

# Ep\_46\_Navigating\_the\_Holidays\_after\_Betrayal

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

holiday challenges, self-care, tradition impact, predictability craving, cultural pressure, support community, gratitude practice, simplifying decorations, family gatherings, emotional toll, practical tools, holiday sanity, gratitude lists, faithfulness, holiday hiatus

## SPEAKERS


Pam B., Bonny, Lyschel

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**P** Pam B. 00:00  
Music. Hi. I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace,

**L** Lyschel 00:06  
and I'm Lachelle Burkett with hope redefined.

**B** Bonny 00:08  
And I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives, we're so glad you're joining us. Welcome to another episode of hope for wives, with the holidays right around the corner. We want to talk about how to navigate this season that can be really tricky for betrayed wives. So ladies, let's just jump right in. What makes the holidays hard to navigate after a recent discovery,

 00:36  
all of it,

**P** Pam B. 00:40  
all the things, all the things.

**L** Lyschel 00:46  
I think making the holidays. I think what makes the holidays hard is the thing about holidays, for most of us, is that it is a little a routine, or a little a tradition. And when you have discovery or

for most of us, is that it is a it's a routine, or it's a tradition. And when you have discovery or even relapses and slips, that really impacts your ability to stay in those spaces of tradition. I know that we we've had some hard seasons through the holidays, and I think we've talked about this in a previous episode. I can't remember, but you know, I also didn't have the energy to host the holiday the way that I had in the past. And I remember feeling that tension of trying to explain, or do I need to explain to others why I'm not doing it the way I used to do it,



01:37

and



Lyschel 01:39

and how do you do that with limited information and not exploiting maybe more than or sharing more than you're willing to to have. So, you know, one particular Thanksgiving, we decided that we I decided we were going to forego all of the cooking and the shopping and the all the things that really fell on me as responsibility. And I made the decision we were going out to eat, and was like, hey, it's probably me about the same amount of money between the shopping and the prep time. So I made that decision. And of course, it was different, I mean. And so there was grief about it being different, but there was also relief about it being different, because my capacity was not there, and I could have forced myself through it, but that's really what wasn't going to be good for me. Now I've had friends and clients and women in community who have said holding the tradition is what carried them through the holiday, that they needed that familiar in order to feel like they were still surviving or even thriving in that season. So I wouldn't say that it's a throw it all out and do whatever you want to do, but Well, it is do whatever you want to do, if holding on to those traditions is what brings you comfort, and it's predictable, right for us. You know, after the Navigating of a disclosure or discovery, predictability is something we're really craving. So if, if doing your holiday traditions allows for that predictability, I say do it, but also know that there's permission to not have to do it if it's not, it's not helpful.



Pam B. 03:22

I would say, from my perspective and some of the perspectives that I've heard from some of the women that I've worked with, is that, first of all, there's pressure to meet expectations of making a holiday. It usually falls on the women's shoulders that you alluded to this Michelle to to do all the booking, the cooking and the baking and the inviting and the decorating and, to quote, make a holiday for our family. And we want to do that for our kids. We want to make memories. And so there's a lot of pressure that we put on ourselves, that we feel culturally, to do that. And I would just say, you know, in hindsight, I'm glad that I did put my self care first. So one of the memories my child might have is I remember that year mom stepped back and took care of herself really well when we were going through a lot of tough stuff in the family. And I think this also applies to anniversaries, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, that there's certain expectations that we have, and we put them on ourselves, because this is part of our story and the past story around those holidays may not apply anymore. We're making a new story, and it's all new. Holidays very often are times when you see people you haven't seen in a long. Time, and so having to answer, Hey, have you been what's going on? What's new? What have you been up to? Are you happy? Are you healthy and trying to connect with people while

you're in the middle of a different story? And how do you know what to say, knowing that it's okay to say, I've, I've been going through some things, not really ready to talk about it right now, but you know, or just being able to say fine, and being okay with that and moving on, it can there's just so much pressure, and it's okay for us to say, hey, this year, I'm not going to put those expectations on myself.

B

Bonny 05:50

Yeah, the point I was going to talk about was around the gatherings that happen during the holidays. You know, the church gatherings, the family gatherings, the friend gatherings, and at when you've had that deception, and you realize how important honesty is to you and how important the truth is to you, so having to navigate those questions feels so inauthentic when you aren't safe to share even the bare minimum that was that was almost emotional torture for me. I that season I gave myself permission to not do very much at all. Now the next season I went crazy with decorating, because that was my creativity, and when I was able to finally get back in touch with my creativity, I started to find who I was again, but that that was, you know, 18 months later. So if you're in a space where it just feels like torture to be with people, it's okay, like Michelle said, it's okay to give yourself permission to do what you need to do and not worry about what other people think. All right, ladies, let's move on to the next question, which is practical in nature. What are some practical tools for finding stability and sanity during a holiday season?

L

Lyschel 07:20

I'll go with some of my own personals. I keep it simple. I have a love hate with Pinterest. Just going to put it out there. There. I said it. I said it, a love hate with Pinterest, especially, I think, for my generation of mothers, like still having kids in our home, and the things that I am so enamored with people's creativity and their ability to do all the things that they post on there, but I also have to get into reality and be like, Oh yeah, they do this for a living. They're sitting around thinking of things to do. So, for example, never, ever, ever will you find an Elf on a Shelf in my house? Never, ever, I know, okay, I'm gonna probably make us lose some listeners. But okay, but the thing I really want to say is that I do think that often times the pressure of community, culture, whatever moves us to a place of making it complex, like we're responsible for creating the memory. And the reality is, is that the memory will be created because of who's there, not because of what's done, right and and I can, and I if, I, if I'm reflective and I look back like on my own childhood, I can, I can't tell you a single gift. Well, one, I got a really good boom box, and I remember the year I got the Nintendo. But other than that, I don't remember a lot of gifts, right? But I do remember having my cousin at every Christmas like anticipating her being there, knowing she was driving up from Florida. Couldn't wait to be with her. I couldn't tell you about any decorations. I know my mother loves to decorate for Christmas, and so I try to even just take that into today with my own family, and knowing that they're the ones that are going to create the memories and the season, not necessarily the things that I have to do. So some practical tools that I have done is I don't put up a lot of decorations, and part of that is just because of my own capacity, but I also have found myself I want to be super intentional with my decorations, so I have a nativity set that I put up that is very special to me. I have this beautiful, and I'm going to link it. I hope you've linked this in the show notes, because I am sold out on this lady. There's a woman called True cotton. She's an artist on Etsy, and she has an advent calendar. They are all watercolor cards, and you can just

flip through them, or I hang them up on a string with clothes pins, and we flip them. Uh, throughout the Advent season, they're amazing, but those are my and then and we do a Christmas tree, but that is about the extent of our decor, because I would rather spend more time doing other fun things that are traditions for us. So I Okay, one of the things we do, instead of doing a gingerbread house, we build a Nativity scene every year. And we have to, we have to go pilfer through the pantry for the supplies. So I don't even buy good supplies for this hot mess of a creation that we do, right? And then every and the kids take so much creativity to this. Like you cannot believe what they can do with some pretzel sticks. Those are, those are some things there, simplicity. Bring it down. The other thing I would say, and granted, this is a little we live in the quasi south, so we get the ability to do this. I walk as much as I can during the season, getting outside and having some cold air. There's just something about that grounding me and giving me the ability to find that space, to still maintain that self care in the season. So I find myself walking on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day like none of the holidays are going to stop me from doing that activity. And honestly, there's a part of it it makes it feel more

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Bonny 11:21

special. So yeah, and you get to look at all the if you do it in the afternoon or evening as the lights are coming on, that's probably really very pretty. You appreciate

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Lyschel 11:31

other people's decorations and Pinterest. See it can be on

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Pam B. 11:35

Instagram too, right? Where did this term Instagram worthy come from? Right? Yeah, I similarly. Now I've lived in three different states since my first worst D Day, and I found in three different states my local grocery store that has a deli has a full turkey, mashed potatoes, dinner, you know, green beans, stuffing, everything, gravy rolls that you can buy and they can make a turkey, probably better than I can, you know, and I've always enjoyed that, but I've learned that, like you're saying, it's not about those things, it's not about the food, it's not about The decorations, it's about the experience of being together, and the gift of this, the silver lining is it really does become more of a focus on the reason for the season, Jesus's birth into our world. And you know, for Christmas or at Thanksgiving, to really be thankful. It gives me more space to really focus on what those celebrations are supposed to inspire in me. And so I would just encourage any woman who normally does the whole turkey stuffing and, you know, mashed potatoes and everything go ahead and order. And you know, next year or the next year, if you really love cooking and you you really enjoy that, maybe you do that next year. You don't have to do this forever, but that's just one practical thing I've encouraged some of my coachees to do.

L

Lyschel 13:19

I'm gonna add a few more things since you said, practical tools. Bonnie, other things that have been life savers. For me is maintaining connection with my support community. I have had a tendency to right and I think we all have this tendency like the rest of our things come up and

tendency to fight, and I think we all have this tendency, like the rest of our things come up, and it starts to suck us away. And then we get to January, and we're like, why am I so dry? Like, I just feel like this is exhausting, and everything else and so things that I do intentionally is if, if you're in a regular if you're in a group, staying in a group, if you can find community, just as going into the holidays, there's a lot of places where one of the hope redefined. I think somebody else is also offering like holiday support groups, and they meet once a month, but being able to connect with recovery community during the season is going to be imperative. The other thing I'll just say is like, I have a core group of friends, and so we make it we're really intentional about making sure we connect for a dinner or a coffee during that season, just to fill our cup, you know, just and those are things that offer stability and sanity. For me, is to not get so lost in the the busyness of the season and try to maintain those intentional connections

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Pam B. 14:37

that's so important, because we're getting a lot of messaging in media and culture, and when we are doing our shopping about happy, joyful, right? We may not really feel that way. And I know I kind of start to feel guilty, like, oh, well, I'm supposed to feel joyful and bright. Why don't I feel. That way, so but when I get into my group of women and I hear other women saying the same thing, I'm like, Oh, I'm not the only one, and it's okay if I don't feel happy, joyful and bright,

B

Bonny 15:12

practical tools for me, absolutely simplifying, making things clear in my brain as well listing, making lists during that time, my brain fog was so bad I had to write everything down, and lists were my friends throughout the years, Dave and I on Thanksgiving Eve, we brine a turkey, and while I did not go crazy that first year, I bought a lot of things and just opened cans and had, you know, and also, we are empty nesters with kids with their own houses. So I could ask them to bring dishes to help, you know, to help fulfill the Thanksgiving meal. But that that tradition we kept that year, even after discovery, we kept that tradition of the turkey because we did it together. And it was kind of a symbol of hope. It was a symbol of hope for me that we could continue this tradition. And things would just get I would heal. I would heal from then on out other practical things and gratitude, while it's it's more of a cognitive, practical gratitude daily, counting your blessings. There is always some little thing to be thankful for. Maybe it's you hit all the green lights on the way to the grocery store. I used to thank God for those kind of things, as insignificant as they may seem, yeah, you know, just little things I became, I became more observant for places to be grateful. I was always on the lookout for something, because God showed His his love for me in small ways, and I as the more I looked for them, the more I saw them, and it was just a glimmer of hope. Oh, also, before we go into the next question, I'm going to link a very interesting podcast. It's called The Huberman lab, and it is not betrayal, trauma recovery related, but he has a great episode on gratitude and how you can utilize gratitude, and how it actually overflows into all areas of your life, social, economic, all things. But it's a great podcast. I'll put it in the show notes so ladies, as we end this episode, what hope would you leave our listeners as we enter into the holiday season, what's happening

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Pam B. 18:04

now is just a chapter. It's not the whole book. What you're going through is a season, and it is about to focus on you and your self-care and self-love, because God said love thy neighbor as

okay to focus on you and your self care and self love, because God said Love thy neighbor as thyself, and that implied that we must love ourselves, and that it's okay to put yourself first. It's okay to ask for what you want, ask for what you need. And you may think, you know, oh, I may not, I won't get it, but you don't know unless you ask, ask your partner, ask your children, ask your family and friends, ask for help. It's okay. Maybe next year, you'll be helping someone else take it one day at a time and relieve yourself of that pressure to have that Instagram worthy or Pinterest worthy. Rockwell postcard Christmas or holiday.

L

Lyschel 19:08

When I sit back and I really step out of the American Christmas season, the reason we celebrate this every year is because we're celebrating the fact that we had a savior come to Earth. And I can't think of a more appropriate season in my own personal life than betrayal and disclosures and discoveries than when I needed a Savior. And so my hope is, is that that our listeners, and even for myself, that this holiday season, we would step back and go, what does this actually mean? Why do we do this every year? And, and I'm talking like as a like, why do we have Christmas every year? The original purpose, which would be fun to do a study on. But, you know, I. Believe that the reason we're doing this is the the tangible reminder that Jesus came to this earth. Um, I also, I'm going to put out a plug for the chosen. I love, love, love the chosen. And, yeah, they have a particular episode, I think it's called the shepherd or the shepherd boy, and it's about Christmas, it's about the birth of Jesus. And I'm I've said this before, but I'm such a visual person that something like the chosen just really helps bring stories to life for me, and I'm so thankful for that, but I could only imagine what it would be like to be Mary in that in that space, terrified, unsure, moving into a chapter of life that she has no understanding of and no explanation for, and also thinking how often I have felt that in My own betrayal story, I'm moving into something. I'm terrified. I have no understanding of what's coming, but I have to trust that God has good in it. And so she had, there had to be some point in her story, probably not that night she was laying in a manger, but at some point she had to be like, I trust that God is going to do something good with this, because on paper, it looked terrible and awful, and this woman was pregnant, out of wedlock and detrimental to her, to everything. So my hope would be, is that we would potentially disengage, even for a moment, from this. The, I don't know what you want to call it, the the consumerism of the holiday, and that we would give ourselves time and space to go back into. How do I fit in this story? How do I fit into what we're doing in this holiday Thanksgiving, even? How do I fit in that right now, where I'm at, and just see what we learn about ourselves.

B

Bonny 22:06

I love that you brought Mary into this because I am sure, because of her culture, she was betrayed by her culture. As she presented, yeah, yeah, yeah, as she presented pregnant, and in the end, she was betrayed by a culture as they killed her son. And but what you've said is so wonderful, Michelle, I look, I look to the women of the Bible when I am in my darkest despair. And I will, I look, and I try to absorb how they navigated, and I also look at the rest of their story. And like Pam has said, this is not the end, this is not the final chapter. This is a horrible storm. This is a deep, dark abyss. And maybe the future looks black to you. Maybe you can't even see past the next hour, but God's already in your future. And Mary. Mary survived. Mary went on to live a wonderful life with John, even after, even after Jesus was put to death and resurrected and left, she continued on and and you can you will too, even though it feels like this is the end. So I know that a lot of us struggle with faith after our recent discoveries, my

hope is that you can look to God's faithfulness for you. Maybe your faith is shaky, his faith towards you is not so, ladies, any final thoughts so our wonderful listeners, we want to let you know that we are taking our own advice when it comes to simplifying during the holidays, and we'll be taking a brief hiatus from publication from Thanksgiving until the new year, but I invite you to go back and listen to our other 40 some odd episodes. We've been cranking them out this year. I hope you've seen that so. So go back and re listen. And you know, it's I find when I re listen to a podcast, there's a new little nugget that pops out at me. So possibly, as you re listen, and you know, as brain fog of trauma calms down and you find more stability, you might hear new things. So I invite you to re listen and also thank you. Thank you for being dedicated listeners. We hear from so many of you now, and it really encourages us to keep on with this work. So thank you, and thank you for joining us today. We hope to be a bright spot on your recovery journey. And if you'd like to leave us a question or comment, there's a button, a contact button on our website that you can use, that we will see. And that our website is hope for wives, and that's F, O R, hope for wives.com and also, if this podcast has helped you, please consider donating toward the cost of publication. Thank you so much, and may this holiday season be simplified and meaningful for you. Bye,



25:21

take care. Bye,