



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 206 – Inspiring Biblical Women With Amy Seiffert Eryn Adkins & Vivian Mabuni with Amy Seiffert

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Amy: Luke really seems to highlight the women in the Bible. I think he...he's got a heart for the marginalized, the oppressed, and shines lights on what God is doing...what Jesus is doing all through that Scripture. But I would say, read Luke and ask, how does Jesus treat women? What is He doing? And if Hebrews 1 says that Jesus is the exact representation of God, the radiance of His glory, whatever Jesus is doing, this is God. This is how God sees women and how He treats them. And we get a front row seat with all the ways Jesus is flipping all kinds of scripts in the Gospels.

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Elisa: 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: Hey friends, before we get started, we have an exciting announcement! We now have a study guide to go along with our podcast episodes that you can download or print to fill out when you listen. Make sure you get yours on our website to follow along with the episode. Now, let's dive into this conversation.

Vivian: Okay, Eryn, we are in for a treat. We have some of the most amazing women on the planet as our guests, and today's guest is just that. She's amazing, and she's a friend. I am thrilled to introduce to you Amy Seiffert. She is a pastor and an author, and a speaker and a teacher. She is a writer. She is passionate about Jesus, and she's passionate about women. She's passionate about the Word of God. I mean, she's just the best combination of everything. She's a mom of three, and she has walked through challenges., a Crohn's disease diagnosis, an adult ADHD diagnosis, which I can relate to with my whole family of ADHD people. Um.

Eryn: Yes.



Vivian: But I also know Amy in person, um, just through Denver Seminary as she's pursuing her Master's degree in Biblical Theological Studies. I love Amy because she's the real deal, and she's honest and smart and fun. Welcome, Amy, to the *God Hears Her* podcast.

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: What an intro. You guys are sweet. Thanks for having me...too kind. You should see my bathroom right now. Just the...just the mess of life is everywhere on top of that lovely intro, so.

[laughter]

Eryn: Oh.

Vivian: Well, we are thrilled you're here. And we would love for our *God Hears Her* audience to know more of you and your backstory. So would you just jump in and share with us your spiritual journey story?

Amy: Absolutely. Um, yeah, so I grew up with a background in the Catholic faith where my family started. And my grandma was a great just spiritual, uh, leader in my life; but I didn't understand. I remember being in church and seeing Jesus on the cross and not understanding why He was on the cross. Like, why did He have to die? What was going on? Just didn't grasp the basics of the gospel. And it wasn't until I was 16 when a friend, uh, had been praying for me for a long time and didn't know it and invited me to Young Life Camp in Saranac, New York, that the gospel was laid out for me in really beautiful way. And it was the first time I was like, oh, I am a sinner, and I'm separated from God. And Jesus died for me to know Him. And it just...it was quite...it was quite a week. Started walking with God and then got involved with, CRU, an organization which, Viv, we are kindred spirits, in my undergrad at BGSU and really took off. I...yeah. So yeah, that's kind of...that's my story and all the ups and downs in between. But in coming to faith as...as a teenager was really...it just shifted my whole world really.

Eryn: Hmm.

Vivian: I think it's such a great reminder for us that we can be praying for people. And our invitation to people, whether it's to youth group or church or Young Life, God has prepared people. And it's just always a reminder for me like, these prayers don't go unheard, and God is at work. Now as a Bible teacher and a student and one who's always loved the Bible, there are some really disturbing portrayals of women in the Bible. And I would just love for you to talk about that. Like how do you navigate some of the horrific things that we read about? If we really take seriously the Bible that God has revealed who He is through this



amazing compilation of different types of literatures and over the span of thousands of years, like, talk to us about that.

Amy: Well there...yeah, there's a lot of places we could go with...with that.

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: The idea um, but it's a great question, Viv. I...I think something that really helped me was...was Scott McKnight, the way he talked about often we're seeing descriptions of what is happening in the Bible, not prescriptions of how we ought to live. And so when you see the mistreatment of women, the abuse or the rape, a variety of things happening to women, this was describing what was happening. This was not God's will and way. Um, and so it's helpful to see like, oh, this is history. And these aren't heroes. These are people in need of a hero. Um, and to really back that up with that lens of God is coming to bring redemption in the middle of such mess and the mistreatment of women as part of the redemption. Um, which is why I became passionate to...to see like, okay, there's not a lot of women, but where are they and what are they doing? And...

Vivian: Mm-hmm.

Amy: ...um, how does God see them?

Vivian: Yeah.

Amy: Uh, cause when I first started to open my Bible at 16, I was like, this is full of dudes, like what's going on here?.

Vivian: Yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Eryn: I was just about to ask you like why did you have a curiosity about that? And it was at 16, you said reading and being like, what is going on?

Amy: Yeah, well, at the same time that I became a believer when I was 16, I then started to go to a youth group after...after I came back from camp. And I was floored by my youth leader. He ended up marrying my husband and I. He was a huge mentor, he and his wife. And when I saw him teaching the Scriptures I was like, I want to do that. Like I want to teach God's...I don't...I didn't even know it, but I knew that I wanted to know it and then teach it. Um, and I remember asking him, can...can women do what you're



doing? Like, cause I wasn't seeing any female pastors at the time. And he was like, yeah, yep and just kind of like chatting about it. And so then when I got involved with CRU, and I saw men and women leading together, men...and men and women equally sharing the mic and sharing Scriptures, I was so drawn to a place where women were using the same gifts that I saw men had, you know, at the same time. So it came from a place of the Holy Spirit prompting inside my soul. You have this gift of teach and looking like, but where...where is the place for that? Like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: ...does my gender preclude me from using this like, pretty much off the bat and trying to find spaces and places and really having a hunger for what were women doing in the Bible.

Vivian: Yeah.

Amy: What are they doing now? What are the barriers? What's the disconnect? What's the theology that's blocking us from having some women really live out their gifts?

Vivian: That's so good. So in your study of the Bible, you know, there are ununsung heroes that are women. Which ones really captured you? Like unpack for us some of the women that are your favorites.

Amy: How long do we have, Viv?

[laughter]

Amy: Oh my gosh, yes. Oh, there're so many favorites. Okay, a recent favorite, right, favorite for me is Huldah. I knew nothing about...I had never even heard of her name until truly a few years ago. And I'm like, wait a minute. She was phenomenal. She was necessary. Um, this is in 2 Kings 22. You also see it in Chronicles, the story of King Josiah when he's around 20, he's clearing out the temple. He's clearing out the idols, and the Book of the Law is discovered. And as he's reading it, he's like, oh my gosh, we have not even come close to obeying this law. And he tears his clothes in grief and humility, and he's like, God, what...what do I do? Some of his advisors come in and he's like, I need to know, is this God's law? And he sends five men to the prophetess Huldah, which keep in mind she's a contemporary at this point of Jeremiah. Jeremiah...he could have gone to Jeremiah to say like, is this the law? Will you authenticate this? But he went to Huldah. And Huldah...I mean, I just think she's in her kitchen. She...who knows, you know, maybe she's helping her husband. Her husband was the keeper of the king's wardrobe, which that could be a variety of things. But can you imagine five men knocking on your door from like, say the



oval office that have come, the king's palace coming to you. And I also think it's so beautiful that she wasn't summoned humbly. He brought his men to her, and they knock on the door.

Vivian: That's good.

Amy: Yeah, and she opens it. And she gives a word about, yeah, God is angry that you have not...like Israel has like forsaken His...His ways. And Josiah from there repents and...and like the word goes back to him. And man, he calls the people back to Him. And it is a huge revival. There's a huge celebration. But she is, I mean, you could skip over her. But she is...she is an integral part. And I felt seen in that, not that I'm a prophet, but that she spoke with boldness and conviction in a space where it was just her as the female in that moment at her house.

Eryn: Five men that are coming.

Amy: Five men.

Vivian: From the Kingdom.

Amy: Yes!

Vivian: Yeah.

Amy: Wild. So, I...I'm impressed by her. I'm like, man, she had an assignment; and she went for it and she spoke boldly.

Eryn: What do you think we can learn from that and apply to our life by that story?

Amy: Yeah, I actually, um, I think of her a lot when I have to be brave. I'm on staff at my church. And if I am in a meeting and I know that in this meeting I probably need to speak up and say something hard or point a truth out, I really do draw strength from the women before me like Huldah. I'm like, okay. She did a hard thing in the presence of mostly men, and I can too. And um, yeah, we can be bold and confident because the Lord is our confidence, right? Like that is...is who He is. And I can rest in the job and the position that He's put me in for this time.

Vivian: Yeah, to be able to see these women in the Scriptures, I feel like we kind of all, as women, we hold our heads a little higher. Like there's some pretty exceptional women.



Amy: Yes.

Vivian: And sometimes we don't realize that. Like...

Amy: Right.

Vivian: ...women funded Jesus's ministry in Luke 8. Like women were at the tomb, the first to see the risen Christ. And they didn't scatter. You know, they stayed and so there's a...there's a lot to be said about women in the Scriptures.

Amy: If 10% of the names that's...that's about what you see, 10% of the names are women. But that to me is like, well then every time a woman shows up, I'm like paying attention. I'm leaning in. I'm like, what is she wearing? What is she eating? What is she doing? What is she saying? You know? Cause there's...she's...she's shining brightly now because there's less of them, there's few. So yeah, I take a lot of strength from these stories, which I wanted to go on a quest and unearth the unsung women and to see like, oh, they're there. Like, let's not...let's not sleep on the ladies that are in the story.

Vivian: Yeah. Okay, pick one more for us [crosstalk].

Eryn: Yeah, I was about to say what? Give us another one. Let's go. Let's go.

Amy: Okay. is, yeah, gosh, okay, I'm gonna go with Martha. So I did an Old Testament Huldah, and I'm gonna go with Martha in the New Testament, and this is why. I think Martha has gotten a bad rap in our...in our Christian circles. The story, it's Luke 10, where...where Mary and Martha are, uh, they...they've received the disciples into their house. And it seems like Mary and Martha were probably in the kitchen together prepping food. But Mary...Mary, she just hears the Teacher teaching, and she finds herself wandering through the house and sitting down with the rest of the disciples. Like she sat down at His feet to learn as one of the disciples, which was a huge cultural boundary she was crossing.

Eryn: Hmm.

Amy: Martha is like, and it's in the text, it's like she's overwhelmed, she's anxious, and she goes to Jesus. Now, here's the thing. Martha could have been overwhelmed and anxious by the fact that...that her sister just crossed this cultural boundary and is sitting with the men to learn as to become like a rabbi like they were. You know, there could...there's a lot of layers that could have been going on there. So Martha goes to Jesus, and she's like, tell my sister to help me. And He says, "Martha, Martha." And whenever a name



is said twice in the Bible, it is usually a very defining moment. You see “Moses, Moses” on the mountain. You see Abraham. You see this double call. And He's like, you're worried, you're overwhelmed. But Mary has chosen the better thing. She's chosen a really good thing to sit here with Me. And so you've got that. So, but often because of this, Martha can be painted as this like anxious, overwhelmed, busybody worried about like domestic affairs. And Mary is like concerned about the Lord's feet, and she loves her quiet time, right? So there's this...

[laughter]

Amy: ...and you're like, oh, I'm more of a Martha. Like, I'm just so busy and I'm worried, you know, like, and we can have this. However, I think I was...I was so overcome by the relationship with Mary and Martha, and Jesus. You see this in John 11 When Mary, Martha and Lazarus, they were a sibling group. They seem to have Jesus over quite a bit. When Lazarus dies, Mary stays put. But it is Martha who gets up, goes to Jesus, and she's like, Hey, if “You would've been here, my brother wouldn't have died,” which is such a bold statement. And why would she have said that? She...she knew about who God was. She was a theologian. She had learned, she was listening in the kitchen I think.

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: Like there's a lot going on. And then she has the same statement as Peter's confession later. I'm like, why aren't we titling this chapter, Martha's Confession? She's like, I know that You are the Messiah. You're the Christ. You're the Lord. Like I know that that's You. And it's the truth of them having this conversation where He says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe this?” this one-on-one moment. However, Jesus saying, I am the resurrection and the life. Like we quote that a lot, but we forget the context. It's this this one-on-one moment with Martha, who is a theologian and a thinker. And she's...she's like working her brain right here.

Eryn: He challenged her.

Amy: Yes, so she's not, I...I think we've just painted her flat with this one-sided...

Vivian: Yeah.

Amy: ...anxious woman. And you're like, oh no, she has deep waters just like us. And so I...I...I draw a great strength from Martha because yes, I can be anxious. Hello? Look at our world right now. But I can



also be a thinker and a theologian and say, *God, let's talk about this*. Like, I know who You are, so why is my brother...what happened?

Vivian: Yeah.

Amy: And these intimate moments. So I...I kind of love Martha cause all the facets we get.

Eryn: I love that.

Vivian: Oh, that's so good and relatable too. I think there are so many women that are smart and resourceful, quick on their feet. I think of Abigail. I think...I mean there's just like, we could name them off, like one by one. Sometimes I think, history has shown that because of art, we see de...depictions of, for example, Mary Magdalene. And she's portrayed in art as a prostitute.

Eryn: Hmm

Vivian: And there's nowhere in the Scriptures that says that she was ever a prostitute.

Amy: Right.

Vivian: But those kinds of images really stick with us, and they color how we view certain characters in the Bible, including Martha. Are there any other people that you found...like your perspective shifted as you began your deep dive?

Amy: Yes. Okay, let's slide on over to...I'm just going chronologically, Phoebe, then in...in Romans. I was, I'm fast.

Eryn: Oh, let's talk about Phoebe.

Vivian: Hmm, I love Phoebe.

Eryn: I know her.

Amy: Oh man. So at the end, Roman 16, the last chapter...fascinating. Paul gives what I used to see as just sort of this like laundry list. Like, hey, and by the way, you know, when you're going to the store, look for the ripe tomatoes. Like it's just like the end of this letter. He's thanking everybody, and he's going



through. Um, and one third of the people he thanks are women, first of all. And it's a variety of women—mothers sisters. And he said, they've suffered with me for the gospel in prison. Um, but he names, Phoebe. And she is, what a lot of scholars would say, not only, uh, she was a businesswoman. But Paul entrusted the letter of Romans to Phoebe to take, and not only take like as a...a letter carrier, but if you took one of the letters, you probably explained them. You were the first commentator, if you will. Um, which is fascinating to me that...that Paul was like, who can carry this like amazing work that he has for the churches in Rome?

Vivian: His magnus opus like, yeah.

Amy: Oh, a hundred percent. And he chooses a woman to go and deliver and probably answer all the questions. I was very fascinated. And she's not, paired with a man either. Um, she could have been a single businesswoman for...from what we can piece together. Which is another fun thing, cause I'm like okay. Everywhere we see women in the Bible, they are out in the world doing things. Most often they're not sequestered in their homes. If we see them, they're partaking in the spread of the gospel, and they're doing things because God has them on a holy errand, you know? So I'm always encouraged by that. They are out in society, shaping it for the Kingdom, and Phoebe's doing that.

Eryn: That's good.

Vivian: I love that so...so very much. I think we can tend to take our flannel boards from Sunday school and just kind of assume certain things about Bible stories, um, without really taking time to understand the culture and how profound it is and how we might have just gotten it wrong. When I think about Paul in particular, I don't think he had an issue with women. Like when I look at the whole of all of his writings...

Amy: Yes.

Vivian: ...and the...the kinds of partnerships he had with Lydia and the Philippian church, and I mean, just on and on; Paul, like Jesus honored women, linked arms with women.

Amy: Yes.

Vivian: I always say it takes a secure man to not be threatened by the strength of a woman.

Amy: Come on, yeah.



Vivian: I also think it takes a secure woman not to always have to be in control. You know?

Amy: Yes.

Vivian: I mean, I just think it's a both thing, you know, But I don't think Paul had an issue with women. And sadly, I think we have taken a few things that Paul has written and clobbered together a whole narrative.

Eryn: In a case.

Vivian: That I think we...we all do well as Bible scholars to...and Bible students to learn and to read and to do our own study and not just rely on what someone else has said.

Eryn: Viv, what would be an example of that for somebody listening? Maybe they don't know that interpretation of Paul and what he has said.

Vivian: Right. So Paul, I mean, he writes in 1 Timothy that women shouldn't teach, that women are to have a gentle and quiet spirit. And so we kind of start to think, you know, like in Titus, you should be lovers of your husband, lovers of your children, workers at home. But we kind of have this picture that that means stay-at-home mom. Which, when I think about it for all of my friends who are working, I don't think that all the women stayed at home is what I think Amy's pointing out to. So...

Amy: Yeah, yeah.

Vivian: ...so some of those things.

Amy: Right.

Vivian: So sometimes we take a North American, white, middle-class, upper middle-class...

Eryn: Yeah.

Vivian: ...perspective and we try to place it onto first-century culture and can miss some pretty significant things.

Amy: Mm hmm.



Eryn: That's good.

Amy: Yes, and with that, passage in 1 Timothy, this...the idea of, women to not teach. There's a whole context going on in that church. There is the goddess Artemis that was during that time in Ephesus and was producing really strong domineering women. And so when they became believers, Paul was saying, I want them to learn quietly. That's how you learn. So that when they do teach, they know exactly what's going on here that's counter to what they've learned in their other cults in the culture. Um, there's a lot...a lot happening.

Vivian: Yeah, yeah. It's so beautiful. So I would love to ask like for the woman struggling as they are trying to engage in the Bible, um especially with some of the things that they're reading, like, do I need to cover my head when I pray? What things are cultural, what things are principles? Can you speak to that, Amy? In your understanding, how would you counsel a woman who genuinely wants to obey God's Word...

Amy: Yeah.

Vivian: ...but is running up against some of these...these...

Amy: Yeah.

Vivian: ...things that she's reading.

Eryn: Yeah. that's a great question, Viv.

Amy: Well yes. First of all, I would say keep going, keep learning for the woman that's curious about like, how do I hold these things? And just what you said, Viv, start to read about the context of what's going on, because context is king in any letter written. Like you wouldn't just start reading in the middle of a letter if you got it in the mail.

Eryn: Right.

Amy: You would read from the beginning, go...and then you would start to think like, where did...where's this person coming from? Like, what did...why did they write this letter? What's going on around there? So research the culture and the context of what you're reading. But I would also say if...if you are struggling, go to Jesus and see how He's treating women. Just...just go to any of the Gospels. I would



say Luke. Luke, I mean...I...I could talk about Luke's ladies. Luke really seems to highlight the women in the Bible. I think he...he's got a heart for the marginalized, the oppressed, and shines lights on what God is doing, what Jesus is doing all through that Scripture. But I would say, read Luke and ask how does Jesus treat women? What is He doing? And if Hebrews 1 says that Jesus is the exact representation of God, the radiance of His glory, whatever Jesus is doing, this is God. This is how God sees women and how He treats them. And we get a front row seat with all the ways Jesus is flipping all kinds of scripts, in the Gospels.

Eryn: Mm. Amy, I have a sense that there's a woman that's listening that may be wrestling with just this idea of what we've been talking about, that God loves and values women. And He values their voice, and He desires for them to learn and to share what they are learning and what He is instilling in them. But there may be a woman that's listening that doesn't feel worthy, doesn't feel qualified, and feels very far away from the idea that she could learn and maybe learn and be seen as smart and educated and intelligent, you know?

Amy: Yeah.

Eryn: Uh, and she's...she's wrestling, yeah, just with like the worthiness of being able to be an advocate of her own voice and maybe a voice for other women. What would you say to the woman that's wrestling with that, that may feel really alone in her unworthiness in that?

Amy: Mm...I'm so glad that we talked about who we talked about, because you've got Mary who sat at Jesus' feet as a disciple to learn.

Eryn: Mm.

Amy: And that learning is precious. And you can, and you have been gifted a mind from God and the Spirit of God inside of you to illuminate what His Scriptures are saying. You have all the tools. You have all the tools to learn and grow. And you've been given a voice to use, not hide. I would say that too. I've heard our mess is our message, right? And so whatever you have, whatever you've gone through, you've got a gift to give to the world, to the church, to your neighborhood, to our community. We need the voices and perspectives and brains of women to be able to see and hear and point others to God. I understand that. I, for years felt like I was not up to the task, even saying yes to seminary. I'm like, can I do? Am I smart enough? I mean, I was...people didn't think I, you know, I was in the shadow of smart people all the time.



Vivian: By the way, Amy is wicked smart. Okay. I'm just going to say that.

[laughter]

Amy: And I still am like, am I? Like, there's just...

Vivian: She is. She is.

Amy: ...you're healing things in me, Viv. You're healing things.

Eryn: Aww.

[laughter]

Amy: Truly, seminary has healed a lot of...a lot of these things. But yeah, to the woman listening, I would say, oh my gosh, God sees you and is calling you forth to use your brain. And here's the thing, if you feel something inside of you of like, oh my gosh, I want to that...respond to that. You...you're wired in that way. Lean into that, because you're His daughter. I think about the woman in Luke eight, the bleeding woman who goes and reaches out to...to Jesus. And...and by faith she's healed. And yes, she's healed physically, but God turns around. Jesus says to her, "daughter," the...the only woman in Scripture He calls daughter. Maybe you need to hear that your name is daughter. And because you have that position as daughter of the Most High King, there is nothing that you can't do if the Father calls you to it. Cause You're His.

Vivian: Mm, that's good, yes.

Amy: Like, go...go forward in confidence. You are the daughter of the Most High King, friend. So yeah. Don't get me going cause I'll...I'll just...

Vivian: I love it. No, you keep on Amy, keep on going. Well, Amy, I would love for you to pray for the woman who is sitting in a space, especially for the woman who's in...sitting in the space, maybe staring at her Bible, wondering like, is this really for me?

Amy: I'd be honored, yes. *Lord Jesus, thank You for this time and this conversation. And thank You that we are three women having this conversation. I thank you that I am made a woman who is in Your image and that male and female, You created them in Your image in Genesis that we are equally image-*



bearers. We were equally commissioned. We are equally blessed. God, I pray for my sisters who are listening, who can feel discouraged, who might feel in the background, who might feel second-class for a variety of reasons and context and situations they're in. And God, I pray that you would just rain down Your peace and Your joy and Your delight over the listener. I love that Zephaniah says that You sing over us, and You sing over us as women. Um, and God thank You that You... You folded yourself up and... and put yourself inside of a womb, a woman's womb, um, and that women have played an integral part in the kingdom of God. So would You give us confidence? Would You open our eyes to see who we truly are, beloved daughters of the Most High King, God. We worship You. You deserve all the glory and honor, and we praise You, God. In Jesus' strong name we pray. Amen.

[music]

Eryn: Amy really inspires me, and I loved our conversation. Well friends, be sure to check out our show notes for some helpful resources. Find those resources and subscribe to our emails to make sure you never miss *God Hears Her* updates. Find all of that at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org. Thank you for joining us, and don't forget. God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His.

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

Vivian: 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.

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