



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 139 – Moving Through Grief with Chriscynethia Floyd

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Adkins with Chriscynethia Floyd

[Music]

Chriscynethia: My friend, her name is Soha, out of my church in New York, she calls me up one day and she goes, *Crissy, I just need you to be open to what I'm about to say to you. I want to call you Sunday at seven and I just want to pray over you.* And I was so angry... and I was like *you can call all you want...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and she tells me *you don't have to say a word. You don't have to pray with me, you don't... you don't even have to say hello to me. Just pick up... just, please, just pick up the phone...*

Eryn: Yeah.

[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*.

Eryn: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Eryn Adkins.

Elisa: And I'm Elisa Morgan. Often in our lives we may feel like we're in a pit of despair. Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for joy and a time for grief. Which time do you feel like you're in right now?

Eryn: Today's guest has been brought out of the pits of despair because of good friends and the places where God led her before tragedy struck. Chriscynethia Floyd is the vice president of Our Daily Bread Publishing. As you'll learn, she has done many amazing things in her life.

Elisa: Let's start by asking Chriscynethia what she was like as a twelve-year-old on this episode of *God Hears Her*.



Chriscynethia: Twelve? Difficult.

Eryn: Okay.

Chriscynethia: Difficult times. My sister had already left for college, she's ten years old... she's ten years older than I am...

Eryn: Okay.

Chriscynethia: ... my brother probably was in college just a year, and he's eight years older than me, and so I became an only child... and... and that was hard...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and it was especially hard because my mother, it was the beginning, or... or the revelation of her mental illness...

Elisa: Oh boy.

Chriscynethia: ... the twelve-year-old me was just in a lot of despair...

Elisa: Oh goodness.

Chriscynethia: ... because my mom had been, probably at that point, institutionalized. And back then there were serious institutionalization...

Eryn: Right. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... you know, it just looked different than it does now. Mental hospitals and things like that, and so multiple visits...

Eryn: And the treatments that they do then versus now...

Chriscynethia: And the treatments, exactly...

Eryn: ... is significantly different. Yeah. Yeah.



Chriscynethia: ... extreme... extreme. But I had my dad... so God bless him, but it was really hard for him. You know, I think it was one of the first times I saw him cry when he had to tell me that, you know, he had to... my mom had to be committed.

Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: You know, and he just sat me, I remember, he sat me on his knee. I was, like, way too big to be sitting on his knee by the way...

Elisa: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Chriscynethia: But...

Elisa: But he wanted to hold you close during that minute...

Chriscynethia: Yeah. Yeah. And he sat me, and... and I had been visiting with my... aunt and uncle, he came to get me, basic because he needed someone to watch me, and he came to get me after having her committed, which was just, I think...

Elisa: Wow.

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... very devastating for him. Something new, I mean, what do you do...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and... and just trying to, he had to grapple with how to find help...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... that was certainly a part of my twelve-year-old history...

Eryn: Yeah. So, were you the youngest? I'm hearing...



Chriscynethia: I'm the youngest.

Eryn: Okay, so you were the youngest...

Chriscynethia: Yea, I'm the baby. Yeah. Yeah.

Eryn: You're the baby. So, how did that affect the family dynamic with your sister being ten years older, what was her response like in that time?

Chriscynethia: Yeah. My sister would tell you that everything's hindsight.

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: Like, she would say *oh, yeah, I always felt that type of action that my mom would do was very strange or what she did there didn't make sense*, but I think back then they just chalked it up to *oh, that's... that's her personality, that's what she does...*

Eryn: Yeah. Okay.

Chriscynethia: And, you know, she's quirky... You know, I think some of that, people just thought *oh, she's very quirky*, but no, there were... some serious issues that came to light. You know, my sister and both my brother I think felt a little guilty for not being there to some extent, but my sister also said once she couldn't help that she was older...

Elisa: Right.

Chriscynethia: ... but I will say that they... they are fabulous siblings. Still are. I'm still very close to my siblings. And they did not, even though there were times I felt really lonely, they didn't forget about me.

Eryn: Yeah. Oh, that's beautiful.

Chriscynethia: There... there were lots of calls and a lot of check-ins, and tons of summer visits with them, because once they left home they usually did summer school. Well, they were actually in Washington D.C., my brother went to Georgetown and my sister went to Howard University in... Washington D.C., so there were lots of visits to Washington for the summer just to...



Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... see something different.

Eryn: Have a reprieve, and...

Chriscynethia: Yeah.

Eryn: ... Just... yeah.

Elisa: And where were you growing up?

Chriscynethia: North Carolina. I grew up...

Eryn: Oh!

Chriscynethia: ... in a small town, which probably wouldn't be considered very small at this point, is the bedroom community of Charlotte...

Eryn: Okay.

Chriscynethia: ... Gastonia, North Carolina...

Eryn: Yeah, I know the Gastonia...

Chriscynethia: ... specifically that region was heavily textile. My mother actually worked in textile manufacturing for a good part of her life...

Eryn: Wow.

Chriscynethia: ... I mean, I think upwards of twenty years. And I do believe some of that contributed, cause it was very hard work. Some of that contributed to, you know, her illness... I tell people that there's nothing I'll ever do in terms of an occupation or a hard day at work that will ever, ever, ever amount to what type of work my mother went through...

Elisa: Oh mercy...



Chriscynethia: ... Yeah. I just...

Elisa: That's amazing.

Chriscynethia: ... Yeah, I just... there's just nothing I'll ever be able to do...

Elisa: Just rough. Really rough.

Chriscynethia: Very rough.

Elisa: And physical...

Chriscynethia: I mean, yeah, she worked in a company that made thread and spooled it, so she's on the line and if she put her fingers too closely to it, she'd, like, lose a finger, and she... she'd lose a couple of tips. I mean, it's here and there, she'd cut, the thread moving down the line so quickly could hurt her and my parents, oh God bless them, I appreciate it now, but certainly growing up we did not like it... like this, but they actually made us work in those mills... as...

Elisa: So, you knew first hand...

Chriscynethia: ... yes. Yes. And for my dad, it was a... a lesson on *okay, if you're going to stay here this is what the industry looks like*, you know, this is what it looks like. My sister says that on the first day of her... her time on the floor of one of those... plants, she said *I knew I was leaving town, cause I knew I was leaving town and I'm even sure that I... it was... I was going to stay in the country...* [laughter]

Elisa: He was kind of smart...

Chriscynethia: Yeah.

Eryn: I know.

Elisa: ...and gave you a good of it.

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: And for me, I worked in a...



Eryn: And to see hard work.

Chriscynethia: Yes. Yeah, oh yes...

Eryn: First-hand.

Chriscynethia: First-hand. For me, I worked in a plant that made Christmas ornaments. So, I would be at the very end of a line boxing the... the ornaments as they came off... came through the painter, and they would be very warm and hot. So [blowing sound]...

Elisa: Oooh.

Eryn: So, you don't break them.

Chriscynethia: ... you don't break...

Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and, you know, I'm tossing them, and then...

Elisa: Are they breakable?

Chriscynethia: Oh yeah, they're breakable at this point...

Eryn: Oh gosh.

Chriscynethia: ... oh yeah, and I would leave with glitter in my hair...

Eryn: Yes.

Chriscynethia: ... and I would leave with... paint, you know, kind of...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... dyed on the tips of my fingers by picking them up...



Elisa: Colorful!

Eryn: I love it!

Chriscynethia: Colorful, and...

Elisa: You've always been colorful...

Eryn: Yes.

Chriscynethia: And so... Yeah, perhaps...

Eryn: How old were you at that point?

Chriscynethia: Oh, I would've been sixteen.

Eryn: I'd bet. So, fast track us to the sixteen to then the twenty...

Chriscynethia: Well, I would say I'm going to go back a little. In junior high, my course teacher, her name was Harriett Gilbert, she discovered that I have a voice. I have a singing voice, which, I had no clue because I was in the church junior choir for a stint, didn't really sing much. But I was put into chorus, and she recognized I had this voice. Now, I didn't know the...

Elisa: Wonderful.

Chriscynethia: ... extent of this voice. I had no idea. And she fudged my age for a county festival, and I show up at this festival, this... this chorus festival, and someone's on the piano, the accompanist, someone from my neighborhood...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... that grew up with my sister, and she goes, my nickname is Crissy, she goes *Crissy, what are you doing here?* And I go *I'm just here singing like everyone.* She says *you're... you're too young, you know, everyone around here is, like, ninth or tenth grade.* And I go *oh, well, I didn't know.* Well, she had fudged and... because she thought I could...



Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... one, handle, vocally, being in the festival. And so...

Eryn: Wow.

Chriscynethia: ... she really started my music career, and that took me, got a degree in music, I am specially trained from the American Music and Dramatic Academy out of New York City...

Elisa: Oh, my goodness.

Chriscynethia: ... and went to University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a small vocal scholarship, and I've just been blessed. I mean, it really truly is a gift that God gave me, and it's the gift that I think that brought me out of all of that despair...

Elisa: Oh goodness.

Chriscynethia: ... because my brother had his gift of athletics, my sister is just a brilliant person, spent time in law, and I needed something. And I think Harriett Gilbert came around to discover this just in time for me to realize *oh, I'm special, too. God has given me something special.* I mean, He gave me a whopping voice in a very young child...

Elisa: Wow. Wow.

Chriscynethia: ... like I had this thirteen- fourteen-year-old operatic voice that I didn't even really understand at the time. I had no earthly idea.

Elisa: Did this become your career for a season?

Chriscynethia: For a season, yeah, it did. For... for a season I had the pleasure to sing around the world... to sing for presidents... dignitaries like... Desmond Tutu... just been really blessed at the latter end of the crusades for Billy Graham, to be part of a group to sing for some of those crusades, and so, yeah. It just...

Eryn: That's so cool.



Chriscynethia: ... it... it changed my life. It made it possible for me to stand in front of an audience of twenty-five thousand and sing solo...

Eryn: Wow.

Chriscynethia: ... you know, which also then led to this role of leadership. Just being able to stand up, stand out, and lead in a way. And, frankly, if I didn't have that experience, I don't think that I'd be the leader that I am today...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and I'm just very grateful and... praise God for it. Just very lucky. I mean, when I think about that kid who felt so alone, who felt not special at all...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... just... just not remotely special, to hear my voice and to hear it come out of almost a child was just uncanny.

Eryn: You know, you said something so beautiful, you said, "I didn't know that I had this voice inside of me..."

Chriscynethia: Yeah.

Eryn: ... and I... I just love that visual, because I think many listening don't realize that their voice matters and that they have one inside of themselves, and I just mean, I don't mean from a beautiful singing perspective, but just to take space.

Chriscynethia: Yes. It's true. It's... the voice gave me a voice...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... being able to speak up for myself. Being able to speak up for others who felt more inclined to let others run over them.



Elisa: These days you have morphed into using your voice in other ways, specifically helping other people find their voice...

Chriscynethia: Yes.

Elisa: ... Can you tell us how your journey into publishing, into books, you know, began?

Chriscynethia: Yeah. So, I moved to New York City in, I think, 1991, first to go to... theater school, I studied... theater, and then also trained classically there in the city and after leaving school I needed a job, and I had also grown up around a children's librarian, my aunt. It was another way of escaping, books, for me when I was a kid and going through what I went through. And I said *oh, well, between gigs, between singing gigs, I'm off the road and, you know, I need a job. It is New York City, everything's very expensive*, I decided to take a job at a bookstore... Barnes and Noble. Yeah. And I worked in this children's-only bookstore, freestanding bookstore, in upper east side New York for a number, well, maybe two years, and they were so gracious. They'd let me leave to sing for a stint, and then they'd let me come back and manage the store again, it made...

Elisa: Oh my gosh, that's awesome.

Chriscynethia: Yeah.

Eryn: Really conducive to what you needed.

Elisa: Yes. Yes.

Chriscynethia: Exactly what I needed, and more importantly, they kept me kind of on the payroll, which allowed me to build up some longevity with them. And then I was asked to interview for a national buyer position in the corporate office... There seemed to be something that someone saw in me that they thought could be beneficial in their corporate office...

Elisa: You're so humble.

Chriscynethia: ... and [laughter] so...

Elisa: They saw your strengths. I mean, it's amazing. And your gifts.



Eryn: Yes.

Chriscynethia: Yeah, and so...

Eryn: And your voice. [Laughter]

Elisa: Yup, yup.

Chriscynethia: Yeah, so I... went to work in their corporate office and I was still... doing some singing on the side and meeting really neat authors, and just having fun with books. Just having fun with... It was just absolutely a... a thrill for me, and a buyer could make or break a book...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and another area where I had no earthly idea how much power I had [laughter]...

Elisa: Yes.

Chriscynethia: ... not that I would just wield it...

Elisa: Right, right.

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... but, you know, we're reviewing...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... books from publishers and say *oh, yeah, let's put it on this table, the front of the store,* and, you know, I'm just thinking this is part of my...

Eryn: And this shelf...

Chriscynethia: ... *on this shelf, let's face it out...* You know, it's that... and I just enjoyed it and got to meet... one of my heroes, Julie Andrews.



Elisa: Oh, my goodness!

Eryn: [Gasping] What?!

Chriscynethia: Had tea with Julie Andrews...

Elisa: Oh, that's fun.

Eryn: Oh, my goodness.

Chriscynethia: ... and she sat to my right and I couldn't say a thing. I was absolutely... I was stunned. And people at the table were wondering *why isn't Chriscynethia saying something to Julie Andrews?* So, Julie Andrews gets up and she goes off to speak to another table, and someone comes by and says *how is it? How did it go?*

Elisa: And you're like *well..*

Chriscynethia: I start crying. I said *oh, no, I could...*

Elisa: Missed your chance...

Chriscynethia: ... *I couldn't say... I just missed my opportunity, I'm so upset...*

Eryn: Like, *it didn't go! I didn't say a thing!*

Chriscynethia: And as this person, her name's Anne, was walking back to her table, she passes Julie Andrews on the way back to my table, and Julie Andrews looks at me and says *why, Chriscynethia, what a lovely dress you're wearing...*

Eryn: Oh!

Elisa: Oh!

Chriscynethia: ... and she sits there and just talks to me...

Elisa: Oh gosh.



Chriscynethia: ... for ten minutes, and we talked music and we talked voice, we... we talked about so much, but, you know, she... she made it so comfortable for me at that point, cause she realized I was just, like, stunned...

Eryn: And I love that she talked directly to you, she was so intentional.

Chriscynethia: And... she talked directly to me. Very intentional.

Eryn: For you to be seen.

Chriscynethia: And about two... two weeks later, we... we had a managers meeting, and she was giving the address to the managers, and she... we were backstage, and I walked by backstage, she goes *Chriscynethia? How are you?* And I looked over at my boss and go *she remembers my name!!* [laughter]

Elisa: There's a powerful lesson right there, isn't it. Wow.

Chriscynethia: So... yeah, very, very... wonderful experience, but... and, you know, so I spent time with them, I think upwards about ten years, and... and then did some non-profit work, and because of the nature of the role I had at Barnes and Noble I got to know people in publishing. A really dear friend of mine, Tracy, worked at the time for Zondervan. He knew I was a Christian, and in fact he and his wife would often come to my church in New York... to visit for special occasions, whether it was a... an Easter service or something like that, but at this point, I'm working for Harper New York, Harper Collins New York...

Eryn: Okay. Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and someone from Zondervan calls the president of sales and says *hey, you know, we'd like to interview Chriscynethia for this role out here, you know, in Grand Rapids.* And Harper Collins owns Zondervan, and so that was, like, they needed to ask permission...

Eryn: Got it, okay.

Chriscynethia: ... for that conversation, and it was probably the first time in my career where I got on the plane and went to... to interview for another job where everybody knew I was going to interview for another job...



Elisa: Yeah, it wasn't a secret...

Chriscynethia: ... It was so weird! It wasn't a secret.

Eryn: [inaudible] ... secret and you didn't have to hide it, also.

Chriscynethia: I didn't have to, it was weird.

Eryn: Yeah. You're like *I don't feel like I'm betraying anyone here.*

Chriscynethia: I think that... right? [Laughter] And so, I got on a plane in March of '07 or something like that, and it was a gorgeous March day in Grand Rapids, which...

Elisa: Which is very rare.

Eryn: That's rare.

Chriscynethia: But I didn't know that.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Oh, God was... God was sly...

Eryn: So you were like *I love Grand Rapids! This is awesome!*

Chriscynethia: *The sun is out!* [Laughter] *The sun is out.*

Eryn: *The birds are chirping!*

Chriscynethia: Oh, my goodness...

Eryn: *People are nice!*

Chriscynethia: *It feels like it's seventy degrees!* That's the last time...



Eryn: You're getting front... you're getting front parking spots! I mean, it's a good day. It was, like, God was like, *come to Grand Rapids*. [laughter]

Elisa: I love it. I love it.

Chriscynethia: Oh, my goodness. But I remember one colleague out of New York said *you're going to go work with the Christians?* And I said to her, I was like, *I'm one of those Christians...*

Eryn: I love that.

Chriscynethia: *... are you kidding me, I'm one of those Christians!* She says *yeah, yeah, you one of those Christians, but...* but she's like *there's a whole building of them!* It's like *yeah, and I'm looking forward to that*. [laughter]

Eryn: I love that. That's such a real, honest conversation.

Chriscynethia: God was leading me, specifically, because He knew, God knew I needed to be at Zondervan for what I was about to go through. Right about a year before moving to Grand Rapids, so this would have been in '06 or something, I met a wonderful man, and... Christian fellow, just a godly man who also happened to be a classically trained musician. We met in New York, we happened to both be from North Carolina...

Eryn: What?

Elisa: Oh, wow.

Chriscynethia: I know! And we started dating, and I had waited so long to meet someone like James. And just a beautiful pianist. And so, there was every intention at... at that moment when we were dating, and when I moved that our relationship, we would, you know, talk further about things, right?

Eryn: Yeah, yup.

Chriscynethia: ... but it wasn't to be, because few months into living in Grand Rapids, I lost him to a stroke...

Elisa: No!



Chriscynethia: ... at thirty-six years old.

Elisa: Oh, Chriscynethia!

Chriscynethia: At thirty-six years old he passed away of a stroke, and...

Elisa: And... were you there?

Chriscynethia: I wasn't there...

Elisa: No.

Chriscynethia: ... I got the call and...

Eryn: Oh, that is so tragic.

Chriscynethia: ... and made my way back to Connecticut to be, really, by his side until... until he passed away.

Elisa: I am so sorry.

Chriscynethia: And I do believe that the way I was surrounded by my colleagues and my friends at Zondervan, just, is the reason, one of the reasons, why God moved me in this direction.

Elisa: It's like... just nested you in His little hands...

Chriscynethia: It is.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ... to hold you through that season.

Chriscynethia: Yeah. He knew I would need help to be cared for and to be... loved on, and so that was... became a really, really tough season. And I would say that season... lasted longer than I ever expected...



Eryn: Really? Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... you know, just the grief. The grief of just finally meeting someone and... and feeling really connected to someone and... and then trying to understand...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... how God could allow that...

Eryn: Yeah. Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... to happen.

Eryn: How did that affect your relationship with God in that season?

Chriscynethia: Oh, I was angry.

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: I was so, so angry. In fact, my friend, her name is Sohah, out of my church in New York... she calls me up one day and she goes, *Crissy, I just need you to be open to what I'm about to say to you. I want to call you Sunday at seven and I just want to pray over you.* And I was so angry... and I was like *you can call all you want...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and she tells me *you don't have to say a word. You don't have to pray with me, you don't... you don't even have to say hello to me. Just pick up... just, please, just pick up the phone...*

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and... and I said *fine, if that's what you want to do...*

Eryn: Yes. Oh, which I love that you would still be open to it, versus, like, shutting it down...

Chriscynethia: Yeah. Yeah.



Eryn: ... and being like *no, not even you can get in*. You know?

Chriscynethia: I know, right?

Eryn: That's beautiful.

Chriscynethia: And... and every Sunday at seven o'clock Sohah was calling from Pennsylvania. She had moved to Pennsylvania by that point...

Elisa: What a friend.

Chriscynethia: ... and...

Eryn: That's so inspiring.

Chriscynethia: ... and she would just pray. I mean, she's a praying woman to begin with, but she'd just pray over me, and then I'd say *okay, bye*. [Laughter] You know?

Elisa: Seven o' five, I'm done. Yeah.

Chriscynethia: Okay.

Eryn: What a good friendship, though, that she's like *still love ya, still gotta call ya*.

Chriscynethia: [inaudible] Okay, bye. See...

Eryn: Bye!

Chriscynethia: ... and she... and she'd say... and she'd say *I'll call next week! Click! I'll call next week!*
Click!

Eryn: So funny.

Chriscynethia: And gradually, I started to pray with her. And I can't... I don't know at what point that started to happen, but, I mean, it could've been a good year, cause I think, I believe we did this almost three years...



Elisa: Oh my.

Chriscynethia: ... two to three years when she'd just call, and... and the other blessing, if you want to think about mourning the joy of, you know, losing James, was that I was introduced to my... my dog, Lightning Bolt. And...

Eryn: What kind of dog?

Chriscynethia: English Spring Spaniel. A colleague of mine, a really dear friend now, knew I loved dogs, but I was in sales and I was travelling and... and I would just salivate over dogs. You know, people would bring pictures of their dogs, *oh, look at that dog!* And Jaime comes to my office one day and she says *hey, at five thirty we're going to drive down to Lansing, we're going to meet your new dog in front of the Magic Johnson statue.* [Laughter]

Elisa: She... she had it planned, yeah.

Chriscynethia: And it's like, *I cannot... I can't...*

Eryn: [giggling] The Magic Johnson statue...

Chriscynethia: ... I know, I know! It's like *we're going to meet your new dog.* And I said *I can't possibly do that.*

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: *Who's going to watch the dog when I travel?* She goes *I'm going to watch the dog!*

Eryn: What a friend!

Chriscynethia: *I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it.*

Eryn: You've got good friends.

Elisa: You have good friends.

Chriscynethia: What that did for me was, it took my mind off myself to having to care for this puppy...



Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... you know. And... and a puppy that needed me for survival, right? And you know, I just lost Bolt a month shy of his fifteenth birthday.

Elisa: That's amazing! That is amazing.

Chriscynethia: Yes.

Elisa: Oh, Bolt.

Chriscynethia: Yes, Lightning Bolt. Yeah, Bolt. And I miss him, but oh, my goodness, this dog was really... therapy dog for me, but a gift from God, because I needed that. I needed a being during that time. And it was just... just for me a very beautiful, beautiful relationship with my doggy, and... and very thankful to my friend Jaime for... for bringing him into my life.

Eryn: Did you experience a new wave of grief when he passed away?

Chriscynethia: Oh yeah.

Eryn: That he was kind of connected to...

Chriscynethia: All of that?

Elisa: James. James.

Eryn: James? Yeah.

Chriscynethia: James. Oh yes, oh yes. And... and his passing was... also difficult because I had lost not even a year ago my five-year-old dog unexpectedly...

Elisa: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... to cancer. So, I lost two dogs in under a year.

Eryn: There is nothing like a grief like that, when... when your dog has been a part of healing...



Elisa: Exactly.

Eryn: ... with other things that...

Chriscynethia: Yes.

Eryn: ... happened externally in this world. That dog is, I just think, a reflection of God's love and comfort.

Elisa: Bring us to now, Chriscynethia, and how God is nesting you and still giving you voice in the work that He's called you to, even in grief.

Chriscynethia: Yeah. Well, my journey here in Christian publishing is an interesting one, and I would say, because I've bounced in and out of Christian publishing the last number of years, going back to New York and doing stints there, coming back to Grand Rapids, this is my second stint in Grand Rapids. Just another example of God opening doors, and... and God saying *no, you should go back there to reconnect with... good friends, and to do the work I believe you... you should be doing*. I really... I really believe that God has sent me back here. What I love about what I do is one, being able to help people grow closer to God, and to engage with the Bible. But also, for those folks who have longed to write or give voice to what they know God has placed on their hearts, we love coming alongside those people. I mean, you guys are those people, right?

Elisa: We are. Yup.

Chriscynethia: And so, you know, God works in us in... in so many different... ways...

Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... I'm not a writer, but I'm here to help facilitate, basically, as well as my team. I work with a fabulous team, and I always say *man, these... these guys make me look so good*. [Laughter] They do, they make me look good...

Elisa: They're... they're a great team.

Chriscynethia: They're... they're a great team and they're so talented. But we all have a heart for the Lord...



Eryn: Yeah.

Chriscynethia: ... and that's what makes this place very special... our mission, you know, is to... to feed the soul with the Word of God. That's our mission for publishing, Our Daily Bread Publishing, and we want to make room for people to, you know, receive and read and reflect and respond to the Word. The idea is that it... it draws people closer and... and then there's this thing called transformation, which I have lived through...

Elisa: Yes, you have...

Chriscynethia: ... multiple times.

Elisa: Yes. Yes, you have.

Chriscynethia: I've lived through multiple times.

Elisa: It's beautiful that God has placed you in a place where, yes, you've experienced it. And you know what to look for in others to draw that out. As we pull things to a close, I... I want to put you on the spot a little bit. You've used your voice telling us about God's transformation of you. I wonder if you could use your voice to show us, to sing to us, about God's work in your life and your love for Him. Just a little bit? Would you be willing to do that?

Chriscynethia: Oh, you're... you're definitely putting me on the spot.

Elisa: Yeah, baby. And you don't have James here to accompany us, I'm so, so sorry...

Chriscynethia: No, you don't... you... you don't, and I'm not quite warmed up, but... God is God, and so we'll [laughter]...

Elisa: Thank you for trying. Thank you for taking a risk.

Chriscynethia: ... I'll try and get... [singing] Why should I feel discouraged? And why should the shadows come? Why should my heart be lonely? And long for heav'n and home? When Jesus is my portion, my constant friend is He, His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me. His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.



[Music]

Eryn: That was absolutely beautiful.

Elisa: Wasn't it? Man, before we go, though, make sure to check out Our Daily Bread Publishing for some awesome new books and devotionals. You can find the link for that in our blog on our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Eryn: That's 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 Russ and Milo for all of their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

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