

## Have Hope; Will Travel episode {97} Divorce in the Church [Sara Slaybaugh]

Katie Axelson

Welcome to Have Hope; Will Travel. When we travel we get to know people who are different than we are, we hear different perspectives, and we better understand others' stories. We learn to stand with people instead of having opinions on issues. I'm your host Katie Axelson. This week we're talking about divorce, divorce in the church. If that's not a good topic for you, check out episode {95} with Grace Tran where we talk about faith in the workplace or episode {93} with Brittany Simmons where we talk about women in leadership and women in the military. Be sure to hit subscribe so you don't miss what's coming next.

Katie Axelson

Welcome to Have Hope; Will Travel. I'm your host Katie Axelson. Today I'm here with a new friend Sara Slaybaugh. Sara and I met through a podcasting group that we are both part of um and Sara's passion is helping women after divorce. So, Sara, that is a powerful topic that I don't think we've taken on yet. So welcome to the show and thank you for trusting us with your story.

Sara Slaybaugh

Thanks so much for having me and I'm actually very excited if you haven't had this yet because I get to kind of be the first spokesperson to kind of give that perspective of being a divorced christian woman. So I'm excited about that.

Katie Axelson

Absolutely I'm excited to hear from your perspective as well. So let's just kind of start um with a little bit more about who you are and your background where you come from.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah. Okay, so my name's Sara Slaybaugh like you said I live in Maryland um I've had a lot of different hats I obviously we talked about I'm divorced now. But I'm remarried um I work part time as a nurse. I have now this year started this coaching business that I'm doing I used to homeschool my kids up until last year and so I have kind of a lot going on.

Katie Axelson

Yeah I bet I didn't realize that you worked part time as well. In addition to the coaching business.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yes.

Katie Axelson

That's awesome. So I always feel bad when people come on the show because they have to tell me like the hard parts of their story and I recognize that there are details of your story that are not yours to share. So I'm not asking for that necessarily but like I always feel bad jumping right in and being like so let's talk about divorce here. We go. Um, so let's just kind of start here? How do you identify if a relationship as healthy or unhealthy?

Sara Slaybaugh

So this is a really good question that people really have a hard time deciding between the two. They do have a hard time recognizing between the two Um I had a hard time whenever I was going through my divorce and then the season afterwards being single and trying to date and all of that. So I kind of tried to narrow it down to two main things that I think would be kind of easy for people to spot or maybe the easiest things for them to spot. So the first one would be um. Do you feel like you have freedom of speech in your relationships. So this is actually a big one so in a healthy relationship I feel like I can talk about anything big or small even if I know it's something that me and the other person disagree with. I still have the freedom freedom of

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speech that I can talk with them about it. So even if I know that the other person may not like my answer even if I know that they might not agree with my answer. We're still able to talk through the issue calmly each share of perspectives we can ask clarifying questions. Um, and then we can more fully understand each other even if we still don't agree. So I feel like I have freedom of speech in a healthy relationship that the relationship is not in Jeopardy just because like I shared an opinion that the other person didn't like. Um, or I said something that maybe rub them the wrong way you know in a healthy relationship I don't feel like that puts the relationship in Jeopardy in an unhealthy relationship then I would feel like I couldn't bring certain things up like I didn't have the freedom to have my own opinion on certain things or to share that opinion like the conversation was either going to be shut down by the other person if I shared something or I would be shut down meaning maybe they turned it against me or you know became defensive or blamed me for something that. Didn't even know there was blame in the conversation. Maybe we're talking about something that that is not even really one person has blame in the other.. Maybe it's just a general topic that we'd be talking about and somehow it would get turned around on me that now I'm being blamed for something. Um, so I would I would either be hesitant to share something because I knew that was kind of the pattern in the relationship. So I then would just not want to share. Um I might have a feeling of like maybe I shouldn't say this what's going to happen if I say this if I did share or if I did get the courage to share. You know like I said the other person would get defensive or they would just completely shut down. Um I had an instance one time and an unhealthy relationship where I was upset about something and it it had nothing to do with the relationship or the other person actually I was just upset about something in general and the other person asked me what was wrong and I knew from experience that I probably should just not share probably should just keep it to myself but I wanted to try to make the relationship work. You know to work through it to be open in communication and so I got up the courage and I thought I'll go ahead and share what I'm upset about. And I shared and the other person literally said "Oh" and turned around and walked away

Katie Axelson  
Oh my gosh.

Sara Slaybaugh

And so it's like that obviously is very unhealthy. It's unhealthy communication and so I did not feel like I had the freedom of speech and then the second. That I would say that is is sort of an easy indicator or easier to see some of these things are hard to see when you're in them. It's like when you're in the situation you have blinders on and so they are hard to see if you're in the situation but this one is another one of the ones that you can kind of gauge a little bit more easy so it would be the safety and support that you feel from the other person. So do you feel safe with them? Do you feel supported by them? So in a healthy relationship I feel supported no matter what. Like my partner loves me cares for me supports me, he's rooting for me that doesn't mean he agrees with every decision I make you know or everything I do or everything I want to do but he's still supportive of me so in an unhealthy relationship I would either feel unsafe like I'd feel physically unsafe or I'd feel emotionally unsafe kind of like I just described um like I couldn't share certain things or maybe I couldn't do certain things and that's not a good sign if you feel unsafe in a relationship you know I wouldn't feel supported. I'd feel like I'd need to anticipate the other person's reaction even if it's to normal decisions or normal viewpoints that you would have I felt like I had to anticipate first what they were going to do or what they were going to say or like if I had a dream of like I wanted to do something or be something or you know. I'd be nervous to share it because I wouldn't feel like the other person would support me in going after that dream. Um, and that's different than a loving partner just saying they don't think it's wise right now to do something or they don't think that decision is maybe the best decision you know and discussing it with that person. But what I'm talking about here is like the gut feeling that they don't support you. They don't really want you to thrive. They don't really care for you so those are kind of the two biggest ways to tell if a

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relationship is healthy or unhealthy. It would be do you feel like you have freedom of speech in the relationship and then do you feel safe and supported in that relationship.

Katie Axelson

So let's say someone was listening and they just identified based on the descriptions that you gave they might be in an unhealthy relationship. Do you have any advice for them at that point?

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so I would say try to learn a little bit more about it if you can like whether that's seeking out maybe podcasts or maybe it's seeking out a group online that can help you discern that maybe it's. Seeking out a coach like I am to help you weed through is this relationship healthy or not. It might mean that you need to go see a counselor. Um, you know, go talk it through with a neutral party see what they think maybe find a pastor that is willing to walk you through those things. Any of those things though I would caution that you're getting in front of the right audience or the right person so you don't want to go to somebody that is just going to tell you that in any case, you're supposed to work out this relationship and like it doesn't matter what's going on in the relationship. You should still continue in it. You know if somebody's telling you that God would hate it if you leave the relationship you know something like that if you are married in this relationship and somebody um before they even listen to your story or what you're going through if they say well God Hates divorce. And there's no other context that's probably not a good person that's going to actually help you through the situation and help you discern for yourself whether this is a good place for you to stay or not so you want to you Want to try to seek out somebody that is willing to take the time to understand to step into your shoes to see what is really going on to deem is the relationship healthy or is it not healthy instead of somebody that's just going to kind of slap a judgment on it from the beginning without even knowing.

Katie Axelson

Yeah. That's hard. Um, and you've kind of alluded to it already. But let's talk a little bit more about what does divorce feel like in the church?

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so divorce in the church feels very isolating. It feels very judgmental. It feels condemning. Um sometimes the conversation changes like immediately when the other person finds out that you're divorced and like I could feel that in conversations I would have have with other people. We might be talking about something not related to marriage or divorce or relationships at all. But if I just happened to say you know I was divorced or I had a situation one time where I was talking about planning a play date with my kids with this other person's kids and it was like as soon as I mentioned that I couldn't do this one day because the kids would be at their dad's house that was the literally the end of the conversation.

Katie Axelson

Wow.

Sara Slaybaugh

I'd never understood this of course was over text and so you know there's a little bit of oh maybe this happened maybe that but really because of the pattern of how people are kind of treated in the divorce if if they're being divorced in the church. The pattern is kind of conversation was shut down because the other person now realized I was divorced and somehow that slid me into a category of being like not a good enough Christian or didn't try hard enough or whatever so you feel a lot of that when you're divorced in the church. Um. You know I used to have myself like a subconscious judgment of people that were divorced and I didn't realize this until I went through it myself but I kind of had that same thing where if I

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learned somebody was divorced subconsciously I thought "Oh well they didn't try hard enough." You know they're not as righteous as other Christians or whatever you know and I didn't realize I held that assumption or those subconscious judgments until I was seeing them projected on me and so I had to then evaluate: Wow These are some of the thoughts that I've had in the past and and I need to change that and I think bringing awareness to it is how you see what are the things that you're believing and how are you projecting them on other people. Um, and so I've really learned now how to not do that and I've really learned now through my own experience that people are in hard situations. Um, and who am I to say well that situation wasn't um, wasn't a good enough reason for you to be divorced now or whatever because we only know a tiny, tiny bit of somebody else's story. So. What does it feel like and in the church? Divorce feels very isolating. It feels judgmental. It feels very condemning. Um and it can feel very alone if you don't get plugged in with the right groups and the right people.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, how do you find the right groups and the right people?

Sara Slaybaugh

Well kind of how I was talking about before you need to kind of be searching for the people that are willing to understand it all starts with seeking to understand. That's my number one favorite biblical principle is seeking to understand and this goes in in any situation really in any relationship, not just divorce or anything else, but it's a biblical principle that you can apply to pretty much anything is seeking to understand so you want to find the people that will do that you want to find the people that when you tell them part of your story they ask non-judgmental questions like they're just trying to understand your perspective. They're just trying to understand where you're coming from. They're not just you know, slapping on a judgment or deciding that they know more about your story perhaps than you yourself do and so part of it is just finding people like that. The other thing is getting yourself plugged in too. So if you want to grow your faith in the season after your divorce, well then you need to do some things in order to make that happen. So for me I felt like God loved me. Even though I was going through a divorce right? I felt like He accepted me and I felt like He wanted to grow my faith and so I started plugging myself in places where I knew that was going to happen. So I continued to go to Bible study Even if I felt sometimes like I was the only divorce person in the room. Even if sometimes I felt like maybe the other people didn't really understand me I still knew it was a good Bible study program that I was in and so I plugged into that. Um God led me to a small group. Within my church that for whatever reason I really felt pulled to I really felt led to for whatever reason and I was the only one going that was my age like a single mom with young kids but I felt like. This is what I needed to do to grow my faith especially through my divorce and after this is what I wanted to be for like the example for my kids you know that Mom plugs into her faith and does a small group and all of this stuff and I later found out that that couple was a blended family and.

Katie Axelson

Oh wow.

Sara Slaybaugh

I had no idea I thought they were a couple that was married for like 50 years and you know this wonderful relationship and which they do have a wonderful relationship. They've been married for a long time but I didn't know that they had both previously been divorced and they were remarried and they were now in a blended family and so I really felt like God led me to them and to that that group. So I think you need to seek out ways that you can plug into your faith find people that understand find people that are willing to listen and use the season as ah as a time that you can grow yourself, grow your faith. Because God will use situations like that. It's when we go through those hard times like that if we turn towards God instead of away from

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him. He really will magnify what's going on in your spiritual life. You know he really grew my faith and it's way stronger now than it was before my divorce.

Katie Axelson

That's beautiful and your faith has grown so much. One of my closest friends is divorced I haven't dragged her on the show yet. Maybe I will um but she talked all the time every time I'm asking like what are you up to today. She's like I'm hanging out with these people from my divorce group and I'm like how your whole social life came from your divorce group like I'm a little jealous here.

[Laughter]

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, that's good. So she's you know she's plugging in and she's getting around people that can support her and that understand where she's at so that's great.

Katie Axelson

So let's talk a little bit more about like what does recovery look like after divorce?

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so for me, you know we talked about the faith piece. So I did press into my faith, I did you know seek out these groups and everything like that I decided myself that God loved me and He still accepted and wanted me like I said before and so I use that to ignore the voices. A lot of which were coming from the church that told me otherwise so I learned how to ignore the voices in the church that were only offering me condemnation without knowing any of my story. I remember reading a very popular Christian author, Christian speaker online I read his article on divorce and how God hates divorce and it really hurt me it really was an article that was not at all helpful and it was very hurtful to me at the time but I learned how to ignore voices like that because I knew that they weren't in line with what I read about God in the Bible that I was reading that God is a rescuer and a redeemer and you know that we see that over and over and over again in scripture. Um, and God can use things that are maybe not what we really wanted. Um, but He can use them for His good and so you know I started to look for the ways in the bible that god pulled people out of hard situations. But god rescued people out of situations that he knew were not situations that they should stay in that he knew were not situations that were good for them and I think of you know Egypt so much that the Israelites living in Egypt for so long and they were being treated horribly. You know they were not being treated well they were in a very difficult situation and we see that God pulls them out of that and he tells them don't go back there. You know and so part of the recovery after divorce is making sure that you have the perspective that you know what God says about you even if other people even in the church are saying something different than that and it's pressing into what what God is saying about you and then there's also recovery like rebuilding yourself. So for example, um after my divorce I had three young kids at the time I still have three young kids but they're a little bit older now. But after my divorce you know I mentioned that I had been homeschooling them. They were with me most of the time. Um, you know I had them most of the time during my marriage and then and then my season of singleness and all of this. But I wound up having a rare opportunity to have a week by myself without kids and it's like Wow like this is amazing and so you know part of the recovery for me was taking opportunities like that and like seizing the opportunity. So when I had this rare opportunity for a week by myself I took it and I like ran with it I wound up going to the beach. Um I as an adult developed a fear of flying and I really had started working on that. Um. You know had tried to work through that and so I decided I'm going to fly myself to Florida and I'm going because I have this opportunity and I'm going to take it you know.

Katie Axelson

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You good for you.

Sara Slaybaugh

And I wound up going down to Florida it was beautiful I was there for a week by myself which I love. I'm I'm actually more introverted and so being at the beach for a week by myself was amazing that was like Paradise to me, you know nobody was asking me like for things all throughout the day nobody needed me all the time. You know? and so it's like I got to do all the stuff that I wanted to do when I wanted to do it So I sat on the beach, I walked the beach, I took myself out to eat, I even went and did paddleboard yoga which was one of the things that I really wanted to do you know? and so I used that time to really rebuild myself and to gain new confidence and then when I came home I just continued to do that like if I had an opportunity to do something that I wanted to do I generally took it. You know I started doing the things that I wanted to do I started going biking and hiking things like that. Um. When I was able if I had the kids I'd take the kids hiking you know? Um, so I tried to do things like that. Um I tried to rebuild myself and and you know regain my confidence and self-esteem and things like that. Um, and then I'll tell you a little bit about like my dating story. So I wound up starting to date. Um, it was hard as a Christian it was very hard as a divorced Christian I feel like I was looking for certain things that are not always very popular in the dating community. You know I was looking for a very specific set of criteria, qualities that I wanted in the other person. Um, and so at first it was hard to weed through who was genuine and who wasn't um. I had one relationship off and on that it was really difficult for me to recognize red flags at first it was really difficult for me to figure out like we were talking about before what was healthy and what wasn't healthy but eventually I learned those things I learned those signs I learned what was good for me and what wasn't good for me I learned how to go about looking for that even as a single mom um I learned how to stick to what I wanted without wasting my time energy and emotions on people not meant for me and I learned how to not settle and so um, all I used all of all of that to recover after my divorce really and to rebuild myself and then what wound up happening for me is I wound up meeting somebody that we just became friends. Um, we you know, kind of talked a little bit here and there and then the following year we started dating and I just saw one good thing after another after another after another so like my questions of is this relationship good? Is it not good? They just continued to be answered with this is a good relationship and here's why and then I'd have another interaction with him and it was like this is a good relationship and here's another reason why you know it was just one good. Good thing after another and so we actually wound up getting married last year so in September

Katie Axelson  
Congratulations!

Sara Slaybaugh

Thank you, we just had our one-year anniversary a few months ago. Um, and our relationship is just truly a wonderful, loving, supportive, healthy relationship. You know I was able to use everything that I learned through going through my first marriage, going through my divorce, going through being ah a single mom you know, going through this season of singleness when I'm not going to date not ready to date and then becoming ready to date trying it out figuring out how to do that. How to go about it. And I used all of that to find the relationship that I really wanted that I think God actually intended me to have so that's kind of my journey and now I'm using that through my coaching business because I'm trying to help other divorced Christian women learn how to do the same I'm trying to step into their shoes with them and say "Hey I get it. I understand what's going on. I want to help you sort through these relationships. I want to help you figure out what you want and what you don't want and I want to help you to not settle so that you're actually in the relationship that can help you thrive."

Katie Axelson

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Yeah, no, that's so good. Um, that's so good I've got so many questions that I just let I ask and they're not coming in a like cohesive order. So first we're going to like back up because the topic has come up a couple of times and I want to ask about it. But by the time we get there. The conversation has moved on. So you've talked about how like the church was not supportive or condemning and um things like that. How do we change that? um both as friends of someone who's getting divorced or as someone who has experienced divorce.

Sara Slaybaugh

As friends if we want to help somebody going through a divorce and we're actually friends with them so we actually know with them know them. The first thing we need to do is stop judging them and start listening to them. So if you've had some of those subconscious beliefs, subconscious judgments or assumptions around divorce, let's just rein them in for a minute and let's just listen to what your friend has to say you know because you might find that through listening to them through learning about their perspective. Some of the assumptions that you had re just that: they're just assumptions and they're not based on anything actually in reality or anything that's going on maybe for this particular friend in their particular situation. So the other thing as friends you want to try instead of trying to figure out like. Who's to blame in this relationship who was in the wrong which person are you supposed to side with like if it's acceptable to continue your relationship with your friend because you think divorce is wrong at all costs. So maybe you're considering should I continue to be friends with this person and I actually have a friend that. She went through a divorce and she blatantly had friends tell her they're not going to be friends with her anymore solely because of divorce and so that's probably definitely the wrong thing to do.

Katie Axelson

Wow Oh my gosh I would say that's probably not supportive. Yeah yeah.

Sara Slaybaugh

Right? And so more supportive would be listen to her see what she has to actually say. Um, what her situation is and instead of trying to align yourself with who you think is to blame and who you think is not to blame like that's not even your place at all your place as their friend is to be a support to them and listen to them. So um, you can include them just as you had before. So if you usually go with them and their kids to the park. You know, invite them and their kids to go to the park. You know if you usually have them on a group chat with people then continue to include them in the group chat like things don't have to change just because the person is going through a divorce you know. And more. So maybe you should make sure they're definitely included in things. Maybe you need to reach out a little bit more to that person to see hey are you are you actually okay like what are you struggling with today? Maybe they want to talk about the divorce. Maybe they don't want to talk about the divorce. Maybe they just want to continue to just be your friend and continue to hang out just as you had before but either way they need a friend and they don't need one that's going to not know any of their situation and then decide that they're wrong and turn away from them. So I would say that you need to take the time to listen to their perspective and be open-minded enough to learn something from it.

Sara Slaybaugh

So um, and then you asked as somebody that's experienced divorce. Um, you know we can change the feeling of divorce in the church by speaking against the judgment when we know somebody was treated horribly. For instance. So if we know that somebody's going through a divorce in the church and we know that they've been in a very bad situation. We know that they've been in an unhealthy relationship. We know that they're actually being treated the opposite of what God has to say of a biblical healthy marriage. I think that we need to take a stand for that and we need to speak up for the other person and say hey they might be going

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through a divorce but God is redeeming them out of that situation like look at all of these examples in their marriage of how they were being treated opposite of how God says that a wife or a husband in that matter if it's if maybe it's the man that's your friend. You know they were treated the opposite of how the Bible says that a husband and a wife should be treated and so if you know somebody in the church that's going through a divorce even if you're not friends with them. It's a good idea to speak up about that to just kind of be the voice from the other side because like we talked about the main or the prominent voice is the one of condemnation and judging them. And so if you know that a situation really is not a healthy relationship if it is not a good place for a parent and the kids to stay in that relationship, if it's not safe for them whether physically, emotionally you know, anything like that. It's a good idea for you to kind of take take a stand with that person and to speak up and just say "Hey. You're right. Like we read in the Bible that this is not how you and your family is supposed to be treated." So like I I touched on before some people sometimes people just need to realize that divorce may be a rescue story. It may be a redemption story. We read about that so many times in the Bible and you know I believe that Jesus rescues and redeems. So even if you're not friends with the person you can still tell them that you want to support them. You can ask them. What would be a practical help just so that they have somebody on their side that's offering them a voice of reason and a voice of understanding.

30:04.50

Katie Axelson

Yeah, yeah, that's good I think that we as Christians try to be supportive I like to assume the best that we try to be supportive and sometimes we're just really, really bad at it. So. Let's talk about things that maybe are well intentioned but aren't actually supportive.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so one of the things would be if you're going through somebody's story with them or you're trying to walk with them through their struggle when they're not yet divorced. But maybe they're in the process of are we going to get divorced are we not going to get divorced. Maybe they're walking through counseling you know things like that if you're at that stage it kind of still goes back to seeking to understand. I think at that stage instead of trying to convince them that divorces the wrong answer or divorce is not acceptable. You know, ah, unless you know a ton of their story unless you really are somehow I fly on the wall in their home or unless you really somehow know a lot of the details you likely really don't know enough of what's going on to make any sort of call for them. So I think that a lot of times people want to try to help the other person decide what is best. So if if they're contemplating getting divorced. You know they're in counseling all this stuff things sometimes people want to try to help the person decide. Um, and maybe they want to do that by saying things like we talked about like God hates divorce and you know. Maybe you need to try this to make your relationship work and maybe you need to try this to make your marriage work and what about going to this other counselor I just feel like you don't really know enough of the situation to even step into that arena unless you are super, super well involved with this person and like you're really a go to person that they really are asking you for advice. Um, so it's hurtful to be going through a divorce or trying to decide if you should get a divorce and people are telling you that you should not that don't know any part of your story. So people do think they're so being supportive doing that because they think that they're helping prevent a divorce but I think the other thing they need to realize is that by the time this relationship has gotten to that point by the time the relationship has gotten to the point where it's either on the brink of divorce. Um, or they're definitely getting divorced, you're stepping into the situation at such a late stage in the process. That you are not really understanding or considering all of the years all of the time all of the struggle all of the effort that was put into this marriage and that was put into trying to make it work. And so you think you're being supportive by coming in and offering some hope like "Oh your marriage is going to be redeemed. I just know that God's going to save it" and "Oh you should stay in this marriage because you know we think that it's the best thing for you



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to do” or whatever somebody might be same I think you need to realize that that person by the time they get to you by the time that you're now hearing about this potential divorce by the time that you're now hearing about maybe this marital problem or whatever it has been a long time in the making and so that individual that's going through. It has probably already been long suffering like we hear about so much you know and so by the time they get to you I think you need to realize that their timeline is different than your timeline. Sometimes what happens and sometimes this can be from a pastor too or maybe even a therapist but sometimes what happens is a couple gets to biblical counseling with their pastor and now the pastor, I think he probably doesn't realize this is what he's doing, but he's putting the couple on his timeline because he's kind of counting the timeline as when they came to him and so he's thinking, "Okay, this couple came to me at this point in time we're going to work with them over this next several months," you know? "We're gonna make sure that she's putting in the effort that he's putting in the effort that um, we're going to have kind of these meetings set up along the way." Which is all fine and good like we need Biblical counseling, we need pastoral counseling again from somebody that's willing to actually understand and actually be helpful. Um, and non-judgmental; somebody that is willing to use scripture rightly you know in a situation. But even the pastor or even that person needs to realize that the timeline doesn't start with when that person came into your office. You know? You might want to put them on your timeline. Oh well, we've been working on this for six months now well that individual has maybe been working on it for six years now you know and so it's it's also remembering that their timeline is not your timeline. So.

Katie Axelson

So yeah, that's real any other suggestions of things that could be supportive?

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so let's say that you know somebody that is divorced or going through divorce um some practical things that you can do. So do they have kids? Maybe they now need help picking their kids up from school. You know, maybe they've had to go back to work full time and so they need somebody that can be at the bus stop or maybe they've been a homeschool family and they're still trying to figure out how could they possibly make homeschool work. Um, perhaps you can help with that. Perhaps you can help with a co-op or perhaps you can help with a subject or something like that. Um. Perhaps you know they just need a time or a night off without having the kids because now they have this additional stress on them. Maybe they're in a situation where they're having 100 percent custody and so you know they really are getting no break at all so practical things would just be see. Can help with something like that something with their kids something with their house. Maybe they need their lawn mowed. Um, you know something that you might not think of maybe it's snowing and they need their sidewalk shoveled because now they've got three little kids in the house and they'd like to go out and shovel their sidewalk or they'd like to go out and mow their their lawn but they're dealing with the baby and they're dealing with the toddler and they're dealing with whatever it may be all of these things now as a single parent, so you know. A supportive thing would be figure out what they actually need and how do you know that while you talk to them. You know you ask them "Hey I would love to help you I know you're going through a divorce, I know you're going through a hard time, or I know you're now a single parent, what actually would be helpful? What what could I help you with maybe it's a freezer meal?" You know, maybe it's just being somebody to say "Hey, I know you have a lot of it in your plate and it's probably unrealistic for us to continue to meet for coffee like we usually do. How about I just bring coffee to you and we'll just sit in your living room that way you don't have to make arrangements for the kids?" You don't have to you know, get out of the house. You know so just talk to them and figure out what what could be supportive. What could be helpful.

Katie Axelson

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I like the call it that you made of like specifically asking them and then I think some people are better at it than others of actually accepting help or knowing what will be helpful. So having the suggestions of like: Can I shovel your driveway? Can I cut your grass? Can I bring you dinner? Having suggestions ready if they're not sure how to respond or if you don't get a ah response from them.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, and the other side of that then is as the divorced person or the single parent or whatever try to accept that help. So a lot of people have a hard time accepting help or they feel bad about it or whatever it may be. I would just really encourage anybody in that situation that if somebody offers to bring you a meal, take them up on it and say "Yah, you know what? That probably would be helpful" and just take it as that person wants to help that person wants to bless you and if you tell them no, you're kind of taking something away from them. Like they want to help they they they want to support you and so figure out a way that you can let them do that figure out something that you would be comfortable with them doing. Maybe you're not comfortable with them coming and doing your laundry if they might offer that you know, but maybe if they're shoveling driveways or they've got their snowplow out there or whatever then maybe say yeah that that actually would be helpful or if they say hey you know I want to watch your kids for the evening so you can literally just sit on the couch if that's what you want to do instead of feeling bad about that view it as an opportunity like I was saying before you might not have the opportunity to go to the beach for a week you know, but take the opportunities that you might be given take the opportunities that people might offer you and just say hey yeah, that actually would be nice.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, yeah, that's good. That's really good. What do you wish everyone knew about divorce?

Sara Slaybaugh

Oh my? Well I wish that people knew that most people that get divorced do not just get divorced because they don't value marriage. They don't just get divorced because they grew apart. They don't get divorced because they didn't try hard enough or didn't pray hard enough or aren't a good enough Christian like these are not reasons that most people are getting divorced I think some people think and I think I used to think that people got divorced because oh well, we just grew apart and so we're gonna get divorced because we just don't know each other anymore. Now that does happen and I'm not saying I agree with that. But what I am saying is that that's not the case in most situations and so applying a judgment to every single person that's divorced that that was the case is really a wrong assumption or a wrong judgment. So most people are not getting divorced for reasons like that. Um you know I've met a lot of people that are in very hard and difficult situations that really you know nothing about um you know I've met lots of people including single dads that were in terrible situations. Um, they're doing so much better for themselves and for their families after their divorce and so I just want people to realize that it's not for a lack of trying It's not for a lack of counseling you know I myself went to numerous counselors when I was in my first marriage. Um, I tried a lot. I tried to seek godly counsel. I tried to do everything I thought I should do you know. I tried to make connections with my then spouse you know I prayed I did all of these things and so what I really wish people knew is that it's usually not just two people that just grew apart. It usually are really hard and difficult situations that people are in that you just really don't know what the whole story is. And and also that life can be a blessing after a divorce that life doesn't end after a divorce and so if it's somebody listening that is going through this themselves I wish they would know that this isn't the end of the world. That God can still use this situation to grow your faith to grow yourself God can rebuild and redeem and so if it's somebody that needs to hear that on the podcast that there is hope after divorce, some of these changes that you might have can wind up being blessings and in my case, you know I look back now and like I shared with the relationship that I have now. I'm so grateful I have this relationship now

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and so looking back God pulled me through my divorce and I'm glad I'm happy I'm doing well you know and like I said I grew my faith through it and so um, those are kind of the things that I wish that people that aren't divorced knew and people that are possibly going through a divorce would realize that it's going to be okay, you know in one way or another God will pull you through and blessings can await you on the other side.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, yeah, no, that's so good. Um, and I'm glad that you've been able to ah to fight through the healing and the recovery to receive and accept those blessings and to see them all throughout your life.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, yeah, you definitely need to be watching for those things and like I said plug, plug yourself into different places so that you're setting yourself up for that.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, yeah Sara this has been so insightful so helpful like I've like I said I've walked through divorce with a couple of friends but it's always it's always kind of that like how do we? How do we approach this. How do we talk about it and so hearing your thoughts has been really helpful in things that I need to do differently um or things that I need to continue to do. So thank you so much for that.

Sara Slaybaugh

You're welcome I'm glad to share.

Katie Axelson

If others have found this helpful as well or if they want to continue to learn where can we find you online?

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, so I'm on Facebook so you can search on Facebook Sara Slaybaugh Coaching is my business page. You can find my profile which is just Sara Slaybaugh you can connect with me on there I have a Facebook group specifically for divorced Christian women. This can be people that are divorced and still so still single. It can be for people that have been divorced and now they're remarried in healthy relationships. So the group is called Confidence and Connection for Divorced Christian Women and so if anybody is interested in that you can search that on Facebook you can find it through my page also as well. It's a great place for you to be in a community of supported, like-minded women that understand what you're going through or what you've been through so that's a great one and then in the show notes I think you're also going to put my free guide so I have a free guide for divorced christian women. It's the Three Essential Steps to Finding the Relationship of your Dreams. It actually can apply to any single person that's looking to date or any single Christian that's looking to date but I have it specifically titled for the divorced Christian woman. So if you're interested in that free guide. There'll be a link also in the show notes for that.

Katie Axelson

Sure, wonderful yeah going to all of those in the show notes for sure. Sara, would you be willing to pray for us?

Sara Slaybaugh

Sure I would love to do that. All right? Let's pray dear Lord we just thank you. So so much Lord that we've had this opportunity to share. We've had this opportunity to talk. We've had this opportunity lord to just be able to talk about what's been on my heart. Um, what's been on

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Katie's heart with her podcast Lord that this podcast is for us to understand people Lord for us to understand different perspectives for us to not just pass easy judgments Lord or or to. Have assumptions and things like that. This podcast is really to help us to step into somebody else's shoes to help us to learn from them to help us to open our minds to what is their perspective and what maybe am I holding onto what beliefs am I holding onto or assumptions I'm holding onto that that I need to let go of. And so Lord I ask that you would just use this podcast this episode and the other episodes that she has to just show people what in their heart might need to change what in their heart and their mind might need to be adjusted Lord I ask that you would be with each of the people that are listening to this that are. Going through a divorce that are having a hard time with it that are maybe post-divorce and they're having a hard time finding the people that are willing to support them or help them I particularly pray for the people that have actually turned away from the church because of how they've been treated after the divorce and I pray Lord that you would just put people in front of them that are supportive that are going to love them that are going to accept them Lord and I just ask that you would just bring good out of all of these situations that you would be bring good out of this podcast and that the people that are listening if they need help. Of whatever kind Lord that they would be able to find some things in this show that can then help can help them on their journey. We just thank you for this time and we pray that you would just meet each of these people where they are and that you would just pull them through and grow their faith while you're at it Lord we thank you for all these blessings. Jesus name amen.

Katie Axelson

Amen. Thank you so much. I love hearing people talk to God because I love getting to see just a little glimpse of their faith when they're comfortable willing to do it on the show. So thank you so much for that. Thanks.

Sara Slaybaugh

You're welcome and that's another way actually that you can get somebody else's perspective right? because you're hearing how do they talk to God you know what are the things that are maybe important to them or and or on their heart or what has God laid on their heart that maybe. Is being shared in the prayer.

Katie Axelson

Absolutely so I have one final question for you. What's something that you've learned recently?

Sara Slaybaugh

Um, okay, well I'll say something related to my business actually so my coaching business of course is online so I have been learning a ton of how to set that all up how to do it. How to do all this stuff. So um recently have learned how to set up things such as a funnel. So if you are in uh online marketing. You know what a funnel is and if you are not I'll briefly explain to you. What a funnel is so a funnel is how you are getting a potential client or somebody that's just maybe interested in your content or whatever. How are you funneling them through so that they can connect with you. So for instance I mentioned that I have my free guide for divorced Christian women. Well I had to learn every single step of making that free guide every single step of making that funnel so I had to learn how to create what's called the landing page for it I had to learn. Um, what to put on it I had to learn how to design it. You know I had to learn how to connect that with the actual free guide that they're going to get once they go to the link I had to learn how to connect the emails with it and everything else. So I would say I have been learning a ton about the tech side of things for my business and so that's one of them and I'm using a system called System Io that I have a link for actually if anybody wants to message me for the link I have a link for it. But it's the system that I used for my funnel and it's the system I'm using for sending out emails to clients. You can do landing pages on it. You can do email marketing. You can do newsletters. You could do a website on it. You could do affiliate marketing and and all of that So I would say what have I learned I've been learning a ton about

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the online marketing side of a business and the funnels and things like that have been a big part of it here recently.

Katie Axelson

And you're calling me out because my funnel needs to be updated. So thanks.

Sara Slaybaugh

So that was a good reminder. Maybe that's why you asked me that question and

Katie Axelson

That's a good reminder Katie you need to remember how to do that.

Sara Slaybaugh

I took it a completely different direction from talking about divorce I was just like well here's what I've learned.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, no, that's great and a lot of people do it's kind of because the show's built around the idea of always hearing somebody else's story and getting to learn from them. It's fun to hear what people are learning right now. A lot of times guests will like turn it around on me and I like panic and I'm like I don't I don't know what I've learned recently. And um, so thank you for not doing that.

Sara Slaybaugh

But yeah yeah I mean I had to think about it for a second. But then it's like well that's what I'm learning I mean that's that's the most recent thing that I've been learning. So yep.

Katie Axelson

Yeah yeah, and it's it's so real and so important we're always learning and we need to always be learning awesome. Well Sara thank you so much for trusting us with your story for sharing it with us for educating us. Helping us be better friends. Um through people for people who are going through divorce and for realizing like hey god doesn't necessarily hate divorce. There's a lot more to the situation than what we know is going on. So. Thank you so much for educating us.

Sara Slaybaugh

Yeah, definitely well. Thanks so much for having me and be willing to listen to my perspective I appreciate that very much and I think that the people that are going to listen to this that are going through divorce or have already been divorced are going to appreciate hearing this side of the situation.

Katie Axelson

Yeah, for sure.

Katie Axelson

As always, big thanks for listening. If you enjoyed this episode and learned something from Sara, be sure to tell her thanks and connect with her on Facebook as well as YouTube. Download her free guide for divorced Christian women: Three Essential Steps to Finding the Relationship of Your Dreams. She said it's not just for divorced women, so I may be checking that out myself. If you've already hit subscribe to catch the next episode but you're looking for something else to listen to right now, maybe check out episode {91} with MaryB Safrit where we talk about singleness, episode {83} where we talk about church hurt with Emily Louis, or you can jump all the way back to the beginning of Have Hope; Will Travel episode {16} where Jamie Lee talked about what it's like to be a single parent. Until I see you again, my friend,

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know that you are loved, know that you are cared for, know that you are seen, you are known, and you matter. We'll see you again in two weeks. Bye.