

# Grace

**Katie:** Welcome to Have Hope, Will Travel. We get to know people who are different than we are, we hear different perspectives, and we better understand others' stories. I'm your host, Katie Axelson. Friends, it is good to be back with you. It has been a hot minute since we have been together. If you are not following along on Instagram, I'm @KatieAxelson, you may have missed that over the course of the last couple months I have moved across country, started a new job, my family's had a lot going on as well and well some things just have to take a backseat and unfortunately that's what happened to Have Hope; Will Travel. We are not quite back to our every other week schedule but we are getting very close to that, so I am glad that you are here with us. I'm that glad you have stuck it out. Oh I also went on a really fun trip, so that was great. It's not all been hard things. This conversation is actually really timely for me. We're chatting with a new friend. Her name is Grace Tran. Grace is passionate about helping others live faith-fueled and full lives. She shares real-life stories from her personal experiences around topics such as emotional and spiritual health, authentic faith, faith at work—that's an important one for me, navigating relationships through God's lens. Grace, welcome to the show.

**Grace:** Thank you. Thanks, Katie, for having me. I love what you're trying to do with this show, and I'm just honored to be a part of it.

**Katie:** Hmm. Thank you. So, I know that we gave a little, like, high level of, like, what your life looks like, but let's dig a little bit deeper. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself, um, and what brought you to this place?

**Grace:** Yes, um, I will try not to go for many hours because it's a long story. Um, the long story short, I grew up in the Silicon Valley, um, in the San Francisco Bay area, and I've always just been a nerd for all things, marketing, communications, and just.

**Grace:** Spreading whatever I feel like will help other people, um, and sharing it in an effective and creative way. So even before I knew the term marketing, I was just thinking, um, this morning I was remembering how as a kid at eight years old, I created my first website and I just wanted to share, you know, like graphic designs and MySpace layouts back in the MySpace days. Zynga layouts, um, and just helping people who, who wanted, um, something to express themselves or their businesses or brands with. And so, uh, fast forward, I graduated with a degree in business. Um, and I became a marketing manager in tech. Um, I also just realized like. Okay, it's not just this love for marketing that I have, but it's also this deep desire to do it for something I really align with

in terms of my values and my mission in life So in 2020 after working for about four and a half years in tech in a very cushy, nice, golden handcuffs job.

**Grace:** I I actually took the leap to join full time ministry, um, working for a church that me and my husband are part of, and I became their director of marketing there, took a huge pay cut, but I'd like to say I gained so much treasure and rewards in heaven because, um, I just I experienced so much richness, um, not necessarily like monetary wise, even though we were still good, like financially God provided, but I just experienced so much freedom and growth and empowerment and just revelation, um, in terms of who I really am and who God created me to be. And that brings me to where I am today. Um, at the end of last year, I actually felt God's call again to step out of that, which had become my new comfort zone. Um, it was the peak of what I would say, the peak of my career, um, just. being in leadership, having influence and, um, doing directly what was associated with God's work.

**Grace:** But, um, I just knew God was tugging me to step out in faith, like Peter out of the boat towards Jesus without any, um, exit strategy or back backup plan. Um, and that he would reveal to me what he would be leading me. Me too. Next, which is now, um, after many months of praying and processing and experimenting with God, um, I am a full time podcaster content creator, and I'm also working full time, um, building with my husband, building a online life coaching business to help people, uh, get unstuck and break free from their barriers and into the authentic lives that are made to live.

**Katie:** I love that. What made you passionate about authentic lives?

**Grace:** I think growing up, I, what bugged me, and this is, I think, a holy discontent, but I, I noticed in myself, I would get really irked when I saw things that were like really scripted or fake or manipulative. And I think a lot of that, you know, this is how I believe God redeems a lot of the pains and the trauma we've experienced as, Um, as kids or growing up is I had a really, um, unstable home environment with my parents.

**Grace:** They, you know, growing up Asian American, um, I was taught culturally like to save face and, um, to save your reputation, like your reputation matters a lot. So when you, um, talk to people, even if it's like family members, like relatives or whatnot, um, you have to kind of mold yourself and camouflage yourself in a way that will gain the most praise and impress people.

**Grace:** And, um, I think that was a double edged sword because on the plus side, I learned to really think of, Oh, how are people thinking? And, you know,

that's a big part of the psychology behind marketing. Um, but the negative side really was that I learned this coping mechanism of, Oh, Like I need to manipulate myself to be someone I'm not to fit in and to be accepted and to succeed in life.

**Grace:** And so, um, I just always felt that tension growing up that I don't like living like this. I feel trapped. I feel confined, but I don't know if there's another way. Am I crazy for thinking that I can just be my full free self? And, um, it wasn't until I would say like a few years ago, I, really, uh, dove deep into this healing journey because I knew something was off.

**Grace:** I knew there was something more that God was revealing and trying to, um, unroot from inside of me. And so that sparked me. Um, and at the same time, my husband was doing the same thing. We hadn't even met, but both of us around the same time just went straight head. Um, Dove into this healing work, getting counseling, coaching therapy.

**Grace:** Um, and also just realizing we can break free from the false beliefs that we've been growing up conditioned to believe. So just experiencing that freedom. It's just, you know, it's almost like the gospel where it's like, it's something so good you can't help, but want to share. And that's really what sparked, um, one of the things that sparked our podcast too, was like, we see so many people in our generation, in our world, feeling trapped, like how we used to feel.

**Grace:** Um, and sometimes we still do feel oftentimes. And so we need to constantly remind ourselves of the truth and practice, um, growing deeper in. Knowing how to operate authentically and fully and not modifying ourselves to fit somebody else's expectations or, or what we perceive to be their expectations. Mm.

**Katie:** That's so good. Have you, and you were talking about growing up, like your parents were immigrants and then you were living in Silicon Valley your whole life, right? Yes, so can you share a little bit about what that experience is like?

**Grace:** Yeah, I, you know, when you grow up somewhere and spend most of your life living there, you don't even realize, you know, that's a bubble.

**Grace:** I think anywhere, regardless of it's, you know, urban place or whatnot, it's like, we just, The cultural norms and beliefs and systems are like so deeply ingrained. And so for me, I grew up in a very high achieving, fast paced society,

um, and culture. Um, you know, a lot of my friends growing up were also, uh, first generation, second generation, Asian American.

**Grace:** And, um, it would be the norm to be like competing, you know, what do you get on that test? Like, what are you, you know, what club are you joining? And um, and then when it came to applying for colleges, so many people were going to those, these boot camps for studying for the SATs, and I was a part of too. And, and you're just constantly feeling like you're in a rat race and you're never good enough.

**Grace:** You never measure enough. There's too much competition, there's a lot of pressure from parents and family members and even. Um, a lot of parents, you know, in this, in this, uh, cultural background, they'll unconsciously, they don't even realize they're doing it, but they are trying to live vicariously through their kids at the same time.

**Grace:** So you feel this pressure that you hold, not just for you, but for your family, for your legacy, um, and to make, you know, make your parents sacrifices worth it. So I think it all comes from a really good place of, um, I mean, majority of it comes from. You know, wanting your kids to be safe and successful and happy, um, and for kids to feel like, oh, I want to honor and show my parents how much I appreciate them or, um, you know, do make a difference in the world.

**Grace:** But I think there's just so much, so many of those underlying scripts we don't even realize we have until we step out of that bubble, which, um, Now I have to correct myself. I spent one year, um, about one year in Australia, um, besides the Bay Area, and I also spent a summer in Wisconsin for an internship.

**Grace:** Um, and those two times when I did move and live in a different context was just very humbling and I realized, wow, there's, my way of life is not the default. Yeah,

**Katie:** that's so valid. And that was gonna be my follow up question is like, what did it look like to break out of that bubble? Um, but first, before you can answer that question.

**Katie:** Um,

**Grace:** we're in Wisconsin. I was in Madison. Nice.

**Katie:** I'm from the Mohawk

**Grace:** area originally. Oh, cool. Nice. It's beautiful there. I love the lakes, the cheese. They're

**Katie:** really good. I

**Grace:** can tell. Yes, definitely. I heard about the winter and I was like, okay, I'm out. So let's chat a little bit about

**Katie:** what did it look like to break out of that bubble, um, that is the Bay area.

**Grace:** Yeah. Um, are you asking like what brought me out of it or what my experience was out of it? Um, both. Okay. Yeah. Um, I'll try to make this a short story again, but basically I was part of a rotational program in the tech company I was working for. And part of that program, you basically list, you know, your top, um.

**Grace:** Your top choices for like positions that you would be interested in. And then you basically just get matched based on interviews with the different teams. And so I was really hesitant to put anything outside of California. Originally I was like, um, California is pretty nice. Like, you know, maybe I'll put LA, San Francisco, LA.

**Grace:** Um, those are the Two biggest options and I was like, okay, maybe I'll branch out a little bit out of my comfort zone and put New York. That would be crazy. I don't think that's gonna happen but then there was just this voice in me that was like wouldn't it be so crazy if and Let me just tell you oftentimes when you get these thoughts Wouldn't it be crazy if yeah, you'll be surprised that uh, that is actually what god is leading you towards.

**Grace:** So I I just felt this, this nudge, this voice, like, wouldn't it be crazy if I actually went abroad to like another country? Like, I've never done that before. In college, I never even, I wasn't even remotely interested. A bunch of my friends did study abroad and I was like, I don't, I'm not really interested.

**Grace:** Um, but there's just a voice. And then I kind of just ignored it. I was like, Oh, it's just a random thought. And then it just kept coming up. And that's another sign when you know that might be something bigger. And. I just, it just kept coming back and I'm like, is this God? Is this me? I don't know. And then, um, I remember I was on a plane ride, uh, flying to visit a friend, um, in another country.

**Grace:** And on that plane ride, you know how airplanes, they have like those free movies and typically, you know, I would watch. Um, a movie I've heard of, or like a movie I've been wanting to watch, but I, for some reason, I just stumbled across this one independent film that was, um, not even in English, so I rarely watch, um, you know, foreign films, but it was all about, like, Um, growing up and finding like who you are.

**Grace:** I didn't even know that's like what that movie was about, but I watched it and it just spoke so clearly to me. And one quick piece of context was before this, I actually had a couple people praying over me in different, different contexts who all said, I feel like God is like nudging you to step out and this phrase like step out just kept coming up and I was like, are these people talking to each other?

**Grace:** How do they all know? Um, and so I, I journaled down, I remember I journaled down the phrase step out and I underlined it because I felt like Okay, I think there's something here. I don't know if it's like locationally. Maybe it's just a metaphor for like how I approach life But the craziest thing happened where I watched this movie I didn't even understand the language but at the end of the movie it was a black screen and two words And it said step out.

**Grace:** Wow Yeah And I was just blown my jaw dropped. I wasn't I remember very clearly I was in the plane my jaw dropped and I was like if that's not god, I don't know what is And I just scribbled down in my journal. Wow I really feel like god is actually challenging me to put like Another country or something that I would not be comfortable with, um, you know, in my, in my own fleshly desire, but to put that down on my rotation list.

**Grace:** And so at the bottom of my list, you know, I had five choices. Number five was the one, um, or number four was Singapore. Number five was Australia. And I was like, there's no way it's going to happen. And lo and behold, that's how it happened. Yeah. And just really quickly, like, in terms of my experience there, it was one of the best, I, it's hard to describe because it really feels like another life, like, especially with the pandemic, like, um, everything pre pandemic feels a bit like a dream, but I feel like, I feel like it just, Open my eyes to see, wow, the American style of doing things, of seeing my life, my worth, my value, my identity.

**Grace:** Um, so much of my identity was based on how other people view me. Um, and I didn't even realize that. And growing up, especially in a high achieving culture where I was valued for what I could do, what I could do of value became my value. And, um, it was so deeply ingrained. I never even noticed. So when I went to Australia without knowing anyone, without any, you



know, large ministry assignment, uh, except just to do my day to day work, um, I just had such a really, um, awakening really with God of like, Who am I if I'm not grace the leader or grace the minister or grace the person everybody knows, you know, and I was having a hard time making friends and finding community.

**Grace:** And through that, God really just drew me into the deepest intimacy I had ever experienced. Part of that, I was more like, Oh, I have people to talk to. I have, you know, um, other, other things to distract me. And Australia was a bit like this. Gentle and loving time out almost of like slow down, like recalibrate and, and really like learn to dwell in my presence and not be trying to fill yourself with all these seemingly good things or people, you know, outside of me.

**Grace:** Wow, and how long were you there? Um, about a year. I thought I would, I thought I would be staying a long time because I loved it. It was so beautiful. I highly recommend if anyone's ever, never been to Australia, highly recommend going. It's just, it's like a movie. And the people are great, too, and the culture, um, there's always downsides, of course, but I would say I had the time of my life, um, but, yeah, things changed when I met my now husband, um, unintentionally.

**Grace:** How did you guys meet? We met, um, on a Facebook group because both of us watched this YouTube channel, um, that they, they used to create more, like, inspiring videos, um, but now they do more, like, social experiments, um, but, It's not even like a christian youtube channel or anything. We just both watched it We both happened to join like I don't usually do this and he definitely doesn't do either but for some reason we both saw On their instagram story.

**Grace:** They're like we have a facebook group for people who want to join. So we both were in that group Um, you're supposed to introduce yourself in that group So I did and then I mentioned, you know, i'm really passionate about the intersection of faith and work and that's That's where it all began in the, in the comments and then the DMs where, um, he slid into my DMs.

**Grace:** Um, yeah, fast forward, uh, to now we've been married almost three years. So, wow. That's awesome. Congratulations.

**Katie:** Thank you. Um, faith at work is a passion point of mine as well, like we were chatting about earlier, and I would love to hear your thoughts on how to incorporate your faith in a secular workplace, like the tech environment, especially Silicon Valley, not always Christian friendly.

**Grace:** Yep, I totally agree. Yeah, there's a lot to unpack with that. And, um, just a shameless plug. If anyone's interested, I post a lot about that on social media and, and through our own podcast too, if you're interested, because there's just so many, you know, subtopics within subtopics in this, in this area that I think it's so important.

**Grace:** And, um. Not really talked about enough in terms of the church and you know, just believers in general We can easily say in a church environment trust god, you know, don't worry. Don't have no fear, you know but then we're in we're when we're in a workplace where most people don't believe what we believe and are saying things that are Just against our own values our beliefs.

**Grace:** It's it's so much harder And so I think one i'll say two things. Um as a high level, you know overarching theme one is to just realize that nothing is technically like secular versus sacred. Like everything is sacred because God is over everything. He's in everything. And so when you look at it that way, your job, your day to day job is not just you sitting at a desk or doing, you know, whatever you're doing from nine to five.

**Grace:** It's Being a minister to the people around you, it's being an ambassador for Christ through the work that you're doing, through the conversations you're having, through the way that you're conducting yourself. You're literally on mission for God and he's with you in it. And I think oftentimes we can forget that when we're like in a meeting and things are getting political and we're like, Oh gosh, like, you know, where's God in this moment?

**Grace:** I don't feel him, but. The truth is God is inside you. And maybe he put you in that environment to be his light and to show people a counter cultural way of handling conflict or being at peace in the midst of anxiety or loving people who are difficult to work with. And I've just had so many experiences myself, especially when I was working in tech of people being like.

**Grace:** Grace, like, how are you so joyful all the time? Or like, you know, I've never, I even had, I was so surprised when I heard some people I was managing, and I was early in my career, so I had no experience. I felt like I was doing everything wrong, but I remember, I was, I felt very encouraged when, um, Some of the people I was managing was like, Grace, I've never had a manager like you, like you have been the best manager I've ever had.

**Grace:** And I was like, really? Cause I feel like I'm doing everything wrong. I'm making mistakes left and right. But it just showed me, wow. It's really not about the work, the, the, the performance or the achievements that people remember



you for it's how you made them feel. from living out, like, who God made you to be.

**Grace:** And the second thing I'll just mention is, I think we also discount the power of prayer and just tapping into the spiritual dimension of work. And what I mean by that is, you know, Like when you, um, go to church, you know, everyone's, it's so easy to pray in those environments, but like, God, we invite your spirit, we invite your presence here.

**Grace:** And then you feel like energized, you know, and what makes us think that we can go out in a secular environment or quote unquote secular environment where, um, we don't pray, we don't fill up, we don't read our Bibles. And then we think that we can go out there to fight the spiritual battle. And. So that's what I really would encourage people to do because that really changed a lot for me, too Was when I started being consistent with my spiritual practices of okay I am like this is not like a to do list on my checklist.

**Grace:** This is me like, um Putting on my armor putting on my spiritual armor getting filled up with god's truth and his word and his spirit so that I can Therefore go out and be his ambassador and not go out. It's like going out into a battlefield without any armor or weapons. You're definitely gonna get attacked and vulnerable.

**Grace:** So,

**Katie:** no, that's so good. And it is all about preparing for battle. And then the battles don't look like what we expect, right? Like we're not literally fighting people. In fact, we're doing the opposite a lot of times. Um, yes. But it's so important to be ready and to invite Holy Spirit to journey with you, even going to work every day.

**Grace:** Exactly. Exactly. Um, what

**Katie:** advice do you have for someone who is like, I don't even know how to start living out my faith at work. I feel like I spend time with the Lord and I feel like I put my armor on and then I show up to work and I, it, I don't, maybe it stays in the car.

**Grace:** Yeah. Wow. That's a really great question.

**Grace:** Cause I feel like. underneath that is also the question of how do you, um, not get stuck, trapped in almost like the cycle of shame that you're not a

perfect Christian or you're not a, you know, good enough, strong enough Christian. And, um, I think that's not just applicable in a workplace setting, but even in church or in our relationships or whatever, it's, it's so easy to be like, how come I can't just get it right?

**Grace:** How come I'm not, you know, bold enough or, um, you know, dang, I missed, I missed. My day with Jesus, like I'm such a bad, it's like a cycle of shame and guilt. And so I would say again, two things. The first part is just learning to recognize your, the talk track that's going in on in your head. When you think of like, if you're, if you're struggling, like bringing your faith into work, notice, like, what is the barrier behind that?

**Grace:** Like, why do you feel unable to, are you shaming yourself? Are you telling yourself things that are not true about, you know, I'm not able to, I'm not strong enough. I'm not capable, you know, those kinds of things and really work with God. Like bring those honestly to him. Instead of trying to fix it yourself, he actually wants to help us.

**Grace:** He invites us to bring those things to him. Just like David in the Psalms, pouring out his heart to God, honestly, all the highs and lows. And, you know, Jesus says he came not to, um, save people who are perfect, but to save the sinners, to heal the sick. And so when we are weak. That's when his power can be the strongest through us.

**Grace:** And so we have to bring those, those areas where we feel incapable or, um, not good enough, inadequate and bring that to God. Cause he loves when we just come to him and we invite him into that. Cause that's where he gets to show off and show his glory. Um, just like, you know, Moses with his. Um, David as a shepherd boy or I mean, there's just countless examples of inadequate people in the Bible who had no reason for succeeding except that God used them and God's power shown was shown through their faith.

**Grace:** Um, and so that, that would be the second part is, um, with. Like as you bring all that to God, just allow yourself the grace to start wherever you are. So if you, you know, haven't, you know, practiced or, or established a discipline yet of praying consistently and spending time with God every day, just start small, start with five minutes or even two minutes.

**Grace:** And you can't do five minutes. And, um, I saw this awesome infographic because I'm a visual person and I saw this infographic recently of habits and how oftentimes we try to, um, go from the bottom to the top of a cliff thinking that, Oh, I need to jump to that cliff to be, to achieve what I want.

When reality is life is just a series of staircase steps and we take small steps and it keeps going up slowly, but we just have to be patient.

**Grace:** We can't rush the process. And, um, You know underneath that is the truth and the belief that we have to remember is God is not after your perfection He's after your heart connection He's after your relationship and in order to have a real relationship with God, you need to learn to trust him He knows that trusting him is actually for your good because Freeze you from thinking you have to handle everything yourself or you have to control things when you're just not able to as a human being.

**Grace:** And so it's all an invitation really to trust God, lean into relationship with him and allowing him to transform you. slowly and gradually over time instead of trying to be like, Oh, I need to be an on fire Christian at work all of a sudden, like God can do things like that. But I think just recalibrating our expectations for ourselves so that we can have grace for ourselves, the way that he already has grace for ourselves is just so, so key for that.

**Katie:** No, that's so good. And I think if we did all of a sudden overnight transform from being where we are to being this like on fire, passionate. Like, for Christ, at work, that would probably be a turn off to our co workers.

**Grace:** Exactly. Like, I think

**Katie:** you'd be put off by that. They'd be like, something happened last night, she had too

**Grace:** much to drink.

**Katie:** I'm drinking a Holy Spirit wine, but you know, um, but yeah, to, to absolutely start small. And one of the lies that I found when I did a lot of what you just recommended for myself was I was believing the lie that My coworkers already knew about Jesus and they weren't interested, which for some of them that was true, but not for all of them.

**Katie:** Um, they actually had way more questions than I thought they did. Things that, that couldn't be reconciled or things that they had asked in the church and it wasn't a safe space to ask that kind of question, um, or things that they were wrestling with or had forgotten. Um, and I was able to kind of provide some of those answers

**Grace:** to them, which was really cool.

**Grace:** Um, like gateway conversation to deeper conversations. Yes, actually, that brings a really good point that I also want to just, um, echo is that oftentimes we think sharing about Jesus is like speaking about him with all the right words and all the right ways when really it's creating, being a safe person for people to open up to.

**Grace:** And the more that we listen, the more that we're actually interested in people, the more they feel like, Oh, I can actually talk to her about my questions and worries and struggles and doubts. And, um, you know, when we look at the Bible, Jesus often, more often than not, he answered questions with more questions.

**Grace:** He didn't just tell people. You know what? I mean, there's a lot of truth in what he preached, but he knew that to establish a change and in a life changing connection with someone, it's about making them feel seen and known and heard. It's not making them just know the things in their heads that don't actually emotionally connect with their hearts.

**Grace:** And so the more that we're able to model that and It takes a lot of, um, humility and like resisting that urge to be like, let me tell you the truth. Let me tell you how you're wrong. You know, that's, that's the, um, very contentious, you know, culture that we live in now is like, let me tell you why you're wrong and why I'm right.

**Grace:** And you need to believe this. And if you don't, I'm going to cancel you. We can't be friends. Like Jesus was all about being the bridge between people, not dividing people who don't agree necessarily. And so if you have a coworker who Um, is a different religion or doesn't know what they believe, like, instead of like trying to talk at them, just be present and lean in and ask them questions and really authentically love them.

**Grace:** And the more that you're able to do that, I think the more, um, that just creates an open environment and a safe space for conversations like this to happen. Yeah,

**Katie:** absolutely. It's all about listening to learning, which is the whole point of the show. So. Right on target there. Yeah. So let's chat a little bit.

**Katie:** What does it look like to live a fully authentic faith

**Grace:** fueled life? Another big question, but I think one of the most important questions, um, and I'm a little biased because this is what I'm all about, but I

think ultimately at the end of the day, it's just, Being fully who you are in God, like knowing your identity in God is the key because if you don't know who you are, it's really hard to know what you're supposed to do, what God is, you know, saying to you, all these things that we try to figure out on our own apart from God.

**Grace:** And there's I mean, there's a reason why Jesus says he is the vine and we are the branches. We're designed to be connected to him in order to thrive. We might be able to, you know, exist or, or survive for short periods of time, but we, we will wither, we will burn out and be exhausted and be lost if we're not connected to him, who is a source of life and truth.

**Grace:** And, um, I think a lot of like people and myself included, I was on this journey of. thinking like, well, how do I even find myself? Like that's feels like a worldly concept now, like find yourself. And, and I think as Christians, sometimes we can even hesitate against that. We're like, no, just, just read the Bible and just go to church.

**Grace:** And like, like finding yourself as a worldly concept, but I actually think there is, um, a misconception in terms of both worlds of, of, you know, it's not just, yes, read your Bible. Yes. Pray, but it's not. just doing that. It's also not just finding yourself apart from God. It's the fusion of doing both because you want to be discovering who God made you to be to know the purposes he made you for.

**Grace:** And so the more we're able to look at God and You know, know his character, you know, through the Bible, through, um, our spiritual communities, through any, um, just, just knowing the truth that he says, and knowing his character gives us so much understanding of, wow, this is the kind of person he sees me as, not what the world says I am, not what other people say I am, not even what I say I am, because the heart is deceitful, like it's ultimately about how does God is.

**Grace:** View you and knowing his character is so key to that and you know, it says in scripture It says like we are god's handiwork prepared for good works that he prepared ahead of time for us to do and it's not It's not us trying to figure out like let me let me create my own Idea for what will fulfill me.

**Grace:** It's actually a partnership with god being like god What have you created me for in the beginning of time? You knew I was going to be here What did you create me for and help me to live that out according to your truth and your ways and just the confidence rooted in who you are. And that's, I think, so

key to living authentically is just being rooted in him so that we don't have to feel like we need to mold ourselves to find validation and worth from other places.

**Katie:** That is such a good word. Thank you for that. I can tell that you are clearly passionate about this. And, um, it's also the topic of your podcast, is it not? Yes. Tell us a little bit about your show.

**Grace:** Yeah, um, yeah, I mentioned briefly earlier, but my husband and I co host a podcast together. Um, it's called Let's Unpack That with Alex and Grace.

**Grace:** And we talk all day. All about how to live the faith fueled life that you were meant to live. Because so often we, you know, go through life very lost and confused. And we think there's like all these black and white answers to life where there should be. When in reality, it's very nuanced. There's a lot of gray areas.

**Grace:** And so this podcast is all about diving deep into those layers and sharing our personal struggles and experiences too, to let you guys know we're real, we're not perfect, but these are the things we've been learning along the way. Um, And yeah, it's a lot of fun. And if anyone's interested, feel free to check it out.

**Grace:** You can also find us on Instagram. Um, it's hash or not hashtag at symbol with the trans that's our last name. So

**Katie:** yeah, that was going to be my follow up question. Where can we find you online?

**Grace:** Yes. Yeah. You can find us on social media or you can go to our website with the trans. com. Awesome.

**Katie:** What have I not asked you yet that you want to talk about?

**Grace:** That's a great interview question. I should learn.

**Grace:** I think I would just end with encouraging anyone who is listening to just know that God is with you and he sees you and You know, I think it's very easy for us, especially in the Western mindset of individualism, you know, of self sufficiency, where we're self made men and women, and we need to do things all on our own, and there's a lot of self help, a lot of, um, and, you know,



those things are not bad, but it's, it's, um, It's kind of just how God sees us is he sees us as his children that he wants to help.

**Grace:** It's like if you're a parent with kids, you, you understand this. When you see your little child trying to figure something out, you, you want to be there to support them and challenge them and teach them and sometimes teaching them doesn't look like giving them the answer. It actually means taking them through a challenging situation or allowing them to go through a challenging situation and Um, coaching them along with along the way with questions with, you know, how could you do that?

**Grace:** Or what are you thinking and just having that two way dialogue and that's exactly how god sees us is He wants a two way dialogue so that we're not Kids trying to figure things out on our own that are too big for us to figure out He wants to come alongside us and help us. Um, but we need to be open to that.

**Grace:** It's up to us He's not going to Force his way in and be like, I'm going to micromanage your life. Like that's not love. Love is giving someone the option of like, I want to help you. Do you want to receive my help? Cause I'm not going to impose myself on you if not. And so if there's someone listening, who's like, you know, I'm struggling in life, like whether that's bringing your faith to work or growing in your faith or, you know, trying to figure out the answers and, and it can feel really debilitating when it's like all on us and our own willpower and strength.

**Grace:** But I think. That's the encouragement I would just end with is knowing that God sees you. He loves you. He wants to help you and he's waiting for you to invite him in. Um, and to be patient with your own process too. Cause you know, just like again, going back to the parent child analogy, you're not going to shame a kid for not getting something right away.

**Grace:** Like if you're teaching them something, it's going to take some time. They have to go through their own process that will really cement it deeply for them. And. We need to resist that urge of like getting the answers, being perfect, and having instant transformation and instead see the prize not in the outcome but more in the process of being refined with God's help and transformed more and more into his likeness with all the ups and downs along the way.

**Grace:** Yeah,

**Katie:** that is actually such a perfect lead in to one of our favorite questions here at the show because we are always learning things. That is the whole point

of the show is to learn from somebody else. I'm curious. What is something you've learned

**Grace:** recently? Oh that, what, how do I pick it? My husband and I actually recently We're starting a new practice.

**Grace:** We used to, you know, debrief our days and say like, how was your day? But we realized How do we measure our days when every day technically is good? You know, God is good How who are we to define what's good or not? So i've actually we've been asking each other every day. What have you learned today? Wow Yeah, so I think just the I think the biggest thing that comes to mind for me is Learning to unroot the false narratives that I had subconsciously ingrained in myself growing up that I had never even realized was there.

**Grace:** And I think so many, so many of the enemy's tactics to hold us back from God's purposes for us is to be subtle, you know, distorted, um, It's like, it's like good things disguised or bad things disguised as good things, right? So for example, I'll just be really transparent like one of the deeply ingrained beliefs I had was I just need to do more work in order to achieve more like that's just Humanly like that's what I was taught growing up That's what I saw in my efforts and everybody praised me for being a hard worker and overachieving like everybody said that was good.

**Grace:** So that must be good. But in the past two years, just realizing how deeply ingrained that is and how that's costing me actually a lot of other things that are actually more important to God, like relationships or having peace and trusting him and flowing in his grace. Just like in Matthew, um, 1128, you know, come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

**Grace:** And Jesus doesn't say like take a spa day or take a nap. He actually says take my yoke upon you and I will teach you my ways. I will lead you in my rhythms of grace. And I think that's, um, the passion translation, I believe. But I, I feel like there's just so many like narratives that the culture we've grown up in has.

**Grace:** Taught us to believe that we need to really question and bring to God and ask him, God, how do you see this? Like, is this right? Is this accurate? Cause if there's something rubbing, you know, some, some tension inside of you, it's always an invitation from God to dialogue with him so that he can reveal to you what the truth is.

**Grace:** And that way that like, that's how you get, you can get free from the things holding you back that you don't even realize, you know, the enemy's trying to use against you.

**Katie:** That's such a good word. Thank you for sharing that with us. Yeah, of course. Grace, would you be willing to pray for us? Yeah, I'd love to.

**Grace:** Yes, Lord. Thank you so much for this opportunity just to talk about you and talk about how worthy it is to follow you with our whole hearts. You truly are just so faithful in all the ups and downs, God. It's so easy for us to get stuck in the hopelessness and the darkness of the world. And, um, we just repent of that.

**Grace:** God, I just, I just say that, you know, we as human beings, it's so easy to fall into the traps of. you know, hopelessness, victim mentality and, and feeling like we have to figure it out on our own. And if we can't, then we just give up. And God, I just pray against that. Like if there's anybody listening who feels just like that sense of giving up or, you know, this is just too hard or that's impossible.

**Grace:** I just pray, Lord, you would remind them today that you are the God of the impossible. Like you love doing what is impossible to man. Like it's. Anything is possible for you. And, um, I pray that even for myself and, and also Katie, that you would show us more and more how to lead, how to love out of a place of just faith and trust in you, um, for anyone who's listening, who wants to bring their faith to work, that they would really lean into their authentic identity in you and authentic purpose that you've made them to be by seeking you and seeking your kingdom first and everything else will be added to them.

**Grace:** God, they, that's what you promise us. And that's what you show us time and time again, but we're not able to experience that if we don't take that step step and leap of faith, God, and you know that, and so I just thank you that you're constantly just inviting us into deeper intimacy, deeper trust in you, um, because without you, like.

**Grace:** None of this matters. Even our biggest worldly achievements doesn't matter because it's all going to fade away. It's all going to pass by like a vapor and I just pray that when we get to heaven God you will be able to Talk to us face to face and tell us that we did a faithful job here with our short lives We were faithful with what you gave us.

**Grace:** We were trusting in you we were open handed with everything you've given us from our time talents and treasure and Yeah, we just thank you for this opportunity that we're continually learning and growing. Um, I just pray that whoever's listening would be able to experience your grace and your love and your compassion for them as they step more and more into that journey, Lord, in Jesus name.

**Grace:** Amen.

**Katie:** Amen. Thank you so much. I always consider content good when I have to go sit with Jesus and process it for a little while. And that's where I am. I'm like, okay, Jesus, is it going to be weird if I just like get my journal

**Grace:** on and start taking notes in the middle of the podcast?

**Katie:** Maybe I'll do that.

**Katie:** Maybe I'll do that when I'm producing it. But thank you so much for sharing with us. I'm excited to check out, um, let's unpack that with Alex and Grace. And I know that we've already connected on Instagram, so I've enjoyed the content that you've got there. So thank you so much. I really

**Grace:** appreciate it.

**Grace:** Yeah, thank you. This was a blessing to me as well, and I just hope it blesses whoever is listening, and yeah, it really encourages them today. Yeah, for sure.