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Intro: Hey friends! Welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I am so happy that you're here. Each week I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women. We're talking about friendships, and faith, and relationships, and self-confidence, about our calling in life, and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends. And I cannot wait to get started.

So friends, today's episode is a bit of a harder one but it's also a really important one. Today we're talking about how to know when it's time to end a relationship and then how to actually do it. I wanted to do this episode because I know that there are women listening to this who are currently in a relationship, maybe it's one they've been in for years, but things have been feeling off lately and they just can't seem to figure out why.

You've tried your best to communicate your feelings but nothing seems to change. And you have a feeling deep down that you might need to end things but you're feeling so hesitant because you've invested so much time and energy into this relationship. And really you're just feeling stuck. If you're nodding your head through this, you are not alone in your feelings. I have just the right friend to talk us through this. And that's my friend, Kenz Durham of Delight Ministries.

We actually had Kenz on another Girls Night episode where she briefly mentioned ending a long-term relationship with her boyfriend at the time, and that it was one of the hardest decisions she's ever had to make. She casually mentioned that we could do a whole episode about it, and I thought, "Yeah, I think we need to." So here we are doing exactly that.

In this episode, Kenz shares her story, the things she's glad she did, and the things you wish you did differently. I'm just so excited for you to get to hear from her.

One more thing. I know that there's some of you listening who are not in this exact place of ending a relationship right now. But I also know that so many of the things that Kenz shares applies to other situations too, other areas of our lives where we need to say goodbye or walk away or end something and we haven't known how. So if you're in any of those situations, friends, this episode is for you, too.

But before we dive in, there's a book I would really love to share with you. It's mine. It's called *The Lipstick Gospel*. It's the story of the worst breakup I have ever been through and how God put my heart back together from it. It's a travel memoir, a story of transformation and hope.

If you're going through a breakup right now or if you could use some encouragement in your faith, or if you want to get closer to God but don't know how, or if you're struggling to say yes to the plans God has for your life or if you're feeling shame about some past mistakes, or, gosh, a million other things, I would love to share this book with you.

You can either download a digital copy of the book for free. All you have to do is go to stephaniemaywilson.com/lipstickgospeldownload. Again that's Stephaniemaywilson.com/lipstickgospeldownload. Or if you're a paperback girl like me, we have those too. You can pick those up in my shop at stephaniemaywilson.com.

All right, friends. With that said, let's jump into the episode. Here's my conversation with Kenz.

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Stephanie: All right, friends, I'm so excited for who I have on the show today. I'm sitting here with my actual real-life friend, Kenz Durham. Kenz, welcome back to Girls Night.

Kenz: Yay. Thank you for having me. I do feel like we're actual best friends. So what a compliment.

Stephanie: Truly. Truly. You've known each other for... I don't know. We'll have to do some math. Like a long time now. We've talked about this on the show before, but I've loved getting to walk alongside you and Mac as you guys build all the amazing things that you guys have been building. We're just in each other's corner in a way that is really important and special.

So before we get into anything, tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact about yourself.

Kenz: Ooh, fun. My name is Mackenzie Durham, but in my own ministry space, I go by Kenz because I started Delight and For the Girl which are the two organizations that we lead with one of my best friends that's also named Mackenzie. So we had to distinguish the two of us. She goes by Mac, I go by Kenz.

So a lot of you guys might know me as Kenz. I think I got the better half of the Mackenzie name, but she might [inaudible 00:04:14]. Anyways, I live here in Nashville, Tennessee, just a little ways away from Steph.

A fun fact. This is kind of like a basic fact about me but fun. I run an insane amount of miles. I'm a big runner. And you can catch me on a Saturday running like over 20 miles just out there like Forrest Gump. I'm surprised you haven't seen me on the street, Steph, just running up.

Stephanie: Do you run past my house?

Kenz: Yeah, often. Well, you just moved, right?

Stephanie: Yeah. Okay, we're gonna have to figure this out later because the babies can now wave to you because we don't run 20 miles on a Saturday. That is at a time? At one time?

Kenz: Literally at one time. I ran a couple of actual marathons, but I definitely run marathon just on my own on a Saturday. Isn't that so crazy?

Stephanie: It is not my idea of a good time. But I love that it is real. It is unbelievably insane. Man, I don't even know what to say about that. Really quick, for women who don't know, give us the elevator pitch for Delight and For the Girl just so that girls... We've had you on the show before and we'll link to all of your other episodes, but I just want to make sure that if this is women's first time tuning in they have some context for what that is.

Kenz: Yeah, for sure. When I was in college, me and Mackenzie started a girls' bible study that we named Delight Ministries. Basically a space to gather women together weekly and really just create a safe place on campus to feel seen and loved and known and just have Christ-centered conversation on a regular basis. We needed that. And it turned out that so many other people at our university needed it too.

So we started this Bible study and it grew and grew. Eventually, we were talking to friends that went to other universities who were like, "You should start this too." So that's really what my college experience looks like. We were starting Delight chapters on other college campuses. And by the time we graduated, we had like 20 other chapters maybe. And then the last few years post-graduation, it's looked like just building delight and seeing it thrive.

I mean, now I think 14,000 women walked through the doors of Delight this semester. They meet regularly on their campuses and go through curriculum together, and worship together, make dinner together, just hanging out together. It's really, really sweet. So that's what Delight looks like.

Stephanie: Fourteen thousand.

Kenz: Yeah. It's so wild. People are always like, "Can you believe this?" And truly I look back and I'm like, "Okay, I feel like it was just so many little yeses that God used in my life. Like saying yes to that little Bible study and then being like, "Yeah, I'll stay in Nashville."

Post-graduation, I really wanted to move back to California. That's where I'm from. And I was like, "Okay, I know God's calling me to stay and build this." So there's another Yes. And there are just a bunch of little yeses. And then all of a sudden, I guess, nine years later, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, it's so wild how God can use you." It's just special. It's so, so special.

I always say we started one chapter and then everybody else started all the other chapters. So it was God using me, but really so many other women, which has been so special.

Stephanie: I asked this every time. This may be obviously not your job anymore. Do you know if there's a chapter at University of Colorado campus?

Kenz: Ooh, I want to say no, sadly.

Stephanie: I think we've said this every single time. If anyone is listening from the University of Colorado, you guys, start Delight. Start Delight. I will come hang out. I will come start it. I will come do a night with you if someone starts chapter UC's campus. I would love it.

Kenz: Oh my gosh, so many people are about to start it. They're like, "Steph is coming. Okay. Okay."

Stephanie: I'm not kidding. I will come. I will come. I have my Delight shirt all ready to go. Kenz, last time we had you on the show, Mac was here with you. We love you Mac. The episode was really For The Girl, which I know is how you guys start your episodes. For the girl who is just really sick of being single. That's a lot of what we talked about - who's just feeling really stuck in this season of life and just really wishing that the next one would start. And that's a lot of what we talked about. And I loved our conversation.

But as we were kicking it off, you said something that just sent off, I don't know, basically wrote a post-it in my brain and just stuck it in there. And it has never left. As you were telling your dating backstory, you talked about ending a relationship after a really long time and how that was a really hard thing. And you said, I mean, honestly, trying to figure out how and when and if to exit a relationship we could do a whole episode on that.

And truly a sticky note just pinged inside my brain because I know that there are a ton of women who have found themselves in relationships where they've really committed, they've been together for a really, really long time. Maybe they live together. Maybe they have a dog together. Maybe they have furniture together. I mean, they have really built a life with this person, but when it comes to accept, there's something in them that's going like, "Maybe this isn't right."

And then they have to decide whether they're going to walk away from the last however many years and start over or keep going forward with something that they have some sort of checking their heart about.

So, because I know you've walked through this, I really would love for you to walk with us through this. And I do want to say I know that some of the women listening... You know, we have women who are in all different stages of life. So I know not everyone may be in a relationship that they're thinking about ending right now.

But this could be like work. This could be moving. This could be all kinds of things where it's like, "I've really invested a lot in this. Am I really thinking about walking away?" So all the stuff that we talked about in terms of relationship, I think, I mean, you can correct me, but I think really can apply to a lot of different things. Right?

Kenz: Yeah, for sure. That's so good. Because I realized that it isn't everybody's story for sure. Although there's a niche amount of people that this message is so important for. So I love that you're doing an episode about. It's so easy to only record episodes for the majority. But something specific like this is so important to talk about. So yeah, I'm excited.

Stephanie: So tell us the story. Tell us about this relationship. I mean, share as much as you feel comfortable sharing. But we'd love to know who this person was, what your relationship was, how you met. Just anything that you feel is important.

Kenz: Yeah, for sure. No, that's awesome. So I met... Mac is always like, "Don't say names." But I feel like it's the most general name ever. Nobody will now. So anyway, Joe. His name was Joe and we met in my freshman year, actually, during freshman orientation of college. So like I said, I moved from California to go to college here in Nashville at Belmont University.

So made a huge move in my life, and almost immediately met this guy. And we met in that little freshman orientation group. We were friends for probably majority of freshman year and then started dating at the end of freshman year.

There's, of course, a whole story there. But I remember actually, our first date was Valentine's Day and I was just... I mean, you go to college, as you know, kind of expecting to meet your future husband. Like it's more serious than maybe other times in life. So I remember he decorated my dorm room door for Valentine's Day and asked me to be his Valentine or whatever.

I seriously to this day am obsessed with Valentine's Day, because of the impact that had on my love story. I was freaking out. I remember walking down the stairs after seeing that just being like, "Oh my gosh, Joe..." We were best friends and now he wanted to go on a date. And so that was super exciting for me. I remember calling my mom just freaking out and all the things.

So, anyways, that was kind of where it all began. It took a while to get official or whatever. But yeah, we started dating then, and then basically dated all the way through college, and then all the way through my first year post-college.

So right about when all of your friends are getting married or already have gotten engaged or whatever, I was breaking up with the boy of what had been like four and a half, almost five years. Like I said, it was like my whole life in Nashville because we met right when I moved to Nashville, and then all the way through that. So only was he my boyfriend, but he was my best friend because that's how it started.

And then he was just my comfort zone. He was a lot of what I had here in Nashville. So breaking up with him felt like the hardest thing ever, which I'm sure we'll get into. I'm grateful I did have a friendship and was always intentional about that in my life, which I'm really grateful for. He also was a musician. So he was out of town a lot, which kind of forced me to make friends and all of that.

We were also starting Delight in the midst of that. So I had something going for myself, which felt good. Also could talk some more about that. But yeah, that's kind of our story.

Stephanie: I'm glad that you mentioned that because I think for a lot of us before we get into a serious relationship, we see other people sort of fall off the face of the earth when they do and we're like, "That's so stupid. I'd never do that." Or they're upset with their friend for sort of disappearing when they got into a relationship. But it's easier to do than we imagine. But also it is really, really, really important to have a life outside of your person for a million reasons, whether you're dating or engaged or married or whatever. Like you need a life outside your person, other things going on in your life.

You'd been in this relationship for a long time, I guess how far into it did you start to think about ending it? And why? How did that start?

Kenz: We started dating when we were so young, of course. I got to college and when we started dating, probably just a few months after I started doing Delight. And really I'm so grateful for this opportunity. It really kept me accountable in my faith and really I just felt like I was growing so much in my faith.

Meanwhile, he decided to do music stuff in a secular space and knew for a while he was really working hard to keep his faith a priority. But over time, I just felt like there just grew more distance there between our faith journeys. That was probably a big thing. It wasn't obvious though. It wasn't like he was off the deep end or anything. It was good and it felt fine for a while, but eventually, towards the end, that was probably the biggest thing of like just a disconnection of like, okay, like, we are in different places spiritually, very different places.

He is such a good person and making fine decisions, but I kind of could see the future of that. And it just didn't feel like it was what God had for me. So that was really the biggest thing. And yeah, his lifestyle too. His lifestyle started to look like touring more and stuff like that. And I was like, "I don't know if I'm cut out for this. Is this really what I want?"

It's actually really funny. I'm not into music at all. So also I was like, "Why am I dating a musician? What has happened in my life?" For a second I was on tour with him and it was really funny. I just remember a couple moments towards the end of this. And I feel like this probably will speak to somebody out there. I just remember a couple moments zooming out a bit and being like, "Okay, this isn't who I am."

With time, with so much time you don't really recognize it. You're just like, "Four years into it, I just thought he was my person." I was totally convinced of that. And he was my best friend. You don't see that disconnect happening. But there are a couple moments where I would zoom out and I was like, "Okay, I don't know if this is really where God wants me to be. I can kind of see the future of this. This is out of character for me. Our passions don't align, our lifestyles don't align, and our faith isn't aligning." So it kind of became clear. But there were small moments.

I was actually at a worship night eight months before I broke up with him. It was like a Tuesday night and the pastor was doing kind of an altar call, like surrendering things in your life. And I remember just God pretty clearly saying, "This is your time to surrender this relationship." Obviously, that felt so hard and nearly impossible.

I did go forward. It was like, "Come forward at the altar and lay this thing down." And I did. And in the moment that felt good, but then just couldn't break up with him. Like I said, it was like losing so much. For eight months it really truly felt like a spiritual battle. I really felt like every day with my time with Jesus I was just asking him I was like, "Should I break up with him? Should I not do it? Should I do it? Should I not?"

And I couldn't get clear answers. I felt so torn. Obviously, that was affecting our relationship between Joe and I and my faith relationship, and my relationship with Jesus. So there was so much confusion there for so long and just truly couldn't bite the bullet. I couldn't make a decision to walk in obedience because it felt scary, honestly.

Stephanie: My brain is like fireworks right now. I have so many things. I'm thinking about... One of them, you talked about how his faith was sort of maybe from the outside looks like it was similar to yours, but you could feel that you were really growing in one way and he wasn't as much.

I know that there are women listening who are like, "I'm stronger in my faith than my boyfriend is." Is it a must-have that you should be at the exact same place? Talk to us about that a little bit. Why was it important to you that you guys were in not just even like the same neighborhood spiritually, but in the same house, I guess?

Kenz: Yeah, for sure. I wouldn't have known it in the moment. I understand where those girls are coming from. Because in the moment you're like, "He's so kind. He..." And he was. He was the nicest person to everybody, personable, loving, kind. I mean, I'm not gonna pick his faith apart, but they just weren't things that probably I needed as his girlfriend spiritually. Or if we were to be married, he just lacked things that I could grow from spiritually.

But I wouldn't have known that in the moment. It was easy for me to be like, "It works. It's fine." It's tough because I know now. I'm married now. And Josh, my current husband, I mean, because of... We're just like... And I wouldn't say he's the spiritual powerhouse. He's not a pastor of a church or the most eloquent speaker or crazy worshiper. He's a business guy. He just has a heart that is connected to Jesus.

And there's something about that and the way that he... I can trust his leadership and I can respect him as a man of God. And I think that's what I lacked the most in my relationship with Joe. But I didn't even know it. But yeah, we just functioned very independently spiritually. And it was fine. But that's the thing. It was just fine. It wasn't fruitful. I was growing but outside of Joe, which only made us more distant.

So a lot of women can listen to this and be like, "Okay, but I am growing spiritually because I have awesome church community, a really awesome mentor, girlfriends." And that's fine that you're growing spiritually. That's good for you. But the problem is, is you're gonna grow more and more distant from the guy. And that only is going to create more disconnect. That was our story, essentially. I know now that it's just important to have a man in your life that you can just trust. And he doesn't have to be this spiritually chest. I'll say that. Hopefully, that's helpful.

Stephanie: I don't know if I've ever thought about it this way. But kind of what you're describing is that the closer you got to Jesus, that pulled you away from Joe instead of... And that's I think really indicative. I've been there where the closer I get to Jesus, the closer I grow in my relationship to God, the further I get from this person. That's a pretty clear moment.

[00:23:26] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! I wanted to take a quick pause from my conversation with Kenz to thank our sponsor for today. Our sponsor for today's episode is an amazing company called [Prose](#). Now, most of you have probably heard me sing the praises of Prose, the world's most personalized haircare. But for those who haven't, I wanted to tell you about the incredible results I'm seeing since using my customized Prose products.

Prose has given over 1 million consultations for their hair quiz. And that's how the process started for me. The quiz was so much fun. But like one of those magazine quizzes I used to love, it was easy, but also really in-depth. They asked me so many questions that I wouldn't have thought to answer. Like how much does your hair shed? The answer is a lot. Is your hair oily? The ends are just near your scalp and more.

So I did their hair quiz and then I placed my order and just a few days later the package showed up on my doorstep. I have a pre-shampoo mask, shampoo, and conditioner. I've been using these products for a while now and it's made such a difference. My hair feels silky and soft and looks even shinier.

The other thing I love is that you can continuously customize your formula. They'll help you tweak things depending on your lifestyle changes or even changes in the weather. Prose is also focused on providing clean and responsible products. Every product is free of parabens, sulfates, phthalates, mineral oils, GMOs and is always cruelty-free. Also, if you're not 100% positive that Prose is the best haircare you've ever had, they'll take the products back no questions asked. But I have a feeling that won't be an issue for you.

Friends, Prose is the healthy hair regimen with your name all over it. You can take your free in-depth hair quiz and get 15% off your first order today. Just go to prose.com/girlsnight. That's prose.com/girlsnight for your free in-depth hair quiz and 15% off. Prose, thanks so much for sponsoring our girls night. We just love having you.

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Stephanie: I don't even know if we've talked about this, Kenz. But Carl and I have a new marriage prep course that we are doing together. We're halfway through. We have a bunch of couples that we're walking through it with right now. And we're halfway through. And it's been really, really fun, because it's been things that Carl and I have learned over the last eight years and things that we've been talking about with couples in our actual lives over the last eight years, but we're getting to actually share the things that you've learned in a wider sense.

And one of the things that we talked about is the direction that you're headed in your life. So we talked about it in terms of north, south, east, west. This can be your career, this can be your dreams, this can be your faith, whatever. Pick a category. But if you decide that you're walking north and your person that you want to walk with is walking west, well, if you're holding on to each other, you can't get north and west at the same time.

The best-case scenario, maybe you compromise and you end up northwest or maybe one of you pulls harder and you drag the other person north or they drag you west. But either way you're not getting necessarily where you want to go. And neither are they.

So I like that you mentioned career-wise too. There were some relationships in my past that were really awesome in a lot of different ways. And there were even moments where I was like, "Why didn't this work out? God, I don't understand why this person couldn't be the person." After some time and some hindsight and then meeting Carl and seeing what our life together gets to look like, I couldn't do the things that God created me to do in the world if I was married to that person. Like our callings didn't align, our dreams didn't align.

Like you're talking about with Joe, you know, standing there at one of his shows being like, "How did I get here? This is a good thing for you but me being here isn't conducive to me being who I was created to be." All of those things, I think are factors that we have to think through that are really hard to think through.

Kenz: That's really good. I really believe that for sure. And that's why it's important as young women, as you're trying to pursue Jesus and develop your identity in Him

and where He's calling you, that's a really important conversation when it comes to relationships. Because we've got to figure that out. We've got to be sure of that.

I had to be sure like, Okay, yes, God, you are calling me into women's ministry. I can see that this is the life you have for me. I'm going to need somebody who blank in this." And you have to be sure of that calling to be able to say that for yourself. So yeah, good.

Stephanie: I also really liked that you said that Josh isn't a pastor or a worship leader or whatever. I think there was a long time where I thought that that's the only brand of godly man that there is out there. And that's so not true. So whoever you end up marrying doesn't have to play guitar and be writing worship songs or whatever the thing looks like. It can look like a lot of different things.

Kenz: That's right. Yeah.

Stephanie: So you're basically fighting with God for eight months about this? Did you talk to Joe in the process about this? Did he know what was happening?

Kenz: Yeah, yeah. I did some. And that's what made it hard because there were moments where I was honest... There were probably even moments where I tried like a week after to end the thing. But it wasn't out of obedience or courage. It was more like, "Let's see if this happens to end the thing or something."

I was like, trying to be so sensitive because, of course, in a breakup, there's two people that are going to be... I was going to be devastated from it and I knew he was too. So that was a part of it, too. It was so sad for him as well.

We talked a bit about it. I have questions and even maybe sometimes, like, "Hey, you're gonna really need to grow in this area." And then not seeing growth in that area. Or, "Hey, just so you know, this has been really hard for me. It'd be awesome if we could go on an awesome day and talk through this." And then maybe feeling let down again in that area.

So there was a lot of feeling let down, a lot of prayers not being answered, and a lot of hard conversations that every time were pretty heartbreaking and leading us inevitably to break up. I would say those eight months were pretty much very sad. It clearly wasn't working out but no one had the courage to end the thing. So, yeah, I think it was eight months of a hard place, for sure.

Stephanie: So you guys are having these sad, hard conversations for eight months. You're talking to him about some of your concerns and telling him like, "Hey, this is something that I would need to see change if our relationship is gonna go forward,"

but those things aren't changing. How did you end up finally breaking up? What did that look like?

Kenz: It's actually kind of interesting. It happened over the summer at some point. Going into the summer, so maybe sometime in May, I kind of made a little vow with Jesus. And I don't know if this is right or wrong. I don't know. But I was like, "By this date," which was the end of the summer, it was sometime in August, "If things don't change," or "if I don't hear you say you definitely should continue this relationship, then I'm gonna break up with him for sure."

And I don't know if that was kind of my easy way out of like, "Let's see if we could just make it work for a little longer." I don't know what it was. But it helped because essentially that date came around. And this is a sad story. I was at my best friend's wedding. I was in her wedding on this day. He came to the wedding. My parents were at the wedding. It was a really fun wedding.

But I remember getting ready for the wedding that day being like, "Yikes!" And I still didn't know if I was going to do it honestly, because I feel like I had some weak efforts before. Like I said, I don't even know. It was a very blurry... As you probably could imagine, my spirit was just so confused.

And that's the really sad and terrible part of this season was that it was spiritually so draining. I mean, I could go off on that. But just quickly, I was trying to do ministry in the midst of this. I was trying to start a ministry in the midst of this. I was trying to pour into people's lives, I was trying to write curriculum, all these things. And I just had nothing in my tank.

I would sometimes be able to not think about it, but it felt so all-consuming, which was another reason why I felt like I got to end this. Like, "For the sake of my calling, for the sake of what God's doing in my life, I gotta end this." Even for the sake of friendships in my life. Even if it wasn't for this big ministry thing, if it was just for friendships, if it was just for my own health, mental health, I needed to end the thing.

So anyways, this day comes, I go through the whole wedding thing. And I'm in the car in my bridesmaid gown essentially with Joe outside of his house. And I was just like, "We gotta end this thing. This isn't working." It's so sad. I see these photos because of course it's like days now documented on my Facebook page and Facebook kind of alarm. But I feel like it was before everything was on Instagram. I had some weak moments.

I don't think I intentionally go and look. I feel like sometimes I'm just scrolling through my Facebook photos for another purpose and I see them and I'm just like,

"Oh my gosh, this day was so heavy." But anyways, I just ended the thing in the car with him. Thankfully my mom was in town. So that was really sweet. I lived with my sister at the time. And that whole night I just remember just crying because it was super devastating.

But there is a sense of relief as well that comes with just finally doing the thing. A lot of times it stops us from completing that conversation. That conversation in itself is the hardest moment honestly. And then after that, it's like okay, I just have to deal with myself and the sorrow which feels a little less than dealing with somebody else as well. So that felt really relieving. And then also like spiritually just having made a decision and walking in obedience felt very relieving almost immediately. We could talk about the postseason in a second. I know we're gonna be running out of time, but yeah.

Stephanie: no, I was gonna ask about that. I've been through breakups where you break up and then two days later you're talking because this is your person. Like you've talked about, this is your best friend. This is your safest place. This is the person who knows all of your inside jokes. They are the other half of your inside jokes. So it's so hard not to reach out to them. So that ends up prolonging a breakup and making it really messy and murky. What kind of things did you put in place to make it so that this wasn't that?

Kenz: I think this is like one of the most important conversations because if anybody listening to this is like, "I'm feeling super distant from this guy. It's time to break it off. But it's been forever. He's my everything." If you can have the conversation, that's amazing. Do the thing, have the breakup convo, but then the post stuff, you've just got to stay disciplined.

And I'm really proud of this. By nature I'm kind of a disciplined person but I was like, "I cannot reach out to him." And I just didn't. I literally didn't for two months probably. I think after the two-month mark we grabbed coffee or something. But it was just over by that point. And I don't even know why we grabbed coffee. I can't really remember. It was just a quick situation that helped with probably closure and everything. And then we didn't talk after that.

But for two months, there was not a single text exchange, there wasn't a single DM exchange. There was no communication. And that was really hard. It looks like filling my time in a way. I would go on walks like if I ever felt like I was tempted to text him, I would leave my phone at home and I would go for a walk if I ever felt like... I even tried not to look at anything. I'm trying to remember. This sounds so funny. I don't think Instagram stories or any of that was even a thing then. So there was less to probably look at.

But if I was to look back in hindsight, I wouldn't have looked at anything. I would have just tried to be as disciplined as possible. Hanging out with girlfriends doing Delight, filling my time. Of course, there's a limit to that. You don't want to run yourself dry. But I think it's really important to, especially for like a temporary season, a couple months, fill your life a bit with people and things and try to leave your phone behind and just really protect that.

Because like you said, I can't count how many friends who have prolonged even further the breakup and it just lingers and lingers. It's never gonna come back together. That doesn't happen. Maybe sometimes, I don't know. But it's not healthy. It isn't what God called you to do. It's better just to leave it and just leave it and be disciplined about it.

If you need more clarity or if you feel like there was an open door of some kind, I think it's fine to maybe meet up a couple months after quickly and get that closure. But beyond that, there doesn't need to be much more communication. Which is so hard and harsh. But it was the best decision I could have made for myself and for him as well.

And you'll find through that season that it just feels like... Once the first couple of weeks go by... The first couple of weeks they're super, super hard and it can maybe still feel confusing and you maybe still want to text him. But then after that, it just starts to feel right. You start to jump into the regular rhythms of life again, you start to reconnect with friends again, you start to think of other people you could be with and that feels fun again. And pretty quickly it does turn around. But you need that buffer of time for sure.

Stephanie: I feel like you don't have to unfollow them necessarily. I don't know if that feels like too... Especially with someone like Joe, he didn't do anything wrong. It wasn't like you were mad. But this is best for us but I think utilizing the mute button... On Facebook you can unfollow someone without unfriending them or whatever.

And also their friends. You don't need to see... I mean, I feel like those were some of my hardest days post-breakup was not even just seeing his profile but seeing someone else have him in a story or photo or something like that. Not story because again that wasn't a thing during my last breakup. But it's like a stab to the heart. And you don't need that. You just need to kind of protect and insulate your heart for a little while. And so using technology to do that is a really good thing.

Kenz: Yeah, absolutely.

Stephanie: Kenz, women who are listening right now, if they're sitting in that confusion, that something about this doesn't feel right but is that just me being nervous? Am I

hungry? I don't know what is happening inside of me. Is this God speaking to me? I don't know. I feel like I've heard God say all kinds of things that weren't actually God saying things to me. How do we figure out if what we're feeling and hearing is something we need to listen to? Or if it's just butterflies and we're hungry, and we need a nap?

Kenz: Yeah, for sure. I think we kind of hinted at it later. At least my story probably shows some clarity that when I started to have questions, like when God first spoke to me to lay this relationship down, or at least kind of spoke to me, I don't even know what that was like, after that, I started to have those conversations or those prayers. And I think this is important for you. Start praying for something.

If there's a really weak part of your relationship or something that would definitely need to look different, start praying for that thing to look different. And then see how God shows up in that. Things will become clearer. He either will grow, change, develop, or he really won't. And that will become clear to you. Start having conversations with him.

It doesn't even need to be like I'm having questions, help. It probably could be more productive. Like, "Hey, I would love if you could plan this super special day and we could talk through A, B and C." Start bringing those things up and stop just having quiet questions in your heart and see what comes out of that. Again, things will become really clear. Or they won't.

Through it all, you just got to have courage. You got to be certain of the identity of who God called you to be. I've just seen so many women just... I loved Joe so much. I could go in a whole spiel of how that felt so good and right. He felt like so much my person.

I have sat across the table with so many women who feel the same way about the guy they're dating and they have these conversations and they are praying these things, yet they still are walking in so much insecurity, so much uncertainty of what God really does have for them. And they have so many questions if God even does have somebody better for them.

It's just like, He does. He totally does. He has more for you. He has something better for you that might come with heartbreak. It might come with a season of loneliness. I was single for like two and a half years after Joe. That was lonely at times. But also super, super, super life-giving. Walking in obedience with Him is the best decision you can make.

So yeah, you've got to carry that season with confidence, with calling, which is so close to Jesus. Because you can have these conversations and you can have these

prayers. But if they aren't followed up with that, it's going to be hard to make any sort of move really and break up.

Stephanie: I like that you said not having these quiet questions. Because that's a lot of what Carl and I have been talking about in our marriage prep course so far is like, if we could give one piece of advice to every couple ever, it's say what you need. Actually, save the thing. Ask the question. Say what you need.

Because if you say, "Hey, I really need us to be growing in this way," or "this is a really important thing to me that I really want to be part of our relationship, can we talk about this over a date? Will you please plan a date for us?" and they don't do it, then it's not a matter of like, are they a mind reader or not? No one is a mind reader. No one's going to be good at that. Everyone's going to fail every time at anticipating. So that's not like, "I'll know that this is right if they read my mind." They're gonna fail.

So you're telling them, "Hey, this is what I need." And then you're getting to see whether they care or not, or care enough to do something, or whether they're capable of showing up for you in that way. But you won't know until you really ask. And then you have a new piece of information that you can use to make your next decision.

Kenz: Yeah, that's right. So good.

Stephanie: What would you say to the woman who is feeling like I have invested so much in this relationship? Like we've been together for so long. And yeah, maybe they do live together and maybe they have a dog together or maybe they're just different pieces of their life that has been tied together for so long that they're really gonna have to do some surgery to disconnect things. What would you say to her?

Kenz: Oh, my gosh. I would just say that the other side of your obedience is going to be so worth it. That although the moment of transition, gosh, the breakup conversation, moving the boxes out and having the dogs split situation conversation or leaving the dog, taking the dog, I don't know what that can look like for you, it's all going to suck and it's going to be super hard. So hard and devastating and heartbreaking and sad. And there's going to be a lot of tears, and it's going to be rough.

But then it's going to be a lot better than what you're living in right now. The Lord is going to show up in the most miraculous ways you don't even know right now at all. But you've got to just have faith in that. That when you say yes to this and when you say, "Yes, God, I'm going to make this decision because I'm believing you're going to show up for me," He is.

And He's going to knock your socks off and it's going to be beautiful. There's going to be way better adventures, way better memories to be made, way better friendships that are going to be had. Your calling is going to unfold. All the nastiness, confusion, all that ugly, heavy stuff that's going on in your sphere right now, it's going to be gone and there's going to be a new start. And it's so worth it.

So if you can, which I know you can, because you are courageous and brave and strong because that's how God created you to be. If you can do that, which you can, break it up and move out the things and go through the hard stuff for just a couple of weeks, maybe a month, maybe two months. But like then like five years later, a year later, it's going to be so, so worth it.

Stephanie: Kenz, that's so good. That is so good. Is there anything else that you needed to hear when you were going through this? Like practical, like for real do not text him. Just anything else that you really needed to hear, big or small, practical or more heart-focused?

Kenz: Gosh, I do feel like we talked about some of the most important things and I'm so glad we did. As I was sitting here, I was thinking to myself maybe there's somebody who is like, Oh, it took her eight months to break it off. I have questions right now and I'm unsure." I bet they're like, "Oh, I'll take eight more months with him and just figure it out and whatever." And I do want to speak to that.

If I was to look back in hindsight, I wouldn't have wasted that time. It was really sucky period of my life. I wish I cut it off sooner, honestly. Of course, you can't change the future and whatever. But gosh, I just wish I did. I'm so glad I had confidence breaking up with him because I asked those questions and prayed those prayers, but I probably could have done it a whole lot sooner. So I don't know.

If anybody is listening to this, I would say, start praying those prayers, start having those conversations, asking those questions. And then make a move. It doesn't need to be prolonged forever. I definitely think it really negatively impacted that whole young adult season in my life. And it didn't have to probably as much as it did. So just taking action and being courageous and doing the thing. I know it's hard but healing will come a lot sooner.

Stephanie: That's what I was thinking about is, I mean, the conversation in the car, that is what everyone is dreading. I can't bring myself to have that conversation because you know it's gonna hurt so much. But I almost wonder if you were to bottle up all of the pain that you felt in those eight months and compare the jar, I guess, to what you felt in the car later that day, I feel like probably the pain of those eight months is a lot. There's a lot more there because it's just so prolonged.

And the moment in the car when you're actually breaking up, if that's the break, the longer you take to actually break the thing, you're prolonging your healing also. So the sooner you get the break over, the sooner you can actually, actually start to heal.

Kenz: Yeah, that's right. Oh my gosh, that's so good. I just thought of the funniest analogy. I don't even know if this is too inappropriate. Oh my gosh, I just thought of this. Steph, do you get your bikini waxed?

Stephanie: Oh my gosh. I think it's been a little too long at this moment. But yes, I absolutely [inaudible 00:50:36] in different seasons of life.

Kenz: It's really the same thing. Recently I prolonged the appointment and my bikini hairs were so thick and so long that the appointment was the most horrifying thing ever. I actually canceled the first appointment. I literally had an appointment where I should have just done the thing. But I was like, "We need out." And then a month later, my hair just grew even thicker and it was harder.

Literally, I'm not joking, I thought of getting... Like every day when I saw myself in the mirror, it hit me again that this was gonna have to happen in my future. I think I brought it with me for way too long. I wish I stuck with my original appointment because it would have happened a lot sooner and would have been so much better. So anyways, that's my story.

Stephanie: That is the best thing ever. Welcome to Girls Night. Exactly that. Exactly. Just keep the appointment. Prolonging the pain doesn't make it less. Oh my gosh.

Kenz: I know.

Stephanie: Oh, man. Well, I don't know how to transition into this. KENZ, will you pray for us?

Kenz: Yes, yes, I would love to pray for us. Jesus, I just pray right now for the girl, like we said at the beginning, maybe this is like a job breakup, maybe this is a friend's breakup or maybe it is a guy break up, which is just hard and heavy, Lord. I just pray for courage, God. Would you just rewrite their identity in the way you created them?

Would you give them a glimpse of their future free of this thing? And would they just hold on to that hope, God, through this hopefully just hard next little season, God? And would you just be with them through it, Lord? Would you build so much intimacy between you and them? Then I just pray for their future tenfold on the other side of obedience, God.

Lord, we just thank you so much for this conversation. Would it compel people to make a decision, a bold decision, a bold yes to just follow you courageously, God? And would you be there in the midst of it? We just love you. And we pray all this in your name. Amen.

Stephanie: Amen. Thanks, Kenz.

Kenz: Of course. Thank you. This was fun.

[00:53:14] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't Kenz amazing? I just love her and I love this conversation. And I'm so happy I got to share it with you. One thing I wanted to mention quickly is I know we talked about a lot in today's episode. So if you want to find the links to any of those things, all you have to do is go to our Girls Night website. It's girlsnightpodcast.com.

And for every episode, we have a blog post with the show notes. All the links will be there for everything we talked about, including all of Kenz's contact info so that you guys can follow her and so y'all can be friends.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that if you haven't had a chance yet, it would mean so much to me if you take just a quick second to leave us a rating and review on iTunes. We've gotten so many amazing five-star reviews from y'all and you've left the sweetest comments. I can't tell you how much it means to me. And it also helps out the podcast more than you can imagine. So if you haven't yet, please take just one quick second to leave us a rating and a review. Thanks so much.

All right, friends, that's all we have for today. But we'll be back next week with another episode of Girls Night. I'm so excited about this next one. I'll see you then.