

## TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 121-GET MAD AT GOD

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

This is Episode 121.

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.

How do you feel about letting God have it?

Your anger, I mean.

Many people are really uncomfortable about railing at the Almighty but I'm here to issue your permission slip to do so, and even suggest that God is really okay with you unleashing your truest, most unattractive, most unfaithful self.

I learned this when I was only ten years old.

I've talked in previous episodes about what happened, but there's a little more to the story I'd like you to know.

My father had been sick for about a week--with food poisoning, the doctor thought. I hated to see him so ill. He tried to chuckle and joke around, but even I could tell he just wasn't himself. So naturally at bedtime I was moved to pray, "Dear God, please make my Daddy well." Then with childlike faith, confident my prayers would be answered, I rolled over and promptly fell asleep. It was Tuesday.

On Wednesday he looked a little better. The doctor came out for a visit and announced that he was much improved. That night I happily thanked the Lord for that good report, and prayed, "Dear God, keep working on him till he feels good." And again, knowing my prayers were heard and answered, I rolled over and fell asleep.

On Thursday my Daddy died.

I didn't know what to say to God then. A kind woman at church assured me that God did answer my prayer--just not the way I expected. My father was very well indeed, she said, now that he was with Jesus. I gratefully accepted her comforting words; nevertheless, for a long time after that, when I'd pray for my brother to get home safely from a night out or for my mother to feel better soon, I'd P.S. my prayers with "YOU know what I mean." I really was afraid God would pull a fast one on me again.

From then on, for a long, long time He became, in my mind and heart, the God of the Trick Answer. I didn't like it much.

I remember thinking that this whole thing made absolutely zero sense, and it was about then that I started getting real with the Almighty about Him and His weird ways.

His omnipotence had come home to me in a rather frightening way. I perceived Him as an unpredictable force, striking who-knows-where next. "God is love," my Sunday school teachers told me. But what kind of love, I wondered *at* Him, snatches a kid's father away before she's finished with him?

I had no problems stamping my foot and shaking my fist and flinging myself on my bed, screaming at Him. And I am so thankful that no one ever told me not to be mad--about what happened, and at the God who allowed it to happen.

Somehow, even at that tender age, I knew He could handle my anger, that it was okay to let Him have it with both barrels. But also, somehow I sensed that He was like the safest person in your life, the one you are positive will love you no matter what you say.

And I was right.

In an essay about showing your true self to God, a writer for The Collective says that *In a world where authenticity is questioned more so than ever, there needs to be greater faith in who God is and how He loves us--sarcastic comments, swear words, songs of praise and however else we choose to express ourselves. We do not need to hide who we are for fear of judgment, shame, and guilt because we want to fit the "perfect" mould. When we do that, we do ourselves and God a disservice.*

You may have heard of the 30-year-old singer/songwriter and former worship leader, Jane Marczewski, who also called herself Nightbirde. She made an appearance on the TV show *America's Got Talent*, singing her original song, "It's Okay," and won Simon Cowell's golden buzzer after auditioning. At the time, she was deep into a fight with cancer, and eventually had to leave *America's Got Talent* ahead of the live shows.

Before she passed away on February 19, 2022, she wrote her story of getting real with God:

*I am God's downstairs neighbor, banging on the ceiling with a broomstick. I show up at His door every day. Sometimes with songs, sometimes with curses. Sometimes apologies, gifts, questions, demands. Sometimes I use my key under the mat to let myself in. Other times, I sulk outside until He opens the door to me Himself.*

*I have called Him a cheat and a liar, and I meant it. I have told Him I wanted to die, and meant it. Tears have become the only prayer I know. Prayers roll over my nostrils and drip down my forearms. They fall to the ground as I reach for Him. These are the prayers I repeat night and day, sunrise, sunset.*

*Call me bitter if you want to--that's fair. Count me among the angry, the cynical, the offended, The hardened. But count me also among the friends of God. For I have seen him in rare form. I have felt His exhale, laid in His shadow, squinted to read the message He wrote for me in the grout: "I'm sad too."*

*If an explanation would help, He would write me one--I know it. But maybe an explanation would only start an argument between us...*

*I remind myself that I'm praying to the God who let the Israelites stay lost for decades. They begged to arrive in the Promised Land, but instead He let them wander, answering prayers they didn't pray. For forty years, their shoes didn't wear out. Fire lit their path each night.*

*Every morning, He sent them mercy-bread from heaven. I look hard for the answers to the prayers that I didn't pray. I look for the mercy-bread that He promised to bake fresh for me each morning. The Israelites called it manna, which means, "What is it?" that's the same question I'm asking--again and again. There's mercy here somewhere--but what is it? What is it? What is it?*

*I see mercy in the dusty sunlight that outlines the trees, in my mother's crooked hands, in the blanket my friend left for me, in the harmony of the wind chimes. It's not the mercy that I asked for, but it is mercy nonetheless. And I learn a new prayer: thank you. It's a prayer I don't mean yet, but repeat until I do.*

*Call me cursed, call me lost, call me scorned. But that's not all. Call me chosen, blessed, sought-after. Call me the one who God whispers his secrets to. I am the one whose belly is filled with loaves of mercy that were hidden for me.*

*Even on days when I'm not so sick, sometimes I go lay on the mat in the afternoon light to listen for Him. I know it sounds crazy, and I can't really explain it, but God is in there--even now. I have heard it said that some people can't see God because they won't look low enough, and it's true.*

*Look lower. God is on the bathroom floor.*

And so, my friend, when you find yourself in the mood to stomp your foot and shake your fist at what is making absolutely zero sense to you,

May you feel the warmth of God's arms around you,

May you know Him as a safe place to be your most unattractive, ugly-crying, faithless self,

And may you carry on with the absolute reassurance that He is welcoming whatever you have a mind and a heart to share with Him, loving you, and lying right there with you on the bathroom floor.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be needing to get real with our Creator, 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](http://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.

Go ahead. Get mad at God, my friend. Because even in the expression of that, there can be ultimate joy. And always, always remember, if you go looking for that joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...