

Transcript for the podcast “Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women.”

Hosts: Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher

Episode 2 — Guest: Eric Schumacher

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Eric Schumacher 00:00

Welcome to "Worthy", the Christian podcast that celebrates the value of women. Each week, we'll bring you conversations with women and men on the value of women in the church, home, and society. We will not always agree on everything. But we do agree that God is glorious, the Bible is true, women are valuable, and respectful conversation on this topic is essential in our day.

00:35

[Theme song]

Eric Schumacher 00:41

I am Eric Schumacher. And this is my co host,

Elyse Fitzpatrick 00:44

Elyse Fitzpatrick. And we're here together on our [cheers] second podcast, to talk about women and celebrating the value of women. We want our listeners to get to know us a little bit. So just by way of explanation, Eric and I have co-authored a book entitled "Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women." And so what we wanted to do was to begin to have a conversation, a public conversation, about the value of women in the church, in the home, in society, and to maybe even begin to model what that kind of conversation might look like. So Eric and I are going to interview people with whom we agree, essentially, and also people that perhaps we don't agree with. But we're going to have them on the podcast, and what we're wanting to talk about, our primary conversation piece, is going to be about the value of women and how that plays out in the church, in the home, in society. We're going to invite you in. And we're also going to invite you to send us questions or to post about us on social media. We're going to invite you to do those things. And what we want to do is to teach one another, first of all, truth. What does the Bible have to say about women? But then also to demonstrate how to have a godly, peaceable, gentle, respectful conversation about this topic. So that's where we are. That's where we're going. And Eric and I are going to just let you get to know us a little bit. In our last episode, if you didn't listen in, Eric had an opportunity to interview me, just so that you can get to know who I am. And then today, I'm going to interview Eric. We've got some questions we're going to ask and then hopefully, you're going to hear his heart. I just have to say it's been a real privilege for me to get to know Eric and to hear his heart about women, for women. Eric and I first met--I want to say a couple of years ago. And I'll let you talk, Eric--but I think you had posted some things on Twitter that I saw that I really liked. And then you had written something for The Gospel Coalition, a blog about twenty-one ways God used women. And at that point I contacted you--I think over social media--and we had you on our family's podcast, "Front Porch with the Fitzes" podcast. And then had a little bit of a conversation after that and sort of thought, well, hmm, I wonder if we should pursue this a little bit. It was already a way I was kind of thinking and obviously you were way down the pike with it. And so then here we are a couple of years later with a book and a podcast. So welcome, Eric.

Eric Schumacher 04:19

Yeah, here we are. It's been great.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 04:21

It's amazing, actually, isn't it? That we've gotten [inaudible].

Eric Schumacher 04:24

It is amazing. It was quite a journey from a string of tweets to a book and now a podcast. And as of recording right now, the book's not released, and I'm looking forward to its release because I want to read it, because I have no idea what we said at this point. It's been so long since we turned it in.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 04:45

[laughs] Right? Isn't that what happens? I remember a time that I was taking a course in how to do good interviews about your book. And the course was being offered by people who were major producers of programs in Christianity. The first thing that they said, and they said it over and over again, was, "Read your book." [laughs] [laughs] Read your book before you come on the show so that you know what you're talking about. Because, you know, for Eric and I, we wrote this book quite a while ago. I'm anxious to read it too. Who knows what we said?

Eric Schumacher 05:26

Yeah, a little scary.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 05:28

It is scary. That's where we're at. We're really hoping to move this conversation forward. So let me let you get to know Eric a little bit. I've been so blessed to know him, so thankful for what the Lord has done through our relationship and social media. And in some ways, social media is a great thing, isn't it?

Eric Schumacher 05:50

It can be!

Elyse Fitzpatrick 05:51

It can be. Okay! So Eric, why don't you tell us about your journey and your understanding of women, their value, their roles in the home and church and society. How has that changed for you over time?

Eric Schumacher 06:06

As I think about my understanding of women and their value, you know, I have to go back to my mom. She's obviously the first woman I met. And I have a great mom, one of the strongest women I know. And she stayed at home with me and my two brothers until I was about 12. And I remember one time, I don't know how old I was, but I was probably seven or eight, and we were at a campground and walking back to our camper. And I remember telling my mom I wanted to race her. I think what I said was, you can't beat me because you're a girl.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 06:47

[laughs]

Eric Schumacher 06:48

And she smoked me. She didn't have this idea that she needed to let me win so that I could develop my manhood or protect it or something. But a very strong mom, who loves Jesus and loves her family, and worked very hard, you know, to raise us. I started life with appreciation for who she was, even if I didn't always perfectly show it, especially through some teenage years. And then my church, you know, growing up... I grew up in a very conservative Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. Most of the activity in the church was women: my Sunday School teachers, my Vacation Bible School teachers. You know, I could think of a couple women, Judy and Marilyn, who ran our Bible school and loved us kids and constantly talked to us about Jesus. And I remember as a kid too, one of our pastors' wives was being ordained by the denomination as a deacon. And that was the first time I probably had ever even said, oh, there's some official capacity in which women serve. I just hadn't seen it. It kind of stuck in my mind. Fast forward to college--my Campus Ministry I was in, we had a... There's a little talk going on about what it was appropriate for women to do and not to do, and that sort of thing. And that introduced me to a book you mentioned on our previous episode, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*." And I--the whole concept of biblical manhood and womanhood had never entered my mind. I was very, at that time, shaped by John Piper and his sermons. And his teaching really helped me cut my teeth on the Bible and learning to take the Bible very seriously: looking at the text, and what does it say? And so that book really started helping me just think through, does the Bible speak to what it means to be a man or a woman, and what that looks like in different places. I moved on to seminary at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. And a few things there that helped grow my appreciation for women. One of them was, maybe my first year there, I remember opening our campus mailbox and there was a letter inside from President Mohler--Al Mohler, the president of the seminary--to the whole student body. And it essentially said, you know, "We are happy to have women here on our campus, enrolled in our programs--PhD, MDiv--learning with us. We value that and if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, it will be met with discipline." I think even--

Elyse Fitzpatrick 09:44

Nice. Even, if I remember right, the threat of expulsion. And apparently there had been some men on campus who had been, you know, asking some of the women, "Why in the world did you want to be in--why in the world would you be here in seminary?" And all that, and it was squashed pretty firmly and pretty quickly. That example spoke volumes to me. And then the women I knew on campus... I mean, I knew some incredibly smart women who were in classes with me. And then one of my favorite professors was Esther Cruickshank. I took the class on hymnology with her. She's a great musician and music historian. Learned a ton from her. Karen Chong, my manager at the fitness center at the seminary, she was my boss, and just a great example of a Christian woman who led her team well. So yeah, moving on from seminary, I immediately started pastoring. I've been at three different churches now, here in my home state of Iowa. And in my first church, we had a little bit of a controversy there on our--at least disagreements--on what women could do in the church. And it pushed me into studying the Bible and trying to think through these things rigorously. And complementarianism became very important to me. Sometimes I wonder if it became too important to me. But moving on into my next church, it was something that I focused on and emphasized quite a bit. I don't know that I had anyone

who disagreed with me, but I had some good members who would just poke and ask some questions. And I remember, one time we had a complementarian speaker--actually, I think they were the leader at the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood at the time--who came and spoke, and I think did a good job. But I remember some of the questions that people were asking about. You know, "You said, you tell your son this, or let him do this, as you're raising him. Would you do that with your daughter?" Some of the questions gave me pause to think: the emphases we put on what it means to be a man and a woman, can I defend that thoroughly from the Bible? That men should be like this, and women shouldn't? It just made me ask some questions. You know, several years have passed. At some point I just began to think... You know, I developed my views on this at a fairly young age with not much experience. And I've been, you know, studying the Bible and preaching it for fifteen years, and it'd be good to just go back and think through these things. And then I went through some--a church split, some pastoral burnout, some struggles with depression and anxiety. Through that suffering, it gave me the desire to listen careful to people who were suffering. And so when the whole Me Too movement started... You know, I think a decade before--definitely twenty years before when I was in high school or college--I would have just sort of had a knee-jerk reaction to that whole movement and not paid it much mind. But for some reason, I decided I really need to be listening here. And when it spilled over into Church Too, listening to the stories of women, and how they had been treated in the church, and how their abuse had been overlooked... The example of Rachael Denhollander. Yes.

Eric Schumacher 13:10
She's been very helpful.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 13:11
Yes.

Eric Schumacher 13:12
And then, even women in my church. Hearing comments that they would make about how things that a speaker at a conference may have said hurt or disturbed them.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 13:23
That I might not have paid any mind to before. But just to sit and think, huh, I wonder why that is. It didn't strike *me* as anything, but my sisters are bothered by this. I started to have conversations with women in my church. I grabbed a couple ladies from our women's ministry team, sent them an email and just said, "Hey, here's a list of questions that I've been thinking through about, how can I love women in our church and shepherd them better?" And, you know, met them for coffee, and just sat and listened to them answer those questions--and pointing to other things that I should be aware of and think about--for a couple hours. That was such a good experience. You know, I contacted three other women in the church, sent them the same list of questions. You know, just from different ages, and sort of different demographics. Sat with them and just listened. Not every woman thinks the same thing, wants the same thing. Yes. Right.

Eric Schumacher 13:24
Not every woman has had the same experience. You know, for some, they have been treated poorly, and others have said, "My experience of women in church has been wonderful my entire church life."

Elyse Fitzpatrick 14:40

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 14:40

Wanting to look at the Scriptures again. And I don't want to say, "look at the Scriptures anew," or "fresh," because I don't know that we can ever do that. But having experience with intensively studying the Bible and preaching it for fifteen years, to go back with what I've learned about Bible interpretation and those sorts of things, and just go back and look. I think that's when Karen Swallow Prior had tweeted something about deacons being appointed to help protect widows who were being neglected. That's what sparked this, "Boy, I wonder, you know, if..." Whether or not that's the birthplace of the office of deacon. This idea, this instituting formally these people for this task to protect women, like, "Where else do we see women show up in significant places?" That's where that list, of twenty-one surprising ways that women show up. And here we are, it became a book and a podcast.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 15:44

[laughs]

Eric Schumacher 15:44

So, God's been... I think, what's been changing for me, is... I don't know, it might be some really slight places where my doctrine has changed--what I would say some passages in Scripture mean. But mostly, I don't know that my doctrine has seen major changes. But what I've seen change in me is my attitude, and my awareness of how women are treated, how important they are, and what a great help and benefit they are to the church in the world. And just trying to be aware of that, to draw attention to that, and to really... You know, you mentioned this in the last episode, that in the new world, the new heavens and earth, men and women, as the bride of Christ, we're going to rule together with Christ. And that's, I think, started in the beginning. The man and the woman were to exercise dominion together.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 16:52

Right.

Eric Schumacher 16:53

So I want to live in this kingdom, as we bring the gospel to bear on the world, seeing my sisters as my partners in this great task.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 17:05

That's really so wonderful, listening to how you're wanting to dialogue, and how you have dialogued with women in your congregation. And then really asking the question as a man, you know, "Why would that comment from the pulpit, which doesn't even affect me at all--it doesn't even register--why does it affect women the way that it does? Why would they even notice it?" You know, I so much appreciate that about you, Eric. And as I've watched you over the last couple of years as we've had to work through, you know, the writing of the book, and the different ways in which we've had to work together--I've watched you and... You know, I should say, just for those of you that are listening that don't know

Eric, Eric is a wonderful dad. He's married to Jenny. He has five kids. As he said, he's a pastor. He's also a songwriter. And I'm so thrilled to know him. I know that in our congregation, we sing one of your songs, which is "Not In Me." I'm so thankful for that. Also, you know, Eric says that I really like the All Blacks, which is a rugby team, and Eric, did you go see "Little Women" yet? [laughs]

Eric Schumacher 18:29

I haven't. I haven't seen "Little Women" yet. But I'm a third of the way through it.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 18:35

Oh, okay. So you're gonna read it before you're gonna go see it?

Eric Schumacher 18:40

That's the plan, but I might just give up and go see it.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 18:42

Yeah, yeah, I am thinking it's probably a good thing to go see it, maybe before it gets out of the theaters or something.

Eric Schumacher 18:51

So if our listeners have questions about literature, like "Little Women," they can send that to me. And full contact sports, they can send those to you.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 19:02

[laughs] You know, it's such an interesting thing, because Eric and I were talking the other day about, you know, movies we were going to go see, and Eric said he was going to go see "Little Women," and I said that I had just seen "Ford V Ferrari."

Eric Schumacher 19:15

[laughs]

Elyse Fitzpatrick 19:16

Which I thought was one of the best films I've seen at all this whole film season. So, you know, saying all that to say, you know, let's not assume that genders have certain things that they like and don't like just because that's their gender. You know, so, Eric wants to watch "Little Women," and I'm gonna watch it as well. But boy, I love "Ford V Ferrari," and I really love Transformer movies. Well, I'm going to take that back. I love the first Transformer movie. I haven't been too crazy about the other ones. But it's just interesting. And that doesn't mean--and I guess that's something we're going to be talking about, as we go on in our podcasting--but, you know, saying, "Well, okay, the stereotypical woman would like X," or even to say, "In order to be a biblical woman, you have to love to bake bread. In order to be a biblical man, you have to love to work on hot rods." Or something, I don't know. You know, we really do want to speak to that.

Eric Schumacher 19:53

Really? Yeah, absolutely. I remember, this was another piece of my story that shaped my thinking about women. When I was in college, our campus ministry had a men's and a women's retreat. Separate retreats on the same weekend. And then I think we came together on Saturday night for like a banquet or something.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:02
Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 21:03
But we're all together. So on that Saturday morning, all the men went to a state park and we went rappelling and rock climbing.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:11
[laughs] Did you shoot--

Eric Schumacher 21:12
And the women--

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:12
Did you go shoot guns? Or was it just rappelling and rock climbing?

Eric Schumacher 21:16
We did shoot guns.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:17
[laughs]

Eric Schumacher 21:18
Yeah, we went and shot shotguns. Did target shooting.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:20
Right, yeah, of course.

Eric Schumacher 21:22
Because you had to, because it was a men's retreat.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:24
Right, right.

Eric Schumacher 21:25
And the women went and stencilled. Painted the stencils flowerpots.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:35
[laughs] No.

Eric Schumacher 21:35

And when we got back and shared what we did, the women were not at all happy about what we got to do, versus what they did.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 21:47

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 21:48

None of the men were sad about not stencilling flowerpots. Nothing against that. But I think next year, we just had a campout and did rock climbing. And everybody was there.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 22:00

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 22:00

But you know, if you had told me before the retreat as a nineteen-year-old kid, that the women were going to do the flowerpots, I'd have probably thought, "Oh, I guess that's what they like to do." Consequently, I have never asked my wife if she'd like to stencil flowerpots.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 22:19

She'd probably take it and hit you with it or something. [laughs]

Eric Schumacher 22:23

[laughs] She might.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 22:25

Yeah, you know, and that's gonna get us into other conversations which we're going to have down the road, just about--even about what goes on in women's ministry. And, you know, it's been my joke for some time that we need to really move women's ministry past learning how to fold napkins so they look like the empty tomb. You know, we got to move past it.

Eric Schumacher 22:45

Yeah. Well, you mentioned last episode: Jen Wilkin and Nancy Guthrie. And I think those two women and yourself have been just wonderful examples of women who largely minister to women, though I've benefited from their books. But they are--all three of you are just intensely focused on the Word of God and interpreting the Word of God in a solid, substantive way with no fluff. And that's fantastic. Well done.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 23:22

Thank-you. So, Eric, what are you hoping to accomplish? You know, we got a podcast, we got a book. You know, two years from now, five years from now, what are you hoping to see?

Eric Schumacher 23:35

Oh, you know, we say in the book, that the purpose of the book is to glorify God by seeing and celebrating the value of women in God's Word. And that's really what I want to see happen. You know, I believe that we are created to glorify God. And that means displaying his excellence, showing off what is wonderful about him. And the way that you see the glory of God is in what he's made and what he's done. And so, you know, that subtitle of the book and description of the podcast may give some people pause. "We shouldn't be celebrating women, we should be celebrating God." Well, if I go to a restaurant of a famous chef, and he brings me out a meal, and I eat all the courses of this meal, and the chef comes out and says, "What did you think?" And I said, "I absolutely can't stand and don't care about your food. But I think you're a marvelous chef." That wouldn't make any sense. The way I honor that chef is by saying, "Your food is really really good." And women, like men, are made in the image of God. And their purpose is to live in a way that shows the world what God is like. The whole concept of image in Ancient Near Eastern societies--you know, the type of place that Moses is writing in--a king, when they rule a land or take over a territory, they erect an image of themselves there. To say, "This is mine. This is where I reign." And human beings represent God. And, you know, when you see in Iraq the statue of Saddam Hussein being torn down, it's disrespectful to him.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 25:29

Right.

Eric Schumacher 25:30

And when he's been dethroned, that's how you show you don't honor this man anymore. So how we treat the image of God reflects what we think of God. How we think about, and treat, and interact with women, says something about what we think of God. And so I'm hoping that we can have respectful conversations about women, rooted in God's Word, that will cause people to think about women as valuable representatives of their Creator, and will begin to treat them accordingly.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 25:33

That's so well said, Eric. You know, just all the time, getting back to: "Look, what we're really talking about here is the creation of God, the image of God, something that God created and called good." And remembering that, as we seek wisdom, honoring men and women. You know, I really hope that people won't assume that because we want to honor women, that means we want to dishonor men. That's not where we're going either. What we want to do is honor God's good creation. So you know, that's a wonderful thing to have as a goal, to really encourage people to honor God and his image in women and men. But what do you think are the obstacles that we're going to come up against as we try to do that?

Eric Schumacher 27:26

I think there are a couple. One of the first is, as you mentioned, getting past the assumption that highlighting the value of women means... Several things. The assumption that it means that we're denigrating men. I don't think saying there's value in males diminishes the value of females, and vice versa. Some could have the assumption that highlighting the value of women is some way detracting from the glory of God. Or the assumption that because you're talking about women, and their value, that you're throwing out scripture, and that you're somehow on the slippery slope to liberalism and you're a threat to the inerrancy of the Bible. And, you know, one of the things I want to say, and I think

why I've been passionate about this conversation, is there's often been, you know, in the whole Church Too and Me Too movements, this idea that it's conservative Christians who are at fault for, you know, abuse--and therefore a conservative reading of the Bible is what is what promotes abuse or devaluing women. And there certainly are conservative circles, where, for whatever reason, they have been guilty of devaluing women. Covering up abuse, those sorts of things. Misapplying doctrine, that sort of thing. But I've wanted to be a voice that says, "Yes, I'm going to celebrate, speak out for, protect women. And I'm going to hold firm to what I believe the scripture says." So that assumption is something that hopefully we can get past. I think another is--this might be the biggest obstacle--is to say that this is a conversation for men, not just for women.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 29:33

Yes, good.

Eric Schumacher 29:34

And I think so many times when I've talked to people about the book and said, "You know, I'm co writing this book with Elyse. It's called 'Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women.' And what we do is we walk through the storyline of the Bible, and we look at the ways that women are integrated into that story, and the valuable place they have and how God's worked through them." And the response is, "Oh, that sounds great. I'll buy a copy of that for my wife, or for my mom, or maybe our women's group at church can read that." There's this assumption that if you're talking about women, or women in the Bible, it's a conversation for women.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 30:14

Right.

Eric Schumacher 30:15

In other words, only women are interested in talking about women. Or only women have something to learn from the women in the Scripture. And you see that. I imagine you've seen that at women's events and retreats, where the Bible passage that the pastor is going to preach on--or for Mother's Day--is always a female character in the Bible, as though those are the only parts that might apply to women.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 30:43

Right.

Eric Schumacher 30:43

And how often have I ever--I don't know that I've ever been at a men's event or a men's retreat where, we're going to look at Ruth and what she has to teach us as men.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 30:56

Yes, yes.

Eric Schumacher 30:57

So an obstacle is just gonna--might be to get men to read and to listen and to enter the conversation.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 31:06

Yeah, I've had that exact same experience, Eric, where I have talked with people about the book, or what I'm thinking, and it's an automatic--it's automatic, "Oh yeah, well, then that would be a good thing for our women's group to do." And it's like, no, actually, it would be a really good thing for your men's group to do.

Eric Schumacher 31:32

Yes. And you know, I think--and I'm gracious with people who make that assumption--

Elyse Fitzpatrick 31:35

Yes, yeah.

Eric Schumacher 31:35

Because, you know, even just listening to my sisters who are authors. Getting published as a woman, so often it has to be a book to women. We're not accustomed to seeing women write books that we expect men to profit from.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 31:52

Yes, yeah. Right.

Eric Schumacher 32:03

And so I understand why people come away with that assumption. It's just an unfortunate one.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 32:10

Yeah. And, you know, one of the questions that I have asked guys, you know: how many books by a woman have you ever read? So, you know, my male friends will say, "Well, I read you." But, you know, it's--

Eric Schumacher 32:25

[laughs] They have to.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 32:26

[laughs] Well, you know, who knows, maybe they skim it or something. But, you know, it's a question of whether or not women have something valuable, significant, to say, that they can say to men. At the same time, recognizing and valuing the roles that, you know, we think that the Bible teaches. Is there's something about the time in which we're living, Eric, that makes this really important, or have we covered that, or?

Eric Schumacher 33:03

Well, I think there is. Laura Wifler and Emily Jensen from Risen Motherhood, in their endorsement of the book, there was a phrase they used that was just striking to me. They said, "We live in a world where womanhood is simultaneously worshiped and despised." It's worshiped and despised. And we really do see that, where the response to the mistreatment and despising of women is almost a deification of women.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 33:42

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 33:43

Which might be responsible for some of the knee-jerk reaction, saying women are valuable. And, you know, we just continually see in the news, the devaluing of women in the church and the home in the world. And, you know, you see that in some places where there are other religions that integrate women, you see that in some churches, where there are false beliefs about women that have harmful consequences. So I think part of the solution to that is to help people see the glory of God in his creation of female human beings.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 34:37

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 34:38

And why that's a glorious thing and what he's done for them in Christ. You know, Jesus came to live a life of absolute obedience and righteousness and holiness. And you see that, and how he treats and loves women. And suffering the curse on the cross on our behalf, he's conquering sin, death, and the devil in his resurrection from the dead. And he's redeeming women, as his people, and clothing them with righteousness and exalting them to a future where they will be raised from the dead and reign with him, along with all of his people. That's a glorious future. And I think when you can show the world how much God values women--what he does for them and through them--I pray by his grace and through his Spirit, it could change minds and hearts, so that people will think twice before they mistreat or brush aside a woman, simply because she's a woman.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 35:51

Nice. Nice. That's great. So, Eric, you've already talked to us about your mom, and what a wonderful example and human being she was in your life, and how formative she was for you and in your faith. Are there other women that you want to talk about now, that have been formative for you?

Eric Schumacher 36:19

Well, amongst living women, my wife has been probably one of the most influential women in my life.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 36:29

Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 36:29

You know, we've been married for twenty... Let me get that right. Twenty-one years now.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 36:36

[laughs] My husband, Phil, always says, "When somebody says, 'How long have you been married?'" And we've been married--we're working on forty-six now. He always says, "Not long enough." So Eric, if you can't remember how long you've been married-- "Not long enough," is the right answer. [laughs]

Eric Schumacher 36:50

Ahh. That's good. Yeah. Well, you know, watching her lay down her life for other people. You know, she's not a flashy person who draws attention to herself. She's just quietly faithful, and has suffered much and sacrificed much to love me and to raise our five children. And it's a delight to me. And just to watch her, hear her read them the Scriptures, point them to Jesus, and so she's influenced me, I think, in a lot of ways.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 37:40

And what about women from Scripture? I've learned so much from you, as you have, you know, really gone through, woman by woman by woman by woman, talking about their faith. Is there one that particularly stands out to you?

Eric Schumacher 37:58

I think Ruth is--she's one of my favorite characters in the Bible. I think I've probably preached through that book five or six times. And she is just a marvelous example of courage, strength, covenant faithfulness. She really is in a lot of ways a picture of Jesus because, we see, you know, Adam--you know, it says after he was given Eve, he would leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. And after the fall, we see him, you know, throwing her under the bus and pointing the finger at her. But in Ruth, you know, after her husband is dead and her mother-in-law is going to go back to Bethlehem, Naomi tells her, "Go back to your gods, and go back to your own families. Because there's nothing good waiting for us. The Lord has basically abandoned me." And Ruth, leaves her father and mother and clings to her mother-in-law, which is an act of faithfulness to her deceased husband. She's like a second Adam in a sense, where she's succeeding where he has failed. And she goes back and Naomi is too depressed to do anything. And we see Ruth really taking the initiative for leadership and protection and provision at home. Where she says, "Okay, here's the plan. I, as a foreign Moabite woman, am gonna go out by myself--"

Elyse Fitzpatrick 39:53

Think of that.

Eric Schumacher 39:54

"--into the fields, and glean." Incredibly courageous. Dangerous.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 40:00

Yes.

Eric Schumacher 40:00

Because she's going to protect and provide for her mother-in-law. And it's an act of faith, you know, because Boaz says, "I've heard about what you've done and how you've taken refuge under the wings of the God of Israel." He recognizes this is true faith. And what she really is, is she is the embodiment of the Word: she is living out Torah. What does the law teach? "What does God require, but to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with your God." And she is doing the just and right thing for her

widowed mother-in-law. She's showing her mercy. And she's walking humbly. And so when we look for a picture of Jesus in the book of Ruth, of course we see it in Boaz, the kinsman redeemer.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 40:50

Sure.

Eric Schumacher 40:51

But we also see a picture of Jesus in Ruth!

Elyse Fitzpatrick 40:54

Yes.

Eric Schumacher 40:54

Because she is the perfect Israelite. And she's the one through whom King David's going to come. She's the one through whom, you know, in these days when there was no king and it was judges, this redemption is going to be born through her. And I think it's a message to the Israelites in exile, that this is what you ought to be. You ought to live like she's living. She embodies covenant faithfulness. And this is [inaudible] and how redemption will come. And it points us forward, as we look at our own failures, to Christ, who comes to be the true Israel: the embodiment, the Word in the flesh--who in the full and final way, does justice and loves mercy and walks humbly with his God, on behalf of me and you and Ruth and every other sinner, so that we can share his blessing as he takes away our curse. So, Ruth. I love Ruth.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 41:56

Sweet, sweet. So, you know, what about modern women--authors, artists--is there anybody you want to particularly talk about, as we wrap up here?

Eric Schumacher 42:11

Boy, there's so many. I think, some of the women I've appreciated on social media and I've learned from... You know, Karen Swallow Prior has been a great example of someone who just humbly and graciously responds to people who are critics. I've personally been encouraged by Beth Moore. I don't think I've ever read one of her books, or listened to a talk by her. But her example--her "Letter to My Brothers," I think is what she called it--

Elyse Fitzpatrick 42:44

Yes.

Eric Schumacher 42:45

--was eye opening and helpful to me. And then she's just been a personal encouragement to me as I've tried to speak about these things. I do not know how that poor woman puts up with what she puts up with online. I mean, there's so many more. I think of an artist--who I think is going to be a guest on a future episode of this podcast--is Melanie Penn. And I can't wait to introduce our listeners to her. But she's a singer-songwriter from New York. Has written one of the best Advent Christmas albums that

I've ever heard. I rank it up there with Andrew Peterson's "Behold the Lamb of God," and Handel's "Messiah," is my favorite three Christmas albums.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 43:31

And what's it called?

Eric Schumacher 43:33

It's called "Immanuel." What she does is she's written first-person songs from the perspective of different people in the Christmas story.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 43:44

Nice.

Eric Schumacher 43:45

And her albums are really good. She's a really skilled singer-songwriter, probably one of my favorites. And her songs are really joyful. You know, I'm a Johnny Cash fan. And typically what I listen to is dark and sad music.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 44:00

Yes, yes. [laughs]

Eric Schumacher 44:01

And so she's kind of an outlier on my song mix. But really a joyful and happy person, though not in an annoying way.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 44:11

Yes.

Eric Schumacher 44:13

But when you hear her story, it hasn't been an easy one. You know, she was in New York and watched the Towers come down, live. And the Lord used that in her life in a great way. And if you listen to her on other podcasts, she's just very insightful on how to think about God's world and what he's doing. She's led worship--she did for quite a while, I think at Redeemer Church in Manhattan. And so she's somebody that I admire and respect for what she's doing.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 44:49

Sweet. Well, I am so glad that our audience has had an opportunity to get to know you a little bit, Eric, and hear your heart. And they will know now why I said, "Hey, let's do this, let's write a book, let's do a podcast." I'm really thankful for this time. And, you know, we just want to remind our listeners to subscribe to us on all of the podcasting apps. You know how to do that. And if you rate and review us, it helps us to get out there. And if you have any questions, you know, that you'd like us to answer, then those are going to be included. A way to do that, a link to do that, will be in our show notes. And so we're just thankful that you joined us today. And, again, pray with us. Would you pray with us that the

Lord would help us to accomplish the goal of valuing God's creation the way we should, and learning to do so in a gentle and respectful way? Eric, it's been great.

Eric Schumacher 46:09

Yeah, it has. It's been good, look forward to next time.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 46:12

[laughs] Yeah, we'll see you next week.

46:22

[Outro music]