



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 199 – Praying Honestly with Rachel Britton

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Adkins with Rachel Britton

[Music]

Rachel: And then I think about Jochebed, you know, the mother of Moses. And as I was studying her, you know, I thought, *well, she hid her baby in the bull rushes by the river*. And I... I always thought, *well, she did that out of fear*. Fear of, you know, losing her child because Pharaoh was killing all the babies. But then when we read in Hebrews that she actually did it out of faith, and I think that encourages us to let faith drive our decisions instead of fear.

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Vivian Mabuni: You are listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women, where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you. Join our community of encouraging one another and learning to lean on God through Scripture, story, and conversation at godhearsher.org, God hears her. Seek and she will find.

Eryn: I am really looking forward to this conversation. One of the reasons is because she is just passionate about women being comfortable, and confident, and having conversations with God, and that's exactly what our heart is for this podcast. And so, to have a whole conversation around this topic with somebody that's passionate about that, I am really looking forward to it, Elisa. One thing, when I was reviewing and looking over her bio, she's multifaceted. There's... I mean, I could list it all. She's...

Elisa: I noticed that, yup.

Eryn: ... Yeah, I'm, like, *oh, I don't even know which one to grab*. And I'm sure...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ... the one I grab is the one she's like, *oh, come on, there's more*.

Elisa: [eww noise]



Eryn: ... But... but one thing that I...

Elisa: Missed me.

Eryn: ... yeah. But one thing that I... that I read that I was like, *oh my gosh, that's just so cool. I didn't even know that this was an option*, and I'm excited to learn it. It's... She's a creator and writer of an Amazon Alexa skill app...

Elisa: Yes!

Eryn: ... called...

Elisa: That's...

Eryn: ... *Alexa, Say a Prayer*...

Elisa: Totally love to. I've got to tell you, I don't have Alexa in my house right now, so I've been rocking around going...

Eryn: I do.

Elisa: ... "Hey Siri, say a prayer." "Hey, Google, say a prayer." Nothing. Nothing's happening. So, have you tried it?

Eryn: I haven't yet, but what is really cool is that it receives approximately fifteen hundred requests per day.

Elisa: That's amazing.

Eryn: So, Elisa, help me welcome Rachel Britton to the *God Hears Her* podcast.

Rachel: Hi, thank you so much for having me.

Elisa: Hi, Rachel. Welcome. You know, *God Hears Her* is about...

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: ... conversations with God, and I love that word to describe prayer...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... because it is both talking and listening. You know that's what *God Hears Her* is, it's the both/and. So, tell us about yourself, Rachel. Our listeners are going to discover that you're not from the United States.

Rachel: No, that's right. I have actually been in the States for many years, twenty-nine years. I can't quite believe that...

Elisa: That's a long time.

Eryn: That is a long time.

Rachel: ... yeah, but I still have my English accent. My children have tried to teach me how to speak with an American accent and it hasn't worked. So, anyway...

Eryn: Good, good. Cause I love your accent.

Rachel: So, originally... my husband and I lived in London and absolutely loved it there. We both worked there all those years ago. We... we spent one whole year looking for a house in a neighborhood in London where we wanted to live. We found the house of our dreams. It was a lovely, small, Victorian house. My husband said as we turned the key in the lock, he said... "We'll live here for ten years at least." I was doing very well with my job, I worked for the BBC. I was climbing the career ladder with the BBC, and, you know, everything was in place. I felt like it was time that I could actually take a break and start a family, so I had everything planned out. My husband actually came over to the US to Massachusetts for work, and he called me from there and he said, "I have big news." I said, "I have big news for you, too." Of course, I...

Eryn: Oh, I got chills.

Rachel: ... I was pregnant. So, I said, "I'm pregnant." He said, "The company wants me to transfer to Boston, Massachusetts."

Elisa: Wow. And this is how long since you moved into your dream house?



Rachel: ... that must have been... just a few months actually.

Eryn: Oh my gosh.

Rachel: Yeah.

Eryn: Oh wow. So, it wasn't even like it was the ten-year mark?

Rachel: No, no...

Elisa: It wasn't even the one-year mark.

Rachel: It was just a few months.

Eryn: So, you had a plan and then there was a clear disruption to that...

Rachel: Yeah.

Eryn: ... plan? What was your response on the other line of the phone?

Rachel: Well, usually I'm one for adventure, and I do like to travel, but in that moment, I just did not want to move.

Eryn: Yeah.

Rachel: I think it was too early for nesting instincts, you know, I was barely pregnant. But I think, you know, I loved my life in London. I loved my job, I had a great group of friends, we had this lovely house we'd just bought, but I think there were fears that held me back. You know, that fear of change. It was going to be a really big change, and it would be uncomfortable and hard. You know, I'd... I'd been to America, but I'd never been to New England or the East Coast. I'd never lived in a different country. I think even moving to a different town could be hard, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Sure.



Rachel: And then there was that fear of uncertainty, you know, would it be a better life for us? We'd be moving from two salaries to one salary...

Eryn: Wow.

Rachel: ... you know, because I wouldn't have a... a work visa, and then I'd be leaving my family, my friends...

Elisa: Oh, my goodness.

Rachel: ... my work colleagues...

Eryn: Everything you know.

Elisa: Right when you have a baby, yup.

Eryn: I mean, yeah.

Rachel: ... just that fear of being on your own and loneliness. And then I think a couple of other fears were probably, you know, *would I be good at adapting to a new country?* That kind of fear of failure. And then also, you know, losing my identity. I was going from a great career with a prestigious organization, you know, at the BBC, and I didn't know who I was going to be. If people would say to me, *what do you do...?*

Eryn: Yeah,

Rachel: ... I knew that I wouldn't know how to answer. So, I think all those... those fears really, really held me back...

Eryn: Yeah.

Rachel: ... but we still agreed to come to the States. I still agreed to do it.

Eryn: Wow.

Rachel: Yeah.



Elisa: What was the tipping point for you to go, *okay, I'm terrified, but I'm going to do it terrified. I'm going to do it scared.* I mean, *I want to stay married. This guy's the father of my baby.*

Eryn: Right, exactly.

Elisa: That's a good one.

Eryn: Yeah, I know. It's like, well, *what will this do for my marriage?*

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ... Yeah. Where were you in your faith journey, too?

Rachel: Well, I think the tipping point for me saying yes is that I really wanted my husband to have the opportunity. I felt like it would be a good opportunity for him. So, I didn't want to say no. In my faith journey, I had been brought up in a Christian family. I had come to faith in Jesus, and my husband too. So, we did have that in common, but I think over the years of... living in London, and my career, and my friends, I... I drifted away from God a lot... we no longer went to church at that point, and I think in the back of my mind, I felt like I wasn't really being a good Christian, you know, because I wasn't doing those things. And I felt that God disapproved of me really, that I wasn't good enough, you know, for Him. I think probably because of the way I felt that as a Christian I should behave and I wasn't.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Was there any way you might have sensed that you felt like God was punishing you and taking away all of your dreams because you weren't doing your faith right?

Rachel: I don't think I... I thought that because really when we... we first came to the states, God wasn't even, you know, I didn't even think about Him. I... I'd got to that point where... He just wasn't part of my... my day in any way or my thoughts...

Eryn: Yeah.

Rachel: ... I'll just pack up a bit with this. We sold our house. We moved out of the house when... our daughter was four weeks old. So, we arrived in the States with a... a six-week-old baby.



Elisa: Wow.

Rachel: ... staying in a hotel. We eventually moved into a... a rented apartment, but I was miserable. I was so unhappy...

Eryn: Oh gosh.

Eryn: I would imagine.

Rachel: ... And one afternoon. I sat on the floor of the bedroom, my daughter was asleep in her travel cot, my husband was watching American football trying to learn American football in the other room. And I...

Elisa: His homework, yeah.

Rachel: ... and I just sobbed because I didn't know how I was going to go forward. I didn't know who to talk to, and then I remembered God.

Elisa: Oh...

Rachel: I prayed three words, "God help me."

Eryn: Oh...

Rachel: ... and I... I felt a sense of His presence come over me. I knew He'd heard my prayer. I go back to your... your question about did I feel punished...? You know, after processing that for a while, I realized that God had taken me... from all the things that distracted me from Him. He'd moved me across the Atlantic. And it was like He'd stood in front of me and said, *you know, Rachel, will you now take notice of Me?* And so, I didn't see it as punishment, I saw it as love. Love that He loved... He cared so much about me that He would take me away from the things that kept me from Him.

Eryn: Yeah. I'm curious what that was like for you after that moment of peace.

Rachel: Things didn't change for me. I was still very unhappy. I still wanted to move back to England. I think the one big thing that did change was that someone I'd met in the apartment complex invited me to church, and for the first time in my life I really wanted to go. I was, like, desperate to get there. They



invited me to start, you know, reading my Bible and do Bible study, and I was... I just devoured the Bible. It was just amazing. So, that... that aspect did change. But certainly the desire to just go back to my... the life that I had, I really... I really wanted to do that. We'd been here in the States for about two and a half years, and that opportunity actually came up. My husband's job wasn't going too well, so his company offered him two choices: one, he could move to California for three months, or we could go back to London for three months. So, guess which one I chose? [chuckling] We went back to London, [laughter] and our intention was that we would actually settle back there. By then, we'd decided to have another baby. We thought, *we know what we're doing now, we'll have a second baby*. But to our surprise, we got twins. [laughter] So, we had... we went back to London with... three children under the age of three, which...

Eryn: Oh, my goodness.

Rachel: ... you can imagine that was a... a lot to deal with on a day-to-day basis...

Elisa: No kidding.

Rachel: ... But we also deliberately... he started to look for another job, we started to look for somewhere to live, and... things just weren't coming together. We just couldn't, you know, it was just... seemed impossible. So... we actually decided to pray about it and ask God what we should do, and we said, "If You want us to come back to the States, then Colin's company has to give him a pay rise. They have to start the process of a green card," cause we were just on a visa, and the actual chance of them saying yes to that was very, very small. I'd say something like ten percent. It was just, we didn't think that they would do that, but they did. They said yes to everything that we wanted.

Elisa: Let's take a quick break to hear about an upcoming special Bible study deal.

[Music]

Eryn: Looking for a tell it like it is Bible study to do with your friends. *Unshakeable Moxie* might just be what you are looking for. Think of it more like a mini-retreat: cozy conversations where you can be completely honest about your hurts and hardships. Through this six-week study, you'll be comforted by countless Scripture passages that remind you how life's answers will always be found in the loving arms of Jesus. Get a copy for you and gift one for a friend with our special BOGO deal. You can find a link for that in our show notes.



Elisa: Now let's get back to our conversation with Rachel Britton to find out how she felt about moving back to America.

Rachel: How did that feel? Well, I knew that we had to do it because that's what God wanted us to do. And I think in that moment, I made a decision of faith in God rather than those fears that I had, and those fears still existed. You know, you mentioned my book, *Pray Naturally*, and you know, as I was writing that book, faith over fear kept popping up as I looked at the Old Testament women.

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: How did God use them in your life? We'd love to know that.

Rachel: So, you know, Rahab, everybody around her was melting in fear. All the people, you know, in the city of Jericho, they were all paralyzed. But Rahab made that dangerous decision to hide the spies and to defy the king of Jericho. That decision could have cost her her life, but we know that she was actually given life cause she was brought into the family, you know, of God, into the family of the Israelites and I... I think from looking at her life, for myself, and I think for all of us, she gives us courage to have faith over fear, you know, even when it's a huge cost to ourselves. And I think for myself, making that decision to come back to the US, that... that was a cost to myself. I was leaving my family again, and all my good friends, having to choose a new life that God wanted me to have. And then I think about Jochebed, you know, the mother of Moses. And as I was studying her, you know, I thought, *well, she hid her baby in the bull rushes by the river*. And I, I always thought, *well, she did that out of fear*. Fear of, you know, losing her child because Pharaoh was killing all the babies. But then when we read in Hebrews that she actually did it out faith. And I think that encourages us to let faith drive our decisions instead of fear.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: That's a great point, Rachel. That's a beautiful point, and how helpful it is that you just referenced when you're reading the story of Jochebed, and you think, *oh, but she's also in the New Testament*, you know, to tie those together because it was a fearful situation for her to relinquish Moses. And yet, in God's arc of the story of the Bible, in Hebrews, we see, *oh, but she did it out of faith*, you know? And I love that, what you're referencing, you know, and they didn't always know what they were doing. Yeah, they didn't know the answers like we get to know today...

Rachel: No.



Elisa: ... but she trusted.

Eryn: Rachel. What would you say to somebody that's at the crossroads where they have to make a decision...?

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ... and it's not necessarily the decision that they have to make, one's bad or good, both could be good, but there's the fear of, you know, *what if I mess up God's plan, if I... if I pick the quote unquote wrong one?* I would imagine you were met with that maybe in... in some of the decisions that you've made with... in regards to family. How do you... it's like, how do you know?

Rachel: I feel that, you know, we always live with this tension between faith and fear. I don't think that ever disappears. And you know, whether it's faith, you know, for one decision or whether it's faith and fear of making the wrong decision, and I think what I've discovered for myself when I was, you know, when we came back to the US, and I didn't really want to be here. I really want to be back in England, and all those fears that I had, you know, new fears of, you know, my parents were getting older, what would happen when I'm here and they're there...

Eryn: Yeah.

Rachel: ... That fear I'm missing out on all those... special family events and things, you know? I spent a lot of time with God, just coming to God. When my children went off to school in the morning, when I could I would get down to the track where I'd walk, cause I want some physical exercise, but I'd also use it as that time to spend with God. And I feel that sometimes we expect too much of ourselves, but God is very patient and He's very kind and that time I was spending with God, I could call it my prayer time, but really it was just bringing my anxieties to Him. Sometimes it... just all those jumbled thoughts, you know where you are cause you don't know what you're doing, and you're frightened of this, and you're scared of making the wrong decision. But I feel that God knows what's going on in our minds and our hearts, and He honors that, and He hears, and He helps us. And I feel like in those times spent with Him, that's when we grow in our faith, and He grows us, so those fears start to get less and disappear.

Elisa: You know, Rachel, I love the way you're describing this. It's like you just relinquished all of your anxieties to Him and the image that's coming in my mind as I listen to you is of white noise. You might put it on as you go to sleep on your noise app or something, but that white noise and what I am imagining and you know, you can say, yeah, that's what I'm talking about or not, maybe I've got this all wrong, but



I'm imagining you on the track walking, and prayer begins almost as a listening into that white noise. You know, just an intentional focusing on it in such a way that it dissipates. And that's like the first layer, isn't it, often of prayer is that we can't really quiet our anxiety in order to formally pray. And so, we unplug and go, *well, see, I don't know how to do that*. I love the inclusion of even the anxiety. That counts, even that God, you just said He's like... He's in your mind, and He, like, reads our mind, yeah, I think so, too. I... I love that. I love how every day your approach is to God. Can you talk to us a little more about what it means to pray naturally?

Rachel: Some of the main struggles that we have with prayer, and I know many of my subscribers and, you know, women have told me that it's kind of not knowing how to approach God and... not knowing what to say. I think one of the things I wanted to help women do, and especially through the book, *Pray Naturally*, to help them make it more of a natural part of their day, is give them words that they can say, but leave gaps in the prayers where they can fill it in with their own thoughts.

Elisa: Hmm. Could you give an example of that?

Rachel: So, some of the prayers, you know, they take words of a Bible verse and then give the opportunity for the person to say it back to God in their own words. Okay, here's one prayer, "Lord God, these are the facts about my situation. This is the reality I face," and then there's lines for... to either write it down or just tell God, *this is... this is my life at the moment. This is what it's like*. And then, *this is how I feel*. And again, just telling God straight how it is, *this is how I feel*. You know, my... my prayer to God was often, *God, I don't want to be here. I want you to take me back to England*. That's not going to happen. I've thought, and, you know, *anywhere else in the world I'll go*. [giggling]

Eryn: Anywhere else in the world I'll go.

Rachel: How ridiculous is that? You know? This is the kind of conversation though....

Eryn: Yes. We want to hear it.

Rachel: ... kind of having it myself, but was telling God, and then at the end of this prayer it just says, "Thank You for listening to me."

Elisa: Love that.



Rachel: But my prayer about telling God *I don't want to be here*, you know, stomping around the track. And eventually I had to say, *God, you know, you want me to stay here, you're going to have to take that desire away*. And... that's kind of a hard thing to surrender to God, you know? But there was a lot of... you know, stomping and moaning and groaning before that.

Eryn: I really appreciate your example, and you can continue to give us more of them, cause I think they make us feel even more human and less crazy, cause I think that we have these feelings and we maybe even shame them a little bit that, you know, *God doesn't want to hear this, He doesn't want to hear me, my grievances or my frustrations*, but that's exactly what can develop a deep intimacy with Him and just be who we are naturally as what your book is. It's just being who we are naturally, and sometimes that looks like not liking where we are and just sharing it. Just *blah, this is just where I'm at, Lord*. And I think being met with Him loving us in our raw emotion is a beautiful gift. Thank you for sharing that with us, Rachel.

Rachel: Well, I think He, you know, He knows what we're thinking anyhow. He knows what's in our hearts anyhow, so we can bring it to Him however it sounds, and it's going to be different for each of us because we're all individuals.

Elisa: It makes me stop and think of, maybe this is a prayer example I don't know, you can help me with it, but if I just stop... it... you know, I... say I'm off daydreaming, and I... you know, slip down another tunnel of worry and anxiety about, *oh, now it's about this situation, okay, now it's about this thing at work. Now it's about this thing in my family*. If I just attend to it, I can turn that worry into a prayer if I just pay attention. Oh my gosh, *I'm now imagining that she's on the streets in poverty*. Okay, *now I'm imagining that I've been fired*, and, you know. Wait! In that moment, if I can just grab that thought and bring it forward and go, *God, I guess I'm afraid I'm going to get fired*, or, *God, I guess I'm afraid that one of my dear friends is going to be in poverty*. Then I stop that swirl and that cycle of panic and anxiety. It's... yeah, that's what it looks like? Is that an example...?

Rachel: Yeah. It's like you're just bringing those thoughts before God, and I think if it helps us, we can just add an amen on the end, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Now it's legit, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.



Elisa: I'm dying to know the rest of the story about the *Alexa*, *say a prayer*. I wonder if you could tell us the story about that? How did you come up with that idea...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ... and what are some of the examples that...

Eryn: And how do we do it...?

Elisa: Yeah. How do we do it, yeah, yeah.

Eryn: How do I get it? Yeah, because I am, I'm genuinely like, *do I go into the Alexa app?* Where... how do I get it?

Rachel: Yeah... so, it all actually started... My husband... he's a tech guy...

Elisa: Oh, the software guy, yup, yup.

Rachel: ... He's into software and he said to me, *you should write some prayers for Alexa*. And so, this was actually quite early on when Alexa, you know, you could start writing Alexa skills, he was going to do all the tech side, so I didn't have to worry about that, which was great. And so, we managed to get the phrase, "Alexa..." I don't think Alexa is in here, because if not, she'll start giving a prayer. You... you know [chuckling] so, we... we... we were actually able to get the phrase, "Say a prayer," and so, I wrote a few prayers and he, you know, made it public or whatever you have to do with... on Amazon. And then he... he said to me... one day, *you know, we're actually getting quite a few... quite a few people are asking Alexa to say a prayer*. And I thought, *okay, I need to take this more seriously*. You know, I...

Elisa: Yes.

Rachel: ... I didn't really think much about it, so, every so often I write a new batch of prayers, and they are very short, they're usually just one sentence....

Eryn: I love it. So cool.



Rachel: I don't know any more about who asks Alexa for a prayer, where they are in the world or anything, but I just feel in my heart that, you know, I feel like God said to me, *Rachel, get people to talk to Me*, and I feel like that's one simple way that I can help, that I can be obedient to that.

Elisa: What's an example of one of those prayers?

Rachel: Something like, "Lord God, I thank you for your Son, Jesus, who has given me life. Amen."

Elisa: Oh.

Eryn: Oh.

Rachel: Just something as simple as that. So, the first time you ask Alexa, you have to say, "Alexa, ask say a prayer." And then after that you can say, "Alexa..."

Elisa: Okay.

Rachel: ... "say a prayer."

Eryn: Okay.

Elisa: Okay.

Rachel: So, now you've got me in a panic and I'm thinking, *okay, I have to go and look at my prayers, make sure they're okay*, because [laughter] we're going to have...

Elisa: They're fine.

Rachel: ... lots of people asking. But then I'm like...

Eryn: Well, you have... you have about a half a... I did the math, you have about a half a million people so far in the... only a year that have listened to Alexa. [laughter]

Rachel: Yeah.

Elisa: Good job, Eryn.



Eryn: Yeah, it took me a second, but I did it on a calculator.

Rachel: Okay. But I'll... I'll do...

Eryn: Not in my head.

Rachel: ... I'll do my part, and then I'll let God do His part. Yeah.

Eryn: There you go.

Rachel: Yeah.

Eryn: Well, and... and, you know, to that point, letting... just letting God, like, releasing, letting Him carry our anxieties, our fears, our questions. What advice do you have to somebody that feels like they're not sure if God is hearing them in their prayers.

Rachel: To be honest, I think, you know, even though I have a faith in God, I pray, I write about prayer, I still struggle with that myself actually. You know, when I'm going through something really tough, you know, *are You listening?* [Music] *Can You hear me? Do You know what I'm going through?* I think we have to look back and really hold onto those times when God... and hopefully whoever's listening and struggling with that has had God respond to them, I really think we have to hold onto those times when we know God has come through for us. So, if He's done it before, He will do it again. And so, you know, that's a really big step of faith to do that.

[Music]

Eryn: I love that we can talk to God about anything on our hearts. This was such a peaceful conversation with Rachel.

Elisa: Well, friends, be sure to check out our show notes where you can find a link for Rachel's book, *Pray Naturally*. Check out that and more at godhearsheer.org. That's godhearsheer.org.

Eryn: And one more exciting announcement, our two-hundredth episode is coming up! As part of the celebration, and a thank you for all of your support, we are doing a giant giveaway full of goodies. Check out our website for entry rules and keep an eye out for our two-hundredth episode next week.



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 Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Maggie and John for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

Elisa: Our Daily Bread Ministries is a donor-supported nonprofit ministry dedicated to making the life-changing wisdom and stories of the Bible come alive for all people around the world. [Music] *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.