



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 99 – Conversations with God

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy with Lori Hatcher

[Music]

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

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

Eryn: And I'm Eryn Eddy. What does prayer mean to you? Is it difficult to speak with God or are you always talking to God?

Elisa: Everybody thinks of prayer differently. But Lori Hatcher joyfully discovered that prayer is the opportunity to have a conversation with God. Lori is an author, blogger, and women's ministry speaker. She's written five devotionals, including *Refresh Your Faith*. She and her pastor husband live close to their four grandchildren in Lexington, South Carolina.

Eryn: We can't wait to learn more about prayer and refreshing our faith from Lori Hatcher on this episode of *God Hears Her*. Lori, welcome to the show. Let's talk about the things that we struggle with within prayer and faith.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah. But before we go straight into that, Lori, we want to know your story. You know, where you're from. Just kind of weave us through some of your decades if you don't mind.

Lori: Sure. My husband likes to say that I wasn't born in the south, but I got here as quickly as I could.



Elisa: That's a great line. That's so cute.

Lori: I'm...

Eryn: I love that. I love that.

Lori: I'm a Yankee transplant from Bristol, Rhode Island, now living outside of Columbia, South Carolina, a very happy transplant. I don't like cold weather, so I'm very happy to be here. But, in coming to Columbia was really part of God's work in my life. I have a friend who lives in Rhode Island, still, and she and I joke. I tell her, *I didn't know that someone could get saved in Rhode Island.* And she says, *well, you did something I've never done. You got out of Rhode Island. So...*

Elisa: Somebody got saved in, somebody got saved from, Rhode Island. [Laughter.] Hey, we like Rhode Island. That's okay.

Lori: I love Rhode Island, in June, July and August.

Eryn: So, you grew up in Rhode Island?

Lori: I did. I moved here... We like to say that the blizzard of '78 prompted the migration of '79.

Eryn: Oh.

Elisa: Interesting.

Lori: My dad is from Columbia, but he was stationed in Newport with the navy, and we were all born there, I and my two sisters. And then the blizzard of '78 helped Dad convince Mom that there was a better way. And so... So, we moved here in my sophomore year of high school. And... and I'm very glad to be here. I came to faith just a couple years after that, and I believe that God used all those circumstances to put me exactly where I needed to be for Him to call me to Himself.

Eryn: So, you're in South Carolina, you graduate high school. Do you go to college? What's the journey after... and... and I want to know, like, you said later on you found the Lord after your sophomore year. So, take us to that.



Lori: Well, I... As a first born, I was a first-born overachiever, and I really had everything going for me. I had graduated fourth in my high school class. I had a full-tuition scholarship to the college of my choice...

Eryn: Wow.

Lori: ... I had been dating, you know, a guy for two years and everybody thought we'd get married. I had everything the world said should make me happy, but I was empty inside. The summer before my freshman year in college I would wake up in the morning, and I would look in the mirror, and I would sob. I really thought I was having a nervous breakdown or something...

Eryn: Oh, man.

Lori: ... I didn't know what was going on, because I had everything that should have made me happy, but I was still empty. I knew I needed help, and I thought, *well, I need counseling. But counseling costs money, and I don't have any money, and heaven forbid that I tell my parents that I'm struggling. We can't do that.* So, I had been attending church, a Bible believing church, for two years with... with a friend, and I thought, *well, a pastor is like a counselor, he meets with people, and he helps people.* And my pastor was very kind. He had baptized me two years before. I was faithful in his... the youth group and came to church every time the doors were open, because my boyfriend was there, and so was his ex-girlfriend.

Eryn: Oh.

Lori: So, I wasn't going to miss a service.

Elisa: Can't leave... Can't leave them alone.

Eryn: You were... You were like, yeah, hawk eyes, just...

Lori: Yes, yes. So, I made an appointment to talk with him, and honestly, I don't know what I planned to say that day in his office, but what came out, you know, he... he sat there, and he looked at me with his kind eyes, and he said, in his very deep voice, radio voice, *well, Lori, what can I do for you today?* I opened my mouth, and I just began confessing my sin. The Holy Spirit just convicted my heart in that moment, that I was not everything that I portrayed myself as. And my pastor didn't know what to do with me, because he had baptized me two years before when I'd walked down the aisle and prayed the prayer and all that. But, when I did that, nothing inside of me changed. Maybe I didn't have enough



understanding of what the gospel really was. And I desperately wanted to fit in in this Christian culture. But he led me in a prayer, and he said, *Lori, you need to... you need to make Christ Lord of your life.*

Elisa: Wow.

Lori: And he led me in a prayer and... and I know now, looking back, that that was my prayer of surrender. I said, *God, I've been living my life my way, and I'm not doing a very good job of it. I don't want to be in control anymore. I want You to be in control of my life. I surrender to You.* And, you know, and... I never understood that such a simple prayer could accomplish such a tremendous thing. But I left his office changed. I broke off our relationship that didn't honor Him, I began to want to read the Bible, I wanted to be in church, not because my friends were in church, but because I really wanted to hear the Word of God. And I began to change. I always thought of Christianity as, you know, you have to give up things. But all of the sudden I found that the things that weren't pleasing to God, I... I just didn't want to do anymore.

Eryn: Yeah.

Lori: And so, I wasn't giving up anything. It was a joyful thing. And God just began to transform me. And I'm very, very grateful He did.

Elisa: What you're saying, when we try to surrender, it's like, you know, we think all... all the most horrible things in the universe and if those aren't in a category next to our name then, you know, we're kind of good to go. But when we take everything into our own hands, which I do regularly, you know, it's all up to me. Man, we... we leave Him out of the picture. I love your honesty there, thank you for sharing the pain that came before the confession that... has freed you. That's beautiful.

Lori: Well, I used to be very jealous of other people who had these dramatic testimonies, you know? They were in the drug culture, or they were in some heinous sin world, and I always felt like, *I don't have much of a story because I was the good girl.* I, you know, I did... on the outside I did everything right, but on the inside, I was just as lost and just as in need of a Savior. And so, my testimony, I think, is for the good girls. They think maybe they don't need Jesus because they've got everything in their life that... that they think should make them happy.

Eryn: That's so powerful. Yeah. One thing that I loved that you shared was how you knew that there was more, even after praying the prayer and walking down the aisle. Like, you didn't compromise on believing that God is what you were experiencing but knew that He was something so much more than what you



were experiencing. I think a lot of us can struggle with pushing past that. I'll just settle in and become complacent.

Elisa: That's good.

Eryn: That this is my journey with the Lord. But you were like, *no, there's something else*. Would you speak on that a little bit more? I mean, what was it that... was it just looking around and what... what caused you to not just sustain in complacency?

Lori: I think part of my testimony that offers so much hope for those who maybe have prodigals, even though I didn't look like a prodigal, I was not a Christian. I had not surrendered my life to Christ, is that I sat under the sound of sound Bible teaching, the gospel, for two years before the Word of God just penetrated my heart. The true teaching pushed out all the false ideas that I had about faith and about the Bible. And in the fullness of time, that Word just pricked my heart, and pricked my heart, and pricked my heart. God's Word never returns void. So, so many prodigal mamas, I've got a heart for prodigal mamas, cause I walked that journey as well. And they wonder, *did all those years of raising my children in the faith and taking them to church and the kids who memorize Bible verses in Awana, you know, is that all... and now they're not living for God is... was that all a waste?* But God's Word always accomplishes what He intends for it to do, and so, even though that time was slow in coming, I wasn't there because I was interested in God's Word, I was just there because my friends were there. But God even used that because His Word never returns void. So, fr... from that point it was just very sweet to see how God was patient with me, and how He wooed me to Himself. I can't say that I saw a supernatural joy in somebody that I really wanted or anything. I wasn't looking for God. But He was looking for me, and He found me.

Elisa: Sometimes our greatest step is to allow God to find us, isn't it? You know, we can throw up all these defenses and... or settle, as you were saying, Eryn... And then we miss God because we're defended against Him. And if we just let ourselves be found, if we just let ourselves be loved, it's a... maybe the hardest thing we'll ever do. So, take us through, in terms of your faith, and your prayer walk, and your time with God, how did that grow? How was that shaped? What have you learned a... about prayer? And how have you struggled with it in ways that you can share with us and everybody else here who's around listening with us right now?

Lori: I'm apparently a very slow learner. Because about the first twenty years of my life was... my prayer life was frustrating and ineffective. I compare it to online grocery shopping, which we've all had to learn how to do during the pandemic. Okay, here's what it looks like. You scroll through, and you pick everything that you would love to have, and you click off the boxes, and then you submit your order, and



you wait. And then somebody arrives at your doorstep, and you open your package, and sometimes exactly what you ordered is in the box, other times...

Eryn: This is great.

Lori: ... something similar is in the box, and then sometimes, like, you get rutabagas instead of bananas.

Elisa: That is great.

Lori: And that was my prayer life for decades. It was ineffective, it was inefficient, it was frustrating, it was mysterious. I would hear people talk about hearing from God, hearing God speak. And I thought, *oh my goodness, I've never had that happen.* Or they... they'd pray these beautiful prayers and then next week they'd come back and share how God had answered them. And my prayer life was very hit or miss, and very ineffective. That was the first twenty years of my life. And then, I learned that prayer was not meant to be a monologue. It was meant to be a two-way conversation. I learned that it wasn't just submitting a grocery list of things I wanted God to do or giving Him all my best ideas about how He should order my life and my days. I learned that it was, in part, me talking to Him because He wants us to talk to Him. He invites us to pray to Him. But it wasn't just about what I could get from Him. It was that I could get Him. What changed was I learned that two-way conversation was supposed to include, yes, me talking, but also letting God speak. One of my favorite quotes on prayer is by a missionary named Frank [Lawbuck], and he said, "The trouble with nearly everybody who prays is that he says 'amen' and runs away before God has a chance to reply. Listening to God is far more important than giving Him your ideas." The transformation happened when I learned to listen. And I'm not just talking about sitting in a room totally silent. I learned that the main ways God speaks to us today is through His Word. Well, when I began incorporating God's Word, Bible reading, into my prayer time, in... my one-way monologue became a two-way dialog. And I'd be happy to describe that.

Elisa: Yes, I would love to hear that.

Eryn: I would, yes.

Elisa: I... I... I really appreciate... I'm gonna just highlight for a second this big idea you just shared. Instead of getting things from God, you get God. And... And I love that. So, yes, could you give some examples?



Lori: I learned that the main purpose of prayer is to build our relationship with God. It's a conversation between two people who love each other. We wouldn't have much of a conversation with our children, or our spouse, or our friends, if only one person talked and the other never said anything. And... and that's kind of what I'd been doing with God. I'd been doing all the talking, and not letting Him get a word in edgewise. So, I began reading a daily Bible, which has a selection from the Old Testament, a selection from the New Testament, a selection from Psalms and Proverbs, and then that gave me the format to use... You've heard the acronym, probably, ACTS. I use PART. P-A-R-T. Praise, request, admit, thanksgiving. So, I would sit down with my Bible, and I would open to the Psalms, and I would begin to praise Him with the Psalms. I would read one of the Psalms selections, and then that started my prayer time out by focusing on God. Not focusing on me or my needs. It reminded me Who I was talking to, Who I was bringing my needs to. And then when my praise time was over, I prayed Psalm 139, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there's any wicked way in me." And then I would be still, and I'd listen. And, y'all, every single time I asked God to show me my sin, He would, and there was never a day that I... He didn't have something to bring to mind that I had done wrong from the day before. And so, I would confess those sins, and I would ask God to help me gain victory over those, and I would just cleanse my heart before Him. And even just that part showed me how, through God's Word, He was speaking to me. Through the Holy Spirit He was convicting my heart of sin that needed... You know, David said, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord won't hear me.* So, sin hinders our prayers. Then I would begin my list, my grocery list, the things that I... I wanted to bring before the Lord that were heavy on my heart. And I used a prayer journal to keep track of the things I wanted to pray about and for, and I would date the request because it was so fun to write down the answers and see how faithful God had been when He started answering my prayers in that way. And then I would conclude with a time of thanksgiving, which, again, just reminded me how much I had to be grateful for that God had already done in my life. And then when I would finish, I would just be still before the Lord, and invite Him, again, just... just to speak. And sometimes He would bring to mind a Scripture that I had read that day, in either the New Testament or the Old Testament, if I had prayed for wisdom in a certain situation sometimes the answer was right there in that reading for the day. And I... I just learned that the Bible is the way God speaks back into our lives so often. That's the primary way.

Eryn: Yeah.

Lori: And so, I would leave my time of prayer feeling like I had talked with God, and He had talked with me.

Elisa: What happens when it doesn't work?



Lori: Well, P-A-R-T can get very legalistic if it's just a formula, yes, but for me it was a tool.

Eryn: Yeah. I like that.

Lori: It was a tool to grow my conversation with God, to give it guidance and direction, and honestly, if I don't have some... some guardrails around my time before I know it I'm making my grocery list instead of praying for the missionaries in Africa, you... so, I needed that structure for me, and [background music] because I combined prayer, talk... me talking with Bible reading, I never came away feeling like I hadn't heard from God. I heard one friend say, *if you want to hear God speak, read your Bible. And if you want to hear God speak aloud, read it out loud.* And so...

Eryn: I love that. That's so great.

Lori: So, every time we open God's Word, He's speaking to us, and that's very comforting.

[Music]

Elisa: When we come back, Lori will explain how we can know it's God's voice speaking to us rather than the voices of the world, or people around us. But first, we have an exciting announcement from Eryn.

Eryn: Hey friends, we are so excited that our next episode of *God Hears Her* is our one hundredth episode. We have a special conversation with our producers about our favorite episodes, and the behind the scenes of the episodes you listen to. Make sure to check out our one hundredth episode for a fun conversation and a surprise special edition release coming up.

Elisa: Now, let's get back to our conversation with Lori Hatcher.

[Music]

Eryn: There's something that I... I... I do on my phone. It's in my notes, so it's a folder, in my notes, and I lock them. And they're prayers. And I've been doing it because I can access it on my phone, or on my desktop. And I'll do a check in: what am I feeling, a recap of yesterday, I'll talk with God, I confess, I invite Him in, and then I read. I love going back through, and seeing how my conversations have grown...

Elisa: That's awesome.



Eryn: ... with Him, and how more comfortable I've become with silence, and more comfortable I become with not expecting an answer. Cause I think that's the most intimate and sacred thing, when you can just trust and know that He's there, and not force a response back. You know, like I... I do with the people that I love. I can share, and I trust in them that they believe the best in me, and that they love me, and they're not going to abandon me. And... and so, I... it's been neat to see. I love your acronym, PART, cause that's so tangible. Elisa knows I love things that are just practical and tangible, and something that I can apply, and I love that you shared, you know, we have to be careful that we're not performing. Cause when I started doing that in my notes on my phone, I did start thinking, like, *oh man, I didn't do it today, and God now doesn't think that I care about Him, or that I don't want to have quiet time with Him, or... or I don't care about communicating with Him, cause this is the only way I would communicate.* But even analyzing those thoughts helped me to break out of that and pay attention. And... and when I started paying attention to those thoughts, He would meet me with those and He would tell me, *no, you don't have to perform, I'm here right now. You don't have to always go to your notes, you don't always have to do this. We can talk right now on this walk, or in this conversation that you're having with this friend.* And you may... He's... He meets me literally wherever I'm at, and I just... I just love the way that you broke that down.

Lori: For me it was just a training... it was a training exercise. My girls are swimmers, and so their coach would have them do drill after drill after drill after drill, the same thing, the same way, so that when the time came for them to compete, they didn't even have to think about it. It just flowed out of their bodies. They knew without thinking about it. And that's what it really has become. I don't sit down with my list anymore. It just becomes the framework for my prayer time with God.

Elisa: A question that's bubbling up in me, and I don't want to derail us with it, but I think other people might be asking it. When we read the Bible, whether it's silently or out loud, and... and we really ask to hear from God, how do we know it's Him speaking, and how do we know that we're being true to the intent of Scripture as it's recorded...

Lori: Good question.

Elisa: ... rather than just basically taking it out of context, or proof texting, or, you know, take some... you know, and "*Jesus wept,*" *well, then I need to go weep.* You know, I mean, you could just do... you could do anything you want to with any passage.

Lori: That really is such an important question, because... and it really lends itself into, you know, we've talked about being silent and listening for God. So, the question is, *well, how do I know that what I'm*



hearing is God, and not just my crazy ideas. Or again, taking something out of the context of Scripture. That's why I read through the Bible every year, because we really... It is a complex book, and it's so easy to just take bits and pieces. When I first sat down to read the Bible, I would just read a verse here, a chapter there, or a passage here. And, y'all, we would never pick up any other book, open it to the middle, read a paragraph, and close it. I mean...

Eryn: So true.

Lori: So why do we do this with the Bible?

Elisa: That's so good.

Lori: We have to read all of it. All of it. Nothing but a whole Bible makes a whole Christian. I did not make that up, it... some brilliant person said that. But it stuck. And so, we do need to be students of God's Word. For me, I would always begin to try to read through the Bible in a year, and I'd make it through Genesis, woo, that's exciting. Exodus, wow, this is so cool. Leviticus, eee, there's like some fatty lobes of liver. I mean, my pastor would always say, *the best of Bible reading intentions would be wrecked on the rocks of Leviticus.* And so, I never made it past Leviticus, and that's why I loved this daily Bible, because I would read a little bit of the Old Testament, a little bit of the New Testament, and then Psalms and Proverbs. So, if it was a little dry in Leviticus, I still had Matthew to look forward to. And so often I would avoid the Old Testament, because that's like, oh, Old and New, who doesn't want New. But the longer I read, the more I realized that the Old Testament is the New concealed, the New Testament is the Old revealed. That they would partner together in such a beautiful way. So often I would see the fulfillment of the Old in the New, and my understanding just grew. But we have to be students of God's Word. And as far as the *how do I know that it's really God that I'm hearing and not my own crazy thoughts, or... or... or something wrong*, there are a couple of really important guidelines, and that's why we have to be careful in those listening for God in those silent moments. Yes, we can trust the Holy Spirit that lives inside of us, He can speak to us within our spirit, but He will never speak contrary to God's Word. He will never tell you to go blow up a plant because you don't agree with guns, or... or something like that. The Holy Spirit will never speak contradictory to Scripture. So, once again, that's why we need to know Scripture. Also, I have noticed over the years that God usually repeats an important message. How many times has that happened to you? You feel like you're hearing from God, and then your pastor preaches about the same thing on Sunday, and then you hear a... a message on a podcast and it's the same text, or your friend says, *you know, I... I want to... been wanting to talk to you about something*, and it's the same message. So, God is so gracious. He knows we're thick-headed...



Eryn: Yes!

Lori: ... and so, He repeats Himself for us, mercifully.

Eryn: And He aligns... I feel like He aligns Himself with those that we trust, too...

Lori: He does! Yes, absolutely.

Eryn: ... has them speak to us.

Lori: He uses wise counselors. We have to be careful to filter who we're getting input from. They have to be wise in their own Christian walk. And sometimes, like, sometimes I'd be praying and being quiet before the Lord, and an idea would come to me. And if it was something small, then I'd probably act on it, like, *oh, take Sally a meal, cause, you know, her kids have been sick, and she's stressed out, or send a note to So-and-So.* I would usually do that immediately. But if it was something bigger, I would wait and ask God to confirm it through these other ways. And the final way that I generally know it's God, is that it usually requires some element of risk or faith, cause I'm a play-it-safe kind of girl. So, if... if a bold and faith-filled idea comes, it's not from me, because I'm going to take the chicken's way out every single time. So, really, just going back to making sure you know God's Word, making sure you surround yourself with godly men and women who can speak truth into you, being patient, to be listening for God to reinforce that message. And then, you know, being willing to take that step of faith, cause He's never going to take all of the risk away. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him, so we're never going to get all our questions answered. But He never sends us into some crazy tangent that He has not paved the path for in the past with us.

Eryn: Yeah. Ah. Lori, would you... would you pray over us? And pray, maybe, for the woman that's feeling like she's in... just a dry, maybe desert season in her prayer life?

Lori: Absolutely. Let's pray. *Father, I thank you. When You save us, [background music] You invite us into a relationship with Yourself, and in community with each other. But Lord, sometimes circumstances, the trials of this life, the hardships of the world, the temptations of sin, and Lord, just the disappointments that we feel when our... our life doesn't turn out picture perfect in the way we had hoped, God, sometimes those times are... are lonely times, and we... we don't feel Your presence. I thank You, Father, for all the promises that tell us that You will never leave us or forsake us, so that we may boldly say, 'the Lord is my Helper, of whom shall I be afraid?' Father, I pray right now for each person who may be feeling distant from You, maybe wondering if You love them, or care for them, or are active in their life. Lord, I pray that*



You would reveal Yourself to them. That wherever they look, they will see evidences of Your love and care. Lord, Jesus said, 'My Father is always at work' so even in the darkest circumstances, where it appears that nothing is happening, we can rest in the confidence that You are at work, because You're always at work. Lord, for those who are not seeing any signs of life in the relationships, or the dreams, or the hopes, or the prayers that they're praying, pray that You would remind them that You're always at work, that You will fulfill Your good purpose for each one of us, and we can trust You in that. Lord, I pray You'll make Yourself very real to each of us as we move through our days. In the strong name of Jesus, I ask. Amen.

[Music]

Eryn: Amen. Thank you for that prayer, Lori.

Elisa: You know, prayer is an opportunity to just have a conversation with God. And we can do all of this whenever we want. We are so thankful for Lori's insight on prayer, and how it has shaped her faith.

Eryn: 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, and the option to check out Lori's books and website. You can also connect with Elisa and me on social and find out how when you 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 Daniel Ryan Day and Jade Gustafson. We also want to recognize Kelly and Hannah for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

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