



# God Hears Her Podcast

## Episode 90 – Losing a Pet

Eryn Eddy & Elisa Morgan

[Music]

**Elisa:** I woke up in the middle of the night, and I felt like God was nudging me to view this hole in my life and this really can apply to any hole in our life. *Elisa, can you view this hole in your life as an opportunity to fast from that thing that used to be in your life in such a way that you can experience your longing for Me?*

[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 Eddy. When life is hard or uncomfortable, a lot of us find support and encouragement from our pets. Whether that's a dog, a cat, a gerbil, or whatever animal it may be, we find unconditional love from our pets, but what do we do when we lose that pet? How do we handle the grief and letting go?

**Elisa:** Eryn and I wanted to touch on the topic of losing a pet, because pets are an important part of this life and losing them is harder than we'd sometimes like to admit. This episode was recorded a week after I lost my precious dog, Coach.

**Eryn:** Let's talk more about this on this episode of *God Hears Her*.

**Elisa:** Oh so my love, uh, my little heart is breaking right now. It really is. It's just been not even a week that Evan and I needed to help our dog Coach...

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** ...leave this world, and um, you know, it's been complicated. I know you've been through this too, and...but it's been complicated because he didn't really have a physical ailment that we could see, but he



had what seemed to be a mental one. He was super freaked out and stressed out and behaving inappropriately, and ah oh my gosh! Losing a dog just is no fun.

**Eryn:** No, it's not, and I've been there. I was there...it was 2019, I lost, it was right before, yeah, it was right before the shutdown of the world, I lost my sweet little girl Bernice. I had had her for six and a half years. She was a French Bulldog, and she was just a part of so much of my story and my journey and healing and just being present with me and there was so much attached to her, and she...she died of what I think was a brain tumor.

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** Um but the medical bills, you know, were stacking up. What I was spending to try to figure out what was going wrong with her health wise, and I had to put her down, and that was really hard. I hired a company that...that part was sweet. I guess that was the sweetness in the...in the sadness, was a company came and...came to my house...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** ...and she was able to pass away in my home.

**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Eryn:** And they were able to, you know, still comfort me in some way of saying *Oh no, like this is the right decision.*

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** But I still struggled with wondering when you put a pet down is this the right decision.

**Elisa:** Oh, no kidding!

**Eryn:** Is there something else I could have done differently? You start thinking through all of that stuff.

**Elisa:** Yeah, and you know as we talk about our...we have dogs, but in other seasons in my life, I had cats. People have goldfish and birds and lizards and all kinds of things as pets...

**Eryn:** Yeah.



**Elisa:** ...and in different cultures, having a dog as a pet is not something you do. Maybe there's a horse, you know, there's goats, there's no name it.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** One thing that a...a vet helped me with and see if this makes sense to you, was when your pet can't do two of the three things that are their favorite things, then listen to that. I've had three dogs in my adult life—Darla, and then Wilson, and then Coach. And I had Darla with Wilson and Wilson with Darla and then Wilson with Coach and then Coach with Wilson, and then I had Coach with nobody else recently, but the three things were, you know, for me I identified loving to go for a walk, loving their toys, and eating. And that helped me to understand like for instance, Wilson, was a big ole kind of roddy shepherd mix, and he stopped being able to go for a walk. And he still liked his toys, but he couldn't remember where he put them. He couldn't get upstairs to go to sleep at night with us...

**Eryn:** Oh.

**Elisa:** ...without us helping him, pushing his backend up while he did his front end. You know and Darla went blind and had diabetes, and then she couldn't enjoy anything really. You know, so that was kind of a helpful clue, because I know what you're saying.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** You really wonder and doubt yourself. *Is this a loving thing to help my dog?*

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** And thinking about the two of the three favorites if they can't do those anymore.

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** That was a good indicator for me.

**Eryn:** That is really...I've never heard that before and that's helpful, because for me, you see this little creature that can't speak, but can experience nurturing you when you feel...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.



**Eryn:** ...uneasy and then you nurture it because you can tell it feels uneasy, so it's like this little child kind of...of your...I mean, to some it is your...to me Bernice was my little child because I don't have children, so she was my little baby. And so in some ways it's like *Am I making the right call in taking care of this little thing?* That for when I had to put Bernice down, I had a few people tell me it's the most merciful thing I can do, because she's so loyal that she would just keep trying to stay alive even if she's like...because for her she was having major grand mal seizures and she...I mean I can get into it, but it was a lot and it came sudden too, so there was no like slow decline. It was a...a sudden thing and then it was a lot of a sudden thing.

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** Um but anyways, all to say it's...it's hard to know when. When we put an animal down, and then other times an animal dies in our home or...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm. Or they're maybe hit in traffic or...

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** ...you know, they could run away.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** You know, you hit on something that also has really helped me, I think it was my brother who shared this with me. He's had dogs all his adult life and he helped me be courageous enough to...to start being a dog parent, but he said, *We need to view ourselves as, you know, we're just their caretakers. We are their providers.*

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** And you know, you...their just kind of a like child in some ways. You know they are utterly dependent upon us...

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** ...to feed them, to care for them, to take them outside when they need to, to exercise them, to, you know, to listen to them, and he helped me to see that the last way we care for them is to listen when they're ready to go.



**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** Um, you know, like you said, they don't have little voices and it's...it's interesting to me, and I love what you just said too about Bernice that she would just keep going. She would power through.

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** Um that's how Wilson was. I mean, he would try to get himself upstairs and it was so funny. Evan and I would get behind him...it wasn't funny, but it was...and I...I would take his little front paws, they were big, front paws and put them on a step and then Evan would push up his...his...

**Eryn:** Oh, that's...

**Elisa:** ...back self...

**Eryn:** ...buddy.

**Elisa:** ...you know, and all the time he'd be going (makes noises), [Laughing] because he was just embarrassed and didn't want to go through this...

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** ...but he wouldn't stay downstairs, and if we didn't help him, we were really afraid he was going to do a big somersault down the stairs and...

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** ...really hurt himself. And, you know, that was part too of...of another part of my understanding. You know, he was going to keep going until he fell down the stairs if I didn't listen to him. If we didn't help him.

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** Aghh. Yeah, Ooh hard. Hard. What is it about pets that worm their way in...into our hearts, and is there something kind of holy...



**Eryn:** Hmm.

**Elisa:** ...about them? Do they connect us in some way...

**Eryn:** Hmm.

**Elisa:** ...to our God? To their creator, the one who created all of us?

**Eryn:** Mmm. That's a really beautiful question and a statement. I think that they do. I think Bernice was...she was attached to so much my development in my twenties and into my thirties, and she saw me crying. She saw me processing. She saw me praying. She saw me...I mean this little creature that God created and designed watched me go through some much.

**Elisa:** That's really interesting, Eryn. Tell me what that looked like. How you witnessed her responding...

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** ...to all of those moments.

**Eryn:** Well French Bulldogs...so she was a French Bulldog, and I currently have a French Bulldog sitting with me right now. She might be snoring; I don't know. I asked everybody if you can hear her snoring. [Laughing] Um Fre...French Bulldogs are known as companion breeds, so they are your buddy. And they're also known as clown dogs, which means they want to perform, entertain, and like they throw their toys up in the air and they...but they're a bully breed, so they also can hold their own and be like *Don't mess with me!* [Laughing] So they're like the cutest little...cutest little pint-sized dog, but Bernice was a companion dog for me. So she went everywhere with me. When I moved, when I was a nomad for a little while and I was just like flopping on people's sofas in a season, she was ah there when I was making big decisions for my business...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** ...at my office. She interacted with my whole staff. She met all of our interns. I mean, she was the buddy...everybody's buddy, and everybody loved her. So she was not only just this dog, but she would just like relieve any sort of tension in the air...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.



**Eryn:** ...because she was just so precious and playful.

**Elisa:** How fun. How fun.

**Eryn:** I know, yeah, so...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...so in some ways, you know, Bernice, the way it looked for me was just like I mean yeah, she was just...she went everywhere...she went everywhere with me.

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm. And when she would see you be upset for example...

**Eryn:** Oh yeah.

**Elisa:** ...when you cry, um she would come. It would like trigger something.

**Eryn:** She would, yes, yeah, so it's interesting, I had a...I led a woman's Bible study, and I had about...had about ten women in my house every...every Tuesday night, and she could sense in the room...this is so wild to me...she could sense in the room the woman that walked in that was carrying the heaviest emotions...

**Elisa:** Wow.

**Eryn:** ...before we even knew it. And she would sit with her, and there was one time...

**Elisa:** Oh!

**Eryn:** ...I know, it was so precious. And there was this one time where one of my friends was sharing what she was going through, and you could tell she was just during Bible study or during...when we were just asking who needs prayer for certain...certain things, and my friend was sharing some stuff she was going through in a relationship, and she seemed not very ah non-emotional, you know, just kind of speaking what it is. Bernice was sitting beside her feet as she was sharing what was going on ah in her life. Um my friend starts crying and Bernice jumps in the chair and sits right beside her...

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**Elisa:** Mmm.



**Eryn:** ...and like cuddles her, comforts her, and ah licks her hand and is just like caring for her. And the whole room, we were all like *Oh my gosh! That's so sweet.*

**Elisa:** There's the Holy Spirit right there

**Eryn:** But she would do that. [Laughing] Yeah.

**Elisa:** Comforting us with a comfort we've rece...oh that's amazing.

**Eryn:** So she would do that. She would...and I think that that's...I think that there's something divine...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** ...to that.

**Elisa:** That's precious. You know you're making a great point that...that we get attached to our pets, whatever they are, as they help us through seasons in our lives. I remember I had Darla, she was actually my son's dog...

**Eryn:** What kind of dog was she again?

**Elisa:** ...She was a purebred Rottweiler.

**Eryn:** Oh wow.

**Elisa:** And ah my adult son was just had other things going on in his life and so various times she'd come and stay with us, and I loved her so much. She was precious. And when...when she went back to him, I felt such a...a loss that I wanted to get my own big dog, so I adopted Wilson. And Wilson was with us for gosh I think...I think he died at about age 13 and we got him when he was 3, so that's a long time, and Darla came back also during that time, so I had both of them, but my...my grandson was incredibly attached to Wilson.

**Eryn:** Oh!

**Elisa:** I had a picture of Marcus laying on Wilson's kind of tummy the way you do. Um they were about the same size when we got Wilson, and then when Marcus was about 16 and Wilson passed, Marcus was undone. Okay by this time, Darla was gone, and we had Coach as our second dog. Coach took a





very respectful backseat to Wilson. He knew Wilson was our favorite, if you will, because he was there first. Wilson was bigger. Wilson was very well adapted, and Wilson held the first place in Marcus's heart, and so Coach was very respectful. And when Wilson died, um we had an in-home vet come too and she actually asked us to bring Coach down to say goodbye to Wilson.

**Eryn:** Oh!

**Elisa:** She said otherwise, he's going to be confused and wonder what happened. So we did that.

**Eryn:** Oh.

**Elisa:** Coach came down and sniffed Wilson. We all were crying. Marcus wasn't there. And then, of course, she took Wilson's body away. We were just grieving. We called Marcus, and he came over and he sat in the chair where he always hung out with Wilson, and Coach who was smaller than Wilson, immediately jumped in Marcus's lap.

**Eryn:** Oh.

**Elisa:** And from that moment on, he had first place in Marcus's heart.

[Music]

**Elisa:** When we come back, Eryn and I will talk more about the grieving process after losing a pet. Now God answers prayers that may seem small, but actually mean the world to us when they're answered.

**Eryn:** That's coming up next on *God Hears Her*.

[Music]

**Elisa:** *God Loves Her* is the newest book in our *God Hers Her* series. You know, we all just want to be reminded that we are loved, and in this devotional, women writers share personal stories about God's love that is unconditional. Not only can you receive love from Him, but you'll want to share it with others. *God Loves Her* is perfect to take on the go or to curl up with in your favorite spot at home. Get one for yourself and another to share with a friend who could use a special reminder of God's love. God to [godlovesher.org](http://godlovesher.org) to order. That's [godlovesher.org](http://godlovesher.org).



**Elisa:** I have a dear friend, her name is Dorothy, and she lost her dog just a few weeks ago, and she wrote a blog about it. I just want to read a couple of phrases from it because I love the metamorphosis...

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** ...that God created in her heart through this dog. She said, "I never thought I was a dog person. Dogs are needy. Dogs require too much of us. 'I didn't want this dog,' I would remind my husband whenever Leo (her dog) misbehaved or got sick." [Laughing] "I now know what I really meant was I don't want to fully give my heart to this animal, because most likely he's going to die before me, and the loss will plunge me into grief just as it did when I lost pets as a child." And she...she just was so gracious to herself. She said, "When we prioritize pain avoidance, we pay a price. It shrinks our world."

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** "It diminishes us. It inhibits our ability to fully love."

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** And I've been thinking about that, you know, now in the aftermath of Darla, Wilson, and Coach, they're all gone, and I don't know, Eryn, it's not been very long, but I have to confess, I've just been scrolling 24/7 through Petfinder looking for a dog. It's like I don't want to have this gap in my being. I'm actually (this is embarrassing), I am sleeping with Coach's toy lambchops. I washed it, but anyway, I washed it, but I'm sleeping with it, because I don't want to feel this void.

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** I don't want to go back into these places in life where I am alone.

**Eryn:** Mmm.

**Elisa:** I want Coach back with me.

**Eryn:** Mmm. I resonate with that so much. Oh, I...it's vulnerable to love something that you know you'll see pass away probably.

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.



**Eryn:** When Bernice died, I said I would never get another French Bulldog. I was like that was the last French Bulldog...that was the first French Bulldog and the last French Bulldog [Laughter] And then I also said I probably would never get a dog again. I was like *I just don't think I could.*

**Elisa:** I remember you saying that, and I was like *Eh, eh, eh. Yes, you will.*

**Eryn:** But I was like...and here's the thing, like I...I grew up with a household of tons of animals. I mean, we had wolves, but we had to tell people they were German shepherds. [Laughing] We had Macaws, we bred Great Danes.

**Elisa:** Goodnight.

**Eryn:** We had Jack Russells. We didn't breed them together, but we also bred Jack Russells.

**Elisa:** Thank you.

**Eryn:** Ah I had cats, I had...so I saw a lot of death of animals in my upbringing, and then I went through a time where...when I was married, we didn't have...I didn't have a pet for 8 years, and then I got Bernice and then when she passed, I was like, *I'll never...I get it, I get it. I will never get another animal. I don't think I could go through that again.*

**Elisa:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Eryn:** And...and then 8 months, I'm on Petfinder. [Laughing] And I'm on humane society, and I'm looking up adoption centers and fostering, and I even went to the point where I was like, you know, *I don't think I could get a dog, buy a dog, I don't think I could do that. I don't think I'd adopt. But I could foster.* And the reason I wanted to foster wasn't for the right reasons of fostering a dog. To me it was like let me temporarily fill the void and then send the dog off to another family that can experience the heartbreak when it passes away. Like that's truly like how I felt...

**Elisa:** Wow! Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...and how I processed it. But then I kept pursuing every avenue of maybe adopting and then somebody else beat me to the application. Fostering, somebody beat me to the application.

**Elisa:** Yep, I've already lost two this week. [Laughing] Yes.



**Eryn:** But you know what was so interesting in that time before...before I decided to seek for another pet, I was so...I was so lonely, and there was a void in me that I was trying to fill, and in that time, I asked the Lord to hold my grief. I developed during this time of not having an animal and I was living by myself, and it was during...

**Elisa:** Hmm, it was Covid.

**Eryn:** ...it was during Covid where everything was locked down. It was...I was very lonely. I learned how the Lord can hold even grief of a pet...

**Elisa:** That's good. That's good.

**Eryn:** ...and that it's not...that's not too small for Him to hold and it's not too miniscule. He wants to hold that grief and He want...and He held me in it, and then when I was ready, I was experimenting with Petfinder and fostering, and I would actually pray and say, *Lord, would you send me an animal*, and like at the time like my...it is expensive to get an animal.

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** And even if you were to adopt and then the vet bills are expensive and then the new food and new beds and new collars and new bowls...

**Elisa:** Right. Right.

**Eryn:** ...and all of that stuff, and my finances weren't in a place where I could just splurge for that, so I was like *Well I can't get any...I can't do any of that, so when you're ready for me to have an animal, I know that you'll bring one*. I actually prayed that prayer, which is...may sound silly to some listening, but I prayed that prayer. And you know, Elisa, it's so funny, because I get a direct message on Instagram from a woman...

**Elisa:** Hmm.

**Eryn:** ...and she has a French Bulldog, and she says, *Hey, I see that you had a French Bulldog. I'm having to rehome mine for...*and she was just expressing she's got two little boys, she was going through postpartum, her French Bulldog was her baby, she felt like it was not a priority anymore, and it wasn't living a...a...



**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...happy home, and so she said. *Would you be interested in having her?* Now I'm thinking I'm being catfished and they're going to steal me in a parking lot when I pick up little Judy...[Laughing] ...that's her name, and ah I'm like *What?* This...this random situation just shows up after I've been shutdown from all animals of...

**Elisa:** Mmm.

**Eryn:** ...fostering and adopting and I'm like, *What's the catch?* She sends me the medical records. She sends me everything. She's 6 years old. I was like *I don't think I could handle having...*

**Elisa:** A baby, yeah.

**Eryn:** ...*an older French Bulldog...*

**Elisa:** Yeah, or an old one. Yeah, right.

**Eryn:** ...*like an old one. I'm like she's 6 years old.* Oh my goodness. I said to her, you know, I...I was so fearful to even grow attached to this animal. I said, *Let me have her for a week and let's just see if we bond.* And within three days we bonded, and...[Laughing] ...and I...

**Elisa:** I remember.

**Eryn:** ...knew that...

**Elisa:** I met her on Facetime and she's so adorable and it is a bond. And, you know, you just hit on another way people lose pets is having to rehome a beloved pet because of your life circumstance...

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** ...has changed and...and how respectful and powerful that decision is, you know, for the dog, and then to go so far as to reach out to a total stranger on Instagram. [Laughing] That's amazing. That's amazing!



**Eryn:** Well and you know, it's so interesting because it's like the Lord provided me a companion that I...and what's so sweet is that I desire to go on trails and hike and I was looking at dogs that were built for that,...

**Elisa:** Mm-hmm.

**Eryn:** But my French Bulldog that I acquired from this family, she's built to go on trails and has so much energy, and she's so youthful, and it's just...it was so sweet because the Lord blessed this woman that gifted me my dog, I guess permission for her to release her dog and to not feel shame...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...and to rehome like you said.

**Elisa:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Eryn:** And then He gifted me a companion that I deeply desired...

**Elisa:** That's beautiful.

**Eryn:** ...and I...I...and she came with a bed, she came with vet records that all of her updated shots, she came with a leash, she came with bowls, she came with all those things that I was like praying for that I was like *I can't*. The Lord just like...I think that's what He wants to do in our lives is...is bless us, but that developed a deeper intimacy with the Lord even in that that He provided. But He actually heard those prayers, you know, and He...He care for my heart that was lonely and wanted a companion and knew I needed some...

**Elisa:** Yeah.

**Eryn:** ...something like Judy ah to be my buddy during lockdown. [Laughing] You know.

**Elisa:** You know we're somehow trained to see God in circumstances around us. You know, if we have eyes to see, we can see Him working in our world. We definitely know He works in our relationships with people. We know that He works in our jobs, our professions, our neighborhoods. And...and I think the highlight that you're bringing up here and spotlighting, Eryn, is that He works through animals too, to remember the are His creatures. He created them, and He did initially encourage us to care for the



creatures. You know, that's our job as...as humans to care for them and what a beautiful assignment that is. I also love how respectful you are expressing of God's timing in your life...

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** ...and of His involvement. I...I went to sleep last night just sad because Coach isn't here, and hey if anybody's listening to this and they know my husband's had cancer, I'm not being a total brat. I am so grateful for him still being here with me. No one can replace Evan, but Coach our dog was our companion in that season...

**Eryn:** Yeah.

**Elisa:** ...too, so we feel his absence. And you know what honestly, Eryn, I woke up in the middle of the night and I felt like God was nudging me to view this hole in my life, and this really can apply to any hole in our life. *Elisa, can you view this hole in your life as an opportunity to fast from that thing that used to be in your life in such a way that you can experience your longing for Me?*

**Eryn:** Mm-hmm.

**Elisa:** And that's what fasting really is. It's...it's not just I'm going deny myself, you know and be godly. It really is as I understand it one of the...the greatest benefits of fasting is that we experience lack. We're hungry, we're thirsty,...

**Eryn:** Hmm.

**Elisa:** ...we're scared, we're lonely, we have a hole in our heart for the thing that we don't have, and that hole in our heart is something God wants us to long for Him as much as for that other thing, and that...that hunger, that thirst, that desire can remind us of how much we need Him. And...and so when we're in these griefs, whether it's Bernice or Coach or Wilson or whoever, you know, your kitty cat, mine was named Velvet. We had another one named Michelangelo, but we found out he was a she, so we named her Michelangela. Anyway. [Laughter] All these...all these precious pets. [Laughing]

**Eryn:** That's so cute!

**Elisa:** When...when we are grieving them, you know, maybe that pull in our hearts can remind us of...of how much God wants us to long after Him.



**Eryn:** Mmm.

[Music]

**Elisa:** Pets are wonderful, and they mean the world to us. When we lose them, it can be one of the hardest things we go through. But God is still with us.

**Eryn:** Yes, Elisa, that's so true. Well before we close out today's episode of *God Hears Her*, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description, and there are also links to connect with Elisa and me on social. You can find these links when you visit our website at [godhearsher.org](http://godhearsher.org). That's [godhearsher.org](http://godhearsher.org).

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

[Music]

**Eryn:** Today's episode was engineered by Gabrielle Boward and produced by Mary Jo Clark, Daniel Ryan Day, and Jade Gustafson. We also want to recognize Diana and Mary for all of their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

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