NEW INTRO AND TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 86: GRAB YOUR BLANKIE
(to air January 19, 2026)

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

This is Episode 86.

Well, it's a new year, and you may be feeling…oh, a little daunted by the future, by what lies ahead, by all that you can't see coming down the road of 2026. If that's true for you, I have some good news for you in this episode: even in the dark, God has ways of providing comfort…and joy. Which I'm guessing you need in a big way these days.

Because 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.

Recently I went to a football practice where my six-year-old grandson was playing. When he ran over to the sidelines to get a drink of water, I held up my phone and said, "Hey good boy! Give me your game face!"

And did he ever.

He looked for all the world to me like he was about 15.

Tough. All business. Git 'er done.

The next day, I took him to the movies (his first time in a theater), and as we settled into our cushy easy chairs (gotta love those things) with our drinks and popcorn, the lights went down. And after a couple minutes, I heard him say to himself, "I shoulda brought my blankie. It's dark in here. My blankie makes me feel better."

I'll admit, I had to chuckle as I put my arm around him.

But then I thought, “Oh, what the heck? Aren’t we ALL six-year-olds, with a game face one day, looking all tough and stuff, and then needing our blankies the next, to make us feel better in the dark?”

When the unknown looms ahead, and leaves us unable to see, we search for comfort--even as adults.

Years ago, Ben and I went on an epic trip out West, and one of the places we visited was Jackson, Wyoming, where his cousins lived. And when they invited us on an overnight hike, we were excited to go to such beautiful country with experienced outdoorspeople.

The night before we left, however, I started having second thoughts--about my ability to keep up with these expert hikers, and also about our safety out in the wild…because we were spending the night in the Gros Ventre wilderness, home to wolves, grizzlies, bison, elk and mountain lions.

This was no KOA campground, that’s for sure.

I worried that, in their efforts to give the suburbanites a good time, the Mountain Men might overestimate our abilities to survive in the great untamed outdoors.

When I said something about my growing intimidation of the whole trip, Ben’s cousin said, “Ah, there’s nothing to worry about. You’re safer up there than you are in town--just like being in God’s hip pocket.”

And all I could think of was, “But what if God decides to sit down?”

I didn’t sleep much that night, but woke up the next morning determined to carry on with a smile, as we packed up a bunch of gear and set out on our adventure.

At one point, we had to cross a river, and I couldn’t imagine how, since it was rushing with a fair amount of enthusiasm. Enter the raft, that someone was apparently hauling around on his back. The Mountain Men then magically produced a pump and proceeded to inflate the raft, and tie a rope to the back and the front. Then one of them hopped in, paddled like mad to the other side, and hopped out on the bank. Then we on the other side, pulled on the rope till the raft arrived back on our shore. Then, like the thing was a stretch limo, we were invited to hop in and paddle like mad to the other side of the river, where a Mountain Man was ready to grab the rope as we were carried downriver, and pull us back upriver so we could get out.

When everyone was on the opposite bank, we all lay down on the raft to deflate it, fold it back up and hoist it on some poor cousin’s back.

And then we hiked. And hiked. And hiked. And when it was time to set up camp for the evening, I was amazed at the beauty of it all. The vastness. And the wildness. Lots of wildness.

As we were enjoying our elk burgers for dinner, I heard something in the woods. It sounded like a giant beating heart. Thumping, thumping, thumping. Fast. Like the stuff of Edgar Allen Poe stories.

“What’s that??” I wanted to know.

“Oh, just a grouse,” they said.

I was too embarrassed to admit I didn’t know exactly what a grouse was, but I imagined it was something capable of attacking and consuming all of us.

A little later, the grouse thumpings quieted down, and it was time for bed. I wondered what poor Mountain Man had been lugging our tent all over the Gros Ventre.

As it turned out, none of them.

There was no tent.

“Tents are so heavy, we decided we didn’t need one,” they said.

“But no worries,” they said.

“We’ll be fine,” they said.

And that’s when I broke. It is extremely dark at night in that part of the United States, and I had no idea (although I could imagine) what was lurking out there in the foreboding inky blackness. And the thought of actually going unprotected in the middle of all that unknown was too much for me.

I needed comfort of the highest caliber, no question.

So I turned to my husband and said, “You know I love you. But I’m sleeping next to your cousin tonight. Good luck and God bless.” And I moved my sleeping bag over next to a human blankie, and there spent the night… comforted…in God’s hip pocket.

What comforts you when the future--immediate or distant--is a big question mark? A giant unknown? A vast dark space?

Do you find solace in the presence of a friend?
Cinnamon tea?
Prayer?
Cooking? Baking? Then giving some of your treats away?
Being outdoors?
Playing with a child?
Your favorite T shirt?
Taking a walk?
Playing games?
Exercising?
Going somewhere quiet?
Going somewhere loud and rambunctious?
Journaling--writing out your thoughts?

Dancing?
Music?
A massage?

The sound of rain?
A hot shower or bath?
Deep breathing?
Certain comfort foods?
A good cry?
Reading a favorite book?
Digging in a garden?
Coloring in a coloring book?
Making art?
Do you find comfort in a particular movie or TV show? In the aftermath of the unspeakable tragedy of 9/11, Alan Jackson sang an entire song about the ways people found comfort--one of which was watching "I Love Lucy" reruns.

And personally, I did just that. How about you? You might want to consider giving some serious thought to what makes you feel…better…

And then, my friend,

May you consider this your invitation--in this upended world, and in your own personal crazy universe--to stop for a bit, to feed your spirit and give your heart a massage.

And when you can't see your hand in front of your "game face" because it's so doggone dark around you, may you feel the ultimate comforting of God Himself, offering you…a blankie of the very best kind.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might need some serious solace these days, 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.

Find some comfort, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...

<u>NOTE:</u>

Jackson, Alan. "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)?"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPHnadJ-0hE