Ep 244 When Your Faith Feels Weak

Introduction to the Fight for Your Marriage Podcast and Its Purpose

Teri Lyn Toby: Nothing that we go through. Should we stand back and think to ourselves, oh, my goodness, because I've done. I chose this, or this has happened to me, or in dealing with this, God can't use me. That is simply a lie from our enemy and he wants to defeat you and lie to you so you do not fulfill your purpose for kingdom glory. thanks for joining us for the

Lori Lassen: Fight for your Marriage podcast with Charlene and Lori. This is a place where you can find hope. Hope for your marriage through Jesus Christ.

Exploring Biblical Characters to Understand Facing Life's Impossible Moments with Terri Lynn Toby

Hi, it's Lori. I'm so happy that you are here for this episode of the Fight for your marriage podcast. Today we are going to be talking about my favorite book. I'm sure it's probably your favorite book as well. We're going to be talking a lot about the Bible and about scripture and, and about people that are in the Bible. What can the people of the Bible teach us about facing the seemingly impossible moments of our lives? That's the question that our guest today, Terri Lynn Toby, is going to be talking about. She is a writer, a wife, a mother, a lifelong student of scripture, and someone who has lived through hardship just like what you might be going through. She is faced difficulties in

her life and she has had those seasons where she has to decide if she believes what God's word says and who he is, or if she's going to listen to those whispers of the enemy. And today we talk about how to understand scripture and how to look at people in the scripture and not just see them as Bible stories, but to understand that they are people just like us who have walked through trials, who have had to grow their faith as the Lord strengthened their faith in their journeys. And I think that you're going to really enjoy this conversation today. I think what it's going to do is encourage you. You know, today might be a day where you are just at the end of your rope and you feel like you don't have anything left to give. You don't have any faith left. That mustard seed that you need seems to be gone. And I think that today you're going to walk away from this just encouraged and believing that God can and trusting and being reignited in that faith. So I hope this episode is a blessing to you and stick around till the end so you can find out how you can connect with Terri Lynn Toby. Terri, thank you for joining us today. I'm so excited to have you on and to talk about. One of my favorite, favorite topics, and yours too, I think, is scripture and God's Word.

Terri Lynn Toby Shares Her Personal Journey and Background in Faith and Writing

Teri Lyn Toby: Yes. Yes. And thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to be here with you.

Lori Lassen: Oh, I'm excited. Well, let me ask, you to just tell us a little bit about yourself. And, we're going to talk today about the Bible and tell us a little bit about yourself and, what God has done in your life recently.

Teri Lyn Toby: Well, that would take 247 to talk about what God's done in my life. Right.

So to keep it short, I'm a daughter of a Southern Baptist minister who became a Christian counselor and an entrepreneurial and philanthropist mother. And, both strong Christians in the Lord. Both. as far as my dad, he was the first Christian in his family. So we really see him starting that legacy of faith in our family. Right. And, from that I went to. After growing up in that household, dad really taught me to know what I believe and why I believe it. Right. But when I went to Taylor University, Taylor took that and taught me not just to know what I believe and why I believe it, but how to share that with others that you can't even begin with the foundation of Scripture because they don't even believe that. Right. But, at Taylor, I met my husband and We've been married 35 years. We have two grown children. We don't have grandchildren yet, but we have two grown children. My son is in seminary to be a pastor, and, my daughter is. Teaches at a preschool, a Christian preschool here. And so, I kind of adopted dogs to fill that void a little bit. My children. So I'm a dog mom. One of my dogs is my service dog. He. He's my diabetic alert dog. So he's sitting here with me in case his little head pops up. You'll see him. So God called me to. I did theater for 30 years. And really what was on my heart was, was writing, though. My, I studied psychology at Taylor, and my psychology professor, the head of the apartment came to me one day and he said, terry, he said, you know, he said, you have an innate ability to understand human nature. But he said, you need to drop psychology as your major and become a writing

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Teri Lyn Toby: major. And I laughed. I laughed at him. But I, think he's laughing now. Yeah, because that's what I'm doing and the Lord's using it. I, you know, I'm firmly believe in us following our purpose, what God. I think God's given us all a purpose, though sometimes we. I'm going to be 60 next year, and, I've walked a Wilderness journey of preparation that I needed to walk.

and sometimes I mourn that. I mourn years the locust stole. And I think some of your listeners might be able to relate to that with what they're going through. But I've learned in that, that those years though I see some of them as a loss. God used them to grow and mature me and develop me and prepare me for the purpose I'm walking in now. Even though they were very difficult years.

Lori Lassen: Yeah, it's not easy to walk through it. We say that all the time. We never want to go through hardship. We want the easy life. We want the, you know, no hardship life. But that's not realistic. And you love to share what people of the Bible teach us about facing the seemingly impossible moments that we face. Because we can see a parallel many times between our lives and, and people in the Bible. And when we read the scripture, we see people that didn't just have an easy life either. Many of them faced great hardships. And so I'm excited to talk about that. speaking to that. Sometimes we put biblical figures on a pedestal and I think sometimes we can even read a story and relate to the good guy in the story and think, I'm not the bad guy like in Joseph's story. I'm not the brothers, I'm not the people that, you know, sold Joseph into slavery. I'm Joseph. You know, and we can put ourselves on a, on a pedestal like that. what happens when we remember that people in the Bible were just ordinary people like us who were dealing with fear, they're dealing with relationships, they're dealing with uncertainty and disappointments. how do we rationalize that?

Teri Lyn Toby: Well, I think we miss so much that scripture has to teach us when we place those people in scripture on a pedestal or we don't realize how much like us they are.

Understanding Biblical Figures as Ordinary People Facing Similar Emotions and Trials

I mean, the truth of it is if we go back, we were all created in God's image. Right? All of us, the people in the scripture and us too. So they are not having any different emotions to things than what we have. Right. They're the same emotions. And I also think sometimes when we read scripture, like you mentioned Joseph, right. We see him in prison for one chapter and we see these problems in scripture, maybe just a couple of verses about the problem. Right. Or one chapter about the problem. And we think, oh, their trial must have been very short lived and they were moving out and they, blah, blah, blah, I'm sorry. Joseph was in prison for over seven years. Yeah. And he had even had dreams about where God was going to take him. Right. He knew he wasn't supposed to be in prison. He had had dreams of everybody bowing down to him, and they're not doing that now. Right. And so his preparation, his wilderness journey for those seven years was really in a dark pit. It's not like prisons that we have today. Right. They. They're horrible conditions that he lived through. And yet he maintained. I think, what we know about faith, right? And what we should is I say, who is your faith in? Is your faith in faith or is your faith in God? Because God is who he says he is, and he will do what he says he will do. And if. And Joseph faith was in his God in Yahweh.

The Faith of Joseph and the Story of Tamar in the Bible

Right. And so he was able to walk through that trial still holding on to what he knew God had told him from the very beginning.

Lori Lassen: Yep. That's the faith that we all want to have.

Teri Lyn Toby: Yes, yes.

Lori Lassen: Is there somebody in the Bible that really sticks out to you that you relate to that? you know, you got to know their story more through the research that you did for your books.

Teri Lyn Toby: I will tell you, this may be a pat answer, but all of them, all of them, seriously, all of them, not just the books, but the Bible studies, researching these women, especially in the Old Testament because their lives were. Take Tamar, for example. Again, one chapter smack dab between Joseph's story, right. Tamar and Judah, Genesis 38. And we don't like to talk about her. I mean, what she did and what happened to her, all of that was unbelievable. And most of us would not choose, as one is women to go through that. Right? And most men would not be the father in law of a daughter in law. And. And we can't imagine not knowing

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Teri Lyn Toby: who our daughter in law is if they were to come to us like that. Right? Men can't do that. And I think there's something I say in every single one, because I think there's something, whether it's a man in scripture or a woman in scripture, they're not in there because God just decided it was supposed to be. He wanted their story told. They're in there because there is something relatable to us in their stories. Even someone like Tamar's, right? In what she went through and the loss she suffered through two dead husbands.

God's Use of Flawed Individuals and Praying for Prodigal Loved Ones

Now, granted, they weren't the best husbands in the world, but she suffered through two dead husbands and was sent home as a widow. Virtually what Judah did with her is he sent her home to Die, Right. Because his third son was of age. I mean, he had to be of age. He wasn't a little boy being waiting to grow up. So Tamar knew Judah was lying to her. So each of these people, when I read them, and then how God used them, not just the circumstance and how horrible it was, Tamar was used in the lineage of our Messiah. She's listed in the first chapter of Matthew. Right? So nothing that we go through, should we stand back and think to ourselves, oh, my goodness, because I've done, I chose this, or this has happened to me, or in dealing with this, God can't use me. That is simply a lie from our enemy. And he wants to defeat you and lie to you so you do not fulfill your purpose for kingdom, glory. And I think those people in the Bible tell us, look, we were flawed too, and God still used us. Mixed all of our flaws, he still used us.

Lori Lassen: And right now, the listeners that are listening to this, many of them are praying for a prodigal spouse.

Trusting God's Promises and Believing the Impossible Like Mary and Joseph

They're praying for prodigal children who have walked away from the Lord. they feel inadequate sometimes for this call on their life to stand in the gap and pray for a spouse who's walked away from the Lord in many cases. And some days it's a day of strength

where they have strong faith and feel like, this is what I'm. I'm here to do. And other days, they may have days where they feel like their faith is wavering. So. So how can looking at the humanity of some of the people that we see in scripture help when we have those days where we feel inadequate to fulfill the call that God's placed on our lives?

Teri Lyn Toby: I. Going back to scripture, many of the things and the people that we see, and in writing the Believing the Impossible series, I chose that title because, Favor really deals with the relationship with Mary and the relationship of her and Joseph, along with some, fictional characters that we have in there. Right? And the angel comes to Mary and, you know, essentially says, okay, I'm going to believe what you tell me that it's going to happen. I'm going to believe that. But, you know, I. I mean, really, how is it going to happen? She's saying, I'm going to believe it. Let God. God do this to me because you're here. But I'm not seeing with my eyes visually how this is going to happen. And the angels, you know, tells her, and then he says, look, Mary, absolutely nothing is impossible with God. Absolutely nothing. I have had to learn in My own life, in my own marriage. That one. I'm not my husband's Holy Spirit.

Navigating Marital Growth and Trusting God's Work in Different Seasons

Though I've tried to be His Holy Spirit, I've failed because that's not my call to be that. So. So I'm not His Holy Spirit. I've had to learn that in my marriage. I've also had to learn that we are growing in the Lord really at different places, right. You'd like to think in a marriage, I think sometimes that you grow together in the Lord and we should be doing that. And there are times that that happens. But God's growing me and he's

growing my husband, right? And sometimes, And I'll say for women, because I'm a woman, I am not a man. I'm sure it could be for a man too, but I'll speak as a woman, right. I think it's hard for women to believe that God's working on our husbands when we don't visually see it happening. We want tangible evidence of our faith. And when we don't receive that tangible evidence of our faith, then we begin to allow the doubt to take root within us, right? And we see that in scripture many times. So let's bring up Abraham and Sarah for a minute in the Old Testament. And even Joe, we could even look at Joseph and Mary, right? but Abraham and Sarah, God calls Abraham out. They're going, Abraham knows he's chosen. He knows, knows he's going to be this great nation, right? God tells him all that. They get to Egypt. And Abraham, see, what he sees is the tangible things, not the spiritual things. He sees a beautiful wife that he has. So he's afraid that Pharaoh's going to kill him for his wife, right? So he tells Sarah to be his sister. She does

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that. We end up, they end up leaving Egypt, right? Because God protects Sarah from anything happening with Pharaoh. And they leave Egypt, but they leave with Hagar. The circumstance of this, not of this visual. Focusing on the visual, right? I say during that time in Abraham's life, he had faith, but his faith was probably baby faith, little faith, right? Because he's just starting out with a relationship with God, right?

Developing Perfected Faith Through Trusting God Without Tangible Evidence

But as we watch, and I'm truncating the story immensely, by the time we get to the end

of Abraham's, towards the end of Abraham's life, and God tells him to take his place, promised son Isaac, up to the mountain, right? Something that just amazes me and we miss so much of the detail when we just kind of read through scripture quickly is Abraham looks at the servant going up the mountain. Now there's no sight. He has a son. He has the wood. He doesn't see a ram in the thicket yet. He doesn't have any of this. He just knows what God's told him to do. And he turns to the sermon. He says, wait here. We will, we will both be back. And he goes up there and of course we know God provides the lamb. And he does. And I say at that point when he says, we will no sight, no visual evidence of what God is going to do. But Abraham's faith by that point had become perfected faith in his Lord, right? Because without seeing it, without seeing, the tangible, he knew, he knew as God. That's important when we're going to believe that God is going to work in our lives. When we take hold of that and believe God's going to do the impossible and we hold, to that truth, we must know our God. We cannot possibly expect for our little faith to become perfective faith if we're not spending time in scripture, right? If we're not dwelling in the presence of our abbot and just allowing him to heal and nurture us.

God Meets Us Where We Are: Lessons from Joseph, Mary, and Dealing with Shame

And, and let's mention really quickly Joseph and Mary. And that again, the tangible Joseph had Mary come to him and tangibly tell him, I'm pregnant. And he knew she had not been with her, right? He knew he had not been with her. That was the tangible thing. He was feeling emotionally and seeing and hearing. All of his senses were cued into. He was being rejected it. And in marriage, a lot of times we feel that, right? We feel that rejection from a spouse and even our children. And we see that and it becomes a

tangible thing for us, a visual thing. Mary leaves, she's not there. Joseph has a dream. God comes to him. The neat thing about that, to me in studying that for the fiction books was God with Joseph met Joseph with exactly what Joseph needed at that moment. Joseph needed a dream. He needed God to come to him in that dream via an angel and tell him it was okay, right? God will do the same for us. In whatever circumstance you are in, beloved, he will come to you and he will say to you if it. Maybe it's through his word, maybe it's through a Christian counselor, your pastor. Maybe it's a Christian sibling, a child. Whoever God sent to you, he knows, he knows what you need in order to continue to walk in that belief that God is doing great things even when you tangibly can't see it or feel it or know It.

Lori Lassen: I think when you speak of Mary and Joseph, I think, we can easily say, well, Mary was chosen and it was such a beautiful place that, that she was going to be. But we forget about what they were walking through, the shame and the embarrassment. Mary having to, you know, hide this pregnancy that she was hiding because of the embarrassment and feeling like, I don't know what's happening because this is not usual.

Finding Blessings in Surrender: Mary's Example and the True Meaning of Favor

And right now, many people are walking through something similar where they are not pregnant with the Messiah, but instead saying, lord, this doesn't look like something that I should be in the middle of, but here I am, so I'm going to trust you. And. And that's where that faith grows, is in the midst of that journey.

Teri Lyn Toby: It does. In fact, if I can piggyback off that a little bit in the fiction, my fiction books, I. I clear. I try to make it very. They are fiction, right? The Believing the Impossible series is fiction. But I've done a lot of biblical research in historical research that went into these books, and where there were gaps, that's when the Lord used my imagination to fill kind of in those gaps. Right. The thing with Mary and I wrote favored, and I say in there, I really. It's dedicated to those people who don't know that they are favored or blessed by God. Yeah, right. It's dedicated to those people. What Mary did, yes, God did choose her to carry the Messiah, but she was

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Teri Lyn Toby: in a position of blessing. She placed herself right in that position. I think sometimes we think when we talk about being blessed or favored again in our society, in the way our society is, we look at things like, oh, well, if that person is wealthy, they've been blessed or favored, or if that person's beautiful, they've been blessed or favored. Right. When really being blessed or favored is placing yourself in a position of surrender under God to allow him to do in your life whatever you want done. Right.

The Family of Jesus and Navigating Secrecy and Shame in Difficult Circumstances

And Mary and Joseph, we can even know, we know from the book of Matthew that they had four sons after Jesus. And we also know one son, James, ended up being a follower because he writes the book of James later. Right. We also know in that scripture that gives us the four names of their sons, they had some daughters. Doesn't say how many. It just says daughters plural. Right. And when I was looking at that and

writing favored, and you talk about keeping it a secret, I, dwelt on this thing as Mary and Joseph. So they know Jesus is the Messiah, but they're having other children. They don't go back To Nazareth right away. They don't go back to Nazareth till after they were in Egypt, and then they go back to Nazareth. They went back to Bethlehem initially. And in the book, I say that they did that piggybacking off what you said, because they felt comfortable in Bethlehem. nobody really knew them there. Right. They were known in Nazareth to come back with a child. Like they would have. Everybody would have known. Right. And they would have had to make explanation. So when they go to Egypt, chances are probably James was born in Egypt if he was the second son and he's listed first. And when you see names listed in scripture, in order, usually the first one is the firstborn or second. So, like, we know Jesus was there first. So, James is listed James second. She. She probably gave birth to him in Egypt. So by the time they get back to Nazareth, it's been probably a good three to five years that they've been gone out of Nazareth. Right. So was the gossip still there surrounding them? I'm sure it was. Did their children probably hear that gossip? I'm sure they did. Now think about that as Mary and Joseph. And if you are an, individual right now struggling in your marriage and you're trying to keep it a secret. Secret. Right. You don't want people to know that you're struggling, that their children went to school. Well, we know the boys would go to school, Rabbi school, and maybe came back and said, mom, Mama, they said that Jesus is not Daddy's, or they don't think you know all these things. Explaining that to your children, which I think some of you may be right now walking that road, probably with your marriage and trying to deal with that. So that's where fragile, the second book comes in, is talking about how fragile our lives are.

Bringing Trials into the Light and Learning from Jesus' Brothers' Journey

But one thing in looking at their life and in associating that with our life, that I found to be so, so true. And dear sisters and brothers in Christ, hear me. Satan wants nothing more than to keep your trial, your circumstance, what you're going through in the dark. Because he doesn't want you to find support, any support from your Christian brothers or sisters that might encourage you, that might encourage and help you in your faith and to stand firm in what you know to believe and is truth. Right? So I, if anything from this, Mary and Joseph, I don't think kept it secret in the dark. I don't necessarily. They think they broadcasted it, but I do think they were honest with their children. And sometimes even as our children grow, we learn that they go through hard, sometimes they don't follow the Lord right away. Right. They have to go through their own time of preparation. And we see that with James and Jesus's brothers because they were like, he's. He's saying he's, the Messiah. People are following him. And they probably lost business from that. right. They were carpenters, potters, you know, all this stuff. They probably were losing business because they were the brothers of this guy that was roaming the countryside, you know? You know, and they were trying to encourage Mary to tell Jesus to cut it out, stop. They weren't believers yet.

Trusting God's Plan Beyond Our Desires and Timelines

In fact, we know James didn't become a believer till after Pentecost and so, or till after the resurrection. And so, all of when we read these stories in Scripture and we begin to understand if we really sit with them and I say allow through the help of the Holy Spirit, through Him, my. Your imagination to kind of go where these, what these lies were like that aren't told us in Scripture. They weren't easy, and our lives aren't easy. So I would say don't keep things in the dark. Don't keep it hidden. Satan wants that. Bring it out into the light and let, people stand beside you and pray with you and encourage you so that

you can walk in this, in a position of blessing, being surrendered to whatever God has for you in that. Right?

Lori Lassen: How do we handle wanting to trust God, but then also the lie that creeps in that says, well, this is

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Lori Lassen: the outcome I want. So, Lord, I trust you, but if you could just do it this way, that would be fantastic. Because like the many examples you've already given, that's what we see time and again. People that have had to trust God in what he has put them. You know, where he has put them. I know you've walked through that even personally in your life. So how do we distinguish between trusting God and selfishly wanting the outcome and the timeline? Because also we get stuck on our timelines.

Teri Lyn Toby: We do get stuck on our own timelines. And I think sometimes we take some scriptures out of context a little bit. something that changed my life immensely was really looking at Psalms 37.

Shifting Desires from Self to God's Will Through Stillness and Prayer

So we take that scripture, and I've got some other places to go with this, but we take that scripture, you know, God will give you the desires of your heart, right? And we hold onto that. God's going to give me the. If I just pray hard enough, if I just stay on my knees long enough, if I just beseech the throne of God, he will give me the Desires of our heart. But what I found, if you read that whole psalm through it says that we are to

be still, we are to wait, we are not to fret, we are not to fear, we are not to worry. I found when I sit still, still before God, when I wait before him, when I choose not to fret and not to worry, all of a sudden the desires of my heart changes. I'm no longer wanting my desires from God. I'm wanting God's desires for me. See?

Lori Lassen: Right.

Teri Lyn Toby: It changes that. Paul says. And we look at Paul and I won't get into what it was, you know. But Paul writes that he went before the Lord three times to have something removed that he felt like God said to him. I'm m not removing it. Paul, my strength is made perfect in your weakness. I have found in my own life. And I bet when I say this, many of the listeners are going to say, oh my goodness, yes. Satan comes to me in my head in first person, and it sounds like my thoughts, right? And I say satan because we know we have an enemy. Scripture tells us we have an enemy who roams the earth seeking who he will devour. It also tells us, and I say this to my dear brothers and sisters out there struggling in a marriage or with children or whatever. Your, your foe is not your spouse and it's not your child. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, right? So that needs, our focus, needs to change, right?

Recognizing the Enemy's Lies and Setting Minds on Heavenly Things

They're not the ones we're wrestling against, right? Or even praying against. So Satan comes to me in my head and he'll say things like, I'm, just not good enough for this. Why am I even struggling with this? Why am I even attempting to do this? Or why am I praying this way? Or I'm not seeing God work here at all. So maybe I'll just try to

circumvent the God thing and do things my way, right? Those thoughts, any thought that comes to you, I would say that produces guilt, that makes you feel inadequate, that causes those feelings of rejection to surface, are, not from your heavenly Father, dear one. They're from the enemy. They're from the enemy. And we are told that to set our minds on what? On things above. Right. Set our minds on things above.

The Power of Surrender and Trusting God's Refinement Through Trials

I have found in my own life that when I position myself in a place of surrender, asking the Lord to change my heart to match his heart, that when I realized that the enemy I'm fighting is not flesh and blood, but one that the, the Victory's already been won against. By. By my Lord Jesus. And I can stand in that. Of course, we know we're to put on our whole armor, right? And when I do that. And when I do that, and I set my mind, I say I am not going. It's a choice, beloved. It's a choice. I'm not going to dwell on those thoughts that are not of the Lord. I'm going to set my mind on the things that I know in Scripture. What do I know? I know that God says that I am a saint. I know that my God says through his son Jesus, and my life in him, that I am holy, I am righteous, that if he's called me to something, he's going to do it. Amen. Sometimes I sit at this keyboard, right? We've heard this before. God doesn't equip the. Or, God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called, Right?

Lori Lassen: Yes.

Teri Lyn Toby: I have sat here many times, and I've said, do not equip me, Lord. Don't equip me. You just do it. You just do it when I'm writing, right? And I think we kind of

have to get to that place in our thoughts, in our heads, Beloved, trust grows. Our, God wants to refine us as gold. These circumstances we deal with here on earth are circumstances that God is allowing so he can refine you into gold. So he can say,

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Teri Lyn Toby: look at this, son, or, look at this, daughter. They're shining, my son.

Hope as an Anchor and Finding Good in Difficult Circumstances

They're shining the light of Christ through the circumstance. If we didn't experience trials, we would not know how to persevere through them. If we didn't persevere through them, we would not have a hope. And let me tell you something about that hope. It is not a feeling that hope Scripture talks about is not a feeling. It is a grounded piece of rope that runs through scripture that you hold on to because you know at the other end, God is holding on to that other end, and you do not let go because that anchor is not going to release. Right. There's a whole lesson there on hope that we could get into that. We probably don't have time, but. But it produces hope. It grows our faith. It grows our trust. So if we can see, I'll probably start to cry. My mama had a stroke about a year ago, so we're walking that road with her. And, I set out there on my back patio, and I was praying one night because she had told me she was moving up by my sister, and I Couldn't understand that because she had moved close to us. And it. I didn't know if we had done something wrong. If, In my feelings I was feeling rejected. My children, my adult children were feeling rejected. My husband, because she literally said she moved up by us after daddy died. Because she was going to live here till she died and we were going to take care of her. And that's what we had done. And now she wanted to go two

hours north to be with my sister. And it was painful for me. It was painful. And I was holding on and I was praying. I said, lord, you promised to make beauty out of ashes. You have promised to turn everything into good. But I am not seeing good here, right?

Viewing Difficult Circumstances as Good Because of God's Promises

My eyes began to focus on the tangible, the circumstance around me. I'm not seeing good. And the Lord came to me and I don't know how else to say it but this. And he said, if I promise to turn every circumstance into good, cannot every circumstance just be good from the beginning, from the get go, be good even though we think of it as bad? I cannot tell you my mom having the stroke was a good circumstance in the sense of how we view them. But I can tell you, I've watched us all. My children, my husband, my sister, her family, my mom. We've all grown deeper in our relationship with the Lord through what my mom has gone through. So I sat back and I said, that makes total sense to me. Why if I stop saying this is a bad circumstance and I begin to look at it, even though the it may feel bad, even though it may hurt, this is a good circumstance. This is good because it's going to end good, because that's what God says. And I'm going to believe that. I'm going to believe from the beginning that it is good, right? That it is beautiful. Because I'm going to trust that God does what he does. Let me tell you, I told you, I'm going to be 60 years old. I cannot tell you at 20 that I could have said that, right? Abraham, as we talked in the beginning, could not have gone to Egypt when he did, leaving the place that God had called him to without asking God if he should go, even because there was a famine, he was looking at the famine. He could not have had perfected faith yet because he had not walked the roads that God was going to take him down to grow him. Right?

Embracing Painful Circumstances for Spiritual Growth and Trusting God

Beloved God, every circumstance, even if it ends up being which we don't want, a failed marriage, or it seems like it's a failed marriage, even if it means a prodigal child that is gone, or even a friend that betrays us or a church, and we get hurt in church, any of those things. Right? We have to walk through those. If we desire for our trust and our faith in God to grow, if we desire true relationship of communion and knowledge with him, beloved, then those circumstances that hurt so bad are good.

Lori Lassen: Amen.

Teri Lyn Toby: they're just good. They hurt. And I'm sorry that they hurt. And God says that he takes every tear and he place. He knows every tear you cry, every single tear he's holding on to. And I think he cries with us. If I believe that he laughs with me, I believe he cries with me, too. You know, I really do. And he cries with you, and he laughs with you, and he understands the pain and the hurt. We have a saying. My family's from the south originally, and we have a saying, you just got to pull up your bootstraps and go on. Right? And I know there are times I felt like pulling up my bootstraps that I had the energy to do that, and there were times that I had no energy seriously to do that. And that may be somebody out there right now. And you're just saying, all I can do right now is just sit and say, jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Calling on Jesus Name When All Else Fails for Healing and Growth

Yeah, I've been there. M. But I will tell you, even if you can't

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open the word of God, even if you can't speak it out loud, even if you can't pray, if all you can say is call on the name of Jesus, he knows, just say his name. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. And you will find he will meet you right there, and he will begin the process of healing and growth. Then you'll want to open the Word again, and then you'll want to pray again. And then you'll want to be with believers again. I know because I went 10 years without all of that in my life. After Daddy died, my dad died. And all I could say was, jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Faith in God's Unchanging Nature and Diverse Ways of Learning

Lori Lassen: And the enemy wants to keep you in that despair. The enemy wants to keep whispering those lies to you. There's no hope. This is your life now. Look what God has done. He has failed you. But God, that's why it's so important that, we read scripture and apply it to our lives and say, lord, I want the faith. I want the faith that you gave Abraham when he was walking up that mountain with his son. I want the faith that you gave Mary and Joseph and on and on through scripture. I want that faith so that I can see you and we've all had those moments where we can utter nothing but Jesus and what a God. But he knows the longings of our heart. He, understands what is behind that powerful, powerful name.

Teri Lyn Toby: And he'll use, let me say, so if you are somebody, people learn differently, right? We all learn differently. Some people learn from hearing some. Some music

speaks to them. That's me. Music, is very important to me. I was a vocal piano performance major before I ended up at Taylor. So music is big for me.

Finding Tangible Encouragement and Trusting God Through Secular Means

Some it's reading, some it's hearing sermons, some it's hearing other people. One of the things, I was attending a retreat, and I was in the throes of first looking at publishing favored, right? And I got in a little. They gave all of us at the retreat a bag of encouraging letters. And in that bag, I pulled out, it looked like some sort of paper clip that had been made into an angel kind of thing. And the tag on it said, nothing is impossible with God. And I still have that angel. So if you are somebody that needs something tangible, I think it's okay to have something like that. That really, it still encourages me to this day. I have it tacked on my board, right. To see that angel during that time and reminded maybe you need something tangible like that and that's okay.

Lori Lassen: Yeah.

Teri Lyn Toby: I also think God uses. While we are to go, please hear me, we are to go to scripture. I'm not saying don't do that. But I know at my worst time, as we talked earlier, after my dad died, God didn't just use Christian people and he didn't just use scripture. He used what we call secular things to help me through that time. Because I said, I told you. And I bet some of your listeners, whether it's a fail marriage or going through a divorce or looking that way or a child or even a health issue, whatever it is you're dealing with, right? I was mad at God. I was mad and we get mad at God, right? And I said before, I'm so thankful God's shoulders are big enough to handle my temper

tantrums. because they are right? And he does that. But there were times during that wilderness of mine that I was so angry with God, I didn't even want to open my Bible. I really didn't. And I, I never thought I'd be one. I grew up in church. Preacher's kid. I grew up serving. I served when my children were younger, almost like a full time job. I served in church. I never thought. And I don't think anybody who knew me would say, terri will. Will always be in church.

Don't Throw the Baby Out with the Bathwater: Learning from All People

She'll never stop going to church. Beloved, I stopped going to church. I did not want to be with people. I just didn't. And I found I've said to my children, as I've taught them, and I think it's something my dad taught me, and also Taylor taught me, is don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. You may not always believe everything somebody's saying. I don't always believe. Of course not. We don't have the same worldview as a secular person. Right. I have a Christian worldview. That's my foundation. But also, I'm. There's things that can learn from people, so I'm not going to necessarily toss them aside just because they don't have the same belief system as I do. especially during those times of hurt. God used people in my life that I never thought I'd go to or hear from or be in circumstances and situations that, a stranger would be the one that God reminded me, I'm still here. I'm still here. I'm still. For you. I've not gone.

God's Unchanging Presence and the Invitation to Turn Back to Him (Teshuvah)

I was. You talked about a prodigal. I'm just inviting Bloom, too. I just studied the parable of

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the prodigal son that Jesus told. Right. But I think something we need to hold on to, beloved, is this. God doesn't change. God's the same yesterday, today, and forever. So the God of the scriptures that we see and how he works in those people's lives in scripture, is the same God, and He works the same way in our lives today. Right. Amen.

Lori Lassen: M.

Teri Lyn Toby: He doesn't change. Neither does he move. Beloved, if you are his child, he is present with you no matter how far you have run, no matter how far a spouse has run, no matter how far a child, no matter how sick you are, he is still present with you. It is us. It is us that changes our position. God doesn't change his position. We do. There's a Hebrew word, and it's spelled. It's teshuvah. T E S H U V A H. And it literally means to turn around and go back. And when God says, scripture, says, draw near to Me, and I will draw near to you. Right? Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you. Notice that first saying, God is not going to force himself on us. He's drawn near to me to Shuva. come back to me. Come back. I've not moved. I am here. You can count on me. You can trust me. You can put your faith in me. I am the anchor and I will not be shaken. Come back. Come back to Shuva, to Shiva.

Lori Lassen: One. One step is all it takes, right?

Teri Lyn Toby: One step.

Encouragement to Engage with Scripture and Terri Lynn Toby's Resources

Yes. Yes.

Lori Lassen: That's awesome, Terri. I think that's a great way to end it. Thank you. We could talk all day about this because the Word so full and active and living and there's so much to talk about. But I hope, listening to Terri today, that it just kind of excited you to go back and want to get back in the Word and to understand it and, you know, find a Bible study you want. Terri's got a couple Bible studies coming out. And, find a Bible study that you can connect with. but get in the Word and know who God is and, and his plan for your life and understand who the enemy is and what he's trying to do to steal away from you. So, Terri, thank you so much for being with us. Before we go, tell us where people can connect with you.

Teri Lyn Toby: Yes. So I'm on Facebook and also on YouTube, but my, And I have a website. It's Terri Lynn, Toby.com is the website and you can get on there and you can see the books that are come out and ones that are getting ready to come out. You can see the Bible study when, my first bi. And you can purchase the books and everything at all major retailers. The Bible study that Lori mentioned is, the first one is coming out in March. That's the goal, March of 2027. But we're going to be offering some free things on the website for that Bible study. The group sessions will be free. I wrote monologues which are fiction that some have acted out. And those videos will be there. You can download those for free for any of your Bible study groups when that all comes out in March.

Terri Lynn Toby's Closing Thoughts and Prayers for Listeners

and, we're on Facebook, of course, YouTube, Instagram, all those places all under Terry Lynn, Toby, T O, B, E, Y. And Terry has one R in it. So. And Lynn has one N. So it's very easy. So,

Lori Lassen: One letter.

Teri Lyn Toby: Yeah, one letter. So. And let me just say before we close, I do appreciate Lori having me on here. I told her initially I could talk about the Lord all day long, and I think she can too. And about the word of God. But to the listeners out there for Lori, I want you to know I'll be praying for you for what you're going through. and I don't say that lightly. When I say that, I mean it. I will be praying for you and praying that you understand that you're able to set your mind on truth and that you understand that all things are good and that they do work together for our good. Sometimes we may not see that here on earth. That's a reality. We may not, but we know that they are good and are for our good and will grow as. So, beloved, I will be praying for you. I don't know you, I don't know your circumstance, but my heart is with this ministry and talking with Lori earlier, and I will be praying for all of that and for you, Lori, in your ministry as you serve other people.

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Lori Lassen: Thank you so much and thank you for praying for our listeners. They are

special people and we, we adore them. So thank you for that. Terry, thanks for being with us today. You have been a blessing and you did a fantastic job.

Teri Lyn Toby: Oh, well, thank you.

Lori Lassen: Thank you for listening to today's episode. As a reminder, we are listener supported. So if you would like to support the work that we're doing at Rejoice Marriage Ministries and with the Fight for your marriage podcast, you can visit rejoiceministries.org or there will be a link in the show notes. And if you'd like to

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Lori Lassen: financially support the work we're doing, that would be a blessing. Thank you for joining us today. Until next time, keep fighting for your marriage.

Teri Lyn Toby: M.

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