



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 219 A Symbol of Surrender with Anna Laura Eryn Adkins & Vivian Mabuni with Anna Laura

[Music]

Anna Laura: I just can't tell you how powerful it is just to give yourself the freedom to share the entire spectrum of emotions that you're feeling with God when you're...when you're in it. It was something that I was taught not to do. And as, like I said, as my faith evolved and I began to have more honest, vulnerable conversations with the Lord and realizing that it truly...it truly was a relationship, I think that's really the point of it all. It wasn't like this untouchable God, you know, in the sky or on a hill. It was a relationship.

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Vivian: Hey ,friends, before we get started, feel free to download or print our new Bible study show notes to fill out while you listen. You can find those on our website.

Eryn: Vivian, today's episode is really special. I say that I think in every episode.

Vivian: I think this one's extra special though.

Eryn: We're all special. Our guest today is a guest, but she's also one of my dearest friends. Vivian, would you welcome with me my best friend, Anna?

Vivian: Oh, so sweet. Well, Anna, what Eryn didn't underscore is some of the story in terms of your entrepreneurial spirit, this business called White Flag that you started. But before we go into all of that, we would love to hear your spiritual journey story, if you can share some of that with us just to kind of center who you are and your spiritual journey.

Anna Laura: Yeah, well, I always kind of kick this off by saying I've had quite an adventure with God over the years. I did not grow up in a very religious or spiritual household. It's kind of a funny story, but my



parents actually put me into church camp when I was younger just to give me something to do over the summer.

Vivian: Yes.

Anna Laura: And um, and that was actually where I learned about Jesus for the very first time. It was a really beautiful experience. I went to this amazing kind of week-long summer camp called Gold Rush, at my church. And it was kind of one of those things where it's like you go to Six Flags one day, and then you go to Whitewater the next day. And then you do mission work another day. And the last day of camp they just like do this beautiful kind of worship service. And I remember that's where I was just like kind of on my knees and...and just feeling the presence of God for like the very...what I felt was like the very first time.

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: And, you know, high school was a really tough time in my faith. Went through a lot of loss and a lot of really hard things in high school that really challenged my faith. And that's why I say I've been on quite an adventure with the Lord. Cause there was a lot of seasons where, just to be transparent, was really angry, had a lot of questions, um, lots of ups and downs in my spiritual journey. And high school was a tough one.

Eryn: Where do you think the anger came from?

Anna Laura: You know, my experience with the church was an interesting one around that time, because I feel like, at that time, the church that I was attending, and this was years ago, so, a lot has changed. But at the time there weren't a lot of support groups and resources for the things that I was kind of navigating as a teenager. Just back then, I think there were a lot of questions that I wasn't getting a lot of answers. And I, you know, was looking to adult leaders in my life that didn't have answers or maybe just didn't know how to be with young adults in that space. Um, so there just was...there was a lot of doubt, a lot of questions, a lot of anger.

Eryn: Would you say, cause I...I know you, you're very curious...a curious person. And you challenge, I think, perspective for understanding and for the betterment of a circumstance or a situation. Was there something in high school or within, like your young adulthood that you felt like you were challenging that the church was resistant to respond to or didn't handle well? Or like where does that come from in what you're alluding to?



Anna Laura: Yeah, no, I just had a lot of questions, around what I was being taught in the church. And I didn't understand a lot of it. And I felt like every time I would go and ask questions, there was a lot of...there wasn't really a welcoming kind of environment for questions and for doubt. Um, a lot of the narrative that came with questions and doubting and...and just kind of leaning into that was that it was lukewarm Christianity. That was a lot of what I heard growing up was that if you questioned or, if you doubted and you weren't kind of doing things a certain way or living a certain way or thinking a certain way, it was kind of a lukewarm Christianity. That was really hard to navigate, especially as a teenager, and it just stirred up a lot of, uh of tough emotions that were also really hard to navigate as a teenager. So yeah, it's a tough...tough time to navigate my faith around then.

Vivian: So you have a teenage daughter now.

Anna Laura: I do.

Vivian: And I imagine that is for me as a parent, uh, the hard places in my own journey, when my kids hit those markers, it kind of like bumped up again to seeing me as nine years old or 11 or these moments. And I'm curious for you, Anna, if you have experienced that? And what would you tell your teenage self now, with the benefit of more years, more wisdom, more life experience?

Anna Laura: Yeah, I've had a lot of conversations with my daughter. She is a junior in high school. So around the time that I started really wrestling with a lot of things in my own faith, was my junior year. And so it's interesting cause she and I have had many conversations about things that she's learning both at church and in her school. She goes to a Christian school as well. And it has kind of pinged little things, you know, in me, I'm like, oh, I remember this, or oh, this feels familiar for sure. I think I...if I were to speak to my 17-year-old self again, I would just tell her there's space for all of it. Um, and there's safety in all of it. Cause I...I just think that, you know, somewhere along the line, and I can't really put my finger on a specific moment. I think it was probably a collection of moments. But somewhere along the line it was kind of communicated that it wasn't okay and it wasn't safe to ask those questions. So I think if I were to sit with 17-year-old Anna, that's what I would say. And I would tell her to lean in further, because I think that's where like, you know, not to sound too Pinteresty. But that's kind of where the...the beauty happens when you like lean in and you kind of get into the mess. And you do have those doubts and you kind of wade through them. So I would tell her it was safe, and it was welcome.

Vivian: What were some of those questions that you were asking that you didn't feel like people would engage with you about?



Anna Laura: I mean the number one, you know, just transparently was, there were a lot of kids my age and in my class and friends of mine who were losing their life, in car accidents and other things as well. It was a really tough thing for me to wrap my brain around. Um...

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: ...you know. At that time, there was a lot of fear-based narrative around what happens when you die and, you don't know Jesus. And there were questions in me like, well, did they know God and did they, you know. There was just a lot...a lot of fear and a lot of heartache and just sadness around it. That was really kind of the...the...the part that like kickstarted it, which then led into more questions around what happens when you die and, you know, all those things that just...

Eryn: Yeah.

Anna Laura: ...I don't know that any of us have these answers. There wasn't space to really sit and ask and wade through them. It was just kind of a hard stop, and we're not going there and we're not talking about it.

Eryn: So high school. We know a picture of high school. So tell me a little bit about your early twenties. Is that when we met was your early twenties? How old were you?

Anna Laura: Yeah, because I had Brooklyn.

Eryn: Okay.

Anna Laura: I had Brooklyn. Yeah, I had my daughter.

Eryn: She was a baby.

Anna Laura: Mm-hmm. I had my daughter, and I had her at 19. Um, and so yes.

Eryn: When you had your daughter at 19, did you feel supported by the church...

Anna Laura: No.

Eryn: ...since we're talking about questions in the church? Okay.



Anna Laura: No, no.

Eryn: That probably fueled some of the things within high school, when you said you had a really beautiful and complicated relationship with God and people within, yeah.

Anna Laura: I did. Yeah, yeah. Well, I didn't have her in high school. So high school was its own kind of separate experience. And then I think, just truthfully, I think a lot of my experiences kind of wrestling with my faith, not really knowing where I stand with a lot of things, not knowing where I stand with God, just kind of floating, you know, around that time. Um, found myself, seeking attention and getting into relationships that weren't great for me and ended up getting engaged very quickly to a man that I met, you know, when I was 18, and then had my daughter um, at 19. And that was a really tough time as well because I remember, I have a very vivid memory, you know, when I was about seven months pregnant, quite far along and running into some people from the church at the local Target and kind of seeing them and they see me, and they just turn around and walked away. And, um, I think that was kind of the moment that I was like, you know what? I don't know that I want to go back. I don't know that I want to go back there. After I had my daughter at 19, I moved to Nashville, um, shortly after from Atlanta. And I think getting out of my hometown and putting down roots here and making friends and...and finding community, and I found a local church here at that time. That was kind of when things, you know, I started to settle back into building a really beautiful relationship with the Lord. But yeah, it was...it was rocky for a time for sure. And becoming a mom was kind of in the midst of that.

Eryn: So you go to Nashville. You kind of thaw maybe from some heightened emotions and hurt. How did you work through not being bitter and carrying that bitterness, forgiving, and also kind of reclaiming your relationship with God even when people hurt you?

Anna Laura: I mean it was a lot of hard work and hard conversations with the Lord. I'm literally looking at my back deck right now. I would sit out there by myself and just have a lot of hard conver...conversations and journal a lot. I started developing really beautiful friendships. Eryn, you and I got closer, you know, after I moved here, and you were one of them. I had some other really incredible friendships kind of pop up in my life that were really safe spaces to have these conversations. I found like-minded community, people that I could be like, so what about this? And what about this? And I have questions about this. And, you know, little by little, I think it just started to heal my heart and thaw like that was a great, great way of saying it just started to heal my heart. And, um, I began to thaw a bit and, um, and also learn how to create safety in relationships for others as well, you know. Cause I...I'm a single mom raising a little girl who's...she has a lot of questions too, you know.

Vivian: Yeah.



Anna Laura: And learning how to be the safe space that I didn't...I felt like I didn't have when I was younger, um, asking a lot of those questions. So, yeah, it just was a lot of internal work and just the safety of community that I started to build here in Nashville.

Eryn: You know what I think is so beautiful, Anna, is that where there has been so much hurt in your life, like you have allowed God to transform it in you to where you now can create safety and give people permission to have space. I think that's a good example of friendship in itself is...is being able to allow space and allow question and allow transition and change. I think you've experienced transition and change. I mean, from being, you know, a household that's not faith-driven to becoming actively involved in the church and becoming more in love with God to questions, to you know, becoming pregnant at a young age and being a single mom and like, you've experienced all these transitions and changes. God has used, I think what the enemy probably wanted to destroy parts of your faith. He's actually transformed it into you where you now create space for other people. I think that's really beautiful.

Anna Laura: Hmm.

Vivian: That is beautiful.

Anna Laura: I have to say, just even having Eryn on the screen, I'm getting a little emotional because we've never...we've never done a podcast together, but you have...you've...you have been that a safe space. You've been, you know, a very safe friend and, um, safe space throughout this process, like over time. I mean, I really...it's crazy to say that we've known each other for so long, So...

Eryn: I know.

Vivian: I think that's beautiful.

Anna Laura: Thank you for saying that.

[music]

Mary Jo: Hi friends. Are you a mom, or do you know a mom that needs some extra encouragement right now? Check out *Sunday God Meets Monday Mom: A 100-Day Devotional Connecting Faith With Real Life*. You can learn more and find that devotional at the link in our show notes. Now back to the show.

Vivian: So in addition to having safe friends, Anna...



Anna Laura: Mm-hmm.

Vivian: ...as a single mom, like what do you wish that people in the church knew, and what advice would you give for people who would love to be more welcoming and helpful and encouraging? Like, what, as a single mom, what are the most helpful things? Just tell us. Tell us.

Eryn: Give it, give it to us.

Vivian: What, yeah, give it to us. Like what do you wish people knew?

Anna Laura: I mean, it's so simple. it's really so simple. You just lean in and show up. Like it really is so simple the amount of people who've just taken the liberty to just lean in and show up and just say, how can I help? Like I...I mean, I've had friends just show up just to take my trash out for me, you know? Cause they're like, we know you do this, you know, all the time. I've had friends come and just help me with my kids and say, can I go take 'em out for ice cream? Like, you know, it's just leaning in and um, and...and showing up It is...is truly so simple. I think it's not like the grand gestures, and it doesn't have to be so extravagant, you know.

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: As a single mom, I think what people sometimes fail to recognize is that it's literally just like all of the mundane things that we're doing all the time, and something as simple as just taking one of those things off of our plate is just...it's...it's incredible. It's...it's everything. I mean, it really helps tremendously. So it's just, you know, um, leaning in and showing up and just being present and being a safe space. I mean, safety is kind of I feel like the buzzword of the...of the podcast. But it truly is, um, just so vital. I...I look back at seasons where, everything felt really hard as a single parent. And I mean, the...the bits of light and the I guess the anchor in it all was the people who were the safe space, you know?

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: Um, and so, yeah, it...it's not grand gestures and big extravagant things. It's just leaning in and showing up and being...being, that...that safety.

Eryn: Do you think people have a hard time connect or thinking that they can't connect with a single mom? Did you ever feel that?



Anna Laura: Yeah, I mean, from my standpoint as a single mom, I felt...it was hard for me to connect. I can't speak from the other side of it...

Eryn: Sure, sure.

Anna Laura: ...because I've been a single mom since I was young. But I very vividly remember bringing my daughter to school. And all of the moms were much older than me.

Vivian: Yeah, sure.

Anna Laura: You know, I just didn't know where I fit, you know? And, um, I felt like I was in a very different season of...of life, than a lot of the other moms that I was around.

Eryn: I love that you shared that detail. cause that's so true. You showed up, and you're like, I am much younger. Where do I...where do I belong?

Anna Laura: I didn't know where I fit.

Vivian: Yeah, yeah.

Anna Laura: And then, you know, a lot of...a lot of, you know, young adults my age were like going out and doing a lot of things that were considered normal for that age. And I was home with, my daughter and a lot of the time. And if I wanted to go out, I had to find a babysitter and had to coordinate a lot. There were a lot of moving parts, a lot of logistics that a lot of people my age didn't have to worry about.

Eryn: Yeah.

Anna Laura: And so there was just...it was a hard time for me to relate. It took some time for me to find the group of friends that I have now.

Eryn: Okay, so we kind of get into the whole single mom, repairing your relationship with the Lord, dethawing, community's important, safe spaces. Where does...I want to know about White Flag. Like where does that la...like where did you...share a little bit about just...cause I know that's a part of your testimony.

Anna Laura: It is.



Eryn: And I'd love to know that side of it.

Anna Laura: Yeah, no. I love this story. So a little back story. I am named after my mom's mom. She grew up in Frankfurt, Germany during the war, during the Holocaust. Her German name was Hannah Laura. And so my mom and dad named me after her. My name is Anna Laura. And so that's...that's important because White Flag was really built on a piece of her story. Around the time that I was really, you know, I...I was really wrestling with my faith. This was back in 2017, I believe. Yep. 2017. I was kind of in one of those, you know, seasons of...of asking a lot of tough questions. And I was in a really tough season in my marriage. I was married at the time. I was in a tough season of motherhood. I just became a mom of two, um, instead of one. And that's a big change to go from one to two. Also had acquired a stepson in that process as well. So there was a lot of change happening in my world and, um, a lot of, uh, old roots being dug up and a lot of...just a lot of like excavating at that time around my faith. And I remember I had a very clear dream of a...a person walking into a room and seeing a white flag hanging over a mantle and feeling the overwhelming love of Jesus. It was like I could actually, even just saying it, I remember what it felt like. It...I was asleep, but I felt it, you know, like the warmth.

Vivian: Yeah, yeah.

Anna Laura: And just this like overwhelming light and overwhelming presence. And I remember waking up and being like, what the heck was that? Like that was crazy. And I remembered a story that my grandmother told me, which she didn't really talk about her childhood a lot. It was quite traumatic and triggering. She really tried to stay away from talking about, um, much of it as she got older, um. You know, she would just kind of share little bits and pieces here and there, but nothing too detailed. But one thing she did share with me was, when they were living in the city of Frankfurt, her mom sent her and her siblings out to the countryside to get away from the chaos that was happening in the city. My grandmother was the oldest, so she took care of her siblings, but she did really grueling hard work in the...at the farm, in the fields. She recalled a very distinct memory of being in the farmhouse and hearing a plane flying overhead and being so terrified that they were going to bomb, um, the area around the farmhouse. And so she grabbed a white tablecloth off of the dining room table and waved it outside of the window. And I remember asking her just about what that meant. I don't...I don't remember the exact progression of the conversation, but it ultimately landed on, she told me that a white flag was a symbol of surrender. And um, that stuck with me. And when I had this dream, I kind of in that moment woke up and connected, you know, the white flag surrender, the story that my grandmother told me. And I sat with it for a little bit. And I think I...I remember telling just like one or two friends about it. And, you know, I'm creative by nature. I like to create businesses. Eryn knows this. Like, you know, I...I have started hundreds of businesses in my head. And I have...I have so many domains that I've purchased that have not...that have not come to fruition. Um, and so many hobbies that I've been like, I should monetize this, you know, like, I should turn
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this into a business. So, um, you know, I...I remember sitting there thinking, well, what if I created white flags that were a symbol of surrender that people could hang in their home...

Vivian: Hmm.

Anna Laura: ...um, that displayed you know, these...these beautiful, just creative pieces of art that were minimal by design so that people asked what they meant, and they were all rooted in different Scriptures of the Bible.

Vivian: Oh.

Anna Laura: And so I sat with it for a little bit, and I started sketching out things. I actually found the notebook that I had back in 2017, cause I recently renovated my home and had to move a bunch of things around. And I found it, and I had sketches of the...of the first flags that I did. And started with just three and pulled from different verses that I really loved. And I did some mockups. We initially like, kind of sketched them on the fabric and painted them on the fabric and then slowly but surely began to develop what is now White Flag. And what we are is we create these handmade linen white flags. They're linen because they represent the linens found in the tomb. I really love symbolism, and I love...

Vivian: Yes.

Anna Laura: ...I love having details that make people just lean in a little further. You know, when they find something out and they're like, oh, that's really cool I love that.

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: And so they're...they're handmade linen flags. They're white and they have...each of them have a different design on it that's very, very minimal but rooted in a different verse to make people ask what they mean. And it gives you a very organic opportunity to share your own story of surrender in your life. Um, and it's been really, a really cool experience. I've had the pleasure of hearing a lot of really beautiful stories in leading White Flag. It's really just an invitation for people to come up and say, let me tell you about my testimony, or let me tell you about this thing that God did. It's been really, really, really cool. One of our bestsellers is our victory flag. And it is the coordinates of the tomb, which I have a story to kind of tack onto that in a second. Um, but it's the coordinates of the tomb. And when people see coordinates, they typically ask, is that where you were born? Is that where you got married? They...they want to know what it represents. And it's really cool to say no, actually, that's where Jesus defeated death. And it starts the conversation. And I remember when I was developing that flag and kind of trying
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to do my research of the exact coordinates, I was really torn because I know that there's kind of a debate about where that exact place is. And I have a really sweet gentleman. His name is John Musselman, and he's studied Scripture for years, and he's just a brilliant, brilliant man. And I called him, and I was so torn, and I was like, what do I do? I want to do this, but I don't know what to put on it. And he said, "Anna, I actually don't think it matters." I was like, "Why?" He's like, "Well, no one actually knows, and people can speculate. But at the end of the day, it's starting the conversation and that's the mission. Is it not?"

Eryn: Oh.

Vivian: That's a great answer

Anna Laura: And I was like, yep, okay. So...

Eryn: Chills with that. That's such a good answer.

Anna Laura: ...so I just sat with it. And he was like, pray on it and put the one you think, you know, you...you want to move forward with. And so I did. So we have the, um, coordinates of the garden tomb on the flag. So...

Eryn: Love that. This is such a good story.

Anna Laura: I love that story. I always have to like tack it on to the story of the victory flag, cause...

Vivian: Yes.

Anna Laura: ...you know, I've had...I've had conversations in person at events where they're like, well what...which one is it? And I'm like, well, I don't think it matters. It starts the conversation.

Vivian: Right, right, right.

Anna Laura: It's one of the two speculated places.

Vivian: There you go.

Eryn: Yeah.



Vivian: Well, you know what's so I...I'm observing you as you're sharing the story, Anna, and as you're describing things, your eyes light up. And you just have this, like I can tell it's from the inside out. Like this...

Anna Laura: Yeah.

Vivian: ...this enthusiasm, this joy, this almost like a...like being in the zone for what God made you to do, you know. Which to me is a combination of a lot of beautiful things. Like you have this...this mind to, put significance to meaningful objects. I'm an ENFJ on the Myers-Briggs. So, the NF apparently means meaning, like things have meanings. But it really...I mean, there's...there's a...a tying, there's a remembering. Like I...I...I pick up rocks, you know, and...

Anna Laura: Me too.

Vivian: ...when I go to different places, you know. And it's like, this one reminds me of when I was here or whatever. So there's the tying into a place, a moment, and in our faith journey, this idea of surrender is one that is a point in time. Where we're like, okay, I am all in. And then it's one that we continue to unfold as life unfolds. We re-up over again of just we lay down our lives over again...over and over again. Like the money is Yours. The house is Yours. The kids are Yours. The career is Yours.

Anna Laura: Mm-hmm.

Vivian: It's all Yours. The relationships are Yours. And that is where true freedom comes is in surrender. So I just love the symbolism and...

Anna Laura: Aww.

Vivian: ...you know, bringing all that together. I think that is so beautiful. And I can see that is very much how God made you to be, to bring...

Anna Laura: Aww.

Vivian: ...these creative elements together. So I...I...

Anna Laura: Thank you.

Vivian: ...think that is amazing and um, how meaningful on...



Anna Laura: Thank you.

Vivian: ...many, many levels. So...

Eryn: Is there a verse or maybe a promise that you've...you've just really held onto Anna during the journey of learning surrender and starting White Flag, but then also just integrating the concept of surrendering in your personal life with kids and maybe even the way that you thought life would look. And it looks completely different. Is there a verse or a promise of God that you've really held onto?

Anna Laura: So I love that Eryn's asking this question, cause Eryn and I have had a lot of conversations about memorizing Scripture. You know, memorizing Scripture is not my gift. Um, but I will say that truthfully for me, just I have many different, um, kind of interactive, engaging devotional books that I've purchased over the years, and I think just getting in it every morning, it's not even necessarily a promise, but a practice that I've been getting into every morning of like the surrender to the...honestly the evolving faith that I have. Like I think that's something that I've had to undo from my beliefs when I was younger to now is that it's not this fixed belief in a box, this fixed faith in a box and it's looking and feeling and it's kind of tied up in a bow. It looks a certain way. I've had to, again, comes back to the adventure with God beyond the ride of like the ups and downs and questions and doubts. And it's just the practice that's truly the surrender for me is like the practice of getting in it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Anna Laura: ...and allowing wherever I'm at in that day to just kind of come out on paper or to move through it through Scripture.

Vivian: Yeah.

Anna Laura: Um, so I would say that there's...I mean there's...my Bible is scribbled in all over the place. There's notes all over my Bible. There's verses that have stood out to me at different points in time. I can't say that there's one in particular around surrender, cause the act of surrender has just been a daily evolving process for me.

Vivian: Yeah, yeah.

Anna Laura: You know what I mean? So...



Vivian: Totally makes sense, yeah.

Anna Laura: Yeah. it's just been an evolution.

Eryn: Anna, I know you've...you've shared just like when you said like the rollercoaster ride with your relationship with the Lord.

Anna Laura: Mm-hmm.

Eryn: And you've had seasons where you've wondered if He hears you.

Anna Laura: Yeah.

Eryn: And then you've had experiences where you're like, oh my gosh, He hears me so...

Anna Laura: Yes.

Eryn: ...and He's so loud. Would you share maybe with the person listening, if they are in that season where they don't know if He's listening or if He hears them, some of the things that maybe you've learned in that relationship with Him, that you'd want to like just give encouragement or just truth over that person.

Anna Laura: Hmm. Yeah, I've had a lot of experiences over the years of feeling like I'm not heard, and I'm not seen by God and then having these really beautiful moments where He very much proves me wrong. Um, man, encouragement. I mean, I think my...my one piece of encouragement is just to continue to have the conversation. I remember having a lot of conversations, even still, like, I'm currently in a season where I'm like, what are You doing? You know, in...in different, areas of my life and I think just continuing to ask those questions. I mean, I'm really such a big fan of getting it out onto paper and journaling, because I think when you're able to see it, you know, the places where you're not seeing Him show up or you feel like you're not seeing Him show up, and then you're able to look back at it and be like, oh my gosh. He actually was there the entire time. I think that's a really beautiful practice. So my encouragement would be just to keep having those conversations and to not hold back from communicating and sharing your frustration, your doubt, your fear, and just writing it all out and getting it out on paper and just watching God kind of connect the dots in front of you. I mean, I've had to do that so many times that I have very specific memories just even saying that, so, yeah.

Vivian: That's actually really helpful and it...it all...it also ties back into the earlier part of our conversation...



Anna Laura: Yeah.

Vivian: ...that as a teenager having questions and having it be safe enough and realizing that God is our safe place, that He's not afraid of our questions or our anger or...

Anna Laura: Yeah.

Vivian: ...our emotions or our doubt. Like those things don't throw God, cause He already knows. Like there's no hiding from Him.

Eryn: Yeah.

Vivian: So might as well lean in. And what you're describing really is to not feel like we have to get it all together before we can bring our true selves to...

Anna Laura: Yeah.

Vivian: ...to God.

Anna Laura: That was a big lesson I learned, I think. Because again, back then that was what I was taking away from my time in church and what I was being taught, was that it just looked a certain way, and it was supposed to look a certain way. It was supposed to be and feel a certain way. And so, yeah, I think just making room for all of it, all of the mess. And I can't...I mean, I just can't tell you how, powerful it is just to give yourself the freedom to share the entire spectrum of emotions that you're feeling with God when you're...when you're in it. It was something that I was taught not to do, and as, like I said, as my faith evolved and I began to have more honest, vulnerable conversations with the Lord and realizing that it truly...it truly was a relationship. I think that's really the point of it all. It wasn't like this untouchable God, you know, in the sky or on a hill. It was a relationship. And I think of it just even in my own relationship with Eryn, where it's like making room for all of the hard things. It's a relationship with God. There's room for all of it.

Vivian: Well, we have so appreciated you, Anna, for sharing your heart and your life and the lessons God's taught you and your honesty, you know. Your...your willingness to just be real in it. And I think of, uh, so many women who also struggle. I've struggled, you know, just feeling like, God, do You hear me? Do You see what's going on? And if You cared, You'd fix this, or You would change this. Or You would, you know.



Anna Laura: Oh my gosh.

Vivian: And all of those. And that honesty and those questions are welcomed by the Lord. And this side of heaven, we may not see the full picture; but...but we will one day. But it's amazing. I...I agree with the idea of journaling because we look back and go, oh, well here's where He showed up. And I forgot that this even happened. And...

Anna Laura: Mm-hmm.

Vivian: ...you know, and in those ways we're just, uh, it's always been that He wants to dwell with us, and that's just our relational God who did not need us, still chose to be in relationship with us and hardwired us to be in relationship with one another. And I feel like this conversation has captured all of that. So thank you so much, Anna, for taking time and for sharing your life. Thank you so much for...for being part of the *God Hears Her* family by sharing your story.

Anna Laura: Oh yeah. Well, thank you for having me. I'm very grateful. it's a lot of fun.

[music]

Eryn: Well, friends. Be sure to check out our website to subscribe to our email list, read the newest blog article, or check out the *God Hears Her* books and devotionals. Find that and more at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Vivian: Thank you 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.

Jade: We also want to give a quick shoutout to Steph and Heidi for all of their help and support. Thanks, everyone.

Vivian: Our Daily Bread Ministries is a donor-supported, non-profit 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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