



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 136 – Friendship Transforms with Amy Boucher Pye

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Adkins with Amy Boucher Pye

[Music]

Amy: God has put these desires in us, and He wants us to be fully who we are so that we can love the world, that He can love the world through us. And it's... He takes our desires, and through the Holy Spirit, He transforms us, He changes us, to be more fully ourselves and more fully His child who will love the world.

[Music]

Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

Elisa: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Elisa Morgan.

Eryn: And I'm Eryn Adkins. Have you ever heard the phrase *you become who you hang out with*? Apparently, we adapt to the people we spend the most time with. So, friendship is not only important for our wellbeing, but it's also important for changing and influencing our own character.

Elisa: Thankfully, today's guest has some great insight into how we can be friends with Jesus. Friendship with Him transforms us in the best way. I mean, after all, we want to be more like Him.

Eryn: Amy Boucher Pye has been with us before. If you go all the way back to episode twelve, you can learn more about Amy before we catch up with her today.

Elisa: Let's learn what's new with Amy as we get into this conversation on *God Hears Her*.

Amy: I think the new thing is that I'm a spiritual director.

Elisa: Yeah. And what is that?



Amy: Yeah, because it's a really old-fashioned term. I don't direct anybody, I don't tell them how to live, but I accompany people on their walk with God, noticing where God is present in their lives. It's really a huge privilege.

Eryn: Would you share with us how you got to that point?

Elisa: Yeah.

Amy: Well, I think it's partly how I'm wired, because I love to find out about people, I'm a bit nosy. And I also love to see how God is working in their lives. So, I did a master's in Christian spirituality, which was really good and really hard, and I learned about all these church fathers and mothers, and... but it was very academic, and that was in, back, like, I don't know, 2016. And then... and people already said *well, why do you need to do more? You're already like a spiritual director, people already come to you.* And I said, *well, I want to be equipped.* So, then I did a year-long program of a much more applied thing of learning how to listen, how... how to notice where God is working in somebody's life, how to feed back, and how to have a safe place where people can come and be open. So, it was an... a long process, but it's been a really good one, and... and a fabulous thing to be able to do.

Eryn: How do you decipher between your voice and the Lord's voice? And maybe we'll get into that later, but I do want to ask you that question.

Elisa: Sure, go ahead. Yeah.

Amy: I think that's one of the biggest things as disciples of Christ that we need to figure out is discernment. When is it God, when is it just me? And not to disparage just me, cause God works through us as well, through our desires, and He transforms us through the Holy Spirit, so... and we test. We test does this jive with the Bible. That's our number one test, I think. We talk to mature Christians, we have close friends, you, plural, and I, we have close friends that we try to discuss things with and be open and vulnerable, and we ask God to show us. So, I don't say that I have it right for sure, I get it wrong, too, but God is so gentle, He corrects us even when we get it wrong.

Elisa: The intentionality that you're representing in our relationship with God, you know, it... that is very, well, it's attractive and also off-putting to some people. It's like, wow, you know, that sounds challenging or maybe even scary. And I guess what I want to do is put a little bit of a blinker on and... and lead us into the on-ramp in... into the conversation on friendship with God, because that's one of the topics you've been really focusing in on. And it's bubbling up from this relationship you have with God and this desire



you have to help others sharpen their relationship with God... can you help us understand how you understand a friendship with God, and... and what is it that we get to partake of with Him?

Amy: Definitely. Well, let me start with what you were saying about *that sounds scary*. So, right here as I'm recording this podcast with you two incredible women, God is my producer. I am looking to God, I want Him to produce this episode. This is a way for us to move from our head to our heart, to go *God, You're everything that I need. What do I need right now? What do I need You to be? And how can I submit myself to You? How am I looking at You so I don't have to be afraid, because I don't think that You are a distant judge, or an uninterested deity, or anything like that. But You are my friend*. So, we, in every moment of the day we can say *Lord, You're my chef, how should I cook? Or Lord, You're my, you know, You are my shepherd, You shepherd me through*. So, it's this day to day, moment by moment friendship with a very loving, interested God, who wants us to become more like Him, more like Jesus.

Eryn: There may be some listening that are, like, I... I want to be able to say those things, but I struggle with trusting... whoever is listening, how can they gain trust with Him?

Amy: Well, I think it's... it's bit by bit, isn't it? It's trusting God a little bit and saying *please show me as the faithful God that You say You are*, and going and praying through the Psalms. You know, being honest with God, look at the Psalms, a huge percentage are lament. God wants us to be able to express all this stuff to Him. He's so big, He's so amazing, He's so forgiving, He's so loving. And I think a lot of times we put a lot of fear and all of these kinds of emotions that we think He is going to be really upset or disappointed in us. And He's actually going *I love you, beloved. Come to Me. I love you. Come*.

Elisa: Yeah. Let me give you an example that's bubbling up inside me as I listen to God My Shepherd... as you're talking. Cause I think we make it super holy, and kind of...

Amy: Yes.

Elisa: ... convoluted, and, like, you know, we've got to clean up our act and stuff...

Amy: Yeah.

Elisa: ... okay, so, Dominic, my little grandson, was spending the night and he's eight years old. And he loves to read the "Holy Book of God," he calls it... The Bible... and he doesn't want to read the *Jesus Storybook Bible* right now, he loves that, but he wants to read the NIV, you know, "the real one..."



Eryn: I love that.

Amy: Okay.

Elisa: ... Yaya's Bible. So, we opened it up, and it's late and we've been playing a lot. And I turn to Psalm 23, and he goes *oh, Yaya, we've already read this one...*

Amy: *We're done.*

Elisa: ... and I said *Yeah, I know, Dominic, but we'll see different things in it each time. Oh, okay.* So, he starts out, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastries."
[Laughter] "He leads me besides the quiet waters" *Yaya, isn't that wonderful? That the sheep need to be hydrated?* I mean, I just sat there, listen to him, and I went *That's how personal our God is.* I mean, we don't need to, you and me and Eryn, we don't need to lie down in green pastries for heaven's sakes, but Dominic did... You know, that's what felt really good to him... [Laughter]

Eryn: [giggling] Pastries...

Amy: I love that.

Elisa: Is that a little bit what you're talking about in a really, almost, silly way? But we... we make God so far away that it's hard to connect with Him...

Amy: Yeah.

Elisa: ... and Dominic's childlike eyes opened mine to how present God wants to be with us.

Amy: Yes. I love that. Sheep need to be hydrated. Let's notice that for a minute. Well, we do. And we're such physical beings, aren't we?

Eryn: Yes.

Amy: And we... we can get cranky and angry and hangry when we're not hydrated and we haven't eaten. And God is so concerned about all those things. And it wasn't a silly example, I think it's really very rooted, because we can think *oh, spiritual direction, that just sounds so highfalutin and spiritual and you're better than I am, and...* No! I'm not! No, not at all. I'm grounded like you are.



Elisa: Yes.

Eryn: While we're talking about hydration, and to your point, Elisa, what he said is so sweet. How sweet is it that the sheep are hydrated. Amy, what are some signals that we can look for to see if we are dehydrated?

Amy: Isn't it true with your body that if you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated?

Elisa: I guess that's true. I've heard that.

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: What is the spiritual signal in your life if you are cranky with your friends or your family, if you are snapping at the cashier, if you are, you know, not living the way that you want to live. What steps do you need to take to drink of that living water...

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: ... that Jesus gives you through the Holy Spirit, because He wants to slake your thirst...

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: ... and He will.

Eryn: I notice when I don't have certain disciplines, spiritual disciplines, that I'm practicing on a daily basis that attributes to dehydration.

Amy: And what would some of those be? Like, reading the Bible and praying, and...?

Eryn: Yes. Oh, man. My poor husband... If I am on... if I have an off week of just being centered in talking with the Lord one-on-one, and that looks like journaling, going for walks, sometimes it looks like working out, being in my own thoughts instead of, like, waking up, checking my phone, checking my text messages, checking my emails, like, allowing the day to bombard me instead of waking up and owning the day and... and first starting...

Amy: Yes.



Eryn: ... with the Lord and my conversations in prayer with Him. And even in reading Scripture and studying Matthew 6, or whatever it may be, like, that... wherever I find myself in, I start to operate out of a space of self-sufficiency, which I think is...

Amy: Okay, yes.

Eryn: ... a version of dehydration, would you say?

Amy: Definitely.

Elisa: Oh, yeah. Yup. That self-dependency... That is so huge. You know, thank you, let's... it's so... good that we're bringing up these barriers to friendship. You know, one of them's kind of fear, we've talked about of...

Amy: Yeah.

Elisa: ... you know, He's so holy and I can't get close to Him, and I'm so weenie, you know, I... I can't hear Him, and... but this one of *well, I'm supposed to do it all*, and we just buckle up, *and I'm not laying down in any green pasture or a green pastry, I'm not doing either of those, you know, and I'm not going to drink, and I'm not going to etcetera, because I got this*, and then we crash. You know, we crash. Yeah, that's just who we are. Not being hydrated... what other, besides self-sufficiency, besides fear, what else keeps us from friendship with God, Amy?

Amy: I look at Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and it's really interesting because Martha we would probably characterize as the self-sufficient one who comes and presents herself, who stands before Jesus, the original word in the Greek has this sense of suddenness and authoritativeness when *Lord, You need... my sister's not helping me, tell her to help me...* but Martha, also, is one of the three people in the New Testament to declare Jesus as Messiah, so we see that she might appear to be self-sufficient, but she recognizes the truth. And we look at Mary, and she was sitting at Jesus's feet as a disciple, which was counter-cultural, she was a woman, women could only learn the Torah, the Bible, from their husband or their father, but she sat at Jesus's feet, so, we do laud her for that, but maybe we laud her too much, because when Lazarus died, she throws herself at Jesus's feet and has a crisis of faith. So, she despairs. So, I think we have the self-sufficiency, this is a bit of a long answer, the self-sufficiency, and maybe we also, when we're dehydrated, we despair. God's not here. "Jesus, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died."



Elisa: That's so good. We forget about it...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... and I'm so glad you brought up Mary and Martha and Lazarus, cause that's really the study that you did in your book for *Transforming Love* is... is the relationship the siblings had with each other, and the relationships, the friendships, they each had with Jesus, which were different...

Amy: Yes.

Elisa: ... very different. So, how did... Jesus display this kind of friendship Himself when He was on earth?

Amy: Well, we see in John's gospel that these are people that He loved. It says... "Jesus loved Mar... Martha and his sister and brother," so, these women were probably the most important women to Him besides His mother, and He... He would go there to Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem, and that's where He relaxed. So, Jesus relaxed with friends. I think we often forget that. It goes back, Elisa, to what you were saying of *we think He's so holy*, which He was, don't get me wrong, He was, but He was also human. And He takes them where they're at and He moves them along in their journeys. So, He welcomes Mary to sit at His feet and to learn from Him, but then He also responds to her desperate grief by going and raising Lazarus at a cost to Him, because He knows that the religious leaders are plotting against Him, and with Lazarus's death, that signals to them *we gotta kill this guy*...

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: ... *He says that He's God*. And so, that really does signal the end of His earthy life, and the beginning for us of course. And Lazarus, well, Lazarus, we don't even ever hear from, but He does the biggest change in him because He brings him new life, doesn't He? Brings him back from the dead. So, that's what God does with us. He, through Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, through, because Jesus is risen and He lives in, with, us, so, we might be jealous of Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, but Jesus is with us now here, too. And He takes us on this journey of change and transformation.

Elisa: And He really does that with just about everybody He comes in contact with. I mean, it kind of depends on their willingness, if you look at...

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: ... the rich young ruler, we call him, he's, you know, *what can I do to inherit eternal life*, and Jesus tells him. And... you know, love your neighbor as yourself, you know, love the Lord your God, and... and then he says, *well, I've done that all my life, what else should I do?* And Jesus says, you know, *go and sell all of your riches and give to the poor*, and the rich young ruler goes away sad...

Amy: Yes.

Elisa: ... my church says this all the time, you know, on Sunday morning, you know, *fill out your contact card that's in the pew in front of you, and put it in the basket if you want to, but you set the pace on our relationship. If you're not ready to be contacted, we honor that, and you can come every week and not fill out the contact card. You set the pace.* And I see that in Jesus' relationship with us, you know. He lets us set the pace. Don't you think...? And that's so freeing that He doesn't just... sometimes that gets super convicted, I'll say that, Holy Spirit will, like, [tapping sound] *Elisa!* You know, there's that...

Amy: Yes.

Elisa: ... but most of the time it's Jesus going... it... it's a wooing... *are... are you willing? Are you able? Would you like to be in relationship, friendship, with Me?*

Amy: That's right. Well, look at what He did with Martha, when she did appear before Him with this authoritative suddenness and He says, "Martha, Martha." He repeats her name. There's this *I see you, I hear you, I love you.* "Martha, Martha, you're worried about many things, but Mary has chosen the better way." And so, He's calling her to the better way. But He's not going *oh, Martha, you failed again, you're all worried about feeding Me and My disciples, I didn't text ahead*, but you know, He's just...

Eryn: [giggling] Text ahead...

Amy: ... He's just so gentle, isn't He? And He's... He does that with us. *Amy, Amy, you're worried about many things... come spend some time with Me.*

Eryn: There's no shame in His voice.

Amy: That's right.

Elisa: That's good, Eryn.



Eryn: We sometimes can think that there is, I think that's what keeps us out of friendship with Him...

Amy: Yes.

Elisa: That really grabs me, that thought. And I think what kind of friend am I to myself? Because I assume that God's all mad at me or judgy of me, and if I really stop and listen, I'm the one who's mad at me, I'm the one who's judgy at me, I'm the one who's critical and self-condemning. Maybe that's a way for me to move past and move toward God is to remember He... that's not His voice, that's my icky voice...

Eryn: Absolutely. I mean, I... I... I'm going to botch this quote, but I read it recently where it said *My choices reflect the thoughts about myself. They may affect others, but they reflect how I see and view myself.* And I think that that's what we do. Our choices reflect what we think, and if they're not centered and hydrated and rooted, and that's why I said my poor husband, because I'll start, like, grabbing at him to be somebody that can hydrate me, and... he... can't and won't, and shouldn't, right?

Elisa: Right, right.

Eryn: We... we go and grab for the things are the physical to remedy something that is an eternal experience...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ... so yes, I mean, I would agree... What... Amy, what do you think about that?

Amy: Oh, I think you're spot on. Definitely, yeah. I... I love... I love this theme of hydration, because we are... the sheep get thirsty. We get thirsty, and I think we kind of disparage that in a way.

Eryn: Yeah.

Amy: It's like... oh, well, I don't need to be thirsty. Well, I am thirsty, and... and it shows our humanness and our need for God, and we reach up to God *oh, please refresh me. Please slake my thirst.* And He delights to do that. He runs towards us with His living water.

Eryn: Yeah, yeah. We're talking about friendship, and friendship with Jesus, and I can't help but think about the friendships that we have in our personal lives where maybe we're watching them wrestle with having a relationship, a friendship, with Him? Maybe getting confused on is this His voice, is this my



voice, and we're watching our friends do that. Sometimes when we watch our friends do that, at least for me, I can judge. I can pre-judge. I can go *oh, that's not Him*. But I don't know if I... if that's true, right? How can we be friends to our friends that are in a, maybe, a... they're in a struggle with being in friendship and walking with Him and deciphering His voice?

Amy: Well, I think we can just love them. I mean, I know that sounds kind of, maybe, too simplistic, but to be a safe place where we aren't judging them, or we're asking, and we say *Lord, I really want to love So-and-So. Please help me to love as You would love them, and help me to be a safe place where they can process and also not to rescue them, either, not to step in and go oh, I could sort this out, you know...* I'll... what do you... what do you think, both of you, Eryn and Elisa?

Elisa: I love that. Well, I'm thinking of a friend I have who's a little older than me, and he grew up in the church loving God deeply, involved in Bible studies, just deeply sold out to God, but through a number of situations in his life, he lost his trust in Jesus. He really did. And when I'm with him now, you know, he will call himself, you know *I... I'm not a Christ follower anymore, I'm not like you*. And I, something inside me just goes *mmmm, yeah, you are*. I just... I just hold up this reflection... which goes back to what you were talking about, Amy, of, you know, you may have turned away from God, but He is right there, and he'll say things like, you know, *I'm... God just doesn't view me that way, or, God's done with me*, and I just try to go *no, He's not*. You know, and... and *I am here to represent that reality to you, that I'm staying in your life*, and so, that's kind of a dramatic one, but I think we all think we're kind of the exception, a giant exception to God's love. You know, He loves the whole world except for me, because if you knew what was really inside of me, you wouldn't love me either. And so, we make this conclusion, and so, Eryn, what a great question. How do we help our friends, and, yeah, staying, telling them the truth, sharing times in our lives when we felt like we were the big exception, humbling in saying *this is what I need to reveal to God that I still need Him in*, you know, those... I think those kinds of... and inviting them to walk alongside, and asking for help too, maybe?

Eryn: I agree. I think it's also accepting that it might be a little uncomfortable.

Amy: Yes.

Eryn: Love can be very uncomfortable.

Elisa: It really can.

Amy: Yes. Not being afraid to go into that pigsty with them and get a bit muddy.



Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: Yeah. And be okay to sit in some tension. Like, I remember I had a friend that I was just, like, *oh, she's... she's a hurting... she doesn't believe that God is for her. She's created a... a guard against Him. She's operating out of a space of self-sufficiency.* I can see that, because I used to be that. And so, for me, I want to be an example of that. I want my life to be an example of what I once was and what I am now, and the journey that the Lord took me on. But how... you know, how do you do that in not a preachy way, right? You just live your life as an example, and you hope that your friend can start to see the glimpses of the friendship you can have with the Lord that may chisel away as some of the... the things that have hardened them from trusting Him, maybe some of the things that they've chosen to do out of a space of self-sufficiency, out of self-protection, not believing that He... He really does want to walk with you and love you. Cause I think our wounds and I think our human relationships can affect our view of our friendship with Jesus.

Elisa: Amen. And so, talking to all of us, Amy, this friendship with Jesus, how can it change our lives? You know, and... and maybe how can it change our overall relationship with other people, too? If... If we let Jesus be our friend, and if we become His friend, there's a wild thought.

Amy: He will change us because He loves us. And what I've found is that He's making me more into who He created me to be. So, I'm more confident, I'm, I think, more loving. I mean, we're not good judges of this ourselves, are we? But other people who have seen me have noticed, praise God. I mean, I still, don't get me wrong...

Eryn: That's the example piece, right?

Amy: Yeah. So, it's... and the thing is, we think *oh, if I follow God then I'm gonna have to do something I hate.* Well, no. It goes back to desire. God has put these desires in us, and He wants us to be fully who we are so that we can love the world, that He can love the world through us. And it's... He takes our desires, and through the Holy Spirit, He transforms us, He changes us, to be more fully ourselves and more fully His child who will love the world.

Eryn: Was there a point in your life that brought you to this aware... maybe, like, a story that you can share with us that maybe brought you to this point. Maybe something that you wrestled with in having friendship and then surrendering and learning the friendship.



Amy: Yes. Well, I think it was because I had an answer to... a huge answer to prayer and I married my husband, but then I moved to England. And I had been a... you know, a quote unquote “successful,” single, professional woman living in Washington D.C. with tons of friends, and then I moved there, and we moved twice in a... quick succession and I had no friends. And I felt so lonely, so unheard, and I prayed, and I’m like *Lord, please, please send me a friend.* And He sent me three...

Elisa: Wow.

Amy: ... and they just, it was such a ministry of receiving the goodness of friendship, something that I had taken for granted before when I had so many friends, and then I didn’t have any friends. So, I think that has really helped me to be a better friend, to send that text, to send that email, to ask to pray for people, and to ask God *how can I show love to this person?* And He will show us how to love that person and how to be a better friend. And then... then you get all these great friends who love you, and know you, and call you up when you need to, and convict you when you need that, and, you know, I got a text this morning, “I see you, Amy. I see what you’re going through. Keep on and have some time with God by yourself, too.”

Elisa: Friendship with Jesus changes us into a better friend to others. But... but as we... as we think about that, you’re really challenging me, and I’m hearing inside myself this question of *how does Jesus want me to be a better friend to Him?* And you’re being so honest about texting your friend, or noticing your friend, or being intentional with your friend, and maybe the answer, and please expound on this and tell me what you think, is that we are as intentional with Jesus in loving Him as we would be with a friend. He helps us love that other friend, but then, can we love Him back?

Amy: Yes. Well, it goes back to what Eryn was saying, how she’ll get a bit aaaaaah, and she’ll go for a walk or she’ll have time in the Word, and I love that going for a walk with Jesus. I love to do that because it takes us outside of our, you know, if we’re stuck inside, and we go and we look in nature, and we... we can just even almost grab Jesus’s hand in our imagination and just chat, and talk, and receive from Him. We do want to laud God as holy and other and majestic, but [music] we can also hold His hand...

Elisa: I love that.

Amy: ... throughout the day.

Elisa: And we can invite Him to sit in the passenger seat when we’re on errands, or...



Amy: Yes.

Elisa: ... you know, next to us on the couch while we're reading, yeah.

Amy: Definitely. Thank you for that. That's very applied, isn't it? Because that's what life is. It's the day to day, moment by moment, putting our hand on our heart and practicing the presence of God and reminding ourselves that Christ lives within us through the Holy Spirit if we believe in Him.

[Music]

Eryn: Jesus is with us in every moment. We can invite Him into anything we are doing.

Elisa: It was so fun to be with Amy again. Well, before we go, be sure to check out our website to find a link for Amy's new book *Transforming Love*. You can find that and a link to join our email list on our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Eryn: Thank you for joining us, and don't forget. God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you, because you are His.

[Music]

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

[Music]

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