



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 168 Walking Through Infidelity with Jami Nato Elisa Morgan and Eryn Adkins with Jami Nato

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Eryn: Elisa, there are not many people that you come into contact with that have this gifting, this ability to hold the grittiness of their life. And like just the depth of aches and pains met with humor and a joy and a lightness about them. But that's why I'm so excited about this guest that we have today. Jami, thank you for joining us on *God Hears Her*.

Jami: I'm so happy to be here. If you guys could kind of follow me around and compliment me just every day with what you just said. That was sweet.

Eryn: Well, so then tell me, where are you coming from? Where do you live right now?

Jami: I'm in Kansas City.

Elisa: Oh, nice.

Eryn: I love Kansas City.

[inaudible]

Eryn: Are you originally from Kansas City?

Jami: I'm from Texas. I'm from, um, the lush tropics of Amarillo right there in the panhandle. It's one that you drive through and you're like, who lives here? I did growing up and very flat. So, when my dad
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decided to go to law school really late in life, he got accepted at UMKC and so moved the whole family to Kansas City and...

Elisa: And you've been there

Jami: ...and I've been there, and I love it. I can't leave

Elisa: You've got like four kids and a husband. But as...as I've read a little bit of your story, it started out a little bumpy like maybe more than a little bumpy...

Jami: Yeah.

Elisa: ...like ditches

Jami: A big ditch, yeah.

Elisa: Yeah.

Jami: Yeah infidelity is a huge part of our story, and this was like two years into our marriage. So, if you can imagine, my whole life gets flipped upside down, because I was an A+ Christian and amazing for Jesus. Yeah.

Elisa: Oh, good for you, yeah.

Jami: He needed me, and I was doing his work. And so it was really shocking to me that I followed the formula—be a good wife, be a good mom. A Christian marries a Christian, and everything's going to be unicorns and rainbows. And I...

Eryn: Yeah.

Jami: ...thought that is probably, since I'm so good for Jesus, that's probably going to set me up for a lot of success. And then...

Elisa: Absolutely, yeah.



Jami: ...my formula fell apart. My Christian husband, we were in all the Bible studies, we were in accountability, we were heavily involved in our community. And he decides he loves someone else. And so I was devastated. I mean, I had a newborn and a toddler and...

Elisa: Oh, my gosh.

Jami: ...you're already just like tired and exhausted and emotions are...

Elisa: What happened to my body?

Jami: Yeah, just like, where...what day is it? And then to have my life explode. I didn't want to like kill myself as far as like self-harm, but I did go to sleep at night thinking if I don't wake up, that's okay. Like if You want to take me in my sleep, Lord, that's fine. Just to describe kind of the total despair. I mean, it was pretty awful.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Jami, how did you find out? So, you're scooting along being an A+ Christian. So many people relate to this. And you've got a newborn, which is so [waa] wonderfully hard. And then you've got a toddler.

Elisa: How did you find out that your marriage/your husband wasn't what you thought it was.

Jami: Well, I was becoming increasingly unhappy, and that was a new experience for me in my marriage. We were pretty in love and happy to be together, and we got married young. I mean, 23, I think I was. So, it was a new experience to be so unhappy. He was, he got a new job and I thought, Oh, he's just really invested in his job. And I would say things like, it's like you're having an affair, but it's with your job. So, I'm just using that language. And it just came to a head where he came home, he was so exhausted. And I said, you look so tired. Why don't we just like take a nap? Our kids happen to be napping at the same time. I'm like, let's take a nap. I'm tired too. And we laid there, and my heart was banging out of my chest. And I felt like God was like, *look at his phone*. And I was wrestling with God because I'm not that kind of girl. I'm not a sheriff. I don't want to look at your phone.

Eryn: Yeah.



Jami: But it was like, *look at his phone, look at his phone*. And I thought he is going to hear my heartbeat, or he's gonna feel it or I'm going to have a heart attack. So, I decided to obey, because it was that or I might perish. And so I looked at his phone and it was like messages, honey, babe, language that I was familiar with. But it had someone else's name on it along with explicit, just your worst nightmare, things you don't want to know. And that's how I found out. When he woke up, you know, I sat there for kind of 10 minutes or so trying to gather myself, but he woke up. And when people say they disassociate, I felt like I left my body and went to the corner of the room, and I was just watching us having this conversation. And for a person with a lot of words, I...I didn't have many words. And I just said, you...you're a bad person. I mean, that's all I could muster.

Elisa: It's all you could get out, yeah.

Jami: You're a bad person and pack your kids' bags. I'm going to my parents. So, he packed the kids' bags, and I just called my parents, crying, devastated. And, you know, I spent that week at my parents', which I don't remember a lot of, but they carried the load of parenting. What I remember was me and God. I remember my friends came in town. People were very shocked because we were so involved in the community. I remember my best friend showing up and just sitting with me. And I was in hysterics, like saying crazy stuff, which is traumatic. And part of that is I'm thankful I don't remember.

Elisa: Yeah.

Jami: Once we came out public with this story, publishers were like, hey, we want you to write a book about infidelity. And I...I really tried my hardest. I think I wrote eight chapters. But there was one chapter in particular, which was just other people's remembrances. I was interviewing other people about what happened to me because...

Elisa: Wow.

Jami: ...I...I could not tell you. And they would be like, remember you grabbed the trash can because you were going to throw up with this meeting. And I'm like, I don't know what you're talking about. They're like, remember we moved things off the table because you were going to throw it at Nato. And I'm like, it sounds on brand. But, but no, I don't remember that. So just kind of very traumatic for my sweet, tender, A+ Christian heart to have to acknowledge that maybe suffering was in my story.

Eryn: I'm really just so thankful for your vulnerability, Jamie, because this is a very common thing that many experience in their story, and yet it's not discussed enough.



Jami: No.

Eryn: And it leaves stains of shame and guilt. And parts of that of what you experienced is tethered to my story as well.

Jami: [inaudible]

Eryn: And there's nothing really to remedy the pain that you experience at all except for God...

Jami: No.

Eryn: ...and even then you wonder where you are He was. And if...

Jami: Yeah.

Eryn: ...He really...did He see all of what had happened behind closed doors, you know. So I just want to say thank you for your vulnerability and honesty.

Jami: Well, part of the reason why I talk about it and why I speak, I...I'm very frank about it. I just don't...

Eryn: Yes.

Jami: ...mince words because when we were going through it, I scoured the internet. Like someone in the Christian community has got to be talking about this. And I found one woman who was honest, one. And they did get back together, her and her husband; and I clung to her story, like bare-knuckled sometimes. Because...

Elisa: Yeah.

Jami: ...I just needed to know that someone went through it, and they came out of it. And even in my community, my in real life community, finding people to meet with who had this had that happened to them, they would come over in the cover of night. I'm not kidding. They would come over in the evening, and they would say, no one knows this. Don't tell anyone we were here, but we want to help you. And it was kind of helpful, I guess, but also not like I was thinking. So you have to carry the secret, and especially the one who was the victim of this behavior and sin. She has to just carry your secret. And I felt like that was atrocious. And I know that that's, it's not for everyone to like go tell it on the mountain, you



know. And I don't recommend telling all your secrets on the Internet but talking to someone and being honest about this to someone. Secrets are not your friend. And I just felt like it put further burden on the person that was already suffering so deeply. So, part of why I talk about it is I don't know who else is talking about it. You know, you find people here and there and it's brief. It might just be like, yes, this happened to us. It was 10 years ago and look at us now. And that was not sufficient for me during the time. So, I hope that this is sort of a beacon for really anybody in any kind of suffering that need to find just a little bit of hope.

Eryn: Yeah. I went to a trauma therapist that specialized in betrayal. And the one thing that they said that just connects the dots with what you were saying earlier about like how you disassociated, and you just felt like this out of body experience. They say that people that. experience betrayal, what it does chemically to your brain is the same thing as somebody that goes to war and comes back.

Jami: Yeah.

Eryn: It's the same reaction, the PTSD that your body physically responds to. And so it makes...that makes so much sense that you disassociate, you don't remember things. You, you know, having people tell you, I'm sure that...that felt wild. People saying, yeah, you did these things. You're like, what? I did? Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah, and you know, I don't want to spiritualize it, but I also hear there's a beauty in the midst of that suffering...

Jami: Yeah.

Elisa: ...that...that God kind of lifted you and removed you from some of that experience.

Elisa: I mean, it's there, it's...it's in your brain. It's in your body. That's what trauma does. But the way we respond to it with this dissociation, with this can't remember everything, there's a distance created that I think for the moment is a bit of a cushion.

Jami: It is.

Elisa: But then we have to navigate, you know, how do we come back with it and integrate again? And so what was your process for that? How long did your stunnedness last? How long did your separation, you know, you, at your parents last? And, and how...what happened later?



Jami: Yeah, I went to my parents in just shock, right? So I don't know what you're trying to do is stay alive. You're trying to...

Elisa: That's well put.

Jami: ...remember to eat. You're trying to like shower. You're just trying to be alive.

Eryn: The basics, yeah.

Jami: And the basics. Everything is flipped upside down. And for a very self-sufficient person, this was extremely strange for me. So I'm looking around like, what planet am I on? Because I'm the one that's supposed to be bringing someone meals. I'm the one supposed to be helping my friend. And now I was the one being helped. It was wild. So, I spent that week at my parents. And what God did for me during that week because frankly, I would have kept disassociating, like that's my personality. I really enjoy disassociating from hard things. I'm a seven enneagram if you do that test, but yeah.

Eryn: Seven!

Jami: Let's have fun. You won't be bored. So I can easily distract myself, and so this is why it's God. But during that week what God did for me was I'm telling you He held up the sun. The days were years. What he did in my heart was supernatural in that I felt God's nearness so close, which I think only suffering can do for you. I felt His nearness in a tangible way, like His breath on my neck, kind of. I call it spooning with Jesus, but my sister says you can't. You can't say that. It's weird, but it's gonna be my new devotional spooning with Jesus. I'm just kidding.

Elisa: I love it. I love it.

Jami: Just kidding. That's weird. But He held up the sun for me. And so, God in that week dealt with me in a sense of, I heard it felt like, you know, there's few times in life where you can say, like, it felt like God said something to me audibly. But I was saying, I don't want to forgive him kind of. I'm so mad. And He said, you are your husband. And I was so mad at Him for saying that. I was like, uh, excuse me, I was doing the Lord's work for You and being very good. And He said, you every day, you every day go after things that are not Me, and you give yourself to them. And you worship them, and you love them. And you basically cheat on Me every day and man...

Elisa: Oh, my gosh.



Jami: ...I did not argue with Him from that point on, because I remembered that parable of the guy who owes a bunch of money, like millions of dollars. And then he turns around and he chokes someone out for 5 dollars. And I...I said, You're right, you know, and so I relented from that point...

Elisa: Wow.

Jami: ...and I was a forgiving machine. It was so supernatural. I forgave the other woman. I forgave. He had a watch that he wore for a year from another woman. It was in our Christmas card pictures that I sent out to everyone, you know, and they're hanging in our hallway, these pictures. And I would walk past it and that picture would taunt me. And I turned around and talked to the picture, and I said, I forgive you for wearing that watch. I look like a crazy person. You know, I'm just talking to myself and pictures. But forgiveness is not like a one-time thing. It was like, it would chase you, it would taunt you.

Eryn: Yeah.

Jami: And you had to turn around and say, no more. I forgive you.

Elisa: That's good, yeah.

Jami: Or, no, I already forgave him for that.

Eryn: Oh, that's good. Yeah.

Jami: I refuse to ruminate on that. And also, with the help of a therapist, there are some things that like keep at you. And those things, I would have to sit with God for a little bit. I would have to talk about with my therapist, and then I would have to eventually talk about it with my husband to just take the power away. So, there is a process, I guess, but it's up to you and how you need to deal with it. I went on a forgiving rampage because not even because, you know, people say, Oh, forgive people because it's good for your health. Or forgive people so you get to be free, or I think that's frankly very selfish. It's fine. It might be true. But unless you are supernaturally forgiving with the power of Christ, it will follow you. And I wanted true forgiveness. I wanted real forgiveness. I want it deep into my bones. And that's what God gave me. So, was it beneficial to me? Yes, but I was doing that through the power of God. And I think that is where you have to start because you're not guaranteed reconciliation. My husband didn't ask for forgiveness either. So think about that. I did tell God, you know, he doesn't even want forgiveness. And God was like, yeah, but you still...you still need to forgive him, and whether he asked for it or no. He may never ask for it. Now, he eventually did, but it was an alone game. I did that with God by myself, and



that's how I became whole. I became whole with God. I did not depend on my husband or someone else's actions or whether or not I got my marriage back.

Eryn: It didn't have a contingency.

Jami: No.

Eryn: Your faith wasn't in the outcome. It was just in the Lord being there...

Jami: Right.

Eryn: ...present with you in this.

Jami: Yeah.

Eryn: I would love to learn, like, what was that timeline like in wrestling with just you and God and learning how to forgive?

Jami: Yeah, well, a week into it, I mean, like seven days, the pastors from my church were like, do you want? He wants to have a meeting with you. He, you know, he's trying. Do you want to have a meeting with him? So I said, sure, you know, whatever. And so, we had this great meeting, and it was good. And I thought, okay, he is sorry. Let's get back together. So, that was very quick. So, in seven days...

Elisa: Yeah.

Jami: ...we got back together. It was not a good idea, but I was very eager to forgive. I...I don't even, I'm not even mad at myself for that.

Eryn: Yeah.

Jami: I don't think it was the best choice, but what can you do? And so we got back together. He was still...he still had like secrets and some kind of demons. And he was still kind of like lying about little things that he would get caught every time. I wasn't even trying. Again, I'm not a sheriff, but God was bringing things in front of me and like, that's a lie. That's a lie. That...and they were little stupid stuff that you don't need to lie for, and...



Elisa: That's so insightful. You're really paying attention. Well done.

Jami: I would like to say I'm just like amazingly wise. But I'm telling you, God was holding me up this whole time. And so to be in His presence and I needed Him desperately. And I'm jealous of myself in that time. Because we all get so self-sufficient, and we don't need Him like that anymore. You know, life is fine and I'm good and we have money. And you have all these things that kind of scaffold you up.

Eryn: Yeah.

Jami: My scaffolding was gone. There was no scaffolding, and my legs were broken. Like I needed God to carry me. So that was that week we got back together. I mean, I was miserable for, I think we were together two weeks; and I was miserable. He was miserable. I'm like, this is not what I expected to happen. I'm being obedient. There was one kind of big lie. And so we, with the help of my pastors, we just kind of kicked him out and said, you need to go figure it out. I came to the conclusion that if God carried me this far, if He showed me what He needed to show me in the perfect timing, He would do it again. He would take care of me. And I needed to let my husband go figure it out. And so, I kind of just got off the roller coaster. I unbuckled. I said, go on your wild ride, and go to the bottom. Go, go chase your sin. Have it and see if that's it for you. Now he didn't do what I thought. I thought he would go back to maybe this other woman, or it was kind of like, let's see what he does.

Eryn: Sounds like a boundary that you were really putting in place of like...

Jami: Yeah.

Eryn: ...just protecting your heart and your...

Jami: Right.

Eryn: ...relationship with the Lord. And also needing to be in a healthy, sane place for your kids too...

Jami: Yeah, yes.

Eryn: ...amidst all of that.

Jami: Right. I said, you are not going to drag me or your children through this. So go figure that out. And I'm going to get healthy on my own. So, I still had some dependency issues. And I knew I needed to do



some work still. And so he left. He went and lived with like, an 80-year-old man in this 70s split-level kind of shag carpet.

Eryn: I love that.

Jami: This...you know? And that, he's a widow. It was like, he...

Eryn: Oh.

Jami: ...you know, which is kind of, I don't know why that makes me cry. But like, to have someone be like, the...the most hated guy in church, kind of, you know. Like, my husband was like [inaudible] everyone hated him. He had no friends.

Eryn: Aww.

Jami: And then Frank Brown, who's 80, was like yeah, man. Come...there's a mattress on the floor...

Elisa: Oh, that's so tender.

Jami: ...and this delicious orange carpet...

Eryn: Delicious.

Jami: ...and always, always had chocolate milk in the fridge And that was funny. We...he...Nato was like there was really nothing else there, but there was always chocolate milk. And so my husband lived there with Frank and just said I'm...I'm gonna watch Frank. I'm gonna be with Frank. He's a man of God. I need help. And our other best friend who was a single dude at the time, Marcus, was so mad at Nato. And he said, well, I'm going to go live with Frank Brown too, because I'm going to watch you. He was so mad. He's like, I'm not talking to you. We're not roommates. We are, but no chitter chatter. We're not having conversations. I've just got my eyes on you.

Eryn: I love that level of accountability.

Jami: Right? And so...

Eryn: That's amazing.



Jami: ...there they are, you know, these three guys and living a single life with chocolate milk. And so my husband...

Elisa: I love it.

Jami: ...lived there, I think for about a month and a half.

Eryn: Okay.

Jami: And we did not really communicate. I just...my boundary was, go through the pastors and they were good to me. You know, people would come over and take out my trash. And my girlfriends would come over and like we're cleaning your house

Elisa: Interesting

Jami: And half of us are...you're gonna go to dinner with half and the other half were staying here? We're gonna clean your house. And the community that just showed up for me. And even my husband, he had one friend Cory who was like, I will be your friend. I know you messed it up. I'm gonna be your friend. So he had some people show up for him. But that was like a month and a half of me getting really strong, me watching God provide for me. I'm getting like reports of my husband. They're like, he's fasting and praying. He lives with his 80-year-old man. And I was like, good for him. I love that journey for him. It's like, I guess we'll see. And then one day...and this is with no communication except for like big life choices that he...he had to make, and he needed. You know, hey, this is a job change. What do you think about this? But one day I'm standing at the front big glass door, and I am breastfeeding an infant, you know. It's like, who cares at this point? I'm kind of like [ooh], here she is, Miss America. This is your lovely neighbor.

Eryn: This is so honest. I love it.

Jami: You know, it's just like...

Eryn: You're right, yeah.

Jami: ...I'm at...I'm at the bottom. I'm at the bottom. Okay, and I can see that looks like a Filipino guy walking down the street with a shaved head, which is not my Filipino husband. In my head, he had like fluffy hair and, and he's real skinny. And so I'm like, oh, who's this guy walking down the street? He gets



closer and closer and it's Nato. I mean, his name is Mark. I call him Nato. And I'm like, huh, you know, huh, like fixing myself. And, but of course you can't fix the mess that I am. And he comes up to the glass door, and I crack it like open like he's like an intruder. And I'm like, you can't...you're not supposed to be here. And he was like, hey I need you to know You're it for me. So, you can go get remarried. You can go live your life. I'm never getting remarried. Like you're it. And I'm sorry, and I...I messed it up. But I will never do that to you again. And he just looked repentant. I mean, I don't know it was like, oh he's changed. His eyes are different. The words that he's saying, I mean, it was like, whoa. Deep calls to deep. I just couldn't deny what God had done in his life. And it wasn't like, okay, come on in. You get to be back in your lives immediately. I mean, we went to therapy separate. It was like a full-time job. He went by himself. I went by myself. Then we went together, and then we would talk about it with our pastors. It was like a full-time job at therapy. So I did eventually let him move back in. Because it was...I was tired of being a single mom, and I loved him still. And he was repentant. So, I tried to wait as long as I could learning from my last lesson, you know. Okay, don't rush it. And so I felt like it wasn't rushed. He was really repentant. And from that point on, I've never once seen him fall into something like that ever again. He's my best friend. I love him more than when we got married.

Elisa: How long has it been, Jami?

Jami: Let's see, 15 years, maybe? 16?

Elisa: Whoa. You know, I just thank you for this story. Eryn and I are just being really quiet and soaking it in. Because, like you said, people don't walk through the story the way you did and tell it. There are so many principles that we could glean, and we can glean, we are gleaning right now listening, that I think our listeners are going to be filled with. It's like you're...you're infusing a backbone in people as they're listening, going, oh, that's what I've been missing is this, I'm gonna stand up with God's help. And I'm gonna stand here and I'm going to wait and I'm gonna move. I'm gonna continue on in the direction. And thank you because that's what it's about. It's not like flipping a switch.

Jami: No, it's a gospel resolve. When the tentacles of the gospel get so deep into your roots, that is the fruit that you produce. And I will say, of course, I was a Christian before that. I'd loved God. I have since I was six. I mean, I really loved God. I...I know when I got saved and I have always loved God from that time that I made that commitment. But not until I experienced suffering did the gospel become real to me.

Eryn: Yeah.



Jami: My need for salvation, my need for the cross, my need for His presence, I mean, it got into me. So that changes everything. It changes your friendships. It changes your finances. It changes your marriage. It changes the way you parent. So, I think it is a gospel resolve. And so, my favorite thing that came out of that season, like I call it a breadcrumb, but like my favorite morsel that came out of that season, it was not my marriage being made right. It was that God's nearness transformed me.

Eryn: Jami, you shared that. You learned a depth about the Lord through your suffering. I'm thinking about the woman that's listening that she's in a messy marriage. And she just learned there's infidelity, there's porn, there's lots of things maybe underneath. Would you just say a prayer to that woman that her heart's aching and the outcome is unknown?

Jami: *Jesus, thank you so much for being our Rock and our Fortress in storms, that You provide cover for us when the storm is coming, when it's raging. That we run into the cleft and that You are our protector and our provider. And that God, I pray that You would minister deeply that Your nearness would be the reward in this time of suffering for this woman who had hopes for her marriage and they have been devastated by sin. I pray that You would meet her, that You would show her that the reward is Your presence, that peace is a person, that Person is You. It is not that we get what we want. Sometimes it happens and a lot of times it doesn't. But we pray that in the midst of the unknown, You would provide for her in community, in Your presence, in just such a rich time that she would know that she has loved and cared for. God, we also pray for miracles. We pray that You would minister deeply in her marriage if that's possible. We pray that You would work a miracle of repentance in her spouse's heart. We pray for healing. No matter if the marriage comes together again or not, we pray for healing. We pray for trust that You have something ahead that she can't quite see. She cannot see beyond that corner. But we pray that there would be a joyful, joyful resolve that you are going to show up for her, and that that would be the thing that carries her through. And we pray this in Jesus' name, amen.*

[music]

Eryn: The growth that Jamie had in her relationship with the Lord during such a hard time is amazing. If you or someone you know is struggling in your marriage right now, please know that you are not alone.

Elisa: God loves you and He's with you in the suffering.

Eryn: Well before we go, be sure to check out Jamie's book, *This Must Be the Place*, for more about her testimony. You can find that and more at godhearsheer.org. That's godhearsheer.org.



Elisa: And if you liked this episode, or you've been listening to the show for a bit, please leave us a rating and review wherever you listen to your podcasts. We'd love to hear from you.

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

Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Pat and Londa for all of their help and support. Thanks everyone.

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