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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 I'm super, super excited about this episode. Backing up a little bit, before Carl and I had kids, one of the most common things that people would say to us is "travel now before you have kids because once you have them you won't be able to." The first time I heard that I sort of brushed it off. Travel was and is such a huge, important part of my life and who I am. And so I thought, surely that's not true, right?

But eventually, I'd heard that same phrase enough times from enough different people that I started to get scared. I thought, "Did I really have to turn up my passport the day I became a mom?" But the answer was yes. And then what would becoming a mom mean for the other dreams I had for my life? Do I have to give those up too?

Friends, I wrestled with this question for, no joke, years. Years. Actual years. And in so many ways, I felt like I had to choose between being myself and being a mom. And I just did not know how to make that decision.

Well, finally, I learned that this isn't actually true. You can still be yourself and pursue your dreams, and yes, even travel after you have kids. And the way that I found this out was through the example of other women who are going before me. That's why I'm so excited to share this episode with you.

Our guest for today's episode is my new friend Lindsey Roman. Lindsey is an educator, a speaker, a photographer, a wife, and a mom of two with one more on the way. And she actually had a lot of the same fears about motherhood that I did.

We talk about all of that in this episode, and we talk about how we got through those fears, and we got through those fears. Because actually, as we're recording this episode, Lindsey was in Spain with her family with her two littles. And we spend a ton of time in this episode talking about how to travel with your family and what that's looked like for her.

This was such a fun conversation, but it's also one that would have brought me so much peace and encouragement if I'd been able to hear it a few years ago. And so if any of y'all are wrestling with the same things that I was, I hope it does exactly that for you.

All right, you're ready? Let's jump into today's episode. Here's my conversation with Lindsey.

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Stephanie: All right, friends! I am so excited about the conversation that we have today. I'm sitting here with my newish friend, Lindsey Roman. Lindsey, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Lindsey: Oh, my gosh. We had you on our show a couple of weeks ago, well, it aired a couple of weeks ago, and we are so excited. So thank you for having me on. I know Evie was supposed to be here, but her sister's in labor. So we're gonna make this work. We are so excited. I'm so excited to be here. Thank you.

Stephanie: I'm so glad to have you here. When I got to be on your show, it was such an honor. The three of us are talking and I'm like, "How are we not friends?"

Lindsey: Literally.

Stephanie: "How have we gone on so long in the world without knowing each other?" So I'm so glad that we're like-

Lindsey: We're like besties now. We are so similar in so many ways and we're doing very similar things in different industries. And it's just like, why have we not met before?

Stephanie: Yeah, it truly was like, What in the world is happening here? I'm so glad we finally know each other. So we were supposed to have Evie on the show as well. We were going to do a conversation, the three of us. But we're gonna reschedule that because obviously she has way better things to be doing right now. But we kind of called on Audible in the last couple hours because you're doing something right now that is... to say that it's on my bucket list is like... it's not even on my bucket list. It's on my like "my life has to include this as often as possible" list.

Lindsey: That's amazing.

Stephanie: So I don't know what you call that. So anyway, before we get into all that, tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact.

Lindsey: Absolutely. My name is Lindsey Roman. I am a business educator for photographers and creative business owners. I'm also a photographer myself. I do weddings and elopements. I am a mama of two little girls. I am a Christian. I am a wife. I am a basket case and an extrovert. All the things. Did I answer all the questions? What was the last one?

Stephanie: Fun Fact.

Lindsey: Fun fact. I am a theater nerd. I did theater in high school and went on to major in acting in college. But I went to Kansas, like KU, so it wasn't like I was an acting conservatory or anything. But it's just funny that now I'm an entrepreneur. And I feel like with reels and video... I feel like I'm using my acting in my current career. It's funny.

Stephanie: 100%. 100%. My degree is in broadcast journalism. And there was a long time where I was like, "Well, I've abandoned that. I'm never going to use any of these skills." And then I'm like, "Okay, I use them all the time." I just totally didn't like... Thank God for bringing this all the way back around. I need to know what your favorite like... Are you a play person? Are you a musical person? Do you have a favorite?

Lindsey: I love watching musicals. I almost want to say I can't sing a tune but that's not true. Like if it's in my key I can kind of sing, but I am not the kind of person that's gonna get casted as the lead for a musical just because I can't do that. But I got casted in leads for the plays. So that tells you I'm good at acting, but not so good at... Like I'd be in the chorus for a musical. But as far as watching them, I will absolutely watch musicals all day. But for being in them, I think I'm mostly straight play.

Stephanie: Do you have a favorite musical?

Lindsey: A favorite musical? Oh, gosh. Oh, okay. Wait, I thought that... Wait, a favorite musical. I really liked *Legally Blonde*. I know that that's like lame because it's a movie, and it's not an original musical but I really liked that one.

Stephanie: I love *Legally Blonde* the movie. I love it.

Lindsey: I know.

Stephanie: I haven't seen the musical yet though.

Lindsey: That's off the top of my head. That's the first one that's coming to mind, which I know that there's like 5 million. And *Wicked*. That's also stereotypical, but whatever. I'm from Kansas, so I have to say that, right?

Stephanie: *Wicked* is so good. *Wicked* is so good. Okay, all right, we could talk about this forever. But what I really, really want to talk to you about is you are currently in Spain, which the women who have been part of our community for a while are like, Stephanie's heart is jumping out of her chest. I love-

Lindsey: Everybody is watching this on video though. I tried so hard to make this setup as aesthetic as Stephanie's but it's 7 pm in Spain right now. I'm in an Airbnb on who knows what Wi-Fi. So we're making it work.

Stephanie: You sound great, which is, I mean, really impressive. Really impressive.

Lindsey: My husband took the kids to the store or the market. I don't know where they went. But it's working.

Stephanie: Yeah, it's so good. It's so good. We're just making it work. My whole life changed in Spain. I've been to Spain several times. I became a Christian in Spain.

Lindsey: What?

Stephanie: My first book is all about Spain. My heart lives there.

Lindsey: Oh my gosh, I love that. Where? You probably have been all over.

Stephanie: I mean, a million places but my main place is Seville.

Lindsey: Okay. Okay. We didn't go there, unfortunately. We'll have to come back.

Stephanie: It's okay. It's okay. Y'all have to come back. That's kind of one piece of why I am so excited. I mean, I've been following your journey on Instagram over the last... How long have you guys been there?

Lindsey: Like 10 days. We're heading for the airport tomorrow morning. So you are catching me on, like, last day. I am fresh ready to tell all.

Stephanie: Ready to talk about this?

Lindsey: Yes.

Stephanie: Well, the other piece that I feel like it's important to kind of set up why I wanted to talk about this is so travel is really, really important part of my life, my story, my heart, my faith. And when we were starting to talk about having kids, the number one thing people said to us was "travel now because you won't be able to when you have kids."

Lindsey: I literally hate that so much. I roll my eyes at people that say that.

Stephanie: To me what that told me was you can't be yourself and be a mom, you cannot have the things that are important to you and be a mom. So you need to pick. You need to pick between basically the things that light your soul on fire and having children. And that's a really terrible thing to pit against each other especially because it's not true.

Lindsey: You're speaking my language. I literally believe every single one of those lies. Like when I became like a woman, I became a woman. Like when I was in college as a young adult, I never wanted kids for the literal exact reason that you're saying. I just assumed that they were dream crushers and I wanted to go off and have wild adventures and travel dreams and be an actress. But like all these things that I was just like, oh, the second you have kids, you can no longer do that and you become a suburban mom that drives a minivan. No shame for suburban moms that drive minivans.

Stephanie: It felt to me like you just get funneled into a life without your choice. Like you don't get to choose. And that was what was so paralyzing to me. I mean, it took us a really long time to decide to have kids and so much of it was because I was like, "Are kids dream crushers? Do you still get to do the things you want to do, like travel or own a business or write a book? Like, can you still have big dreams and have kids?" That should honestly probably be the title of this episode.

So when I saw that you're traveling with your kids, that's something that we haven't really gotten to do a ton of yet. I mean, we have a... Actually, you probably do too. We have COVID babies. So that's part of it. And then we had twins so we just got our butts kicked. So we were just like catching our breath.

Lindsey: Will you just tell us how you did that? Because I look at like twin moms and I'm like literally, "How?"

Stephanie: I mean, it was wild. We're now coming out to the other side. All that to say we haven't done a ton of traveling with the girls yet. But we're getting to a place where we're like, "Okay, I think we could probably do this." Which is why I'm like, Lindsey, tell me literally everything about what you're doing.

So I want to hear like, where did this come from? Or I guess how did you go from being someone who thought that kids were a dream crusher to being someone who is living out a piece of your dreams with your kid?

Lindsey: I like the first question also because I feel like before we even get to the Spain talk, we're gonna have to back up. I shared a little bit of just like, hey, I was under the impression, the lie that I would say that... Just kids crushed your dream. Totally on that board.

And then when I started dating my husband, he loves children. God bless him. He's like, "I want 12." Like our first date, he was like, "I want 12." And I was like, "Yikes, I was zero." And every time I said I want zero, it wasn't true. You know like when you exaggerate things and you're just like, "Yeah, whatever."

I would say zero but if somebody actually truly asked me, if I sat down and really thought about my life in 10 years, I always had this mental image of me with... I don't know the number of kids but more than two. Just like in this apple orchard and having adventure. So I had that dream.

But just like seeing the world around me and believing the lies that culture tells you of like, "Oh, motherhood ruins your dreams. It ruins your life," I just totally believe that and that just told me, "Okay, I just don't want kids. I want to do a career. I want to be a girl boss or whatever. Like, I just wanted to live a big, flashy life.

There's nothing, I think, wrong with having dreams and wanting to live like a big life. On the other side, now that I am a mom to two girls and I'm pregnant with one on the way due in February-

Stephanie: Oh, my gosh, I didn't know that.

Lindsey: Also traveling pregnant. That's a whole other... we'll get there.

Stephanie: Oh, my bless you. Okay, keep going.

Lindsey: I just want to go back to my younger self and slap... like kindly slap her in the best way and just be like, "Wake up. There's so much more life and joy on the other side of that big, just fear block that you're limiting your life by."

And it's not to say that every single person has to have kids or every single woman that has to be their undying goal. But if you're letting yourself believe the lie out of fear and you're not actually living the life that God called you to, that's where my heart is just because I was that girl.

And now that I'm on the other side, children are the best thing that has ever happened to me. And I love being a mom. I don't look at it now as like, "Oh, my life has changed." I mean, yes, my life has absolutely changed but it's less about like, "Oh, they're dream crushers," and more like, Hey, now I get to go on the adventure that I was already living. And it becomes more wild and beautiful. And I get to bring them along and show them the world and show them what I'm doing and show them that they can do big dreams just like I am at the same time. Obviously, it's much harder, it takes longer, there's annoyances, all the things but it's so worth it.

Stephanie: I love that. This is something I've been coming back to again and again and again. So everyone's gonna be hearing about this a lot, especially over the next year. But there's just not one right way to do things. You don't have to be a mom. If you don't want to be a mom, don't be a mom. Like if you want to have a minivan, have a minivan. Most of my friends at this... Actually, almost all... I think all of my friends that have kids have minivans at this point in their lives. I think it's just smart.

Lindsey: I'm really trying to hold on to... We have a Subaru right now. And once the third baby comes, that's not going to work. We're in this season where I'm like, "Give me a suburban. Give me something else." I'm trying to hold on really and Andrew's like, "Minivan. Minivan."

Stephanie: I know. I know. They're like, You'll rent one on a vacation one time and you'll be like, "Oh, I was so nice." I think they probably have their own idea. But if you want to have 12 kids, if that's what makes you excited about life, if that's the way you feel gifted, if that's what God has for you in your life, then that's amazing. But if you don't have any kids, you can also do that. So you get to decide so much of this to a degree.

Like, for me, I learned the hard way that you don't just get to be like, "I want to have kids," and boom, you get to have one. That's a whole other thing. But I love that you're saying that you were held back by a fear that wasn't true. And the idea that there is no joy on the other side of having kids or no adventure on the other side of having kids just wasn't true.

I think that when we're about to embark on something really big, my sister and I have talked about this, when you're about to do something really big and really new, you don't know what you're about to get because you've never experienced that before.

And people can describe it to you, but you can't fully like grasp it. What you know is what you're giving up. So it's really hard to take that leap when you know what

you're potentially leaving behind. But you don't really totally know what it's going to feel like to embrace the new thing. And that's just a really hard leap to me.

Lindsey: Oh, that's so true. I think also in kind of taking that leap and saying, like, "No, I'm going to do it, even though it's unknown, even though I don't know what to expect, even though it is scary and I don't know what my life will look like..." I mean, because it's a drastic life change.

But I think so much of it is mindset. Like if you have kids, they could ruin your life if that's your perspective. If you view them as terrorists or trolls or whatever, then, yes, that will be your life. But I think so much of it is perspective and inviting joy into your life through your kids and really viewing them as blessings that God has given you just like a way to get closer to Him, as a way to just be closer to the heart of the Father. I can go off. But I think it's so much about perspective, too.

Stephanie: Tell me a little bit more about the transition between, like, I want to have zero kids because they're, you know, dream ruinners and... how did you kind of cross that gap between, I guess, taking the leap? Well, let's start there. How did you decide to take that leap?

Lindsey: Totally. The Lord 1,000,000% had to just slap me and convict me. And then we moved to Hawaii for a time. My husband was in the Coast Guard, so that's what moved us to Hawaii. And I became friends with a girl on the island. Her name is Siena Nelson. And she at the time that I met her had two girls and was pregnant with a third. That's ironically very close to where I am right now. That's literally where I am right now.

And something about the way that she did life, like kids in hand but still living her dreams, still having fun on the island, getting outside every day with their kids, and just the way that she would put them to bed and then we would play guitar, I don't know. Maybe I just wasn't around moms like that before. I don't know what it was. It was honestly the Lord using her in my life. But I was just like, "Oh, being a mom is fun. That's not awful at all." I truly think the Lord used her as just an example in my life in that season.

So I remember, this is like the bratty side of me coming out. But I think Andrew was kind of more like, "I think it's time..." I think this was three years into marriage. He said, "I think we should take the IUD out. I think we should start having kids or at least trying or not preventing it."

And I was just being such a brat. I was like, "I won't make the appointment. You call to make the appointment." I was just being stupid. Because again, I was holding on to that fear. Like I saw something that I liked even in Siena's life, but

when you're wrapped up in so much fear, uncoiling that fear is a process. And it's almost like you're trying to hold on to what you have before you step into the unknown, even though the unknown...

Like the Lord has so much amazingness on the other side of your fear, on the other side of the unknown if you would just trust Him, and literally give your life up to Him and trust that His will for your life is bigger than your own vision for it. So that's what I did. It was a slow, uncoiling process. So that's kind of to answer your question how we got there. And then literally apparently I'm a fertile myrtle because it literally happened the next month. So the Lord was like, "Here you go."

Stephanie: One of the things that I'm so passionate about talking about when it comes to trying to have kids is the fact that, you know, I think a lot of times people will compare stories and they'll be like, Oh, well, you know... I can't tell you that it was hard. You know, it took me a while to get pregnant, and it was pretty hard for us. And so to say, you know, it's hard to just get pregnant right away feels insensitive-

Lindsey: Right.

Stephanie: But the whole thing is hard and confusing either way. Like to think that you have time to think like... Well, it takes on average, you know, I don't know, six, eight months or something like that. It could take a while, and then it happens immediately, it feels like you were sort of robbed of that six to eight months.

Lindsey: Totally.

Stephanie: You're blindsided. At the same time, if you think, "I think this is gonna happen right away," and it doesn't, that's really heartbreaking. So it's just tricky all around.

Lindsey: Absolutely. 100% 100%.

Stephanie: Bringing back these dreams, how did you guys end up going to Spain? Is this the first time that you guys have traveled with your kid? How old are they first? I'm sorry.

Lindsey: COVID babies 100%. Eloise, our oldest, is three. Well, three and a half. She was born in June of 2019. So not quite a COVID baby. But when she was born in June, we lived in Hawaii. So immediately we got her a passport planning to go, I think, to London in Christmas of 2019. And then we just felt bad about family, leaving family. So we were like, "No, let's not do that."

And then we planned a London trip for April 2020. We all know that that clearly didn't happen. So she's three and a half. And then Annalise my youngest, she's one.

We got her a passport immediately after she was born. Until now, we literally hadn't used either of them. And so there was just this bitterness of like, "We need to use them."

But I mean, to back up, both Andrew and I love traveling. We love visiting national parks. We love going international. When we lived in Hawaii, we went on international trips to New Zealand and Switzerland. So we just love travel. So that's kind of like a background of... We love visiting cultures and things like that.

So like when they were born, I immediately got the passport so that we would be ready whenever we wanted to. And then obviously COVID hit, so that slowed us down. And begrudgingly we've been waiting for the time to like, "Okay, let's go, let's go, let's go." We tried to go to Ireland this past May. It didn't work out. Just finances and the timing didn't work.

So finally, we had this window of time for these first two weeks of November and we were like, "Okay, November isn't like the most ideal month to travel unless you're going to the south hemisphere or where it would be warmer. And we were just trying to balance ticket prices, where do we want to go. We really had our eyes on Europe.

But the big, I think, thing with traveling in the winter... I mean, November is, you know, the winter is like a 3 p.m. sunset, which cuts your travel-like tour time in half. So we really wanted to go to either France or Ireland. That was our thought process. And I think that was more just because we wanted to go to Ireland in May.

And we also, side note, brought Andrew's mom with us. So Andrew's mom is with us here, which is like a whole... It makes it fun. She's incredible. She's fun. But it makes it more of a like... you'll see when I explain this.

So we were trying to think of a place that would just work for November weather but also wasn't... We almost went to Peru but prices for Spain were cheap. And we've always loved Europe and I have been to Barcelona when I studied abroad in England back in 2013 and I loved it even though that's just like one part of Spain. I just absolutely love Spain so much.

So we decided to go to Spain. It wasn't the worst temperature. It was like 60 to 75, and we're like, "Yes, let's do that." The plane tickets were cheap. It just felt like a good time. Especially November's offseason for Spain. That's kind of what got us to decide to go here and now. So that's what happened. And then we just went. I'm sure you'll have other questions on all the logistics.

Stephanie: Yes, yes.

[00:23:01] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Our sponsor for today's episode is Audible on Alexa. Listening to Audible on Alexa is the perfect hands-free companion when you're cooking, cleaning or relaxing this holiday season. You can ask Alexa to read you a book, change narration speed, and even get a book recommendation from her. Families find listening on Alexa a great connection time to listen to holiday classics.

Audible also recently launched Alexa in the Audible app, giving you hands-free navigation and discovery in the existing app. So, for example, if you're in the festive holiday mood, you could select a book like a Christmas carol narrated by Hugh Grant. Just say Alexa, "read A Christmas Carol."

Friends I'm telling you this would be the perfect background book for baking cookies or sipping hot cocoa by the fire. Once you finish a book, you can ask Alexa for more recommendations. Just say, "Alexa, recommend me an audiobook" and she'll give you suggestions. Like I mentioned earlier, you can even customize options like the reading pace. So if you enjoy a faster reading pace, just say, "Alexa read faster."

Friends, I'm so excited for you to get to experience this for yourself. And I'm so happy to tell you that Alexa customers can listen to a Christmas carol narrated by Hugh Grant on Alexa for free for the entire month of December. Just say, "Alexa, read A Christmas Carol." Offers only available in the US.

Audible on Alexa, thank you so much for sponsoring our show. We just love having you.

[00:24:25] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! I wanted to take a quick pause for my conversation with Lindsey 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've been seeing since using my customized Prose products.

Prose has given over 1 million consultations with their hair quiz, and that's how the process started for me. The quiz was so much fun. It felt like one of those magazine quizzes I used to love. It was easy but also in depth. They asked me so many questions that I wouldn't have thought to answer. Like, how much does your hair shed, or is your hair oily the lens or just your scalp?

I did the hair quiz and 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. And the other thing I really like 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 will take the products back no questions asked. But I have a feeling that will be an issue for you.

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Stephanie: We took the girls to Mexico this time last year and it was awesome. We went with my best friend's family and a couple other dear friends' families and we just went to an all-inclusive resort in Mexico. And I totally understand why families do that now. It is awesome. They just feed you and take care of you.

I mean, we did that a little bit growing up, but like being the mom, I was like, "This is great way to be a parent. Like I could actually relax. It was great. But we haven't done much other than that with the girls. Like we haven't done any other international trips. What in the world was it like taking your three-and-a-half-year-old and one-year-olds on an airplane across the ocean?"

Lindsey: So I was a little nervous. So, Anna, she's one and she was born in October of 2021. So she hasn't really... I think she's been on one plane in her life to Nashville. Like that didn't count. That's very different than across the ocean. She was the one I was worried about.

Eloise flew a ton when she was little because we went a lot of places kind of before COVID hit, and then a little bit when COVID hit. But even still, we had like a two-year gap from when she was a baby flying all over to now she's three and cognitively aware. So it almost felt like her first flight in a way because she was like, "Whoa, we're going up in the sky." She could talk and verbalize things.

So I don't know. I didn't know what to expect. We got some toys. We're also a screen-free family. So that also I think definitely adds to the mix of how we were able to do this. It adds a whole other ballgame. Just for anybody that doesn't know me or my family, we don't have a TV in our house. That's a personal choice. But we got some Montessori toys for the plane. But the ride there was overnight. So I got toys, but I was like, "You need to sleep." That's the main thing.

So the first flight was just to like... we live in Florida. So we went from Jacksonville to Philadelphia, I think, which is just a two-hour flight, whatever. We can do that. And so then once we board the flight to Madrid, that's where I was like, "Okay, what are we going to do? This is an overnight flight."

I have to give credit to my husband. He is literally like the baby whisperer. But the other thing I will say is he's really good. He just told Eloise, he was like, "Okay, it's bedtime. This is where we're sleeping. Here's your blanket, curl up in the corner, close your eyes, get comfy, go to sleep." And that worked. I know. She's generally good... I mean, it didn't work immediately I will say but she eventually fell asleep.

Annalise on the other hand, we slept-trained her pretty well so she can fall asleep in her crib like that, which is really good until you are in a plane. So basically, for the first like 30 minutes after the flight, Andrew tried to put her to sleep, just like curled up against him and she was screaming her head off. And finally after 30 minutes, she fell asleep.

And she stayed asleep probably like two hours and then she woke up again when they made an announcement or whatever they do. It was a little bit more screams. Overall they both roughly slept the whole ride. Eloise did literally the whole plane. But Anna was like off and on.

But basically once we got to Madrid, we tried... I mean it was like 9 a.m. by the time we landed, Madrid time and so then we just tried to push through. We brought our stroller so that Anna could like sleep in the stroller, which I feel like depending on where you are in Spain, like the streets... We almost regretted bringing the stroller because we were like, cobblestone and it's tiny. And we brought a bob stroller which is freaking ginormous. It's like a running stroller, which the thought process was like the cobblestones but also it's ginormous. But anyway, she was-

Stephanie: You're driving like a small bus

Lindsey: Literally. Literally. We looked like such tourists. Anyways. So she was able, once we got off the plane, to like kind of sleep in her stroller. But we tried to stay awake the whole time until 3 p.m. hit when our Airbnb let us in. That's like the rough...

When you see people and they look dead to the world, you... Oh, you just gotta have a red eye. I see you. There's a look.

And by the time we got into our Airbnb at three, we put the girls down for a nap. I took a nap because I was pregnant and dead. I was like, "Absolutely not." But we intentionally then woke up, I think, after an hour and a half just because otherwise we knew we would sleep through the entire night and then our schedule would be completely off.

So we woke up after an hour and a half and then went out to dinner at like six, which is still kind of early for Spain. Obviously, you probably know that. And then we went to bed. And then from there, we got on like a pretty good rhythm after that. Like that first day was just the rough day.

Stephanie: That's amazing. I'm amazed that they slept the whole... I mean, my girls are really good sleepers. I've just never seen them like sleep sitting up.

Lindsey: I mean it was rough. I don't want to say it was perfect. Eloise literally was asleep the whole time. So she was an angel. But Anna was like... I mean, we did not sleep hardly at all. Because even think about like when you go on a red eye, you barely get any good sleep.

And now imagine you're trying to hold a child and not make the child wake up. So it's like you sacrifice your sleep for that. So it was a little rough for us. But once we got that nap and the first full night of sleep, it got a lot better. You just got to push that first day.

Stephanie: I mean, that's true whether you have kids or not. That first day stinks for everybody.

Lindsey: Yes, 100%.

Stephanie: What have you guys been doing while you're there? Like, what has your itinerary been? And what kinds of things have you been doing? Had there been things that you're like, "I would love to do that, but I can't because the kids are here? Have there been enough things that they can do to make it worthwhile?"

Lindsey: Totally. This was a semi-last-minute trip. Not like super last minute, but we booked our flights like mid-October, so not that long ago. And we did research to do a couple of things. So basically we flew to Madrid, and then did Madrid for a couple of days, went to Granada for a few days, and then went to Alicante for a few days. And then now we're back in Madrid ready to fly home.

So we only did three. We researched and we're like, "Okay, we're here for 10 days, let's not do any more than three towns. We don't want to go crazy." On the end of this, I almost would have said maybe just two. I think that would have maybe been a little more relaxing.

But we didn't really plan a ton of excursions beforehand. Which I think I actually enjoy that because it allowed us to have a little bit more of a relaxed trip. Which with kids, I don't want a crazy itinerary. I don't want to be going from thing to thing to thing. I think if it were just Andrew and I, I think we would have went to the Sierra Nevada, like National Park mountains.

We also didn't rent a car. So that's another thing is we didn't rent a car because we didn't wanna have to lug a car seat everywhere. Andrew researched it. Basically, you need a car seat if you're in a car, but you don't need a car seat for buses or taxis. So we were like, "Okay, let's just mostly to our cities or towns that we could still get around with either walking or a taxi.

I hate the idea of lugging around so much stuff especially as our family grows. So we packed light. And we didn't bring a pack-and-play at all. We just booked Airbnb that had cribs. So literally like, Eloise, can sleep in like a twin bed, or honestly on a cushion on the floor. She's fine. So literally we tried to pack light and travel in a way that allowed us not to bring a pack-and-play, a car seat, all these things.

And honestly, the stroller were like... I mean, it's nice sometimes. But we brought a carrier so that we could hold her. And that's been a little bit more helpful, I think, than a stroller. Literally, we were just like, let's just go to Madrid. But we didn't have any idea of what in Madrid we would do. So the first day we were there, it was raining. So we were like, well, clearly, a museum. That makes the most sense. And what else are you going to do in like a major metropolis town in Europe? Go to a museum. So we went to the Prado. I think it's called the Prado Museum. And that was fun on the first day.

I think the biggest thing that we knew we wanted to do was go to the Alhambra in Granada. We asked other people that had been to Spain and they said absolutely that. If you google it that's like the number one thing. Not the number one but maybe one of the top things to see. So that was like the one thing we wanted to do. So that was the main thing.

I will say though, that's the one thing that me and Andrew have thought about on this trip. You're getting like my fresh-

Stephanie: I'm so glad. I love this. Yes.

Lindsey: I think my pregnancy has to do with this because I'm hormonal and I have expectations of what it looks like to frolic around Europe and especially frolic around Europe with your family and have it look a certain way and take Instagram photos. Which is so stupid. But that's the reality as a millennial woman that is on the internet. I have these expectations where I want it to look a certain way. And I almost don't realize I have those expectations, but I have them.

So we've been doing things and... We haven't actually done a ton of excursions. We saw the Alhambra. We went to Alicante mostly because there was an island... Alicante is on the southern coast on Mediterranean and there was this island like an hour boat ride away that had a lighthouse on it. Andrew's mom came with us and she loves lighthouses. So that was the thought of like, "Hey, let's go to Alicante." It's November, so that'll be the warmest. It will be in Spain.

By the time we got there, we didn't again do a ton of research beforehand, and we realized that the only day that we could go was... this is a whole thing. The only day we could go was Tuesday. Tuesday was the day that the Taylor Swift presale tickets were going on. So obviously I have a Taylor Swift plan. We fought a lot. It's great.

Stephanie: I need to know, did you get tickets? Because I definitely did not.

Lindsey: We did. But it wasn't actually me that got it, it was my friend. I had her apply to get approved. So we were trying for two different days for Tampa. But I just felt so bad because I'm like, "We're literally on vacation in Spain, literally first world problems. I'm just trying to sit here in the Airbnb, tried to get to Iceland tickets." But anyways, we couldn't go to the island on that day. And that was the only day that the boat ride went.

So then literally, it felt like we just went to Alicante, which is such a beautiful town. And I think it would have been more better in the summer when it's hotter. And you could actually enjoy the tropical ocean. But it was still nice to be there off-season. The food was incredible. But there was the things that we did on this trip that I think it would have been maybe a little bit better to go with more of a plan.

We did a very free-spirited trip, which I think is really nice for kids because you don't want to overpack your schedule. But at the same time, it almost feels like, okay, if you're going to spend this money and go across the ocean, you want to maximize it to the most. So we're trying to fight this balance of not having every single day be full of stuff but then not just having every single day be like walk around town and eat.

Like we've kind of been doing both of those things where it's like we'll visit like Castle, or we'll visit old ruins. But then other days, we'll literally just like walk around, sightsee and eat. But honestly, the food's great. I don't hate it. But yeah. That's what we've done.

Stephanie: [inaudible 00:38:03] is basically where I go.

Lindsey: Literally. It's so good. It's so good. And the restaurant... I mean, we've eaten out for almost every single meal other than a couple of lunches. And our girls have done incredible, especially with the tapas style of just like continual food. It's been great.

Stephanie: I love that. I love that. I mean, before we had kids, we got the like "travel now because you won't be able to once your kids are here." But then now we get like, why would you take them? Don't because they're not gonna remember it? What do you have to say about that?

Lindsey: I get that to an extent if they're like young young. Anna is one. She's 1,000,000% not going to remember this trip. And I'm okay with that. Because I think I look at it more so as this is the culture of our family, this is the style of family that we want to be. We want to be an adventurous family. We want to be a family that gives our girls experiences and invites them into different cultures, even when they're young, because I think there's going to be something of that that they're going to remember.

Eloise is three. I've talked to a couple people that still remember things when they're three. So I'm hoping, especially for a formative moment like this, that she'll remember it. I have videos, I have photos that we can show them as they're older.

I get to an extent that, yes, same concept of why people don't go to Disney World when they're a year old. Okay, it's fun in the moment, but you know, they're not gonna remember anything. But I think it's just more so, especially for an international trip, that's just the kind of family that we wanted to be.

And we wanted to give ourselves practice. Like we've another one on the way and we still don't want to stop traveling and stop exploring the world with our kids, whether that's international or whether that's just down the street or to national park in the US. We just wanted to give ourselves practice and also give the kids practice in doing fun things and being adventurous.

And even, I will say, having practice that... We ate out almost every single meal on this trip. I feel like most kids at a restaurant don't typically do well. And our girls have been incredible because they're engaged in what we're doing. They're eating the food. Obviously, we're trying to order things that they would like, but they're

eating the food or we're giving them a little book to read. And I think it's more of the experience.

Like I got Eloise to say gracias and I was like, "I'm the best mom." She doesn't understand why she can't understand people. I'm just like, "Just say gracias." That'd be great. Thanks.

Stephanie: I love that so much. That's really what we've always said. We want to be true about our family too. And we are still kind of figuring out what that looks like. It's require some patience for me, because I want to be traveling all the time. But I do think that it's been growing in a good way for me to be like, there are seasons for different things.

Lindsey: Totally.

Stephanie: And right now, like we're focusing on... You know, other things have been priorities. We've been working on different things, and then, you know, just kind of getting settled into our family life and what does this look like. So I think that the amount that we've traveled and haven't traveled has been right for us, and has been good for me to like take a beat, take a breath and realize that they're just started seasons for different things.

Lindsey: 100%.

Stephanie: But I love, love, love that you guys did this. I think it's just a really powerful thing, like you said about your friend in Hawaii, to get to see different women making different kinds of choices and different families living in different ways to know that there are different options for you. Like you can make this look like you. And that's just something that's been like super freeing for me.

So anyway, just getting to watch you do this has been so encouraging and inspiring. It just flies in the face of all the things that people told me and you for years: that you can't travel when you have kids. And you're doing it and they're young, and you're still doing it.

I want to know, like, as you're preparing for this trip, if you could go back and tell yourself something or do something differently, what would it be? And then I'd love to hear what you'd go back and tell yourself when you were afraid that kids are going to be a dream crusher. Let's start with if you could go back and give yourself some advice about this trip or traveling overseas with kids, what would it be?

Lindsey: Oh, that's so good. I feel like if I can go back before this trip, I would honestly have more communication with Andrew, which doesn't almost even have to do anything

with it. Like the kids have been amazing. Not that we haven't been amazing but I feel like the unmet expectations of like me wanting to take photos or do an excursion versus just if something like the boat ride to the island with the lighthouse didn't work out, there was just like under expectations and then we felt like we just like went to a town just to walk around. But our kids have been so flexible and go with the flow that it almost has been awesome to do that. And like not to have, like I said, things packed schedule to schedule.

So I would almost say before this trip, I would go tell myself to understand any expectation that you have before going and verbalize those. Even if you don't understand them yourself, think about them. Because I had... Again, maybe it's pregnancy talking, like, hormones, but I had expectations of what a European trip with children would look like and it didn't necessarily be that.

It's been amazing. Absolutely no regrets. But it's just been like, you have different expectations of what it looks like. So, yeah, before this trip, I'd be like, talk it through. What is the day gonna look like? Do you want to stop on a cobblestone road for photos? Let's talk about that. And just kind of process your expectations, especially with your spouse, I feel like can be so helpful before a trip. And then also balancing kids into the mix.

So I think it's mostly communication. That's like the biggest thing that I've learned and then I'm excited to work with Andrew for future trips, just because this has been such a beautiful trip in the sense that we've learned a lot because it's really the first trip that we've done with both girls international.

We've gone to Utah road trip. But flying this long doing something in a different country, this is the first time. And so it's been a lot of learning. But I would just say to like take it slow. And don't be afraid or upset if you aren't taking it slow. And if the only thing you do that day is to walk around a town and eat, that's okay. And give yourself grace. Because I think there is that pressure like, "Oh, you go to Europe or you fly across an ocean and you have to just pack your schedule." But often that's just going to be crazy with kids anyway. So I think that's the thing I would say.

And then to younger me, I would say like your attitude or the way that you view your life is absolutely everything. You can choose to make motherhood the worst thing ever. It's all in your attitude. You can choose to view your kids as Hellions. That's all in your attitude. So the flip side of that is, kids don't crush your dreams, but it's all on how you look at them.

If you look at them like they're the blessings that God has given you, then they will be. If you look at them and you say, like, "Hey, I want to travel, and I want you to

come with me," then do it. And yes, there might be crying, there might be some squiggles. Not a lot of restaurants in Europe, especially Spain have high chairs. So we've had to hold Anna. And she's squirmy. Like shoving bread in her face. She'll be fine.

It might not look like the most romantic thing in the world to go to Europe with your family, but it's so, so worth it for the enrichment and the experience that they're getting that you're getting, and the fact that you're just like learning and having this experience together as you go. I would not trade anything for this in the world. So yeah, pass Lindsey, have kids, get over your fear. It's more than worth it, and you are going to smile and love your life on the other side.

Stephanie: I love that. I love that. I told you that Spain is so important to me. And I didn't have a chance to go back for probably eight to 10 years. I can't remember exactly how long it was. But I finally got to go back and I got to take my husband. And I had absolutely ridiculous expectations for that week that we were in Seville.

I realized a couple of days in that I just was trying to cram so much into that time. He had to work a little bit while we were there. So we would like spend kind of half the day... Like he'd be in the Airbnb working on something. And I wish I would have thought through, you know, what do I want to do while he's doing that? So I felt a little bit held back by that.

But then also, I felt like this is a chance for me to like... You know, this is going to be a really cool experience for me and God because this is where we met. And like that's so special. It's where we got to know each other. But then also I felt like I needed to take Instagram-worthy photos and I also felt like I needed to show Carl everything and I felt like it needed to be the most romantic weekend of our lives.

It just was so much. So about like halfway through the week, I was like, "This doesn't feel as fun as I was hoping it would." And it was exactly that. I had to look at my expectations. I stopped sharing photos. I mean, I still was taking photos, but I turned my phone off. So it was like I'm not Instagramming my way through this. This may not be the most, you know, spiritually connected week of my life. And that's okay.

It can't be about everything. You can't fit that much into a week. And so deciding like, what is going to be the priority and really thinking through your expectations. It just was so helpful. And then we went to-

Lindsey: That goes so well with anybody that... even if they don't have kids or not. Like they're just understanding expectations for a trip. Not even international. Just like for a trip in general

Stephanie: It can't be like a super Instagram-worthy trip and really disconnected spiritual retreat. Those two are actually pretty mutually exclusive. Like you're either Instagramming your way through it or you're disconnected. So you have to decide. Both of those are okay, but you have to decide kind of which one it is. Is it about connecting with the people you're with or is it about some solitude and some space for yourself? You just have to kind of think through those things.

So, anyway, Lindsey, I do not want to take up a second of your time, of your last night. Go eat some dinner. Please eat some Croquetas, some I'm tortilla Espanola.

Lindsey: Is that how you say it? Wait, I've been calling them croquettes this whole time. Oh my gosh. Oh, wow.

Stephanie: No, it's fine.

[crosstalk 00:48:52]

Lindsey: Croquetas. Oh. We've had so many of those on this trip. And empanadas. Oh. Sangria. I'm just like sipping the Sangria.

Stephanie: Just like a teeny bit. Have some Sangria for me. Go eat some tortilla Espanola. Your kids will probably love it if they haven't had it. It's like potato... It's sort of like a quiche, but way better.

Lindsey: Ooh. Okay.

Stephanie: Yeah, tortilla Espanola. Oh, it might just be tortilla. And then Croquetas. Patatas Brava. So if you haven't had those.

Lindsey: We have had those. So good. So good. You're making me hungry. It's 7:30 right now. It's like dinnertime. Yes.

Stephanie: I know. I'm making me hungry. Okay, go have so much fun. Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. And thank you for being a trailblazer and showing us that this is possible.

Lindsey: Oh my gosh. Thank you so much, Stephanie, for having me and just getting the fresh honest take at the tail end of this trip. I'm so excited just for your listeners to hear this.

Stephanie: I love it. I love it. Okay, I'll talk to you soon. Have so much fun.

Lindsey: Awesome. Bye.

Stephanie: Bye.

[00:49:50] <music>

Outro: Friends, that was our last episode of Season 16. I feel like this season flew by, right? But we'll be back early February for Season 17, and I'm so excited for the episodes we have in store.

And before we go, I would love it if you do two quick things. The first is to subscribe. Subscribing to the podcast is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It's also a way easier way to listen because it's way of sort of bookmarking the podcast. You never have to go looking for it again. Your Apple just automatically download the next episode when a new one's released. And it'll let you know the second we're back for Season 17.

The other thing is that it would mean so much to me if you would take just a second to leave a rating and a review for the podcast. The way that iTunes knows to suggest the podcast to new people is by the ratings and reviews. That's how we invite your friends to our Girls Nights.

So would you do me a huge favor and take two seconds leave a rating and a quick comment about how you like the podcast so far? It would help us out so much. And thank you to all of you who have left those beautiful five-star reviews already. I can't tell you how much that means to me.

All right, friends, thank you so much again for listening to this episode and for listening to Season 16 of the Girls Night podcast. I will see you in just a few short weeks for Girls Night Season 17.