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TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 83-DO SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES FAITH: PART 2

I'm Jill Baughan, and you're listening to the podcast called Find Joy...No Matter What.

This is Episode 83.

If you're in a tough place right now, your joy may seem like it's hiding--or gone.

I understand. But it's still there, I promise, just waiting to be resurrected. And this podcast is designed to help you do just that...no matter what else is going on in your life.

For just a few minutes each week, I'll tell you a story--one that just might inspire a way to uncover a piece of joy you might be looking for. Then, we'll consider how it might speak to your life, because even though you'll hear quite a few of my stories during our time together, I believe you'll find your own in every one of mine.

Finally, I'll offer a benediction to send you into your day--or into your night.

So. If you're up for doing joy shots with a friend today...have a listen.

I may be on slightly shaky ground here today, and I'll confess I'm a little bit nervous about sharing the next part of the story I started last week...mainly because doing something that requires faith might look different for you than it does for me.

But I'm convinced our journeys do have some things in common, and we'll get to that a little later. For now--as I am fond of saying--I'm pretty sure you'll find your own story in the heart of mine.

Last week in Episode 82 (which I invite you to listen to, even before you listen to this one) I talked about buying a journal and praying for my daughter's future husband--the one she hadn't met yet, the one that I wasn't sure I should be praying for because I wasn't altogether sure that God was directing me to do this; the one who--if this was really more wishful thinking of my own than direction from God--might not show up at all, which might shake the foundation of my faith and maybe my daughter's, and then I would personally be responsible for her descent into despair and distrust of God...Well, you get the idea.

Maybe you've been there yourself.

I did it anyway. Unsure. Insecure. Sometimes feeling foolish. And yet, compelled to just go for it. In faith--inasmuch as I could understand it.

But today I want to take you further into our story, and help you see something else I told you in the last episode-- that the rest of this faith-journey is full of twists and turns.

Decades ago, my husband and I tried for several years to have a baby. We went through all the infertility tests, found an obvious source of the trouble and tried to treat it. In the meantime, we did every single ridiculous thing that might enhance in the slightest way the chances of egg meeting sperm in a joyful belly bump. We stopped just short of me standing on my head to help gravity do its thing, if you know what I mean, but only because I couldn't stay on my head more than a couple of seconds.

We prayed. A lot. Constantly. And finally, after three years, I became pregnant and gave birth to our daughter. And we were over-the-moon grateful. And right after her birth, I actually said in actual words, "I'm so happy and grateful, if God never gave us another thing, I wouldn't complain."

Yeah, you know how long *that* lasted, right?

We began to think, "If God gave us one child, surely He'll give us another." So we tried and tried, we prayed and prayed, we cried and cried. We begged Him to "do it again," but years went by with no baby in sight. And for reasons known only to Him, we didn't feel led to adopt.

As time passed, however, I did feel God nudging me to write about the subject, to be a comfort to other people going through the same thing. So I did, pretty pleased with myself for my obedience. and eight years after our daughter was born, my book *A Hope Deferred: A Couple's Guide to Coping with Infertility* was published. And I'd be lying if I said it never occurred to me that NOW since I took that step of faith, God would give us the baby we wanted.

But no.

It was never meant to be.

And I know that though you may not have experienced our challenges, there isn't a person listening to this who doesn't know what it's like to want something you don't have.

It's a hard lesson to learn: that acting in faith doesn't necessarily guarantee the results you ordered up.

Fast forward a few decades when our own baby was wanting a baby.

After Jamie and Josh were married, I was in an airport bookstore one day when I noticed a shelf of journals. One caught my eye, and I was seized with that old familiar impression:

Was this God telling me to start a journal for their *baby* who wasn't even conceived yet? It sounded fairly ludicrous. Again I struggled with the notion that maybe this was just my own wishful thinking, and nothing else.

And yet this journal--bright blue, wide open, like the sky, full of promise--seemed to be calling me. It made me think of a child with a big, expansive personality. I bought it.

And I carried it around for months, "listening" for the right time to start praying in it.

One day, as I was packing for a trip out of state to see my extended family, I looked at the journal and thought, "Should I pack it just in case the 'time comes'? Just so I have it, just in case? But that sounds ridiculous, not to mention slightly neurotic..."

I threw it in the suitcase anyway.

One night during my visit, around 10:00 I got a text from Jamie that said, "Are you still up?"

And to be clear, this is almost never good news.

Of course, I called her right away. She answered, in tears, and told me, "I think I just had a miscarriage." My heart broke with hers. And all I could say was, "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry" because I knew there was nothing else to say and nothing else to do but sit with her in that sorrow.

But immediately I knew one thing. I told her about the journal I'd bought months before, and said, "I start these prayers tonight." And I did.

Over time, I prayed for everything: for the baby's physical health, relationship with God, for adolescence and hormones, for the hearts he would break and the people who would break his.

I prayed that he could feel the love, that some day, if he could read cursive, for crying out loud, that he would see how he was loved even before he was conceived, that the love of his grandmother would follow him all of his days.

A few months later, Jamie was pregnant again, and nine months after that gave birth to little Ben. And all I could think when I looked at him for the first time was, "I loved him before I knew him."

About 2 years later, I was in an airport bookstore, and another journal caught my eye. (There's something about airport bookstores for me, I know.) It was bright yellow, like the sun, like light in a shelf full of dark. It made me think of a child who radiated light...Again, I went through the same mental gymnastics, wondering if I should buy this journal to start for Jamie and Josh's next child--especially crazy, because they had never even hinted that

they wanted another baby. Again, I was afraid that this was just an exercise in wishful thinking.

But I was compelled. I bought the journal anyway, and carried it around for months, “listening” for the right time to start praying in it.

Then one day, on a visit to our house, Jamie and Josh revealed to us that she was pregnant. We were all ecstatic. And yet, for some reason, I was hesitant to start the journal just yet.

A couple weeks later, I was at the keyboard during a music practice when my phone lit up. It was a text from Jamie that said, “No longer pregnant. Can’t talk now.”

I was useless the rest of that practice. My heart broke with hers. And all I could text back was, “I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry” because I knew there was nothing else to say and nothing else to do but sit with her in that sorrow.

And ask God exactly what He thought He was doing, jerking my daughter and son-in-law around like that. But immediately I knew one thing. And right away I texted her about the journal I’d bought months before, and said, “I start these prayers tonight.” And I did.

I prayed for everything for this baby: for physical health, for a close relationship with God, for adolescence and hormones, for broken hearts and meaningful work.

I prayed that he could feel the love, that some day, if he could read cursive, for crying out loud, that he would see how he was loved even before he was conceived, that the love of his grandmother would follow him all of his days.

A few months later, Jamie was pregnant again, and nine months after that gave birth to little Will. And all I could think when I looked at him for the first time was, “I loved him before I knew him, before he was even conceived.”

Sometimes, when you take a leap of faith, God nods his head and says, “Yes!” And sometimes, when you take a leap of faith, He shakes that same head and says, “No. Not now,” and sometimes, He says, “No. Not ever.”

The past two episodes, in fact, have been a No, Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes.

Acting “in faith” can be very exhausting.

Other people have engaged in way more dramatic acts of great faith, it’s true.

But for me, God used the act to create bonds with and love for with three important people before I knew them. How else will He use those journals? I don’t have a clue. But I do have faith that He will use them for good.

And that's why I think it's important for you to know that in my mind and heart, the point of trusting God was not that we got the "happy ending" we wanted.

Because --I said this last week, but I want to say it again, and make sure that you hear--I assure you that **the presence of the ultimate joy did not negate the sorrow that became a permanent part of us along the way.**

My *hope* was for a happy ending, but my (often faltering) *faith* was in a God who hears and comes near and somehow brings redemption out of brokenness...

And therein lies the joy.

And so, my friend,

May you listen hard when you believe God might be asking you to do something that feels a little scary or a little crazy.

Then may you step forward, even if it's with a shaky foot, to go where you believe He's leading you, to learn something new, to speak up about something that's breaking your heart, to go somewhere you've never been,

And even if the adventure ends up looking nothing like you thought--or even hoped-- it would, may you never lose faith in the God who hears and comes near and brings redemption out of brokenness...no matter what.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be considering taking a risk by exercising some white knuckle trust in God, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on iTunes, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Or you can go to my website at jillbaughan.com, click on a podcast episode and sign up to receive episodes in your inbox. Just don't miss a single one, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

Do something that requires faith, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...