

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

**Hosts:** Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher

**Episode 31 — Guest:** Jasmine Holmes

**Date Aired:** August 31, 2020

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Elyse Fitzpatrick 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 won't always agree on everything. But we do agree that God is glorious, the Bible is true, and women are valuable. And respectful conversation on this topic is essential in our day.

Hi there and welcome to the Worthy podcast. My name is Elyse Fitzpatrick, and I am here today, joined by my co author, co host and co belligerent Eric Schumacher. And Eric and I are happy to welcome a friend of ours. And the last time I saw my friend Jasmine, we were eating Mexican food together in a wonderful restaurant here in Southern California. So I'm going to tell you about Jasmine and you're going to get to know her for those of you who don't already. Jasmine Holmes has written for the Gospel Coalition, Desiring God, Fathom Magazine, Christianity Today and The Witness. She is also a contributing author to Identity Theft: Reclaiming the Truth of Our Identity in Christ, and His Testimonies, My Heritage, which - I love that book - Women of Color on the Word of God. She teaches humanities in a classical Christian School in Jackson, Mississippi, where she and her husband Philip are parenting two young sons. And she's written a book, which is a really wonderful book, titled Mother to Son: Letters to a Black Boy on Identity and Hope. Welcome, Jasmine, we're happy to have you.

Jasmine Holmes 0:50

Thank you so much for having me.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 2:36

So for those who aren't familiar with you, Jasmine, you come from quite a family, which you may or may not want to talk a lot about. That's your call. For those who aren't familiar with you, Jasmine, tell us a little bit about your fixture.

Jasmine Holmes 2:56

So I was raised in a Christian home, and I am the oldest of nine children. My dad is a pastor and speaker and writer and college professor and my mom is a teacher, turned homeschool mom. So I kind of grew up hearing the gospel all the time, every day, learning catechism, learning Bible verses. And I always wanted a more dramatic story than what I actually have, which is that I came to faith at a really young age, I was about six years old, I was baptized when I was seven. And throughout my teenage years, every time I was at a Christian camp, or every time we were like at church or church, and they had an altar call, I guess maybe I need to walk up just to make sure because I was only six. But I've come to terms with my very young conversion. But my journey has just involved learning how to trust God for the salvation that he gave me at a young age.

Eric Schumacher 3:58

That's great. And I just want to say, Jasmine, I loved your book. I actually listened to the audiobook and I listened to it straight through. I'm planning to read it again. I'm planning on having my white sons read it. And I just want to emphasize to our listeners, you know, the title of the book is Mother to Son: Letters to a Black Boy on Identity and Hope. But this is a book that fathers and mothers and sons and daughters,

white, black, any ethnicity should be reading. There's a lot to learn in it, both on being black or white, and on just having identity and hope. It is a rich gospel-centered resource. So thank you for writing that.

Jasmine Holmes 4:56

Thank you so much for reading it.

Eric Schumacher 4:58

Yeah, it's great. So what was it like growing up in a family with the heritage that you have?

Jasmine Holmes 5:07

I think a lot of pastors' kids can probably relate to just growing up feeling like, I was always in a fishbowl and growing up feeling, I didn't have anything else to compare it to. But being a pastor's kid is not easy. And when it comes to the story of the prodigal son, I know a lot of oldest children say this, but I definitely relate to the older brother just wanting to do everything, right, wanting to do everything in order and putting a lot of pressure on myself to be perfect. So it's not been until life as an adult with my own children that I have really grown to appreciate my upbringing. I think while I was being brought up, while I was super happy, and had great parents and great relationships with my siblings, I was more focused on the hard part of growing up with my heritage. And so only now as an adult, am I able to see past the hard parts to the sweet part, which is that I had two parents that love the Lord and loved us well, and laid a really good foundation for us to continue to learn and discover and grow as adults, which I'll forever be grateful for.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 6:22

So, how long have you been married now, Jasmine? I think that when I was last with you, you'd only been married a few months.

Unknown Speaker 6:31

Philip and I've been married six years in October. So it's almost our sixth wedding anniversary.

Eric Schumacher 6:36

Congrats.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 6:37

Well, congratulations. That's, that's really wonderful. How are you guys learning to navigate life as a family? And what lessons have you learned, particularly as a woman? You come from a background that has a specific perspective on what it means to be a woman? And so what are you learning now?

Unknown Speaker 7:03

So much! I always tell people, and it's a fact I think - some people are maybe embarrassed by the fact but I am not because I see it as a sign of God's grace - but I've been in therapy for the last three, four years ever since my son was really small. And I have talked to her about so many things that have to do with shame and womanhood and shame when I don't measure up to my preconceived ideals of what a godly woman looks like, what a good wife looks like. And coming into marriage, I realized that so many of the ideas that I had about what it meant to be a good wife and what it meant to be a good mother weren't based on my husband and my family and our family dynamic and what we wanted together, but were more so based on caricatures that I had embraced, looking at other people or looking at teachings outside of Scripture. And so getting married to Philip, my husband, has been one of God's biggest graces in my life, because he just early on, really challenged me in so many of those areas and really wanted to

empower me to have a voice and to have an opinion and to be independent and to be able to make decisions on myself and all things that I thought that I wouldn't have to do being married to a godly man. I was like, he'll just take care of everything and Philip's like no, actually, we're partners. So it's been good. It's been a journey. And I think once we pass the three year mark, we're like oh, we're officially not newlyweds anymore. Like now we're just married people like, just plain and simple. And three years is definitely a turning point in our marriage, just realizing that I am not married to every for your husband that's in these books about Christian womanhood, or these podcasts about Christian womenhood. I'm married to Philip Holmes, and I am Jasmine Holmes. And our partnership is not gonna look like anybody else's partnership, because we are two people who are different from everybody else. And I've finally gotten to the point where I'm comfortable in that. And it's been incredibly freeing and good for our marriage. And good for us as individuals, too. I think

Eric Schumacher 9:18

That's good. And I just want to thank you for speaking publicly about being in therapy. There's nothing to be ashamed of in that, and I think people are slow to enter therapy because they have some perception of it. And so I think it's important to talk about publicly and I'm glad that you mentioned that. Talk to us a little bit about what kind of challenges you have faced as a woman of color, and how culture has shaped that - and I want you to maybe speak to that in two different ways. One, just American culture in general and then church culture.

Jasmine Holmes 10:03

American culture, in general, is a hard one for me to answer just because I was so sheltered growing up. So my experience is very much evangelical Christian culture. But I will say, just as far as the last question goes, learning how to see myself as a woman in this world has definitely been complicated by the fact that growing up not so much in my household - we grew up in a really small homeschool community, super conservative. People always ask how conservative was your homeschool community? I'm like, I wore culottes to my homeschool conference and felt like I looked so good. And that, to me, really encapsulates the level of conservatism. But growing up surrounded by that mindset, all of these examples of godly women and good women that are put in front of me were white women, white, upper middle class women, who came from these legacies of other women who had been able to stay at home and who had been able to keep the house and all these other things. And so I really saw my heritage as kind of an outsider, an outlier, not something that I could be proud of. And I thought that what I was doing in not owning my heritage, as a black woman was embracing my heritage as a Christian, which is great. And we should all do that. We should all be willing to do that. But I wasn't so much embracing Christian heritage as I was embracing the kind of Christian youth culture that surrounded me. And so I definitely grappled a lot with that, growing up, and all the way really into marriage, grappled with it a lot. And it's only been in the last few years that I've been able to really say no, actually, I'm a black woman. And that's good. And that's beautiful. And that's worthy. I don't have to be apologetic about it or downplay it. God did it on purpose. But that's been a really long journey. So that's been my journey in the evangelical context. And just in the broader American context, which I think really impacts an informed evangelical context to a greater degree than what we maybe want to admit sometimes. There are so many preconceived societal notions about what it means to be a black woman that I face every day from just going to the grocery store and not being able to find shampoo that's going to work for my hair, which is, you know, small, right, but significant.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 12:55

Okay, stop, stop. That is significant. And it's not small. Yeah, that's significant. And it's not small.

Jasmine Holmes 13:03

I appreciate that. I'm used to kind of having to couch my words carefully, because I've had this conversation before and people will say, you know, oh, well, people are dying. And it's like, yes, yes. Yes, you are right. People are dying. And that is terrible. And I'm not comparing not being able to find shampoo to people dying, but we're talking about shampoo right now.

Eric Schumacher 13:26

Yeah. And when people couldn't go to the store, a lot of those same people were instagramming how they couldn't go get shampoo.

Jasmine Holmes 13:37

Yeah. So little things like that all the way to just bigger things. I was talking to a friend of mine just last night, another black woman, and the concept of beauty and femininity, like beautiful, feminine women are white woman with flowing hair who have thin Anglo Saxon bodies, not black woman with afros and curves from the Motherland. And it's such a small thing where, I was talking to my friend and was like so do people just like, do people call you beautiful. She's like, No. I said to people, you pretty? She's like, no. So what do they call you? She says, They say that I'm cute. And my hair is really fun. And that's so interesting. I don't think that any woman wants to just be cute. And I don't think that any woman wants to just hear how fun her hair is all the time. But it's just that cultural thing of where like, beautiful is reserved for this certain type of woman and we can be other things, but not that ideal. Those are just like a couple of cultural examples that come to mind.

Eric Schumacher 14:50

Yeah, I have a few follow ups on that just to tease some of your answer out. So first of all, who are some non white women that we should be reading and seeing as heroes.

Jasmine Holmes 15:06

I'm actually really excited that you asked that question. My next project is actually going to center around talking about some of these women from our past. And so I have been entrenched in reading some amazing biographies lately, of women that I had never heard of before. So three autobiographies and diaries. So three women who have popped up recently onto my radar, who I never knew existed - Amanda Smith, who was a missionary in the 19th century Dureena Lee, who was the first woman who was ever commissioned as a preacher for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, her account of her religious experience during the Second Great Awakening is fascinating. And then, Charlotte Grimké who ended up later in life marrying Francis Grimké, a Presbyterian minister, one of the great black Presbyterian ministers of the faith that we can look back at and to see we've been here, that's not always visible, but we're there. So she married him later in life. But before she married him, she was actually a missionary teacher with the American Missionary Association, and went down south to educate ex slaves. And it's been an amazing experience to find these stories of women who were not visible to me when I was younger, who I didn't have as examples of just old school femininity from the beginning. They've always been there. I just didn't know where they were or who they were. Some other awesome names: Betsey Stockton in is actually the first single woman to become an American missionary. And she was an ex-slave. Yeah, there's just several who I've just discovered recently, and it's been so cool.

Eric Schumacher 17:05

Well, I'm looking forward to that book. When's it due out?

Jasmine Holmes 17:08

I don't know. Actually, I just started the process of talking to publishers, and I'm in the research process, and the considered due date for my manuscript is January 1, which is soon. Yeah, we'll see how it goes.

Eric Schumacher 17:24

Yeah. Well, we want you back on worthy when that book comes out. That is a conversation that I want to have because I'm in a place of realizing most of the heroes I've been presented and seen have been white and been men. And so I'm trying to expose myself to new heroes. And I loved what you said about people don't call you beautiful. We just recorded an episode with Phylicia Masonheimer about her book Stop Calling Me Beautiful. I'm just experiencing the sort of dissonance here between a white woman writing a book Stop Calling Me Beautiful, and hearing from a black woman say, we don't get called beautiful. And I'm rarely calling women beautiful just because that can be awkward for reasons of being a man and a pastor and that sort of thing. But even the shampoo thing, I think those are things are important for us to hear. Because like I said, we can't get to the store and buy shampoo. And so Oh, look at how inconvenienced my life is we're posting on social media. But that's our COVID problem. And this is your daily problem. So that's part of the experience of someone that we need to know. And I know we have a couple Asian American women who are going to be on the podcast this fall that we're recording with. And I'm just excited to hear from them about their experience, their heroes. It's just not things that I know about. And I want to know about. So thank you. And my next follow up is you made the comment that American culture has shaped more of the church culture, like white evangelical, evangelical culture, then we sometimes care to admit, I'd love for you to expand on that. And don't feel like you need to guard your words. Because we want to hear the truth on this.

Jasmine Holmes 19:36

Absolutely. So again, and I keep talking about upbringing a lot. And I try to be really clear in the fact that my parents were not perfect, but they didn't really push these ideas in my home as much but we all know that young people are impacted a lot by their peers and a lot by what's going on outside of their home. And so for me as somebody who was homeschooled, my peers were my church. And they were the people at my very conservative church. And we learned so much at church about purity, and how prized it was, and how important it was, and all these things. A few years ago, I read a book called Virgin Nation. It's all about the rise of purity culture in America, during the Victorian era, and ramping up towards the end of slavery and into the early mid 1900s. And what fascinated me about that book was that, first of all, I had never even thought to examine purity culture as anything outside of well, t's just people who care about what the Bible says, obviously. The Bible talks about purity. And the Bible talks about sexuality. And so that's what purity culture is. And so looking at it outside of that, and actually examining it from a historical perspective really helped me to see why there were often so many times where I felt other when it came to these conversations. And when it came to these thoughts, and when it came to these things that are prized and held dear. And so even something as simple as when it came to purity culture ramping up in America, where were black woman? Well, they were slaves, or they were maids. Tthey weren't a part of this conversation about what it meant to be pure, what it meant to be feminine. And again, that kind of like feeds into also the conversation about what it means to be beautiful. And so here I am a black woman in the early 2000s, growing up in a predominantly white space and hearing all about these beautiful Victorian notions of femininity and womanhood and wondering why I feel like I'm outside of those notions, when those notions were never meant to really apply to me. And that sent me down a huge rabbit trail of okay, okay, I want to understand which one of this is biblical. What of this is cultural? What does the Bible actually say about purity? What does the Bible actually say about womanhood? What does the Bible actually say about sexuality? And I realized the Word says a lot less in some areas than what I was led to believe it says, and it says a lot more in

other areas than I was led to believe it says. So for instance, this conversation about purity and the best gift that you can give your future husband is purity. I can't give my husband the gift of purity, because I am impure, because I am a sinner. And I was born in sin and iniquity, and Christ is the only pure one. And he's the one who makes me pure, regardless of my sexual past, regardless of my sexual history. Does that mean that I don't walk in obedience? Absolutely not. I want to walk in obedience. I desire to walk in obedience, but it's because of what Christ has done not because what I do makes me more acceptable to him, or my future husband. And so just that one example of purity and kind of like dissecting okay, what of this is the Word? And what of this is the culture? And if it's from the culture, where did it come from? And following the Genesis time when women that looked like me were automatically considered inferior routinely compared to Eve in the garden, whereas white women were compared to Mary, virginal, pure, beautiful. And so understanding that now as an adult, and understanding that broader historical context and going to therapy, of course, has really helped me to just kind of organize my experiences. And understand that so much of what I viewed in the church was not coming from the Word of God as much as it was coming from some cultural assumptions that had been made.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 24:06

Jasmine, thank you. You know, what you just said, about Eve being put out there as though she were the woman of color. And Mary being the white woman. Good grief. Thank you. Thank you for saying that, Jasmine, and for being that transparent. I'm assuming the church that you grew up in was a primarily white space. Is that right?

Jasmine Holmes 24:50

Yes. We were like one of maybe three black families in a church of about 400, 500 people. Yeah.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 25:00

So your family was in leadership in that church. And I've had any number of lovely discussions with your dad and and gone places with him and had him insist on opening the door and all that business because he's so polite and such a lovely guy. But to think about growing up in that space, and first of all to realize, when we're talking about purity culture, we're talking about white women, then to recognize yourself as being other. When did you really come to that? Was it not until after you married Philip? Or when did that dawn on you?

Jasmine Holmes 25:50

I don't think I had words for it until after I married Philip. I think that I felt it before I married Philip. I had people say ridiculous things to me. Growing up, I had people say, and I put some of this into the book, and I have had friends call me and be like, Oh my gosh, I don't think that you're lying. I just didn't know. But you know, so I had one time a woman walk up to me and she was just like, you know, Jasmine - I was in my early 20s - and she's like, I feel like you'd be married by now if you were white, but don't worry about it because someday there's going to be a man who's like, not gonna care that you're black, and he's gonna marry you anyway. And he'll be a good man. Or I was talking to a friend of mine, a single black woman at a church where people were, a lot of the black men were dating white women. She's kind of casually asked like, why do you think that is to one of these men? And he said, well, you know, it's a purity issue. You know, like black women are kind of like...

Elyse Fitzpatrick 26:44

Wait, wait. What?

Jasmine Holmes 26:47

Yes, yes. Black women are just more sexual. And so like, it's just literal conversations that I have had. So I think a lot of times people, you know, when we have these conversations, I think, because people don't have context for these comments and context for these interactions it can be really easy for people to be like, well, Jasmine, I think that you're making some assumptions about what people think, you know, I think that you're kind of reading into some actions, I think that you're kind of reading into some things people didn't say, which is why I think that it's really important to be clear, and to say no, this is not something that I'm really into that people didn't say. People said this. And, you know, as far as the historical account goes, like, we can find these words, you know, we can, we can read these words. I have read these words. And those words trickle down to present day assumptions and present day comments that I heard, and that hurt, but I never connected them. And it's this idea where if you live in a place where systemic injustice is kind of seen as this Boogeyman that doesn't exist, then you stop connecting things, and you start seeing everything as an isolated event. On the one hand, that can be a great way to deal with brothers and sisters in Christ because I don't need to come with a fury of 1000 terrible comments every time somebody says something ignorant to me. That's not helpful. But on the other hand, when it comes to educating people about where these comments come from, and why they make these comments, and why they think those comments are okay to say, looking at systemic historical issues can really help to uncover some unconscious biases that all of us have.

Eric Schumacher 28:38

I think, you know, just putting some things together there that maybe our listeners should pick up on is you mentioning that black women in your experience, at least, you and your friend aren't called beautiful. And then there's the situation where black women are called sensual and sexual. And think back through American history, particularly with slavery, where black women are seen as impure. And perhaps temptresses or seductresses is, so they're seen as impure, but their masters in the case of slaves, are going to rape them. Rape them, use them for sex. And so they're not considered pure, but they are considered sexual objects. And even as you think about Mary and Eve, where, Mary, being associated with whiteness, as you mentioned, and even among Protestants she's consistently thought of as the Virgin and Eve is so often presented as the temptress who coaxed her husband into sin and the downfall of the world. And those ideas can seep into our minds without us consciously thinking and associating that. So thank you for drawing those things out. And I just want to encourage our listeners again, I think that's why your book, Mother to Son is so important because you include stories like that in the book, things people have actually said to you. And I want to ask, in your experience as a black woman, have you been hesitant to share those stories? Because you have experienced people not believing you?

Jasmine Holmes 30:48

Absolutely. Yes. I recently, well, not recently, actually, it's been about a year now I was at Target. And I was standing in the aisle next to this woman who's daughter was going crazy. And I have a four year old and I understand kids, kids will be kids. This kid was screaming in the aisle, I want that doll! I want that doll! And her she wanted a little black doll. She was a little white girl, she wanted a black doll. And her mom was just like, you don't want that doll. No, no, you want this doll. She picks up a white doll. She's like, this doll is beautiful. You want this one. this one is the one that that is good. This is the one that is pretty. And she didn't say anything directly negative about the black doll. She just made it very clear to her daughter that the white doll was acceptable. So, as I said, I kind of make a point to tell these stories when they happen, because it just really does show so much of the little things that I experienced. And so I shared the story on Twitter. And I cannot tell you somebody even made an entire YouTube video about how I was obviously lying. And I was obviously making it up to get attention. And I just wanted to

be a victim. And I was talking to my husband about it. I was like, it's so interesting, because there there is this dialogue right now in our culture, where black people are not victims. The right wants us to know they're not victims, they can be strong, they can pull themselves up by their bootstraps, and they can rise above. And to an extent I completely understand that line of thinking. I don't want to be seen as merely a victim of anything. I am more than a conqueror in Christ. However, I think because we're so polarized, and because the victim conversation has gone back and forth, then every time I as a black woman to share something, it's because I want to be a victim. It's because I want attention. I have a wonderful husband who gives me lots of attention and a wonderful son who is very clingy and wants to wear my skin. I don't need more attention. My point, of course, was to bring awareness to something that I experienced at Target that stems from things that I've experienced my entire life. But just the fact that I shared it meant that I was being a victim and I was wanting attention, and I was wanting people to feel bad for me. And then people are going around the way like, well, maybe she just wanted her to have that doll because the price was different, or maybe like it just was like, okay, now I'm dumb. And I don't have eyes. And I don't know how to contextualize an experience. But again, it comes from this super polarized conversation where black women, we just want to be victims. And every time we talk about something that happened to us that was racially involved, we just want to be victims, and it is everybody else's job to tell us look, you're not a victim. You don't have to be a victim, pull yourself up a bootstraps. And so it was a mess. It was a mess.

Eric Schumacher 34:08

I'm sorry. That you've experienced that. That shouldn't happen. Is that called whitesplaining. Is that a thing?

Jasmine Holmes 34:19

It felt like it.

Eric Schumacher 34:20

It should be a thing. I'm coining that on this episode. That is whitesplaining. I'm sorry about that. And I want those conversations about black experiences to happen. And I'm an associate pastor in the middle of Iowa, predominantly white church. We had a young woman who served on the music team with me, a black woman, and I had a I had a great experience. I just sent her a note and said can we have lunch sometime? And I just want to hear your experience as a black woman in the white church, and I'm not going to try to push back on you, or correct you. I'm just going to ask clarifying questions. And in God's providence, she said, hey, my parents are coming from Chicago in the next two weeks to pick me up from college, could they come along? Because they've been working on racial reconciliation in the church for about 30 years. And I just sat and listened to them for two hours. And it was amazing. And it was sad, and it was helpful. I'm wondering, from your perspective, what can white people do to invite those conversations, so that their black friends can speak freely and without fear of the responses you got on YouTube and Twitter?

Jasmine Holmes 36:04

Relationship is so important. I have had a couple of different experiences where people just wanted to ask me questions because I'm a black woman, and didn't really care about me outside of that. But I will say, right now I am at a church here in Jackson, Redeemer PCA, and it is an ethnically diverse church. And my husband's been a part of it for I think 11 or 12 years. And this is going on my fourth year since we moved back here. And it has been such an amazing and redemptive experience to be at a church where the white friends that I have at this church want to know me and myself, as an eighth grade teacher, me as a nerdy plant lady with a bajillion houseplants, me as Win's mom. And so it's been such a

cool experience. And those things kind of come up in the course of conversation because I want to know about their childhood, and they want to know about my childhood, and I want to know about how they're experiencing life, and what are their struggles, and they want to hear about my struggles. And that exchange - I think that when you're in leadership, things are a bit more personal, more purposeful. But as a lay woman at the church, just having people who are sincerely interested in pursuing a relationship, and sincerely interested in learning and listening and honestly, also interested in pushing back if I say something that doesn't make sense to them. I am not an authority on history just because I'm a black woman. I'm not an authority on black history. And so I don't want anybody to just take my word for the things that I say about for instance, purity culture, or about slave legislation, or about any number of issues. I love it when people are like, Huh, that's really interesting. I've never heard about that or thought about that. Can you give me a place where I can learn more information? Or why do you think that like, tease that out for me, help me understand. That's the kind of conversation that I love to have. That is, I think, empowering for the asker and the answerer, because we're both learning truth. And we're both learning a why. And we're both digging a little bit deeper than just getting pat answers or making ourselves feel good because now we have a black friend or now we have a white friend or you know, just it's more than that. Yeah.

Eric Schumacher 38:41

Yeah. That's good. Thank you for that. For our listeners, you've been listening again to Jasmine Holmes, She is the author of *Mother to Son: Letters to a Black Boy on Identity and Hope*. And we've got a couple more questions for her. We just want to thank our listeners for joining us. And we want to encourage you to check out our Patreon page, where you'll be able to hear more of our conversation with Jasmine, there. And consider supporting us so that we can keep this podcast going and help introduce you to some of these amazing women and learn more about how to value God's good gift of women. Jasmine, your book, *Letters to a Black Boy on Identity and Hope* - tell us what sparked that and why you wrote these letters to your to your son. What are your fears and your desires for him?

Jasmine Holmes 39:38

Karen Ellis is one of my mentors. And she suggested that I write a book and use my Winspiration to write it. Karen is one of the only people that I know who can get away with puns when it's my son. And she's like just letters to him about something that matters to you. The idea just kind of took off and took wings really quickly. I had just finished reading the *Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, his letter to his nephew during the Civil Rights Movement. And I had read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's book, *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto*, which is letters to her goddaughter. And so the idea of letters, which is very present on my mind, and the power of letters, and the power of a letter to be disarming in a way that just straightforward prose sometimes isn't. So being a black woman, I am always conscious of my tone, and always conscious of the way that I am being received and heard. And that's how I was raised to be, for better or for worse, that's how I'm raising my son to be. And so writing a letter to him that I wanted to be read broadly was a way for me to show the church my heart in writing a letter, which wasn't to school or to berate or to tear down but to build up and to love well. I want my feelings towards my brothers and sisters in Christ to be the kind of tender feelings that I have towards my own flesh and blood, towards my own son. And so writing the book as a series of letters was a good tone check for me. And a good way for me to just communicate - I am communicating this as I would to my precious little boys. I want you to be able to hear that that's where this is coming from. As far as hopes and fears for my son go, I think my biggest hope for my son is that he would walk with the Lord. That he would be saved, that he would pursue Christ, he would believe the gospel for himself and own it for himself. And my biggest fear is that Christ would not be the center of his identity because without Christ as an anchor, the world is a scary place to be any man. But in my experience, it's especially scary place to

be a black man. And I want him to have that steady and solid footing of knowing, as I said earlier, that God made him black on purpose, and he called it good. And that in his brown skin, my son Win and my son Langston can bring God glory.

Elyse Fitzpatrick 42:32

Jasmine, thank you so much for being with us today. I'm going to ask you if there was one thing you'd like to say to white evangelical Americans, what would it be, and I'm going to let you answer that for our Patreon listeners, but let me just say, it was an honor to have you on. I'm so thankful for you, for your life for your courage in standing up to be the woman that you are, for even saying I have struggles, I've had to learn. I mean, those kinds of things are so wonderful. And you know, my hope is for all of our listeners to stop and listen. Just listen. Don't think, okay, well, how am I going to fix it? Listen, listen to your sister in Christ. And from there, the Holy Spirit may encourage you to do one thing or another. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying, let's listen. So thank you, listeners, for being with us today. Eric and I are thankful for you. Please, if you enjoy this podcast, please rate, review, subscribe. We really need reviews, so that other people will find us. I'm surprised at the number of people who love our book and don't know that we have a podcast. So please do that for us so that when people search for podcasts about women or respectful conversations about gender, that they'll find us. Would you please do that for us? And Jasmine, thank you for being with us.