able to have a conversation in a safe space with her. I can have a conversation like this with somebody else. And I can make note of what was successful in that and what created hurt. And I can assess and just learn from that circumstance. And that again, it makes relationships richer, and it makes the intimacy deeper if you're able...if you're able to walk into relationships open-handed like that.

Elisa: I love that. You know we tend to baptize the Bible and think it just talks about happy little things. But there's a lot of disagreement in Scriptures. In fact, all through Paul's letters to the New Testament churches, Peter's letters to the New Testament churches, there's just disagreement after disagreement. You know should we cover our heads or not? How shall we do the Lord's Supper? Should we stand up and talk in church or not? You know how much money do we give to who and why? You know oh my gosh, it goes on and on. And...and we kind of read through it glossing over these...these situations looking for the principles, which I think makes good sense. But you know let me...let me just encourage everybody, and maybe we can have a conversation about this actually doing a little bit of a Bible study, cause we've done that before. And it's been super fun. But like for instance, look specifically at Paul's letter to Philippians chapters 3 and 4 where two women Euodia and Syntyche were disagreeing with how they should do church. And Paul gives them really specific advice just in these two chapters. He talks about standing firm in your belief, and he talks about beginning the conversation with love. He talks about staying on mission. What are you trying to accomplish here? He...he encourages them to get help from an outsider when they can't come to agreement themselves. Whoa.

Eryn: So good.

Elisa: And then to put their faith in practice. You know and anyway, I...I think there's a lot of really practical, smart stuff for us in Scripture when we just peel back the layers and realize these words were written to real people going through real disagreements. We're not the first generation to have some bumps in the world here.

Eryn: Yeah, that's good, Elisa. I love that. In the moments that I have felt completely exposed to my way of thinking and then sometimes convicted in my way of thinking, I...I just go to my journal and my quiet time. And I ask the Lord, how does He see me in my viewpoint? And what is there for me to learn? What does He want to teach me in this disagreement? And He always, always prompts me with just reminding me how much He loves me. I guess I just experience this grace from Him that, even if I don't always get it right, He will bring relationships and friendships around me that can advise me and guide me in the relationship that He's put in front of me. And that's disagreements.

[musical interlude]

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Eryn: Conflict can be scary, but disagreeing with someone can also be an invitation to extend grace, learn more, and maybe even change your own mind.

Elisa: Ah, very true, Eryn. It doesn't always have to mean the end of a relationship, even if you're like me and feel like running away every time you disagree.

Eryn: Yes, sometimes it's better to talk it out. Well, before we close out today's episode of *God Hears Her*, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description. There are also links to connect with Elisa and me on social and a link to download a free digital resource. It's an e-booklet titled *Developing the Art of Gracious Disagreement*. That download is yours for free. So check out the show notes or visit our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

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

[music]

Eryn: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Mary Jo Clark, Daniel Ryan Day, and Jade Gustafson. We also want to recognize Ryan and Barry for all their hard work. We appreciate you all. Thank you.

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