

# Podcast Episode 002 Transcript - Past Experiences Don't Limit God's Capacity to Use You

## INTRO

Hi, there. My name is Madison Aichele, and I'm a writer with a passion for sharing honest and encouraging reflections about God's character. This podcast is for the woman courageously choosing faith and heart in a world driven by sight and success. The woman who wants to live with an awareness of God's kind and steady hand moving through what seems ordinary, making it extraordinary. The woman who wants to experience the unhurried peace of trusting God's plan, abandoning the race toward the "next big thing" and, instead, choosing to settle into the God thing. Get cozy if you can, lay your burdens down even if it's just for a moment.

Welcome to Faith and Heart.

## MAIN

How often does the past keep you from moving forward into what God's inviting you to?

You start to feel a nudge, a gentle whisper that maybe it's time to take the next step. But before you do, the past begins to resurface. Each memory feels like an extra layer of shame being heaped upon you, one thought at a time. Until you're buried beneath the weight of something you're not meant to carry.

We all have stories and experiences we'd rather keep buried, but when we refuse to let them see the light of God's grace, they'll end up burying us.

It's easy to start wishing for a clean slate, wanting those difficult pieces of our lives to be rewritten into something a little neater. More presentable. Maybe you'd give anything to go back and make choices this older and wiser you would know to make.

I get it. I do. But lately, I've been touched by what God's placed on my heart. And it's this truth: He's always with us, and He's always moving, even during those seasons of life we wish didn't take up real estate in our mind and heart.

A Facebook memory from six years ago popped up for me, and in this post, I'd shared a blog I created for a college English assignment. You may not know much about my college experience, but I refer to that period as the dark year. The Facebook memory felt bittersweet

because it reminded me of when I felt like a failure and desperately wanted to rewrite the story. I was drowning in shame and fear. Paralyzed by the path ahead of me.

Without expecting anything except a 404 page, I clicked on the URL. But this blog was still living on, and I was able to step back into the shoes of 18-year-old me, who was hurting but still grasping for the hope of a dream. And in those poorly written blog posts, I saw seeds.

Seeds of ideas I write about now. Seeds of beliefs that have taken root in my life today. Seeds I know I didn't intentionally nurture. But God. During that dark year, I'd tried running as far from God as possible. And honestly, I thought He'd bowed out of my life and left me to my own devices. What I saw on that blog felt like a sweet and intentional reminder that He's always present. And He's always preserving those precious seeds, like a Master Gardener who can't help but tend to His beloved plants. His beloved people.

I think the past feels so heavy because we carry this immense weight of responsibility for what happens and the impact it'll have on our future. And we forget about the promises of God, that His strength will be made perfect in our weakness. That the best is yet to come. We may find our lives and paths altered, but we'll always find Him the same.

So often, we get stuck in the shame cycle. We emphasize our behavior and don't rest in God's grace and mercy. But it's always with us, a miracle waiting to be accepted with open arms. And we don't have to wait until we feel more put together or worthy of laying it down at God's feet. He just wants us to come to him heavy, so we can leave light.

There's so much He has in store for your future, and that never changes no matter what circumstances or winters You face. He's planting seeds, even now, that will grow in beautiful ways throughout your life. But you can't carry shame with you. You don't have to. That's not a burden that's yours to take ownership of. Our Father's hand is outstretched, asking if You'd like to lay it down now. If You'd like to find rest and freedom. Do you?

God is limitless. Our past doesn't restrict His opportunities to use us. But if we're not careful, getting stuck in the awareness of our limitations can unintentionally strip our willingness to see what He can do. Be encouraged with the truth that He can move through you. You just have to be willing and open to how He's going to do it.

## **READING**

Before I go, I wanted to share a story that was drawn from my experience during that dark year.

When I close my eyes, I can still see it. A waterfall cascading into the depths of a diamond-shaped pool. I'd driven three hours and hiked a trail to see that waterfall. I'd packed water and a journal. The essentials for a writer who knows nothing about hiking but wants to find herself.

Everything in my life felt like it was spiraling out of control. I was trying to break out of a cycle of shame and guilt, and I wanted just one moment of peace where I could escape the noise in my life.

There I sat on smooth rocks, cool to the touch, and watched. I felt like that waterfall, rushing uncontrollably into depths I wasn't sure I could handle.

I was hurting. I was failing. And I was searching for answers my soul desperately needed. I didn't find answers that day, but when this memory surfaced, God showed me something new. I was the rushing water, flowing toward a climactic moment. A moment that felt like the end of everything.

But God.

I wasn't alone, and hitting those depths wasn't the final chapter. I'd reach the calm and unhurried waters below and experience something greater. I'd experience the miraculous power of grace. The fall would cease as I collapsed into what I was supposed to become. Into what I was all along.

When I reached the water, He knew it wasn't the end of the story. It was the beginning of something beyond me. A life surrendered to His plans. I sometimes wonder if the waterfall, looking at the girl sitting on the rocks by herself thought, "Hold on. The fall isn't the end. Trust me."

I wonder if God was sitting with me on those rocks? I like to think He was. With an arm around me and a suggestion to pack food next time. I know He was with me as I fell, in the surfacing for breath, and the gentle flow back to who He created me to be. In the same way, I know He's with you. In the fall, in the inevitable rise, and every point in between.

If you're falling, you'll be enveloped by the refreshing waters of mercy.

If you're rising, His hand will lift you higher.

If you're sitting on the rocks wondering who you are, He's right beside you with an arm around your shoulder and wisdom for the road ahead.

## **OUTRO**

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Thank you so much for listening! I'll talk to you soon.