



GOSPEL *for* LIFE

A Habit Called Faith with Jen Pollock Michel

Season 1, Episode 4 Transcript

[00:00:00] Announcer: Welcome to the Gospel for life podcast. We help churches make disciples. And now, here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:21] Darryl: Hey, it's great to have you with us again today. I'm pleased to welcome Jen Pollock Michel to the podcast.

Jen is the award-winning author of a number of books, including *Teach us to Want*, *Keeping Place*, and *Surprised by Paradox*. She's an American living in Toronto. She is also a wife and a mother of five. She's the lead editor for Imprint magazine, published by the Grace Center for the Arts and the host of the Englewood Review of Books Podcast.

Her latest book, *A Habit Called Faith*, just came out in February. It's a 40-day Bible reading experience designed to help us with faith formation. Jen, thank you for joining us today.

[00:00:59] Jen: This is going to be so fun. Darryl. It's great to talk to you.

[00:01:01] Darryl: I always look forward to when one of your books comes out, so I'm pretty excited. This is great. So in the introduction to *A Habit Called Faith*, you write, "Don't just try thinking your way into faith ... Try practicing your way into faith. Go to church, follow the liturgy, act the part. Let habit take you by the hand and lead you to God ... Faith may have as much to do with habits as epiphanies." I love that section. Jen, why are habits so necessary to a life of faith?

[00:01:33] Jen: I think habits are bodily practices. A lot of them. Not all of them, of course. So just even to think about what you just read.

A lot of times we just imagine the life of faith happening in our mind and not actually in our bodies. And that just cuts off a huge part of the way that God has made us, so that when you show up to church — something that you're doing in your body, and then

when you open your mouth — it's saying you're doing that with your body. And there are just ways that I think these kinds of bodily motions and habits can inscribe faith far more deeply in us than just at the information level. And I think a lot of times I guess I don't know if it's true for you, Darryl. But when I think about my struggles of faith, my experience of faith, it's not always the information that fails me. There are a lot of things that I know to be true of God, true about who I am as his daughter. But sometimes those things just don't feel true.

And I think sometimes it's the habits. It's the practices. It's just the motions of faith where we just we keep at rehearsing that story in a variety of different ways. Some days we feel it and know it deeply in our bones, and sometimes we don't. But the habits sort of carry us through those seasons of wilderness.

[00:02:55] Darryl: I know you're a fan of James K.A. Smith, and he writes about our view of ourselves really being like brains on a stick. And I think what you're getting at is we are far more than that. Habits include our whole being. Is that sort of where you're going with this?

[00:03:14] Jen: Absolutely. I mean, the whole book is sort of built on, or I should say it was inspired by the citation that I had seen by Blaise Pascal, who basically said that same thing. He said, you know, there are some people who they don't really have intellectual questions or obstacles when it comes to Christian faith, but they still don't have a vital experience of faith. And it was his advice: Just practice the motions of faith, and you might find that those motions almost open a backdoor into faith.

And I think that's exactly what James K. Smith is saying. And a lot of his work is that desire; that habit is a hinge of desire that we can often get at. Our desires, for example, are longings for God or are longing for things other than God. And if we simply tell ourselves, "I will believe more deeply," or "I'll just simply cram more information in my head so that I can love God," we may find that that doesn't work.

And so, if it's true that habits are the hinge of desire, that if we go through these motions of, for example, reading Scripture, being with other Christians, singing songs of faith, getting on our knees to pray, fasting, all the kind of praying throughout the day, fixed hour prayer, whatever practice do you want to talk about as we do those things, those might be the hinge by which our desires for God are actually formed, and I think we think of it in the very opposite way. We sort of wait for the desire, and then we say, "Well, the desire will be the catalyst for the habit." As soon as I feel that God is real, well, then I will pray to him. And I think that actually can feel very hopeless sometimes for people, because then they just sort of weight on this emotional experience that never comes. And it's, I think it's very hopeful to say to people practice the habits of faith, and you may actually find that the experience of faith comes on the other side of that.

[00:05:27] Darryl: The whole idea of habits being the gateway to faith is fascinating to me. I've always thought of habits, being like spiritual disciplines, key to the Christian

life. But you write that habits can actually provide entrance into the faith. So what did you mean by this? Because it really is a fascinating idea that habits could actually lead somebody who doesn't believe into a life of faith.

[00:05:55] Jen: I've seen this actually just over the last couple of years, with someone from church and a couple of years ago and now her husband just a couple of weeks ago in my small group, and these are two people who well, first of all, she ended up at church because of a life crisis of the certain death of a friend — guilt that she hadn't reached out to this friend with whom she knew was dying of cancer. And then she gets word that the friend has died and that she hasn't called her, as she had kind of promised that she would. And it's 10 on a Sunday morning, and she's just beset by grief and guilt, and she decides I'm going to go to church and this means nothing to her, she goes. Absolutely. I mean, it means it only means something in a kind of cultural understanding of church. I don't know churches where you go when people die and maybe when you feel guilty, and she searches for a church, and she finds a church that's close to her house, and it happens to be called Grace Toronto Church. And the friend that's just died, her name was Grace, and she thinks, well, this must be a sign.

And so she shows up to church in her pajamas because it was 20 minutes between finding the church and then showing up for the service. And then over the next yearish, she takes up some habits of faith. She starts coming to church regularly. She starts actually coming to a small group. I get involved in a Bible study with her. She's reading the Bible, and she's not doing any of this because she says she believes she's actually one. She's practicing it as if to examine, “Could I believe? Would I believe? What would it even mean to do so? To step into faith?” And then it really was just within a period of months and practicing those habits that things started to make sense for her.

So again, I think a lot of times we think people show up to church with kind of intellectual questions about the faith. Did Jesus really die on the cross? Was he really the son of God? Can we trust that the Bible is true? Is there a god? Is he good? How does he deal with suffering? How can God be good? And how can the world be so broken? We imagine nonbelievers asking all those questions, and some of them are. Many of them are not too many of them couldn't even imagine what reason they would have to take up faith.

And so sometimes even just to see people take up the habits of faith. It's as if those kinds of things become clear to them through the habits. And I think specifically through the habit of reading Scripture, which was key for my friend and then also her husband.

So her husband started attending church with her months after she had been attending, and then this Fall started attending the small group that I led. And he came, saying, “I've seen this amazing change in my wife. I kind of want a part of that. I want a piece of that. But I really have no idea what how I could even step into faith.”

This is a very sort of intellectual, rational kind of person. And it's so interesting because essentially, when he sort of came to that moment of just revelation, where God just really made things clear to him, that it became clear to him that he was to come to God with his heart and in an expression of trust, not because he had all the answers worked out.

And so that's kind of how I imagined this book and just how even, really, I imagine the way that I operate in relationship with people who are not Christians. Sometimes I am just asking them, "Hey, do you want to try some of these habits of faith to see if you might find faith on the other side? Do you want to read the Bible with me? Do you want to come to church with me? Do you?" I don't know. Usually that's I guess, where it starts.

[00:09:57] Darryl: That makes so much sense. I've never heard that before, and yet it just makes so much sense. I love that.

So why do Deuteronomy? You know, it's 40 days of readings through Scripture. I love the book of Deuteronomy, and yet it's not one that we turn to in order to begin to build a habit of Bible reading. So why did you start there?

[00:10:19] Jen: Yeah, I started there truthfully not because I thought because it was my bright idea. I started there because I was in the Gospel of John studying for a speaking engagement that I was doing. And this is quite a while ago before I even really I was thinking about another book, and I was preparing. I'm speaking from the Farewell Discourse, and in the commentaries that I was reading, they were drawing parallels between the Farewell Discourse and John and the Book of Deuteronomy.

Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples. Moses is saying goodbye to the nation of Israel. Jesus is giving his disciples his kind of final words. And Moses is giving these final sermons to the Nation of Israel. And I thought, Isn't that interesting? That piqued my interest.

And then, as I was reading further, they were saying that there are these five verbs that you can find specifically again and John mostly in the Farewell Discourse and also in the book of Deuteronomy. And the five words were: see, live, love, know, obey. And being a word person, being a writer, I started to imagine, what would it look like to actually sort of sell faith? You know if you like, if I had to market it, could you make the case that these five words sort of encapsulate what faith is? Seeing, knowing, living, loving, obeying.

And that sort of set me on the path of wondering Deuteronomy and John. Could this be an interesting project? And I also think the other argument, I guess we're starting in Deuteronomy, and it really could have been Exodus. It could have probably been Genesis too, although I think there are specific things in Deuteronomy that commend it.

But just this idea of getting people in the Old Testament, getting people to see the connections that can be made, actually taking people to some hard parts in the Old Testament, I think we get nervous about people opening their Bible to like a place like that. Yeah, there were some hard things in Deuteronomy. God calls the Israelites to take over the land and to kill the inhabitants of Canaan. What does that mean? That God would actually command that? And so we get nervous, and we want people to avoid those things, and we sort of hope like, “Well, maybe in four years after they're well established in the faith we can take them to the harder part.” But it's even just the way I parent my children. I have always said, “I want to just tell you the truth. The truth may be hard. The truth may not feel super confident, comforting or consoling sometimes. But I'd rather you know it now, and I'd rather you hear it from me.”

[00:13:07] Darryl: I love the way that you handle some of those texts. As I read it, I'm thinking how I would preach those passages. And I just love the angle that you take to make it understandable and even plausible. So I've really been enjoying reading as you work through those texts. It's been excellent.

Another thing in the book I really love are the stories you tell of people who come to faith, and I love the variety of stories. It's not just one kind of story, but it's all different people in all different ways and all different perspectives, and yet people coming from really a place of exploration and question to faith. So why did you include those stories in this book, too?

[00:13:51] Jen: Stories are so powerful, I think stories have an opportunity to tell us things that we couldn't just tell, you know, with points one, two, and three. I think that people read stories and often can identify with them in more deeply personal ways.

So that was one of my favorite parts, actually, of the book was just collecting a very diverse group of people. I mean, they're diverse in age, they're diverse in race, they're diverse in region, they're diverse even denominational affiliation. And the way that they come to faith. And what I really wanted to do is just to be able to say to that person who comes to this book and imagine that there's one way to come into faith, and maybe they couldn't do it the “right” way. I want them to see that there is no right way.

I think that's the thread that connects them all as you see how God is so insistently pursuing of people, how he makes the initiative to reveal himself to people who sometimes are looking for him and people who are sometimes not. Some of my favorite stories are I mean, I have a couple healing stories in there. I for sure have one healing story in there. I've got some more charismatic stories, which isn't my background and certainly has not ever been my experience. But I thought, “Well, I mean, I guess we could take issue with the Book of Acts, too!” But it was so encouraging for me to just be reminded that God's Word is powerful. You see people reading the Scriptures, and that's something that compels them to face God.

Yeah, it was just so wonderful. And I actually have to say that in most of the interviews, at some point, I was crying. The person I was interviewing was crying. Just even to do

it was such a privilege, actually, to be able to hear people just rehearse their story and be reminded themselves, “Oh, God has been so good to me.”

[00:15:56] Darryl: They're beautiful, and it seems so appropriate because Deuteronomy is a story, and then John is a story, and then seeing these modern day stories, it just somehow connects it. I love the stories.

So, Jen, I want to ask you back up a little towards the start of your book. You talk about the way that Bible reading has shaped your life. You call it a keystone habit, one practice that affects incremental, if also monumental, change. So would you unpack that a little? Why is Bible reading so important in your life?

[00:16:32] Jen: I can imagine I could sort of make an analogy, I guess when we moved to Toronto and my kids were enrolled in a French-speaking school, and what did they do when they were learning French? They were just immersed in it every day. The teacher is speaking French to them, and they're just picking up the clues. And it's that immersion experience in the language that allows them to be able to produce the language themselves.

And I think that is what happens to us when we read the Bible. It is God's Word to us, and it can become God's Word in us, too. So that where faith is like a patterning after the ways and thoughts of God, how he sees the world how he sees us, how the story of redemption that he's scripting throughout history through Jesus. And we wouldn't know any of that language, we wouldn't know any of that story, apart from Scripture.

So I think, immersing ourselves in it, it just it feeds our faith. It feeds our faith, our way of seeing the world as God sees it. It's not to say that it's an easy habit because we live in such a distracted world. We want to read everything but the Bible. I mean, we will scroll whatever site that we have to, sometimes just to avoid reading the Bible. I think at least initially, I guess as we start, the habit can feel really hard.

But I am surprised as I talked to Christians who go through seasons, and they feel like their faith is really weak, and when you probe a little into that, they will say things like, “Yeah, you know, I don't have any regular practices or habits. I'm not reading the Scripture.” And sort of like, “Well, if you weren't eating your food every day and you were trying to run a marathon every day, that would be pretty hard.” And especially when we live in a world that just doesn't — faith is not a reflex. I mean, what is reflexive to us as human beings is desire for autonomy and self rule and life on our own terms. And so that's why I feel like getting into the Bible is a really important habit.

And I guess I want to also say that what also is reflexive to human beings is this feeling that God could never love us, that we are so bad and so messed up and so screwed up that we're beyond redemption. And that's not the story that you find in Scripture. What's revealed is a God who remembers that we are dust, who has compassion on his children, whose heart groans within him, and he recoils from doing what justice would really require if he were to visit punishment on us for our own sins.

So all of these things are not self-evident, They're revealed to us through Scripture. I think we just need the daily meal of God, Scripture. Jesus knew that man doesn't live by bread alone — and he's quoting, of course, from the book of Deuteronomy — but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

And that's certainly been my experience in faith. Practicing the habit of regular Bible reading has actually deepened my desire for Bible reading, and my acute sense of need, so that now this is a long-established habit. And it's not to say that I don't have days and seasons where it waxes and wanes. But most generally, what's true is that I do hunger for the Word of God, and I feel faint without it.

[00:20:37] Darryl: It would be easy to see Bible reading as being the equivalent of eating our spinach. We know we need to do it, but it's not necessarily what we crave. And yet, you can get to that point. Charlene and I were at restaurant, actually at a hotel last week, and we ordered breakfast in. One of the things that sold her on this place is that they have salad as part of their breakfast. It's something actually that she's grown to crave now, and it feels like breakfast is incomplete without that. So how do you get to that point where we know we need it, but we don't want to do it just completely as drudgery? We want delight in the Word of God. So what are some ways that we can approach the word of God with delight? Not just, “Maybe it's a thing that I have to do again.”

[00:21:22] Jen: I think it's okay to start with your own curiosities and desires. There's so much in the Bible, and I think a lot of times the drudgery kind of approach is like, “Well, I better start in Genesis. Better make really good run through the Scriptures and start at the very beginning.” And that might be what you need to do. I am certainly a fan of Bible reading plans, and that's personally what I do.

But you know what? Maybe start in the Psalms. Start in a book of the Bible that speaks to where you are starting: Job if you're going through a season of trial or suffering. Start in the Gospels if you just want to remember who Jesus is and be closer to what he did on the cross. So, for example, during Lent is a great time to be revisited in the Gospels.

So I think it's this balance. There are two elements. Try to do something, find some plan, some structure, something to kind of anchor you in your desire to read Scripture. But it's okay for it to be guided by your own curiosities and sort of longings and questions.

I always find for myself that a structure is good, but a structure is always a means to an end. And Bible reading, I think, it is a means to an end. It's not that we just have checked our box, “I read my Bible for the day,” or “God's really happy with me.” Or, “Now I know some theological term that I didn't know before.” We read the Bible to meet God, to hear from God, to commune with God, to deepen our friendship with God, to understand more deeply than he will never leave us never forsake us; that he

inclines his ear to hear our prayer. And so these this is who we learned as we read the Scriptures.

So do something that fosters that. And when whatever you're doing isn't fostering that, not just because it's not fostering that in a day — don't give up on a system just because it didn't work one day or one week. But if you've pursued something for a while and, you know, a couple of months you realize maybe I'm ready for a change, then change. By all means change.

And I think we need accountability too. I want to say this, too. Bible reading is not just an individual discipline, something that we do in community together as the Word is preached. Thank you, Darryl, for being a preacher of the word, as we read it together in small groups and puzzle over it. So having accountability where other people are reading alongside you, and we're also they get to share what they're learning, there's nothing more encouraging.

I've been reading the Bible now, as I've mentioned, for a couple of years with this newer believer. My faith has just ignited because I see her reading the Bible, her just benefiting so much from this habit, growing like a weed. And that just encourages my own habits and practices.

[00:24:42] Darryl: What would you say to somebody who thinks that they're not very good at habits?

[00:24:46] Jen: I would say that we're all not good at habits in some way, shape or form. Well, first, I would say, "Okay. Yes, temperamentally, some of us are more routinized, and so sure. Some people may have an easier time, maybe, with making goals and sticking to them. I happen to be temperamentally one of those kinds of people. You don't have to be like that to make a habit.

And number two, I guess I would say we all do have habits. The point isn't whether you'll have habits or whether you won't have habits. It's just which habits will you cultivate? So we could all inventory our lives, and we could see the regular patterns and routines that we have to our days. You know, whatever it is. You pick up your phone first thing in the morning. What's the first website that you look at? You head down to the kitchen and you make your coffee, or you drink your protein shake, and maybe you have an exercise habit. Or maybe your habit is binge-watching Netflix every day after you finish work. But the point is, you do have habits.

And so examining that and just saying, "Okay, let me be a little honest with myself. I do have habits. Now what am I going to do? How am I going to make some better habits?"

Well, you've got to start small. You cannot attempt something really, really hard. And Darryl, I feel like I feel like you would be much better answering this question because I know you've done so much with habits. But starting small is a really important part of

it. If you attempt something monumental and impossible, you're going to last three days. But attempting something that you feel like it's pretty reasonable.

Let's say there are a lot of great habit building books out there that just sort of give you some very easy tips on how do you start a new habit But it does begin with that intentionality. I'd like to have some new habits. I have recognized I have some bad habits and this is going to take work. It doesn't just happen because you tried it for three days. Habit building is something that really requires a lot of patience, which is another part of the accountability piece. Having some people in your cheering section to say you can do it. And when you fell and tripped, you can get back up.

[00:27:17] Darryl: I love the way that you remind us of community, because sometimes we approach habits so individualistically. That's so helpful.

So then I want to ask you for free consulting advice. How can we do a better job in our churches in helping people develop faith-forming habits?

[00:27:37] Jen: I when I was 16 and I came to faith in Christ, I was so grateful that somebody said to me, "Make some good habits, and here are some suggestions." And they actually quantified it.

It sounds so ridiculously legalistic. And I think that's our fear — that people will interpret any sort of practical advice on habit-building as legalistic form. And as human beings, I feel like we can always take advice and turn into legalism. We can turn anything into legalism. It makes us feel good. It makes us feel like we're in control. It keeps us resistant to grace.

So it's the paradox of saying to somebody, "Okay, everything in your spiritual life depends on God. Faith is a response to God, to what God has done through Christ, to the grace that's available in Christ. You are now united with Christ. You're buried with him. In death, you're raised to walk in newness of life, patterned after his resurrection. This is where all the energy for your spiritual life will come." So we need to say that to people.

And then we also need to say to people like Paul said in the in Philippians, "God is at work in you to will and to work for his good pleasure." We need to get people categories for what I would call consent to grace, or participation to grace.

Or, we could talk about habits as means of grace. What ways do they respond to God in his grace and his activity of grace in their lives? I mean honestly, just telling people, "Have a habit of regular daily Bible reading. Here are some ways to do that. Have a habit of regular prayer. Here are some ways to do that. Have habits of regular fellowship with other Christians where you pray together and confess your sins together and you encourage each other. You spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Here are some ways to do that have some habits of confession, private and public confession. Here're some ways to do that."

We really actually should give people some practical tips in the context of, “This is all by grace. God’s work in your life is by grace. You respond to him because of his active grace in your heart.” But leaving people without any sort of know-how in terms of growing in their faith is actually really discouraging for people, and I think it leaves them to feel as if they’re left to flounder.

Even thinking about this man in my small group who recently became a Christian. I loved his analogy. He said, “I know that the emotions of faith will probably fade. I’ll probably, in a month or two, or in a year, however long it will be, I won’t feel as I do right now at this moment where God feels so real and everything feels so fresh. And I’m just so happy and full of joy. So I know I’m probably going to have to approach my life of faith like I approach my golf game. I’m going to have to just keep swinging.”

If your golf swing is being tweaked by your lessons, you’re going to have to practice. I think you have to practice it 2,000 times before it’s actually inscribed into your muscle memory, he said. So I think it’s going to sort of be like that. I’m like, “Yes, exactly.”

And how encouraging for people to feel like they don’t just have to depend on the emotions of faith, because I think for some people, when those ebb, they worry that faith has ebbed with them. And when we come into people, there’s just really practical ways of connecting with God, connecting with God’s people. It really does feel like an anchor, and I think it’s super hopeful.

[00:31:55] Darryl: I’ve always appreciated your writing, your articles, your books. You have a way of communicating truth with beauty. And I really appreciate that this book is going to be helpful for people to develop a habit of Bible reading and to explore faith. And I know I’m enjoying it as I read through it.

Jen, I wanted to ask you a couple of more personal questions. What are you learning right now?

[00:32:18] Jen: So one of the things I’ve been learning, I guess over the last year, is about a new couple new practices for me, the practice of regular Examen, which is just having, in the morning and the evening, some questions that I regularly ask myself, which keep me paying attention to my own inner life and my own life of faith with God, my walk with God. So I’ve been doing that. And I keep coming to new questions I find that I need to be asking myself.

One of the new questions I would say that’s probably new in the last month is the question, “How can I downsize this idea?” Because it sounds crazy. I just I feel like I’m constantly learning about myself, that I answer every problem with more. You know if something’s not going well, well, then I should just do more. I should just work harder. I should just write more. Everything is more and more and more, and I’ve recognized that’s not always the wisest answer. And sometimes more gets me into a lot of trouble where I’m not able to embrace my limits where I’m not able to embrace my humanity.

And so this is just a theme of my spiritual life For years now, it's just that I am invited into being fully human in my life with God. He doesn't he's not asking me to be superhuman I'm just human, and that means that I have limited wisdom, and I see and that's why I get to seek wisdom from him. And I have limited capacity, and that means laying down things that I can't fix or repair. People, relationships, broken situations, conflicts, their outcomes that I have to lay down that just more is just not an answer. Because really, sometimes more is inspired by fear, fear of the things that won't happen if I don't make them happen.

So I don't know that even just that little practice of Examen has been really helpful, and identifying a question that helps me to see a pattern in my life that's not been super fruitful. I use that word fruitful because that's another thing I've been learning. I've been, I think, especially in the pandemic year, realizing that the category of productivity is absolutely unhelpful and probably unbiblical, depending on how we mean to use it. In various research that I've been doing it, it's far more related to machines than it is to humans. The life of faith in Scripture is described as a fruitful life, and I think fruitful is far more fertile — no pun intended, I guess. I've got a couple of books on my shelf here where I'm learning about trees in Scripture.

I don't know. This could go with so many directions. I'm one of those people that today I'm learning this, and tomorrow I'm off to a new book. But yeah, I guess in the pandemic, especially, I to grow a deeply rooted life that looks like the tree of Psalm 1, the tree that will always it's producing fruit. And it's always in season. And those are some things that I think have been kind of threads, especially in this last year. So I do feel like it's been a year of disruption and a year of learning too.

[00:36:25] Darryl: I picked up some of those themes in your newsletter, and it's got me thinking, Yeah, it's been really good. The whole productivity discussion is very good. I remember you were writing about that recently, and some of the books that you're reading around that, so that's so helpful. You've given me a lot to think about I think I'm going to be rewinding and thinking about some of those things.

Second question, and this is a final question. This is a really difficult time for a lot of us. Not only are we in the middle of a pandemic, at least I hope we're in the middle. Maybe who knows? Right? And right now, as we record this, it's still winter here. What's encouraging you right now?

[00:37:04] Jen: Well, I'm going to go back to one of my new practices for the pandemic. I've been reading the Divine Hours, which is essentially like a breviary. It's a prayer manual four times a day, and I never do it four times a day. I do not want to pretend that I am, you know, some perfectly saintly person that I always remember to pray when I should. But you're supposed to come to prayer four times a day. And what's deeply encouraging about this practice and just picking up this book is every time you open it the first line, the opening line is always a psalm of praise, like an invitation into praise. Hallelujah! Sing your praise to the Lord. Magnify the Lord. The Lord is great he is good.

And the funny thing is that every time I opened that book and I come to prayer, I realized, you know what I really want to talk to God about is what I'm anxious about. What I need is help with the wisdom that I'm seeking for this situation. The help. I need, an intervention that I need for that situation. And then I sit down and I opened my prayer book and I remember, "Oh, that's right. God is worthy of praise. He's actually holding it all together. Scripture tells us that he is sustaining the universe with his word." And so when we're in the midst of the time when it feels like things are really falling apart, when we cannot see our way through to the other side of something, how encouraging to be caught up in the chorus of praise that has actually it's ongoing. We know that the chorus of praise is ongoing in heaven. I mean, if God is outside of time, this chorus of praise has been ongoing since the beginning of time. We are in chorus, together with Christians throughout time, past, present, future. It can blow your mind a little, but that's encouraging to me that. It also draws me up from my little pinhead sized life and the anxieties that are very real and also smaller than I can see. And sometimes when I just step into that chorus of praise I'm reminded of really how big God is, how good he is, how faithful he is and how I'm unfolded in his love.

[00:39:45] Darryl: That's great. You've given me so much to think about.

Well, Jen, I really appreciate your time today. Being an author is a funny thing, because you write and write for months. And then your book is out there. And I just want you to know, as you already do, that I really appreciate your ministry. We have people in our church that are so excited every time one of your books comes out. Authors don't always realize the impact that you're having, but very grateful for you and very grateful for your ministry. So thank you for joining us today.

[00:40:16] Jen: Thank you, Darryl. And I can't wait to open your book, which will be coming out this fall. So I feel absolutely the same way. Thank you. Thank you for the plug.

[00:40:26] Jen: Thank you're welcome

[00:40:28] Darryl: Bye, Jen. Thank you.

[00:40:29] Jen: Bye.