



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 208 – Victim turned Victor with Priscilla Bordayo

Eryn Adkins with Priscilla Bordayo

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Elisa Morgan: 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: Before we get into this conversation, we wanted to let you know that we will be discussing some sensitive material. We will be discussing topics such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and incest. Please listen at your discretion and check out additional resources in our show notes. Hey friends, I am so excited to introduce to you this powerhouse of a woman, Priscilla Bordayo. Priscilla is a nationally recognized advocate for survivors of sexual abuse. She's a passionate speaker, and she's a dedicated leader in the movement for justice and healing. Her advocacy has taken her to the Senate and House of Representatives where she has helped put together impactful legislation. She currently serves as the manager of Partners for Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, where she is working to expand trauma recovery centers across Michigan and advance the Michigan Safer Act. Let's hear how all of this came to be by diving into her story, and don't forget to pull up your Bible study show notes and let's dive in. Priscilla, I am so excited to have you here.

Priscilla: Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Eryn: This is a really special day. So, where did you come from today?

Priscilla: So, I came from Lansing, Michigan, so just an hour away...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... so, you guys, this is home, like, Michigan is home, so...

Eryn: Is it... did... did you grow up in Michigan?



Priscilla: So, I was born in... Abilene, Texas...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... but I was raised in Lansing, Michigan. Yeah.

Eryn: Okay. What brought you to Michigan?

Priscilla: So, my dad and my mom moved from Texas to Michigan when I was about two years old...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... and so, they just came because family was there. My dad has fourteen brothers and sisters and most...

Eryn: Fourteen?

Priscilla: ... fourteen brothers and sisters, so, most of his family...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... was in Michigan. And I think they just, like, want to be around family. And so...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... we ended up there.

Eryn: And what about you? Are you siblings?

Priscilla: . Yeah, so there's four of us. I have an older brother who has seven kids...

Eryn: Oh wow.

Priscilla: ... I have an identical twin sister. Her name's Cece. Both of us are not married with no kids...

Eryn: Oh my goodness.



Priscilla: ... And then I have a younger sister named Rocky, and she has four kids.

Eryn: Oh wow.

Priscilla: Yes. So, I have eleven nieces and nephews, which I love...

Eryn: That's a lot. So, I want to know a little bit of your faith journey. Like, when did you get introduced to who Jesus was?

Priscilla: So, we were raised in the church...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... I grew up under the Assembly of God. My dad came out of a very strong Catholic family, and then he met my mom and her side of the family who were very strong Christians. My grandma was a very strong woman of faith, a prayer warrior, and... yeah, he met my mom and, like, her family. They basically were like, *you need to know Jesus, and, like, not just know Him, but like live for Him...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And he dedicated his life to Jesus at a very young age. I think my parents were very young when they got married. They were, like, sixteen and seventeen...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... So, they raised us...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... to knowing God and really attaching our life to faith.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: So, I've always had a very strong understanding of, like, who God is and, you know, what I'm capable of if I... if I live my life for Him...



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... but I would say that even though we, like, grew up in a very strong faith base, there is also, like, just like a lot of dysfunction in our home...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... that I did start to question, like, this faith thing. Is this really, like, what it's supposed to look like?

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: And if God is such a good God, then why are all of these things sort of happening?

Eryn: Yeah. Do you care... to share some of what...

Priscilla: Yeah, absolutely. So, I grew up in a very, like I said, a large family. My dad has fourteen brothers and sisters. My mom has eight siblings...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... and by the time I was five years old, all of my dad's siblings, so, fourteen homes... were all raided by the FBI all at the same time.

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: All of my uncles and my grandfather went to prison. At the time was one of the biggest drug scandals in Lansing, Michigan.

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: My dad was the only male that didn't go, because he just wasn't a part of that. He had surrendered his life...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... to Christ. And just growing up with our last name was, like, super tough because...

Eryn: Wow. Yeah.

Priscilla: ... you know, that... the story being in the news, the guy that my uncles worked for ended up being executed in Texas just because of the amount of deaths that took place across the country...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... So, it was a very traumatizing knowing that, like, the...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... FBI's in our homes. My mom's trying to call, like, you know, her in-laws to figure out, like, who's all attached. So, just that, in... in addition to, like, just growing up with a lot of, like, domestic violence, like, in the family, like, with cousins, like, telling us, like, this is what's happening in their home, and then me and my siblings were sexually abused by a few of our cousins...

Eryn: Oh, wow.

Priscilla: ... and that was sort of, like, the first start of, like, where things started to... where I started to question a lot of things...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and where I feel, like, my insecurities and my doubts of, like, God and just not really knowing who I am and who I was...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... My life just drastically changed.

Eryn: How old were you?



Priscilla: When I was sexually abused by my cousin, I was probably about seven or eight. And then what ended up happening was we just kind of, I don't know if I just kind of, like, trained myself to just, like, keep going, never share, just keep going...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... By the time I was twelve years old, my dad got a pastoral position in Vernon, Texas. So, we moved from Lansing, Michigan...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... to Vernon, Texas...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... and this is the year where I think my life completely changed, because it should have been the year where it was very exciting, you know? We were excited. My parents really, like, our whole life was, like, every Sunday you're at church. Every Wednesday you're at church. On Monday, Monday nights we're at prayer. Like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... most of our time was spent in the church...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, my parents always had meetings, so, we just always grew up that way and...

Eryn: Gotcha.

Priscilla: ... when my parents told us that he had gotten a pastoral position, they really just emphasized, like, this was, like, the next thing that God has called our family to do...

Eryn: I see, yeah.

Priscilla: ... and we're going to be, like, committed to what God wants us to do.



Eryn: Gotcha. Okay.

Priscilla: So, we're like, *here we go*, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *this is going to be a cool, fun adventure*. And in the beginning, it was. Like, it's a small, small town. Like, Vernon, I don't know, like, if it's grown now, but, like, there was only one fast food place there...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... there was no mall there. And for a girl who's like, *I need all the clothes*...

Eryn: And for a girl... three girls in the family...

Priscilla: ... *all the shoes*... and three girls, exactly...

Eryn: ... four with the mom, yeah.

Priscilla: ... *I need all the things*. Forty-five minutes you have to drive to go to, like, a good mall, like...

Eryn: Yes. That was how... I grew up in a small town...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... and we had, like, one stoplight and then we just got a Starbucks in the grocery store maybe two years ago...

Priscilla: Oh, my goodness.

Eryn: ... but, like, the mall was, like, forty-five minutes, an hour. It was like an...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... adventure to go to the mall.



Priscilla: Yes, seriously.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: I think they finally got a Walmart, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... at some point, I think they got a Walmart, which was kind of cool. But at the same time, like, that was... it... that was very different...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... but small town. But I will say that I feel like my family, we all agree, like, that really was just, like, probably one of the worst years we've experienced as a family, because there was a drastic change in, you know, my... I grew up where my dad, you know, there was, like, a lot of cheating and a lot of just...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... like, things that would happen in our home...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... prior to moving to Texas. But...

Eryn: So, your dad was struggling with infidelity... with your... on your mom.

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: When you say, okay.

Priscilla: Yeah. And so, I... I will say though, because of that, I remember that piece being, like, *oh, maybe these things won't take place...*

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... *when we move to Texas, cause this will be like...*

Eryn: I see.

Priscilla: ... a new setting. My dad's going to start honoring my mom, like, those kinds of things.

Eryn: Yeah. We're going to start going to church. We're going to start doing all of these, like...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... things even more, on a...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... even deeper level.

Priscilla: Yeah, for sure. Only the complete opposite ended up...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... taking place. Instead of my dad, like, cheating on my mom, that was the year when, like, he started to come into my room and he started to rape me at twelve years old...

Eryn: Oh, Priscilla.

Priscilla: ... and our home was very connected to the church. Like, I didn't even know this was, like, a thing for pastors, where they provide the home that's literally attached to the church, like a hallway...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... so, there wasn't a lot of separation, which was very new for me because...

Eryn: Yeah,

Priscilla: ... growing up my home was always separated from the church...



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... even though it felt like we lived there, at the church.

Eryn: Wow, yeah.

Priscilla: This time it felt like I legitimately had nowhere to go...

Eryn: You had no... nothing safe.

Priscilla: ... because even though... yeah, like, I am having... my father's coming into my room and doing things to me that I just fully did not understand...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I was still expected to lead worship on Sunday mornings, and for over a period of a year this was going on, and it just ended up getting to the point where my body just was, like, one, I was scared. I didn't know what to do, and my body was changing...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I just remember one night bleeding out, and I had no idea, like, why my body was bleeding out. I just remember being in the shower, just crying because I legitimately didn't know who to talk to or, like, who to go to. And so...

Eryn: Did you share a room with your sister?

Priscilla: So, remember that one whole minute that I'm older?

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: I own that. And I... that was my biggest argument to, like, why I should get my own room.

Eryn: Oh, okay.

Priscilla: I was, like, *I'm one minute older...*



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and so, what ends up happening was my dad created, like, this little... it's a tiny room, probably, like, honestly, like, the size of this space, like a twin bed and, like, a... two...

Eryn: You really wanted your own... Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, things of... Yeah, I was like, *I will have my own room.*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... So, my twin and my younger sister shared...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... and... I ended up having my own room, but, like, it was, like, a twin bed and then there was, like, two bars like above each other...

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: ... and I just had all my clothes, like, hung up. My sister ended up coming into the bathroom and she heard me crying, and she was like, *what's wrong with you?*

Eryn: Which sister was this?

Priscilla: This is my twin sister.

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: And so, I finally, with whatever words I could come up with to try to explain what was being done to me, I **told** my twin sister that my father... that our dad was coming into the room and he was hurting me. I didn't know the terminology of...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... rape... molestation, abuse. Like, I didn't know really what that really, really looked like, and if...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ...like, that really applied to me, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... you know, when you've been abused by your cousins, you get to this point and you're like, *wait a minute...*

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... you know, is this...

Eryn: Normal. Yeah, right. Right.

Priscilla: ... normal? Is this, like, supposed to happen? You always have this feeling inside of you, like, *it's not right, it's not normal*. But you do start to question, like, wait. Is it?

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: And so...

Eryn: And when you experience something like that, there's not, like... there... there's an alarm that goes off and warns and tells everybody...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... so as a little girl, you're processing like, what is normal? What's adulthood? What is...

Priscilla: Yeah. Yeah.

Eryn: ... that's so confusing.



Priscilla: Very, very. It was, I... I often use that word because it was such a confusing season and time...

Eryn: Yeah. Especially when you didn't have words to put it.

Priscilla: ... no words. And like I said, like, we're here because my dad is supposed to be a pastor and a shepherd to the people....

Eryn: Right. In a safe place.

Priscilla: ... And... In a safe place. And just, these things are happening.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: So, I end up telling my sister, and what ended up happening was my sister hid in my room that night in between the clothes, and she saw everything that my father had done to me that night. And she was the reason that my mom found out. And when my mom found out, at the time, she herself didn't know what to do. So, she ended up calling in this counselor... lady that I clearly was not ready for. And they took me into, again, our home and church is in the same space...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... so, I go down the hallway, and my mom tells me that there's someone here to, like, help me, and we went to the sanctuary, but for some reason. I did not feel safe in the sanctuary. Like, I did not...

Eryn: Of course, right.

Priscilla: ... want to be in that space. And I just remember, like, looking at this lady and she starts crying as, like, I'm trying to tell her what happened to me. And I remember just sitting there looking at her like, *why are you crying?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: Like, it just didn't dawn on me that...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... like, what I was experiencing could affect other people in the way that it did.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: And so, I did not feel comfortable, I wasn't ready to talk about what was being done to me, but I was also frustrated because I'm like, *why isn't my mom talking to me about this?*

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: *Why isn't she checking on me?* Like, why isn't... there was never a conversation of, like, *I'm so sorry this is happening to you.* Or, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *How long has he been...* like, it was nothing like that. It was, *go talk to this lady.* It wasn't until later on in life when, after a long journey of just, like, healing and, you know, trying to figure out, like, why my mom made some of the decisions she did, because ultimately what ended up happening was my mom chose to stay with my dad. We kept going through all of the motions of *we are a Christian family...*

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... My dad was still preaching. I was still expected to lead worship as well as my sister. I will say that was the time where, like, worship became everything to both of us, where she started to learn to play piano, the drums, like, she started to write songs and I've always just kind of turned to worship...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... as part of, like, my healing...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... even though it was a very confusing time because...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I wouldn't say that I hated God at that point, but I really hated my mom.



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: I felt like my mom had this opportunity to, like, get me out of this situation...

Eryn: And protect you, right.

Priscilla: ... yeah, and... and protect me and... and my siblings, cause I thought like, what... you know, of course I'm wondering if this is happening to them, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... so, that just didn't happen though. Like, realistically, like... it... we just kept going.

Eryn: Did your dad ever have a conversation with you? Was, like... what was that dynamic like once...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... your mom learned the news that that was happening.

Priscilla: So, every Sunday after church... because this was such a small town...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... they were very, very respectful and honoring towards all pastors in that area.

Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: And so, part of, like, one of the perks that we had as far as, like, being a pastor's kid...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... is every Sunday we would go to the Golden Corral, that buffet, and get to eat for free. And so, like, we were...I... Let me tell you, I can eat. So, I was, like... and it's all you can eat. We... it's all you can... all you can eat. We were going... we were going to eat...

Eryn: They got options, too.



Priscilla: Yes, yes. We going to eat. I will say though, one day after we got done with service, we went to the Golden Corral. My mom tells us everyone's going to get out of the car except for Lala, which is my family nickname. And so, I'm like, *why am I having to stay in this car?*

Eryn: Yeah. It's almost like... it feels like you're being punished.

Priscilla: I honestly thought like, *what is about to happen?*

Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Priscilla: My dad ended up driving me down the street to some park, and he sat us at this picnic table, and we sat there, and he was attempting to apologize to me for what was being done. And I just wasn't ready...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I felt, yet again unprotected, like, still wondering *why is my mom sending me with him?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: Like, why... where is she in all of this?

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: And why is she making the decisions that she's making?

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: And so, I think he probably got maybe one sentence out before I stood up and I just said, *I don't want to hear anything you have to say right now...*

Eryn: Yeah,

Priscilla: ... and I... I ran, like, I started to run. While I was... I was always a runner. I just remember running all the way back to our home, and I ran inside the house, and my mom was sitting on a couch crying, and what I thought she was...



Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Priscilla: ... praying, like, just with all the strength that I had left from running, I just remember slapping her across the face...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... and I was like, *how dare you?* Like, *don't you ever send me with him again.* And I show... I told her, like, how much I hated her.

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: And I was so angry at her, more than I was at my... I was angry at my father, but there was just like a different level of anger that I had towards my mom....

Eryn: Yeah...

Priscilla: ... that...

Eryn: ... because she had the power to... to actually move you from that...

Priscilla: At the time, I thought from that...

Eryn: ... Right, right.

Priscilla: ...Yeah. Yeah, I'm like, I thought, *what a coward*...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, what mother chooses this for their children.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: So, what ended up happening, we were there not even, like, a... we were there, like, one full year.



Eryn: Okay.

Priscilla: And we ended up moving quietly back home. I just started really acting out. I remember telling my mom, like, if she didn't make changes, like, I was going to, like, write our pastors growing up, like, our pastors, like I'm going to start telling everybody, like...

Eryn: yeah.

Priscilla: ... I just...

Eryn: Understandably...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... though too. Accountability, it sounds like, is what you also wanted.

Priscilla: Yeah, I just wanted protection, but I wanted to be free. I mean, I was so angry. I don't...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... know that there's really even adequate words to describe how angry I was during that season...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... that's probably the most angriest I've ever been in my entire life. And it feeling like I had no...

Eryn: And rightfully so.

Priscilla: ... control, like, still go to school, still do your homework, get good grades, you will lead worship, you will still go and do all of the things that the church expects us to do. We will show up with a happy face, like, all of those things. And, I mean, I can say I feel like I... I knew how to keep a secret...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and I knew how to live that double life...



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, where it was, like, portraying we were so good and happy on the outside, and then at home everything was the complete opposite. But it wasn't until, like, I ended up going to a youth camp, and I remember one of the speakers was speaking about forgiveness and again, just being so angry. It was... had a lot to do with, like, just releasing, and letting go, and, like, really allowing God to, like, use you because you have gifts and you have talents, but, like, forgiveness is so, so powerful. And then shortly after that, I remember hearing Joyce Meyer and her sharing her story about her being abused by her father and that really changed, like, my life... I went to that youth camp though I did make the decision, like, I'm like, *I want to forgive because I don't want to keep feeling what I'm feeling...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And I started to really see the cycles and patterns of, like, within both sides of my family...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... My mom's side and my dad's side. And all I knew was that I wanted something different. Like, this was not going to be my forever life...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, I was very determined at a young age, like, whatever I could do to get out of...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... this cycle and this dysfunction. I was very determined to do so...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... So, I forgave, but it was more of, like, *I'm... I'm going to do what I have to do to get myself to the next place...*

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... And when I went to college, I ended up just honestly... like, I'm at a Christian college, I'm leading worship at the Christian college, I was at a really incredible church... at Trinity with Pastor Becky and Pastor Jim Hennessy, and I really owe them a lot of credit to just, like, where my healing truly, truly started. Because again, like, I just was so used to living that double life that even when I had this freedom to, like, go make different decisions, I found myself going and leading worship...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... Monday through Friday at a Christian college...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and then on the weekends I'm getting drunk...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I'm sleeping around...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, I'm doing all the things that I thought and said I would never do...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... because I'm going to be different. I'm going to be out, and...

Eryn: Why do you think that you chose to do that?

Priscilla: I think just because there was just so much inner healing...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... that truly needed to take place and I didn't want to feel... there are certain aspects of my story that I legitimately, like, physically cannot remember...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... because just... there was just so much trauma, like, my...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... story and my brain only goes to a certain point...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... because I think a lot of people think, like, abuse, especially when you're talking about rape, it's like what you see in the movies where it's very aggressive, and you're thrown on the bed...

Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Priscilla: ... and there's, like, this stripping of your clothes, and...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... it just wasn't like that for me...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... It was a very quiet, frozen, steel, like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... don't do anything, don't say a word...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, it was just, *sit still*...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *let me do my thing*...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... and leave...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... So, I just think that I was trying to do everything I could to, like, not feel.

Eryn: Do you feel like in some ways you choosing to drink and sleep around was your way of claiming ownership even though it was damaging more? Like, yeah.

Priscilla: Absolutely. It was like I was in control of my life, and I could do whatever I wanted...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... to feel good...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... And the things that we do to feel good, it's crazy how that really works, because you think these things are going to fill a void and make you feel good...

Eryn: Yep.

Priscilla: ... but it's so temporary.

Eryn: Yep.

Priscilla: Not only is it a temporary feeling, but you often feel worse afterwards...

Eryn: Yep.

Priscilla: ... for making the decisions that you made, because you start to ask yourself and s... When you can look in the mirror and be like, *what are you doing?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: Like, it really wasn't until, like, Pastor Becky was like, *okay, girl*, like...



Eryn: Could she see some of this?

Priscilla: ... yeah. We were very close.

Eryn: Could she sense it? Okay.

Priscilla: ... and... but I also... I was serving in the church, but I ended up just in inappropriate relationships, and I ended up getting myself in a situation where I was, like, I legitimately yet again, did not know what to do...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and I had found some things out about the person that I was with, and I was scared. Like, I legitimately was like, *you told me this...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *and I'm finding out completely different things*. So, I immediately texted my pastor and I was like, *I need help*. Like, *I feel like I'm hitting, like, rock bottom, but, like, I don't know what to do...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and immediately she, like, responded and was like, *let's meet. We're going to do X, Y, and Z*. And she's like, *you're going to counseling. I'm going to pay for it. You're going to go through Bethesda*, which was, like, a inner healing class that the church offered...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... She's like, *you're not doing anything regarding ministry right now, like, you're just going to focus on your healing*. And at the time, like, it really sucked because I still loved singing, and I loved worship...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and that was like a big part of my community, and I was like, *they're forcing me to...*



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... like, they actually ended up taking my phone...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... they deleted that person's phone number off my phone, all the messages...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... voicemails, so that I could not contact that person...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... and her husband ended up calling this guy and left a voicemail on his phone because he didn't answer, like, right in front of me.

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... He called from his phone and was like, *you are not to ever contact this girl. If you have any issues, like, problems, you contact me, I am the pastor of Trinity Church...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and I was like, *I can't believe this is happening*, cause no one's ever done anything like that for me...

Eryn: I was about to say...

Priscilla: ... Ever.

Eryn: ... like, that's like you... redemptive in a way because...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... the church, in your childhood, did not protect you at all when you needed protection.



Priscilla: Yeah. And here this moment is happening, and I am just, like...

Eryn: And they're stepping in wildly...

Priscilla: ...floored, yeah.

Eryn: That's beautiful.

Priscilla: ... Big time. And I was like, *whoa*, like, *I should be very appreciative of this*. But the dysfunctional aspect of who I was, and this unhealed version of myself, was like, *wait a minute*. Like, *why did you do that...?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... Like, you know, like, cause we can get very comfortable in our dysfunction...

Eryn: So true.

Priscilla: ... and I was like, *why would you do that?* Like, *now I can't contact him*, and, like, *I need closure*. *I will have closure...*

Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Priscilla: ... Like, why did he lie to me, and, like, all these things, the things that I did to... to try to get his number, and I did, I... was still stuck in that little season of, like... that rebellious aspect of, like, I'm... I'm in control...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I was still kind of battling that piece out...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... to the point where the pastors were like, *look*, like, *you have such a calling on your life...*

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... *and you're very gifted, Priscilla, but you're so broken and unhealed, and we've provided everything.* I remember I was at a lunch with Pastor Becky and she's listening to me, like, when I'm like, *well, you told me if I tell you the truth.* Like...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *I'm telling you the truth. I'm... but I'm still doing X, Y, and Z.* And she's like, *you know, Priscilla,* and she put her fork down, as serious as she could possibly be, and it was like, *you know, it's... it's very simple actually.*

Eryn: Oh, love that.

Priscilla: Yeah. She, like, stood up, like, very boldly, didn't yell, didn't look mean, but was very aggressive in the sense that she was like, *it's very simple. You are either going to go after your healing or you're not. You're either going to love God and serve God with your whole heart or you're not.* She's like, *it's completely up to you. I've given you every... every resource that I have.* I mean, they're pastors of a mega church. I mean, I had other leaders saying, *do you have any idea what an honor is to even have this relationship with them?* Like, *do you understand that they're trying to help you...?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And it was, like, a huge wake up call for me...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and at that moment I knew like, *okay...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *I want to choose healing.*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: So, I ended up going back to counseling. I went to the Bethesda class again on my own, and I got so much more out of it the second time because I wanted the healing. I was craving it. I needed it, because I just knew that I didn't want what I grew up with...



Eryn: Yeah, yeah...

Priscilla: ... and...

Eryn: ... and, and the cycles that you were finding yourself in.

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: What would you say healing looked like for you, and what would you say to somebody that is pursuing it and feels like you have to arrive to it...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... right?

Priscilla: I do believe that Jesus is so powerful, and so incredibly good that there are things that we can achieve on this side of Earth where we can say, *I am truly healed from that*. I know a lot of people are very different, and, like, some people will say, *you'll never get your true healing until we get to heaven*. I'm no theologian, I am... I am not a pastor. I'm truly just a girl who was so broken hearted, and was a victim of incest, and I've seen how God has turned my life from being a victim to a victor, and all I know is that healing truly is available. I believed that hope was always, like, a feeling or a thing that you can, like, feel or accomplish. But when I gave my whole heart to Jesus, I realized that hope was a Person, and His name was Jesus. And I feel like that alone going through counseling and, like, as long as you need to go. Like, I feel like counseling is so important, like, counseling and Christ go hand in hand....

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I think good, solid, like, godly relationships...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... have really, really helped me. Not the ones that call you out but call you up...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and that's what's been very transformational for my life, and I just started saying yes...



Eryn: That's beautiful.

Priscilla: ... I was like, *I just want all things healing*. And what ended up happening was in college, my dad ended up coming to... unexpectedly, he ended up coming to one of... our chapel services. I had led worship that day and... in chapel, and I came, and usually the worship team sits on a certain side, and the person that was speaking in chapel spoke on forgiveness...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... And I just remember, like, *I'm going to dedicate my life to choosing forgiveness, and I want to reach my full potential, all that God has for me...*

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... *That's what I want...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And so, I remember going to the altar...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and just crying out to God, and like, *God, like, whatever... I release it all to You. I release my cousin, I release my father, I release my mother*. Like, I released everything, and my father came, and I knew that it was him by his cry, so, he himself was repenting right next to me as well...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... and it was a powerful moment...

Eryn: That's so beautiful.

Priscilla: ... and long story short, there was still, like, there was, like, the forgiveness took place, but then when I realized God had called me to start sharing my story and testimony...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... there was just different aspects of, like, *oh wow, like, both my parents are still alive...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... but what I ended up doing was, like, I really prayed about everything. Like, I was like, *God, like, are You sure? Like, You really want me to share, like, what the healing You've done in my life?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: And I just remember Him just so clearly saying, like, *this is what you are called to do...*

Eryn: Yeah,

Priscilla: ... and I remember sharing my story with one of my best friends. It was the first time I had shared, like, my full story...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... she had a really bad grade in her class and... at the college, and she's like, *look, Priscilla, like, our last assignment is that we have to capture someone's story or testimony.* And we have to do all the setup, like, everything that you see here, like the lights...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... the cameras, the mics like, *I have to do all of that. And if we can make our teacher cry, we can get an automatic A.* And so, she's like...

Eryn: Well, that's really strategic.

Priscilla: ... I know she was so strategic. And I said no at first, I was like, *no, like, I'm... I'm not ready to share my story.* And she's like, *but Priscilla, like, what if I get the entire class to sign a contract...?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... Because, you know, I'm singing, I'm a worship leader. Everyone's going to know my story on campus...



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and I was very concerned about that. And so, she was like, *I'll make everyone sign a contract that they can't repeat anything they hear regarding the stories...*

Eryn: I love her.

Priscilla: ... yeah...

Eryn: Resiliency.

Priscilla: ... She's still my best friend to my... to this...

Eryn: She sounds like a great friend.

Priscilla: ... She really is. She's, like, the best mom, her name's Sandy. And so, she...

Eryn: Oh, hey, Sandy.

Priscilla: ... I know, hey girl... So, I did it, and it just, like, this. And I remember the lights, just like how right now...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... the light was so strong, and I felt, like, the Holy Spirit was equipping me at that very moment when I was sharing the story. And long story short, she turned in her story. She got that A, and the teacher contacted me, and it was like, *Priscilla, like, you shared your story and I bawled my eyes out, but you minister to me.* And I knew then He was like, *you have to help as many people as you can...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and that's kind of where it started...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... My dad, the very first time I told him like, *I am going to share, like, our story...*



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... he wasn't happy about it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... because both my parents are alive...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And ultimately it just came down to like, *Dad*, like, *I love you. I care about you.* Same thing with my mom, *but if I don't share what God has done in me and in... through us.* Because forgiveness was mandatory for us...

Eryn: Yeah, wow.

Priscilla: ... Right? As believers, forgiveness is... is mandatory for us to do. Reconciliation was optional...

Eryn: Yeah, right.

Priscilla: ... I got to choose whether or not I wanted that, and I think it's important to know that victims who've been affected by abuse get to choose that for themselves. I'm not here to tell people how...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... to, you know, choose their relationships, set up their boundaries, like, all of those things are important for the individual to choose. I just knew that when I started to do the research on, like, how did my family get here...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... How did my dad and my mom, who loved God with their... who really love God...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... My dad served the army. They both served the church...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... grew up strict, don't get me wrong, like, my dad was very much like, chores, discipline...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... structure, like, all of those things, which I am very thankful for, but I also am like, *how did we go from that to, like, this?*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: I found out my mom, ultimately, it wasn't until I started kind of sharing the story, my mom shared about how she too was sexually abused by a family member, and when I go back to that day where she sent me with that lady...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... she was being re-traumatized and...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... did not know how to help me because she never got the help she needed...

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: ... When I started to hear more about my father, I found out my grandfather had raped thirteen of his fourteen children. My dad was one of them...

Eryn: Oh my gosh.

Priscilla: ... So, although there will never be an excuse for the decisions my parents made...

Eryn: Yeah.



Priscilla: ... It gave me an understanding of how we got here...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And we are so good in the Christian realm about talking about generational curses and generational patterns, and I think sometimes we pick and choose what we want to talk about...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... This topic of sexual abuse, domestic violence, specifically incest...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... the church doesn't like to talk about it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... But how can we help the millions of people who are affected...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... if we don't talk about it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and if we don't show that actually healing truly can exist...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... for everyone?

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: And I have spent so much time and dedication to helping victims overcome their abuse. But also helping perpetrators, those who have caused harm...



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... to get the help that they need to be rehabilitated...

Eryn: Wow, that's beautiful.

Priscilla: ... And it was just because when I was reading, like, I just realized, like, wow, like, Jesus really died on the cross for every person, to make it...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... And that means the murderer and the rapist, the people that we want to say, *not them*...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... I do believe people will make it behind bars, but I... I truly believe that... that God made a way for them to make it, too...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and that salvation and what Jesus did on the cross can transform anyone. I mean, we either believe that he died...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and can... and can truly bring healing and restoration to every person...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... or we don't...

Eryn: Right.

Priscilla: ... Otherwise, it's... it's... it's not...

Eryn: Well, it's that simple. Right?



Priscilla: It's that simple.

Eryn: It's that simple.

Priscilla: Yes.

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: And so...

Eryn: But's not simple, right? Because it's...

Priscilla: Yeah.

Eryn: ... so complex, but it's also that simple.

Priscilla: Yeah, no, I... I feel like sometimes when people hear me speak...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... they're like, *it... it seems like it's just like so easy, but it's, like, it's not*. The very first time I posted, I remember someone who I thought was going to celebrate me, cheer me on...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and, like, it's a testimony of what God has done...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and I remember them just like being so mean and degrading about like, *how dare you share, like, our dirty laundry*, and like, that word dirt messed me up. Like, it was like, I already felt dirty...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... and so I was just like... like, *God, are you sure you want me to do this...?*



Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And I was in a coffee shop, and that word dirt just kept bothering me, and I was like, *Holy Spirit*, like, *are You sure You want me to share this story...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... *and, like, do this?* And I just heard Him whisper, *I want you to go look up Scripture verses on dirt*. And I was like, *that's weird*, like, *what verses would be in there about dirt?*

Eryn: Yeah, I know.

Priscilla: Like, we need to read our Bibles more. But I was like, *let me go look up...* I Googled every... all the verses on dirt. The first thing that popped up was that Jesus spit in the dirt and He healed a blind man.

Eryn: Wow.

Priscilla: And the second one was that He had created us out of the dust, out of the dirt, and that He breathed His life into us, and that's how we were created...

Eryn: Yeah.

Priscilla: ... And He said, *if I can do that with dirt, and I can do that with dirt*, He said, *what do you think I'm going to do with your dirt?* And from that moment on, that was the game changer for me. I have not stopped sharing what God can do in the dirt.

Eryn: That is so beautiful.

Priscilla: Yeah.

[Music]

Eryn: That was such a powerful conversation on redemption and healing, and I just want to take a moment to say that if you're still overcoming your own trauma, we see you. You are not alone. Check out our show notes for some helpful resources, and you can find those resources as well as our blog and

godhearsher.org



other *God Hears Her* resources 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. [Music] Today's episode was engineered by Ryan Clevenger and Anne Stevens, and produced by Jade Gustman and Mary Jo Clark. We also want to thank Pat and Londa for all their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

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