

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

Hosts: Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher

Episode 30 — Guest: Phylcia Masonheimer

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Eric Schumacher 0:06

Welcome to Worthy, a 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.

Welcome to Worthy. This is Eric Schumacher, along with my co-host, and I need to find another co-interesting title to call her by because she calls me her co-belligerent, but I haven't figured out what that means yet. Elyse Fitzpatrick, she's my co-author as well, and my friend and co-partner in crime. I don't think we've committed any crimes ... yet.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 1:30

Well, we haven't known each other that long.

Eric Schumacher 1:32

Yeah. And we're rarely actually together because you're out in California, but we're not going to talk about that. So we're gonna move along to our special guest for this episode, Phylcia Masonheimer. She teaches Christian women how to apply faith to the realities of life. She's a blogger. She is the host of the podcast Verity. And she's also a speaker. And her writing focuses on overcoming sin and difficulty by the power of maturing relationships with God. And Phylcia lives in northern Michigan, a beautiful part of the country, and Michigan has not told us to stop calling them beautiful. So I can say that about Michigan.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 2:21

You are just the king of segue-ways, aren't you?

Eric Schumacher 2:24

I've never ridden one. But I'll try one day

Elyse Fitzpatrick 2:27

Yes, yes,

Eric Schumacher 2:29

If I'm going to tour Washington DC or something.

So anyway, Phylcia is the author of Stop Calling Me Beautiful: Finding a Deeper Spirituality in a Shallow World. And Phylcia, welcome to the podcast.

Phylcia Masonheimer 2:47

Thank you so much for having me on.

Eric Schumacher 2:49

Yeah, it's good to- It's good to have you here. And I just, I read your book a couple weeks ago before this recording and absolutely loved it the whole way through. Actually listened to the, the audiobook, which is really well done. And I have to say, if I was disappointed by anything in the book, it would be that it was only written towards women. Like I went through this and said, every man should read this book. Because it's, it's a all-around discipleship book. It's fantastic. And I understand why it's targeted to women. And- and we will talk about that. But I, as a man reading your book, I found it- no one calls me beautiful but I- so there was parts of it I couldn't relate to. But I thought it was, I just thought it was fantastic. I just found myself reading through it again and again going, amen, amen, amen. People need to, need to hear this. And I loved the cover too. So you know, like, Elyse writes these books for women, and they're all butterfly-ey and girly looking and all that. And yours has this black cover with bold wording a lot like Worthy. Was that intentional?

Phylicia Masonheimer 4:07

So that was very intentional. The Harvest House team did a great job on that. And yes, you're right, it is a lot like Worthy. It's also a lot like Jackie Hill Perry's Gay Girl, Good God.

Eric Schumacher 4:18

Yeah.

Phylicia Masonheimer 4:18

Um, you know, I think when you're having- when you're talking about a tough topic, a serious topic for women, I think you kind of have to, you know, go with something that reflects the content.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 4:30

Yes.

Phylicia Masonheimer 4:31

And which Worthy would also fit. And so, it- it was a little surprising to me the first time I saw it, because I did kind of expect butterflies or something. I don't know why since the content is, isn't quite up that alley, but I do love how they decided to do the cover.

Eric Schumacher 4:49

Yeah, that's great.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 4:51

So Phylicia, thank you for being with us. I'm really happy that you're here. I want you to tell your faith story if you will. Just let our audience know who you are, how you got to be where you are today, your faith journey.

Phylicia Masonheimer 5:09

Sure. So I grew up in a Christian home, and, and not a nominal one. My parents were strong believers. They disciplined me and my siblings. I'm the oldest of six. And so they were very intentional in giving us a strong faith foundation. But like any child, you can grow up in a Christian home, and you still have to own it. And so I really didn't come to the Lord personally until I was around 15 years old. And then at that point, was- is struggling with an, a sexual addiction that my parents weren't aware of, which is a big part of the book and a part of my own story. And because of that, you, when you're struggling with something like that, it really affects how you view God, how you view yourself, your understanding of sin and repentance and faith in general. And so that was very formative to my faith into college. I went to a

Christian university, which is where I got my religion degree. And during that time, I think, is when the Lord truly helped me lay a foundation for why I believed what I believed, building on what my parents had given me. And ultimately, what it came back to for me was, I don't know why God gets to tell me what I should do with my sexuality. For me, that was the ultimate question. Why does God have the authority to do that? Why do I trust the Bible? And so these are very basic questions, but they're tough questions. They were doctrinal questions. And so I describe it kind of like a backwards domino effect. You have, you know, I started with, here I am struggling with a sexual sin issue. And so why is that wrong? Well, the Bible says, this is wrong. Well, why does the Bible say it's wrong? Why should I trust the Bible on this? Why should I trust God on this? So who is God? What is sin? You know, might as well just get a big systematic theology out. And at that point is when, you know, the Lord truly, I think, met me in that- in those questions and brought me to this, this- I guess today it's a popular word, but almost a deconstruction in that I was breaking down what I believe, but instead of breaking it down to walk away, he broke it down to bring me near. And that's what strengthened my faith, and then led to what I do today. So now I teach basic theology to mostly women who are asking these questions and wanting to know, you know, I've always grown up thinking God was a judge, you know, and so who is he as a whole person, as a whole being, things like that, that I struggled with myself. And so it's an honor to get to do what I do today.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 8:01

That's, that's really wonderful to hear. And we're going to talk more about, you know, your, your journey out of sexual brokenness, and all of that. And I really want to get to that, because I'm quite sure that we have women who are listening who can relate to that and who need to know that sexual brokenness- which I also walked through, I wasn't raised in a Christian home, but really walked through considerable sexual brokenness- how God uses women who even struggle in those ways. And we want very much to get that message out. But how did you get to the place where you felt like you were being called to be a blogger, a podcaster, a writer, wife, mom, I mean, what was, what was the Lord saying to you in all that?

Phylcia Masonheimer 9:01

Well, you know, I never went into this with the idea it would grow to what it is today. I see, you know, when you're walking with the Lord, it's often just one door at a time. And something when I'm teaching fellow writers I say this often, that God, you can go out and you can seek a platform, and you can seek expanding your tents, if you will. But you're going to have problems if you do because your, your maturity has to be able to handle the platform that God is giving you. And God knows, you know, the size that your current maturity can handle. And so when I was younger I've always been writing, and it started as just like a personal blog, a personal, you know, sharing of what I was learning in the Bible as a hobby. I was working in higher education as my career. I loved it. It was wonderful. And then after I had my first daughter and I resigned that job was when doors began to open for me to do more ministry related work. And it was little by little, door by door. And as it grew, it really just showed me the necessity of, you know, your personal walk with the Lord has to be deeply rooted for each door that you walk through. And so it's been probably five years, I guess, that we've, I've really been focusing on writing and ministry and the theology realm. I also do own a business, helps support our family. And together, it's just been a real blessing to see what the Lord has done in the lives of women and in our lives through, through this journey.

Eric Schumacher 10:45

So your book that, that we're talking about today, Stop Calling Me Beautiful. What's that about? Why don't you want people to call you beautiful?

Phylicia Masonheimer 10:55

I always get asked this question. And I've been told that there are husband and wife teams that read the book together, and I'm like, oh, that's so amazing. Like, that's so cool that you can like discuss the concepts together. But the men always say this. "So I'm not supposed to call my wife beautiful anymore. This sounds like it's gonna be damaging." I'm like, okay, no, don't, let's not take this that literally. But so Stop Calling Me Beautiful the book actually began as a blog post. It was a viral blog post by a similar name. It was called "Dear Women's Ministry, Stop Telling Me I'm Beautiful." And I wrote it probably three and a half years ago now. It was very short. And all it was, was kind of a call for women's ministries and American Christianity to stop watering down the gospel and preach what women needed to hear. Because I was hearing over and over women complaining that their women's ministries would do a book study on something that was about insecurity or friendships or something like that. And they were good books. But these women couldn't answer fundamental questions about their faith. They couldn't tell you why they believed what they believed. And so there was this whack-a-mole method of dealing with faith issues. Like, oh, you're having trouble in your friendship? Let's do a book about friendship. You're insecure? Let's do a book about insecurity. Instead of saying, what's the root cause of these issues here? Well, these women don't know the Bible. And they don't know who God is because they don't read their Bibles. And we're not enabling them to read their Bibles. We're enabling them to read more books. And I wrote a book. I hope people read my book. You wrote a book. I'm sure you hope that too. But your book is supposed to point back to Scripture.

Eric Schumacher 12:43

Yeah.

Phylicia Masonheimer 12:44

Right? And so the the blog post simply said that. And it went viral. We were, I was so surprised. I was just shocked at how much women resonated with it. Through that, that process publishers started to reach out and say, hey, we're interested in a book concept on this. And so it eventually became Stop Calling Me Beautiful the book. And it's been really neat to see how women are reading it and saying, you're saying what I've been feeling, that I want to go deeper in my spiritual life. And we can't- I don't ever want it to become a book where it's, like, blaming the church because I do think a lot of these churches have good intentions. But we just need to empower those women ministers in the church to be going deeper with their women. There's a saying I heard from a pastor in Chicago. He says, "Preach up so they grow up." We don't preach down to where they are, we preach up so that they grow up. And the "up" is the word of God.

Eric Schumacher 13:46

Hmm, that's great.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 13:48

So great. I love the fact that you want to help women become good theologians. Everybody's a theologian. Your theology is either good or bad. And I love the thought that what you're trying to do is say, okay, let's leave that fluff behind. And the number of women that I have talked to who have said to me, I won't generally go to a women's event. I won't even go to one. Because in some ways, it's almost insulting. You know, we're going to spend time learning how to fold napkins so they look like the empty tomb or something, you know? So it's so absurd that they're- and that's not to say- I, you know, I know that so many women are really trying to reach their women. And so they do things like that because they think that's how they can do it. But you know, listen, if what we want to do is learn how to fold

napkins, then Martha Stewart can do a better job than you or me. Can't do is call women to deep theology.

Eric Schumacher 14:56

Yeah.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 14:57

And there is a great, crying hunger among women I have frequently called it a waste howling wilderness among women for theology, I have gone and just talked to women about what justification means. And I will have women coming to me in tears saying, first of all I never come to women's events but people told me I should come, so I came. And why have I been in this church for 25 years and I've never heard a woman say this, as a matter of fact I've never heard anybody say it. So, you know, thank you for what you're doing. It thrills me that the younger generation of women are really picking up this mantle. So thank you for doing that.

Eric Schumacher 15:48

Yeah. And, I want I just want to add, Phylcia, I think you do it really, really well. You know, when, when I started telling people I was going to write a book with Elyse, I would hear from both men and women who would say, oh, I love Elyse's book. And I love her voice because it's not full of fluff. And what I hear people say was, she doesn't write like most of the Christian women's books that I read. It's, it, there's no fluff in there. She writes solid theology that's going to the text. And, and I hear a similar voice in Stop Calling You Beautiful. That is, it's not pulling any punches. It's strong. It's pointing us back to the Word. It's rooting us in theology. And I just think that's great. And I'm, I'm really excited to see a number of women's woman authors, that women are loving, who are writing like that. It is, it is definitely a need. And so thank you for doing that. One of the things that you seem to push back some is the social media world and Instagram, where everything looks picture perfect. And even, even the Instagram posts where things aren't picture perfect, you know, people are posting their message, their messes are staged and filtered in such a way that their mess looks wonderful. And tell us what's going on in the whole Instagrammy world with women? And what are you pushing on?

Phylcia Masonheimer 17:34

Yeah, so there is a what I call the Instagram Quiet Time. And that's what I push back on the most. And this is the concept of sharing a quiet time publicly that looks, you know, perfect. It's got the candle and the armchair, and the coffee, and the Bible, notebooks, and the highlighters. And, you know, I use all those things most mornings. There's nothing inherently wrong with them. The problem is when we think we need that to approach the Lord. Like if I don't have my highlighters, well, there we go. Or if my two year old gets up early, there we go. I can't spend time with the Lord today. And so we create this unrealistic, perfectionistic quiet time, and our time with the Lord becomes more about us than it is about him.

Eric Schumacher 18:25

Yeah.

Phylcia Masonheimer 18:26

And so that is the big issue I see for young women today is they tend to buy into the lie that unless their quiet time as the perfect environment they can't approach God or they won't feel like they should. And the issue is, for how many years of history have people not had access to these things? You know, did the apostle Paul have a perfect armchair and coffee every morning when he was seeking the Lord? It's

just an absolutely absurd standard that we've set. And yet we buy into it because it's available. And so my encouragement with, with women is, don't wait for the perfect time, feeling, nap time, anything, to come to the Lord because you need Him, and you need the truth. And if you, if you just put it off until it's convenient, it will never be convenient. It won't be convenient when you're in college. It won't be convenient when you're working full time. It won't be convenient when your kids are little. I've been through all of these seasons. And in each season you have to be intentional. And so if it's not an instagrammable quiet time, who cares? What matters is that you are seeking the Lord's face. And I see that as the biggest issue with social media and Christian women right now.

Eric Schumacher 19:47

Yeah, so we can set up for ourselves through those quiet time Instagram posts sort of a standard of, of what it has to look like for us to have a legit quiet time. And that kind of brings us to the topic of legalism and the standards that we feel like we have to meet in order to be a good Christian. So what happens to women when they find themselves living under legalism, little I law? How can, what happens to women, and what's the solution there?

Phylcia Masonheimer 20:28

Well, I think we all are acquainted with, with the forms that legalism can take. And I always like to spell this out. because when, when I think of legalism as, as I was, I was home schooled. I grew up in, you know, conservative Christian home. So when I think of legalism, I think of like floor length skirts and not being allowed to cut your hair or listen to secular music or something like that. But legalism is any addition to God's law, any shortcut to God's holiness that man is adding. And so that can include things like playing trendier worship music and saying, like, if you, you know, if you don't leave behind these old hymns, then, you know, you aren't open to the Spirit's moving. You'll see people saying that if you don't practice, you know, a more of a quote-unquote, "Openness to the Holy Spirit" - and I grew up charismatic, so that kind of language is common in those circles, you know - then you aren't, you aren't actually seeking the Lord. And so legalism emerges in so many different ways. There's progressive legalism, there's charismatic legalism, there's fundamentalist legalism. Anytime you're adding on to what Scripture says, in trying to create a shortcut to holiness, apart from the Spirit of God, you're falling into legalism.

And what often happens for us when we grow up that way, or we are in a church that teaches these things, is we react against it. And we swing to the other end of that, of that pendulum, and we become very sensitive to anything that sounds like our old legalistic lifestyle. So it's, it would be easy to just ride the pendulum back and forth. But what the Lord does, through His Word through the Spirit, is he brings us back to center in so much of Scripture. I always think of this when I study it myself is, it's so, it's so balanced. It's so moderate, like he's so centered in truth. That's what truth is, you know. That he's not going to be going to these extremes. He's going to guide you directly to his heart. And that should be what we're seeking. And that means sometimes letting him, laying down experiences and saying, Lord, I know that you're greater than my experience, and I know that you can teach me what this needs to look like. How should I view modesty and dress? How should I view what music I listen to? How should I view how worship should work in the church or etcetera, all of these areas that we tend to worship and idolize he can, he will guide us in that if we let him dismantle that legalism and bring us back to truth,

Eric Schumacher 23:16

Yeah. Even thinking about the title of your book and the story that went behind it, where, you know, women going to conferences and being told over and over again they're beautiful, they're beautiful. You know, and you were mentioning earlier like, that you don't want that to become legalism, like, now that

you stopped calling women beautiful, you know, you, you're doing the right thing or whatever. And one of the things I love that you said in the book was, like, Christian women have become beautiful. And there's a way that that happens. And, and that's through the gospel, you know, through Christ's death on the cross our sins have been removed. And we have been declared to be righteous and clothed with his righteousness. And we're being conformed to the image of Christ. And so it's not, it's not that we forsake saying you're beautiful. And it's not that we only say you're an ugly spiritual mess. It's that we say you're a new creation. And here's how that happens.

Phylicia Masonheimer 24:20

Exactly the whole story. You need the whole story. And that's the issue with the you're beautiful gospel, which I probably wasn't super clear on earlier, is, you know, the name Stop Calling Me Beautiful is because of what you just described, Eric, that many women's ministries, concentrate on, you're beautiful. You're under grace. And they don't explain how we became beautiful, or where the grace came from, or who had to die for us to have that. You need the whole story because if you only have half the story, it's either hopeless or it's powerless. You have to have both sides.

Eric Schumacher 24:59

Yeah. So speaking of the whole story, you've got some interesting parts in your story that aren't often discussed among women, and so Elyse is going to ask a few questions about that. But for parents listening along who may have children in the minivan, there could be some words used in this next portion of this that little ears might ask about. So now that we've piqued your curiosity, Elyse, go ahead,

Elyse Fitzpatrick 25:25

Phylicia, you talk openly in the book about broken sexuality. And, and again, I want to say I'm with you. I didn't grow up in legalism that would, that I was hiding from. But I did grow up in a, in a, in Southern California and completely promiscuous lifestyle. And so I want you as much as you're comfortable doing to define that and tell women who are listening why they need to find a place of transparency and being known, why that's important.

Phylicia Masonheimer 26:09

So my own personal struggle with sexual sin may have looked a little different than yours, Elyse, because I was in a conservative Christian home with loving parents. And I was a rule follower, as far as I could be. So I wasn't, I wasn't sleeping with my boyfriend. I didn't have a boyfriend, you know. I, I was a good Christian girl by all appearances. But when I was 12, I was exposed to erotica, which is essentially romance novel pornography is what it is. Pornography in story form. And it was just by accident. It was, it was at a garage sale and I found it, and I was a reader and had no idea what it was. And so I was curious. And I kept seeking this material out until it became an addiction. And this was combined with masturbation. So at that point, it became just pervasive, and I was so guilty, so full of shame. I couldn't bear to disappoint my parents or tell my parents what was going on. And of course, when you keep something like that a secret, it just magnifies.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 27:22

Right.

Phylicia Masonheimer 27:22

And if you continue to, to play into it, then when you do get into a relationship with someone else, everything that you have essentially groomed into your personality, your tastes, your desires will then affect that person. And that's exactly what happened. Once I got into an unhealthy dating relationship, it

capitalized on my own weakness, and it just became even more difficult than it was alone. And so through those years, because it was a solid ten years of struggling with this and struggling to overcome it and trying to understand, how do I repent of something that I'm still struggling with? That was my big issue. Like, if I am a Christian, how come I still struggle with this? And if I do, how do I know God forgives me? How do I know? You know, when does he reject me? It really came down to all of those theological questions of sin, salvation, security. What, what does that mean for me when I have this besetting sin?

And so Elyse mentions transparency, and it was transparency. It was getting to the point of desperation where I realized, I have to tell somebody. I have to talk to somebody who can help me. That was the point of change. Now, it wasn't overnight. It was still- and it was still, I had to try multiple people, asking them to hold me accountable, asking them to talk with me about it, and back then it wasn't even as open as it is now. I think there's a lot more available for women who struggle with sexual sin now than there was, you know, however long ago that was, fifteen years ago. And, and through that journey, I think I realized that with- what any time with sin, any sin, it's the darkness and the hiddenness that keeps you in bondage. It's the light of Christ, the light of truth, the light of his community of faith that brings freedom, and being able to confess your sins to one another that you can be healed. And so it isn't, I think we think well, it's got to be a one, one stop shop, you know. I confess once, and then it'll never be a struggle again. And now when I talk to women, because we have a, have an accountability group for women who struggle like this, when I talk to women about this, I remind them that victory is a lifestyle, not a destination.

Eric Schumacher 30:08

Hmm.

Phylicia Masonheimer 30:09

Christ came to overcome the world. Right? He said, I have, I- take heart, I have overcome the world. But you're still in the world. So that means he's got to overcome it for you every day you're in it. And you can only do that if you're walking with Him. And I think sexual sin particularly affects every area. It just, it's like explosive in how it affects every single part of our being so we feel it more deeply. But that would apply just as much to any, any sin area.

Eric Schumacher 30:38

Well, I want to,

Elyse Fitzpatrick 30:39

That's one of those places, Phylcia, where your desire to help women with their theology is very, very helpful. Because what women need to understand is what sanctification looks like. And it's not a, as you said, I'm going to confess this once, and then I'm going to pray that God will deliver me, and then I'll be delivered. And then, but then women think that. You know, well maybe I didn't confess right. Or maybe God doesn't listen to me. Maybe he hates me because I've done this for so long. And so that's one of those places where what you're saying is so important, is, theology has consequences. And bad theology that you can just address something one time, and then all of us- sometimes God does that, by the way, you know. Sometimes, out of His grace and mercy God does that. He just delivers you from something. And then other times, it doesn't please him to do that.

Phylicia Masonheimer 31:50

Yeah.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 31:50

And then you struggle. And then it's a lifelong journey of sanctification. And yeah, do we get to places where we're delivered from certain things? Of course. But see, that's back to what you were talking about, Phylcia, the importance of sanctification, of the importance of theology.

Phylcia Masonheimer 32:11

Yes. And, and the thing is, if someone when I was in the middle of that struggle- I went to those women's conferences. I read those books. I was in the studies. They told me I was a beautiful daughter of God, but I knew the truth. You know, I knew what was going on inside my life, my heart. And while those messages maybe encouraged me in the moment, they didn't free me. They didn't, they didn't direct me anywhere. They didn't give me any tools to actually conquer. And I do wonder sometimes if perhaps I would have struggled for a shorter amount of time if there had been a more robust teaching. This is what it means to repent. This is what it means for God to walk with you through a besetting sin. But we were, you know, we were just teaching about other things. And this is in multiple churches. This is across multiple denominations. I moved around. So it's not one particular, you know, denomination that's doing this. This is just the idea. I think this, this idea that the church is still working through, that

Eric Schumacher 33:20

Yeah.

Phylcia Masonheimer 33:20

Women don't need or want robust theology because most of them aren't going to go into a pastoral ministry. And that's, I mean, every Christian needs theology, because like Elyse said at the beginning, everybody already has a theology. It did, the, what matters is whether it's actually true or not.

Eric Schumacher 33:40

I really admire your vulnerability in this section, even naming, like I, you know, saying, I struggled with erotica and masturbation. Not words I typically come across in reading books, particularly written by women and for women, although I haven't read as many of those. But I remember twenty years ago when I was in college, and it was sort of a staple at men's conferences or men's breakouts. You know, at a Campus Crusade thing, where the guy would get up and say, you know, nine out of ten men struggle with masturbation and using pornography, and 10% struggle with lying, or something like that, you know, and then he just, he'd just come out straight and, like, men, we got to have a talk about this. And you would at the end of it invariably have a bunch of guys going, I thought I was the only one. Somebody had to name it and say this is a common struggle. And suddenly they could start dealing with it and have people holding them accountable and addressing it. Obviously I have not been to a lot of women's conferences. Is this a topic that is talked about or addressed at those conferences? And what should women be doing to address the maybe unspeakable sexual sins, if that makes sense?

Phylcia Masonheimer 35:11

I would say now we're seeing a movement rising, especially among these younger women, and especially among my generation of moms of small children who are seeing this issue and wanting to protect their children.

Eric Schumacher 35:25

Yeah.

Phylcia Masonheimer 35:26

So I do see a change coming. And perhaps it's a generational thing, too. I think that's a part of this that, you know, my parents generation didn't talk about these things as openly as my generation does. I'm a millennial. So, you know, I think there is a change coming. And it's, and I would call it a revival in a way because the Lord is, that's the Lord, to say, we're going to be free in this area. And as we walk with him, that will happen. But I will say that when I was struggling with it, no, people were not talking about this. This was still, there's a lot of purity culture implications. I mean, we were still dealing with some of the reverberation of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* and other books that I read as a teenager, where if you were struggling you didn't want to admit it because of what it would do to potential relationships or your understanding of yourself and things like that. But last year or the year before, I spoke at a sexuality themed conference on this issue, and they had other speakers talking about, you know, different aspects of sexuality. And after my session, it was amazing to stand back. I went back to my table, and almost the whole auditorium, women came up to share part of their story with me. I even had pastors' wives saying, you've encouraged me to delete the 700 romance novels off my Kindle. Seven hundred. And so this is not an issue. You know, this issue is, I think, we don't, we think of sexual sin and we think like what Elyse is describing as her younger years. You're like, well, I wasn't promiscuous. But maybe it's an internal attitude of the heart and objectification, you know. We make excuses for it. We make excuses for it on media. We make excuses for it in Netflix, you know. What, as women of God, we have to let him reframe our view of our own sexuality and see it the way he sees it, which isn't dirty, gross, and bad, but made holy through Christ. And, and then honor it that way.

Eric Schumacher 37:45

Yeah.

So you've been listening to the Worthy podcast with our special guest, Phylcia Masonheimer, the author of *Stop Calling Me Beautiful*, a book that you should go and get and read, even if you're a man. And I hope there's men listening to this. It is, it is, it is a great book. Shortly here we're gonna ask Phylcia two more questions, and Elyse is going to ask a final question for the podcast. And then I'm going to ask a final question for our Patreon supporters. And you'll be able to go to our Patreon page and listen to that there. We do thank our Patreon supporters for their generosity, because this podcast would not still be going if it were not for them. So, Elyse, what's the last thing you want to know from Phylcia?

Elyse Fitzpatrick 38:36

So, Phylcia, it's, it's just been such a pleasure to get to talk to you. It's just lovely. And again, I want to say, I'm older. You know, my race is almost run. And I'm so glad that there are women like you who are coming after me and saying, don't, don't assume you know your Bible just because your pastor preaches through the Bible every year. You need to understand theology. You need to understand the Bible yourself. So I'm so glad for what, for what you're doing. Honestly it makes me cry. So if there was something that you could say, all right, in my life what I'm hoping to accomplish is this, what would you say?

Phylcia Masonheimer 39:28

Well ultimately, if I step back from everything that I do talk about, teach, it would, it would honestly be for women to see, and I get, I get a little emotional talking about this because it's so important. It would be for women to see that God is trustworthy, that he is good. Because if you come out of legalism, if you come through sexual sin, that will be where the enemy chooses to attack the most. He will cast doubt on whether God is good. That's what he's done from the beginning. It's what he started with. And if he can get you to believe that he's not, then he can get you to believe every other lie. And so if you can dig into the Word of God, be around people who teach that God is good, that he is trustworthy, then that will lay

the foundation for every other theological truth. And then all of those theological truths will lay the foundation for the abundant life that Christ offers. It all goes together. You can't separate them. And so, in whether I'm talking about Leviticus, or whether we're talking about sexuality, whatever we're talking about on Instagram or in a book, it all comes back to the fact that God is good and he is trustworthy. And his plan of salvation is good, and it is trustworthy. And if they start there, then they will have what they need. That's what I would want them to know.

Eric Schumacher 41:22

That, that is beautiful. That is, that is beautiful. Thanks for sharing that. So my follow up question, though, is, it's going to sound light hearted, but it's very serious. So you, you mentioned talking openly about sexual brokenness and sin at these, at this conference and having a pastor's wife come up and say, I just deleted seven- I'm gonna go delete 700 romance novels from my, my Kindle. I grew up knowing about romance novels from the grocery store. And you know, you're checking out with mom, and there's Fabio on the cover of this, you know, 45 books. In one of them he's a pirate, and the other one he's a, I don't know what he is, getting hit by a

Elyse Fitzpatrick 42:14

Astronaut.

Phylcia Masonheimer 42:14

Cowboy.

Eric Schumacher 42:15

Yeah yeah. So there's these romance novels with Fabio. And then, and my mom didn't read those, and I never saw him in the home. And so I didn't know who read them. So then I, you know, I'm growing in my Christian faith. And I become introduced to Christian bookstores. And I go into Christian bookstores. And suddenly, here's a romance section.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 42:38

Fabio's there.

Eric Schumacher 42:38

It doesn't have, well it doesn't have Fabio, but it has an Amish guy.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 42:44

An Amish dude.

Eric Schumacher 42:45

Yeah.

Phylcia Masonheimer 42:45

With a shirt on

Eric Schumacher 42:47

He has a shirt on and suspenders and a straw hat. And there's all this Christian romance. And I'm assuming because you were homeschooled in Michigan you know all about the Amish romance type of setting. So now we're gonna get, we're gonna get hate email from northern Michigan for that, aren't we? Do they have email up-

Phylicia Masonheimer 43:06

Hey now, hey, now

Eric Schumacher 43:08

I'm in- I'm in Iowa, and we have Amish communities here too. Serious question. Like, is there a connection between the draw to Christian romance in the church and the reading of erotica in the world? And is it a safe form of some kind of mental pornography? Help me understand, like, is this good stuff to be reading? Is there dangers in it? And how do we talk about that?

Elyse Fitzpatrick 43:45

Well, friends, that's our time together today. So glad that you joined us. Would you please help us and rate and review and subscribe to our podcast if you agree with what we're doing to try to have respectful conversations about the value of women? Please help us get the word out. And don't forget, you can always become a Patreon supporter. So thanks for being with us today. Lord bless you. Be well.