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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, I'm so excited about today's episode. Today we're talking about online dating and how to do it well. So here's the thing. I think that we fall into a few different camps when it comes to the topic of online dating. I think a lot of us want to try online dating but we are totally nervous about it. We don't know if it's the right fit, the right next step, and we're not sure how to do it successfully.

On the other hand, I know there are a lot of us who have really given online dating a try and we've come out the other side totally exhausted, discouraged, and burned out. It's just not working. Friend, I promise whatever group you find yourself in, you are not alone there.

Today's conversation is going to dig deep into the fears and frustrations we have about online dating while also giving us lots of encouragement, the kind of encouragement that might even have you reconsidering your outlook on online dating altogether.

And the woman who's going to walk us through all of this is a Girls Night favorite and my dear friend Kat Harris. Kat is the co-founder of the online publication, *The Refined Woman*, and she's the host of *The Refined Collective Podcast*. She's also the author of an amazing book called *Sexless in the City*.

Kat is the go-to expert when it comes to online dating. I had the honor of helping out with a workshop she did about online dating a few months ago. And as I was listening to her teach, her knowledge, wisdom, and insight totally blew me away.

In this episode, Kat's gonna teach us how to shift our mindsets and attitudes around online dating, how to set up our dating profiles so that we can stand out, how to make our online dating experiences better and so much more. I can't wait to share this with you.

But before we dive in, while we're on the topic of relationships, I have a resource I would love to share with you. It's my prayer journal called *Every Single Moment: 100 Powerful Prayers to Savor the Present and Prepare for the Future*.

One of the pieces of advice I think a lot of us hear along the way is that we should be praying for our future husbands. That makes sense, right? Dating, finding the right person, committing to them for life, those are not things we want to attempt without God in our corner.

But if you're anything like me, those instructions to pray for your future husband have left you with more questions than answers. Pray for what exactly? And how? I was always very clear on the fact that I needed God's help with my love life, I just wasn't always so clear on how to ask for it.

I wanted to know what am I supposed to pray for exactly? Is there a right way to pray for my future marriage or my future husband? And if so, what is the right way? Is there anything else I should be specifically praying for? Is there anything I should be doing now so I'm ready for marriage when the time comes? What about my life today? How can I grow as a person and in my faith now so I'm the woman I want to be no matter my relationship status? And how do I make sure I'm setting myself up for an awesome future while still savoring my life in the present?

I would have loved to have a resource to walk me through all of this, but I could never find one, so years later, I decided to make one myself. That's my prayer journal every single moment. This 100 Day journal was designed to help women connect with God through prayer in a whole new way, leaving them full of joy, alive with hope, and ready for love.

Not only will it help women pray for their future husbands, it'll help them be ready for marriage when the time comes and it'll help them make the most of every single moment along the way, all through the power of prayer because every single moment really is a life-changing way of praying for your future marriage. And if you had to [Stephaniemaywilson.com](http://Stephaniemaywilson.com), you can grab a copy of your very own. Again that's [Stephaniemaywilson.com](http://Stephaniemaywilson.com). I cannot wait to share this with you.

Okay, with that said, let's jump into the episode. Here's my conversation with Kat.

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

**Kat:** Thanks so much for having me. I'm so excited to be chatting with you. We're basically just recording what you and I just text message and voice memo about. So might as well just press record.

**Stephanie:** I know. Honestly, that is Girls Night in a nutshell. That is when I finally decided to start a podcast because I was going to dinner with friends and having all these conversations where I would leave so encouraged. I just feel like my life changes when I have conversations with my girlfriends. And it's like God speaks to me through them. It's like He has a way of using our friendships and using those conversations in such powerful ways and to find out you're not alone and what you're going through is just... you can breathe again for the first time.

Anyway, I had a string of really great dinner dates with friends and that's when I finally decided to start a podcast because I felt so bad that other people didn't get to hear from my wise friends. So here we are. We're just hitting "record."

**Kat:** We're just hitting "record." I love it. And it's so true. We need people. We need our community. We have so many blind spots. And man, to have people in our lives who we have space and trust and permission to speak into those blind spots is transformative. It's life-changing, like you said.

**Stephanie:** Yeah, yeah. Well, I'm really excited for what we're talking about today. Back a couple of months ago, you and our other dear friend, Kait Warman, did online dating workshop. And I got to be a guest at it. But honestly, I was like, "What am I doing here?" Because you guys are so incredible. The wisdom that each of you shared was just so helpful. Like, oh my gosh, why don't more people have access to this?

So that's why I wanted to bring you back on the show and just ask you all of the online dating questions that I know so many of my listeners are asking and so many of my friends. Like this is hard. But the things that you shared were so helpful. I just knew that we had to share them with our Girls Night community. I have a list of very specific things that I'm just going to pick your brain today. And I hope that's okay.

**Kat:** Oh, 100%, yes. Because I have put in my 10,000 hours. I am 36 years old. I am single. I have been online dating for over 10 years now. So I have a thought or two about what does and doesn't work.

**Stephanie:** Is that Malcolm Gladwell? The 10,000 hours thing?

**Kat:** I can't remember. I definitely need to look that up because I reference it a lot. I'm like, "Listen, I have definitely put in 10,000 hours." You know what I'm saying?

**Stephanie:** It's someone. We're gonna go with Malcolm Gladwell but we'll look it up and we'll, I don't know, we'll put it in the show notes or something. But it's like 10,000 hours is how long it takes to make you an expert at something. And so, yeah, yeah. So we have an expert here. I'm really excited.

**Kat:** Oh, I just researched it. Sorry, as you're talking. I googled it. It's Anders Ericsson who established the so-called '10,000-Hour Rule'.

**Stephanie:** Okay, Anders Ericsson.

**Kat:** Yeah. Never heard of him.

**Stephanie:** I know.

**Kat:** But maybe Malcolm Gladwell talked about him in one of his books, which is why we know who it is.

**Stephanie:** Okay. Wayne Gretzky, Michael Scott.

**Kat:** Yeah, that's right.

**Stephanie:** Amazing. So, now we know 10,000 hours. So, Kat, for women who don't know you yet, can you tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact by yourself?

**Kat:** Yes. My name is Kat Harris. I am author of the book *Sexless in the City*. I have a podcast that drops weekly called The Refined Collective, and website and platform called The Refined Woman. What I do is create and hold space for meaningful conversations and nuance and gray around topics like faith, sexuality, deconstruction, even throw some politics in there at some point. But pretty much any elephant in the room I want to address and talk about in community.

So that's what I do. I have online courses, I host monthly workshops, and do like monthly coaching calls in my Patreon community. So just doing a bunch of hopefully meaningful conversations over there.

Fun fact about me. I don't know if this is fun but it's the first thing that came to my mind. If you have followed me for any length of time, you know that I love Beyoncé and I love Justin Bieber. But you might not know, in the last few years I have fallen in love with a new man and his name is Shawn Mendes, and I'm in love with him.

**Stephanie:** Okay, that's like three fun facts I didn't totally know. I don't know if I knew your great love for Beyoncé or Justin Bieber.

**Kat:** What?

**Stephanie:** I don't know. How did I miss this?

**Kat:** Girl, I have so many Justin Bieber stories. I prayed for that kid every day for seven years. And then I went to church one Sunday and he was sitting right next to me and I was like, "Oh, my gosh." He was getting so close to me, I could have touched his eyelashes. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, do I tell him that I have been praying for him for seven years? What the heck!"

I always viewed Justin Bieber as a little brother, but I view Shawn Mendez as a potential lover. His hair! Like the buoyancy of his hair, I just... Oh. And then he has the Wonder documentary on Netflix. I mean, he has a manifestation journal. He's so thoughtful. He goes to therapy. Alicia Keys is his mentor. Oh my gosh, I just love that kid.

**Stephanie:** All right. All right. All right. All right.

**Kat:** And I'm going to his concert in October. So tickets bought. Tickets bought.

**Stephanie:** Amazing. I'm so glad to know this. I'm so glad to know all of this. Kat, one of the things that I love about you, I love that you... When I go on your Instagram—This is just a great snapshot of you—there are photos that are incredibly... Like you are wise and sophisticated and refined in so many ways. But then there are photos of you being super ridiculous.

Everyone just needs to go follow you on Instagram because you are an incredible mentor. And you're someone that really... you're not afraid to talk about the hard things but you're also really real and you're really fun to laugh with and you're really honest. There's so many sides of you that I love so much. And I love the person that they all make up.

When you're talking about the elephant in the room, it's like you're the friend that you can trust to talk about that stuff. You'll talk about the hard thing, and then you'll laugh with us and you'll also be really real with us. And that whole combination is just a really incredible combination of traits that I appreciate about you.

**Kat:** Thank you so much. I appreciate you saying that.

**Stephanie:** So let's talk about online dating. First of all, we talked a little bit about, you know, you've been online dating for like 10 years. Give us just a little bit more about your online dating journey. Do you love it? Do you hate it? What's your relationship with online dating?

**Kat:** I definitely have gone through every emotion in the books over the years. I think when I first started online dating around 10 years ago, I was embarrassed. It felt shameful to online date. That was really more so in a time where online dating wasn't as mainstream.

I mean, I think when I moved to New York, my mom bought me an eHarmony membership for three months. So it was like that sort of vibes back then. So it was almost for a lot of people who were doing online dating during that time period was you didn't want to tell people if you had met your boyfriend or girlfriend online. you like came up with another story so you wouldn't have to deal with the embarrassment that you met online.

Then once I had been online dating for a while and realized, oh my gosh, this is an incredible way to meet people, I definitely shifted from, "Oh my gosh, this is embarrassing" too "you can totally meet your husband on here." Like one of my friends, Bianca Olthoff, who is a huge speaker, she's a pastor at a church in California, she met her now husband online and they went to the same church for years. But they had never met each other because it was a big church and she was busy traveling for work, he was busy traveling for work.

So I think seeing it work for other people sparked hope inside me that it could work for me. And then I think I shifted to feeling like I put just as much pressure on online dating as any other avenue of online dating. And what I mean by that is, if something didn't end in marriage, then it was a failure and a waste of time. I didn't really see any value in growing or even just practicing putting myself out there. It just felt as though if this online date doesn't end on a relationship, then it's all for naught.

So I think over the years I've transferred and transitioned and switched into a healthier mindset of kind of how I approach online dating now is with curiosity. Online dating can and does work. More than half of Americans today get into relationships online versus less than 3% of people who meet at places of worship. So online dating isn't going anywhere. It's here to stay.

And when I look at online dating just like every area of my life as an opportunity for growth and an opportunity to show up with curiosity, then it doesn't matter. If I go on one date with someone or I get engaged to someone from online, I am getting to spend time with another human being that God really likes and God really loves

and that God created. So there's no such thing as a boring person. There doesn't have to be a boring day. Nothing.

No experience is a waste of time because all of it is grounds for growth and to say, Oh, wow, okay, maybe I haven't dated in a while and I just want to connect with online dating in a way of just putting myself out there. Or maybe I don't feel comfortable flirting. What if I just practice flirting? What if I practice asking guys out? So showing up with different levels of expectation outside of "if this doesn't end in marriage, then it sucks or it doesn't work."

And then if we're continuing in the vein of real talk where I have been like right now in my life is I've been burned out. I was in a relationship last year and it ended and I walked through and have been walking through a lot of heartache. And I think in that have just been like, Oh. I needed a break from online. I needed a break from dating in general.

So I actually, for the first time in years, deleted the apps off my phone for the entire month of February. And I might continue that for another month or so. But I think that's healthy. I think you need breaks. I know online dating can work and it does work. And when I was getting to the place of just showing up with such a bad attitude and burnout, I thought, "Okay, let's just take a minute." So I've been taking a minute for the last month.

**Stephanie:** I love that. You and I were talking about this last week, actually. That I feel like sometimes in life you, and this goes for any season, you need to push in and some seasons you need to hold back. I think when it comes to dating, we've swung between those things so often.

Like there were times when I would be putting myself out there when I shouldn't have been. I was doing it for attention or I was doing it to try to put a BandAid on a broken heart or I was trying to do it because I didn't feel good about myself. And in all those scenarios, it's like, Okay, pump the brakes.

Then there are times where we're not putting ourselves out there because we're scared or because we're trying to... Like if we're not trying, then we can't fail. And those things aren't good either. That's the time when we really need to push in, we need to be brave and put ourselves out there. So it's either being brave and putting ourselves out there more or being brave and pumping the brakes for a minute. So I love that you're paying attention to what you need right now and responding to that.

**Kat:** Thanks, girl.

**Stephanie:** So I think that there are two big hesitations. Actually, we're gonna go through these real quick if that's cool with you. And the three big hesitations that I see when it comes to online dating, one of them you already mentioned. And that's the "I don't want this to be our story." Can you speak to that really quick?

**Kat:** Yeah. Get over yourself. That's a straight up ego. That's ego. Why do you care which avenue God chooses to bring someone into your life? I mean, I think what it reveals is we've watched too many romcoms, too many Disney movies, and care too much about what other people think of us. It's just your ego. So let it go. Period. The end. That's all I have to say about it.

**Stephanie:** I remember talking to a girlfriend of mine who met her husband online several years ago now. And I think she had a moment of that kind of hesitation too where she's like, "Oh, I don't necessarily want to tell my family that we met online or whatever. I don't necessarily want this to be my story."

One of the things that just kind of popped into my mind as we were talking about that is that I walked into work one day and met Carl. That was it. There was no angel chorus singing. It wasn't a meet cute. In fact, he didn't like me right away. I was like set up for failure anyway. It's a whole thing.

I thought he was kind of mean. Our first interaction I couldn't remember his name. I mean, there was nothing cute about our first interaction in the same way that, you know, feeling like you swiped right or whatever might not feel cute. I think finding out that another person is on the planet, that's not the cute part. The cute part happens next. So I love that. Get over it.

**Kat:** And thank God for technological advances. I mean-

**Stephanie:** [inaudible 00:19:00] and they went to the same church is amazing.

**Kat:** Yeah. The last guy I dated, seriously, we met on Instagram. It was a friend of a friend of a friend who had reposted one of our things and then followed each other and then the DMS and then the connection. I just think, Wow, God through technology has made our world so much smaller and given us opportunities to connect in ways that we never would have before. So I'm just grateful.

That's how I view it, is I think that there are so many other ways to connect with people. And why would I hate on that? Why would I be ashamed of that?

**Stephanie:** I love that. That gets into the second thing. I think the second hesitation, especially for people who are believers or people of faith is there's such a faith element to... or



there's such a... I always say this. That I feel like meeting our person is one part God, one part us, and I guess one part to the other person.

Like how we end up being at the right place at the right time to meet our person it's just not something that we can orchestrate just completely on our own. We have a part to play for sure but we really need God to step in as well. So with that, I think people are afraid of online dating because it sort of feels like, Okay, well, if I'm the one swiping right and swiping left, am I playing God? What do you have to say about that?

**Kat:** I think that mindset or question or limiting belief, I'll call it, feels confusing to me and it makes me curious. Because I think of other areas of our lives... Let's say you want to be a lawyer. Yes, you want to be mindful about, Okay, God, where do you want me to go to school? God, is this a calling on my life? Is this a career you want me to have?

And part of figuring out the yes and the nos in that is actively taking steps forward. You know, God can't just give you a law degree. I have to apply to be in school. I have to get grades. I have to study. I have to take the bar. I have to pass the bar. I have to figure out which line of work I want to go into. Is that playing God?

What about physical fitness if I want to run a marathon? Well, I want to be, "God, give me a healthy body. God, help me to run the race well and finish strong." But then I don't want to play God. So I'm not going to train, I'm just going to show up because if God wants me to run this marathon I'm going to be able to run this marathon.

Well, first of all, you're gonna get really hurt. You can't just run a marathon. You might tear an ACL or something, hurt your calf muscles. I don't know. But we wouldn't say that training for that race is playing God. We would say that's wisdom. It's wisdom. And it's showing up in integrity. Co-creating and collaborating with God with a mutual dream.

So why is dating different? What I am curious about and what I think happens, as women primarily, we already feel rejected, we already are sad that we're single, or why is it happening for other people and not for me. And it's a convenient narrative to say, "I'm playing God, if I put myself out there or love happens for other people besides me." What that's really doing is making myself a victim to external circumstances.

I'm getting a reward from that. The reward I'm getting is that I don't have to take responsibility. I can be single and put everything on God and hide in my prayer closet and wonder for the rest of my life, "Woe is me, why did I not meet

someone?" But I'm also paying a price for that. I'm paying up the price of not taking ownership over my life, not experiencing breakthrough with God, not experiencing the breakthrough of getting to collaborate with God, and potentially not experiencing a profound and fruitful relationship.

So until the price outweighs the reward, our behaviors and beliefs don't change. I would just really challenge, what's that belief really about for you? And is it possible that it could be a healthy thing that you could be co-creating with God by using technology for the glory of God?

**Stephanie:** I love that. I love that. That's so good. I mean, there are lots of hesitations but I think another one I hear a lot is, "It doesn't work. There aren't good people on there. I'm not going to... It just doesn't work. I'm not gonna meet a great guy online." We talked about this a little bit, but I want to hear you talk about it just a little bit more, if you don't mind.

**Kat:** Yeah, for sure. I'll say a lot of this stuff is mindset stuff. Whatever you're committed to, whatever narrative you're committed to, you are going to find evidence of that. So if online dating doesn't work, if that's the belief that you're committed to, everything that does or doesn't happen is ammunition for your costs. "See, my friend went on online dating and it sucked. See, I read this one obscure article about someone being cat-fished. See, it doesn't work. It's not safe. I matched with the guy who ended up being a tool. See, there aren't legit guys online."

What are you committed to? Also, what is the invitation of faith? Faith is saying, "I see the past, I see the present and I acknowledge my circumstances and I look to the future and believe in a greater possibility, believe that breakthrough is possible. I believe that I am not exempt from love and happiness. I believe I'm not exempt from experiencing breakthrough in this area of my life."

The skepticism about, you know, "Will I need a legit person online?", what if you put just as much time and effort towards believing that there are incredible people online as you did believing that there aren't good people? I mean, are you a God-fearing person? Are you quote-unquote, "legit?" Then there has to be more than one. And look for evidence.

That's why I love stories like my friend Bianca. I have countless stories that I've screenshot from people who have DM'd me who have met their spouses, their partners online. It does work. So I am on the evidence hunt of possibility. And I will acknowledge with a lot of online dating apps, it's a numbers game.

I use Bumble a lot. In most cities, an app like Bumble, there's a ton of people on. So I usually say I might have like one solid match for every 250 swipes. And you

might think, "Oh, that's ridiculous. Why even do that?" But there's just more people on it. There's a lot of people on there. And also, you do not know someone's heart until you spend time with them.

So unless they're having pictures of taking body shots off someone in Cabo on their profile, get to know them in person. Spend time with them. People can surprise you. Let people surprise you. One of my friends or one of our friends, Kait Warman, she just shared her whole engagement story, which has been so fun.

Now, they didn't meet online but he was almost six years younger than her, he had blue hair and was a total skater boy when they met. And it was a setup. And she looked at his Instagram before they met and was like, "Nope, not my person." And her mentor was like, "What if you just went?"

And it was long distance. So their first date was a Zoom call. And it went really well. And now she's engaged to the guy, the guy that she never would have considered going on a date with because he was younger than her, didn't dress the way she wanted her guy to dress, didn't have the hairstyle that she wanted her person to have, didn't live near her so she didn't want to give him a shot. Guess what? That's the person that she's marrying.

And she says, when you give the chance for God to do the unexpected or when you're open to the unexpected, God might just do the unexpected. How can we approach online dating with that same mindset?

**Stephanie:** I love that so much. I've talked about this a bunch, so maybe the women listening have heard me talk about this before. Are you like a HomeGoods shopper? I don't know where the closest HomeGoods would be like in New York but like-

**Kat:** I love the idea of HomeGoods but shopping in general stresses me out. So I'll like go to HomeGoods, but usually when I shop I know exactly what I want. So going to HomeGoods, I'll end up with a new set of towels that I didn't know I needed. But I do love it. But yes, it's hard when you have limited space.

**Stephanie:** Yes, that totally makes sense. Well, the thing about it is that the inventory changes every day. So it's not a great place to go if you know exactly what you want. But you go one day and there's a whole set of things there. And then you go the next day and it's a whole new set of things. And it happens there in a couple of their stores. But that doesn't happen in most places. But just like you're taking a month off in February, when you come back, you will be new inventory.

**Kat:** Heyo!

**Stephanie:** You know what I mean? You'll be new on the app and you won't have been there before. And that's the same with just like you said, you know, are you a legit person while you're on there? It's constantly changing. And so when people say things like, "There's no one good on there," well, you may not have stumbled across someone who seems like a good fit today but you have no idea who's going to pop up tomorrow who wasn't on yesterday. It's constantly changing totally.

**Kat:** Totally. Also, who died and made you the judge of who's legit or not? That is such a posture of arrogance. I hate it when girls say that. "There's no legit dudes online." First of all, that's rude. And you want to wonder why Christian guys don't like asking Christian girls out is because we have a judgmental, holier than thou posture where we show up dating, "No guys good enough for me." And I'm like, "Girls, we got to get off that high horse. That's arrogance." And I've been guilty of it myself. I can only spot it because I got it.

**Stephanie:** I love it. I told you, guys. I told you Kat is like the friend who actually tells you the truth. I love it so much.

[00:30:27] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Our sponsor for today's episode is [Aura Frames](#). Now, I don't know about you, but I always have the hardest time trying to come up with a new gift to give my mom on Mother's Day every year. But this year Aura Frames has me covered. Named the number one digital frame by Wirecutter and selected as one of Oprah's favorite things three years running, it's guaranteed to make moms smile.

So first, to tell you more about them, the Aura Frames is basically like a digital picture frame where you can easily upload all your favorite photos and videos using the Aura app. I love this gift idea for my mom because she lives in another state and doesn't get to see her granddaughters as often as she would like. So these frames are the perfect way to share all of those special moments and memories with her. Plus, she loves photos. And this makes it so much easier for her to display them all without having to worry about printing them off.

I love using Aura Frames in my home too. You may or may not know this about me, but I have a big passion for home decor, so I can be pretty selective when it comes to what I display in my house. But these frames are so high quality, they're beautiful and they fit in almost any style of home. I love the way that they look.

I also happen to be my family's designated documentarian so I'm always snapping photos, usually to the point where there isn't enough space to print them or even put them in our photo books. But that's why I love this digital frame. I can add all the photos I want. And there's unlimited storage, so I never have to worry about

running out of space. Getting to see all of my favorite pictures and memories throughout the day brings me so much joy. And I know that it will for you too.

From now until Mother's Day, listeners can save on the perfect gift by visiting [auraframes.com](http://auraframes.com). That's [auraframes.com](http://auraframes.com). You just need to use the code GIRLSNIGHT to get up to \$40 off while supplies last. Terms and conditions apply. Thank you so much Aura Frames for sponsoring our show. We just love having you.

[00:32:17] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Our sponsor for today's episode is an amazing female-founded company called [Olive & June](http://Olive&June.com). Now, I don't know about you guys but I love having my nails done. I just feel more put together when I have a fresh manicure. But to be honest, I rarely do it.

A few times a year I do treat myself to a salon mani-pedi. I always walk out of the salon having spent like \$100 and I usually end up chipping my newly painted nails as soon as I get in the car. So then I go through a period where I decide I'm just going to do my nails myself. But no matter how hard I try, my nails always end up looking like they were painted by a 6-year-old. And that's why I'm so happy to have found Olive & June.

Olive & June founder spent a year doing and redoing and redoing her own nails, identifying all the reasons it's been impossible to make them look good on your own, and then she fixed it. She created their Mani System that helps you achieve beautiful, salon-quality nails for just \$2 a mani. And the polish truly doesn't chip. It last for seven days or more.

The Mani System comes with all the tools you could possibly need for salon-quality nails. And they're all in one box. It includes the poppy, which you put on top of the nail polish handle to make it easier to grip and to paint your nails on both of your hands. This is a game-changer. With a poppy, I can finally keep the nail polish on my actual nails instead of getting it all over my fingers. Anyone else? You can also customize your Mani system box with your choice of six polishes.

Recently I've been wearing their nail color called Pink Sands. It's this gorgeous light pink neutral color that I love. You guys, I truly love this company so much. I actually enjoy painting my nails now and the end result is seriously so good.

Not only that. Their Mani System is going to be my new go-to gift for all of my closest people so that we can all use them together at our Girls Night. Friends, painting your nails can actually be fun and affordable all because of Olive & June.

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**Stephanie:** We've talked through these mindset shifts we need to make. We've talked about how there are good guys on these apps and that we need to stop being so judgmental and deciding that the guys aren't good before we even get to know them. But I know that there's a piece that's ours too. And that the thing that I think is really intimidating about online dating is like, when you're just meeting someone, I don't know, randomly out in the wild, you haven't had to decide what sentence you want to use to define yourself or you haven't had to choose six photos or whatever that they will see that is supposed to capture all of you.

So that's the thing that's really hard. It's like writing a cover letter for work or a resume for work or whatever. But it's extra personal. And you have to decide how to put yourself out there or how you want to be seen. I know you have really, really great thoughts on how to put together a profile well. How do we do this? How do we get the good, great guys to find us through our profile?

**Kat:** Well, first I would say, let's remove the pressure. Because what I hear and so much of what you're saying is a fear of getting it wrong or "Oh my gosh, the stakes are so high because I have to get it right or I won't get to swipe on the right person, they won't get to swipe on me."

Dating is a curb, not a cliff. I always say that. The pressure is low stakes. And online dating is like the lowest entry point. It is. Online dating is such a low stakes game. So what if you approached it as if it was a game instead of "I have to strive my way to get the thing I want, I have to prove that I am worthy, I have to show who I am perfectly on three question prompts and three pictures so that I'll get a shot at love"? That is a scarcity mindset.

What if we showed up with a posture of "this is fun"? What if it could be fun? You get to choose. You get to choose your experience online? Do you want it to be fun? It'll be fun. So you want it to be stressful and pressure-filled? Whatever you're committed to, you're going to experience.

So in that again, mindset, mindset, mindset, there are practical ways to set up your profile. So the average person spends less than 60 seconds on an online dating profile. So yeah, you do want to show, okay, who am I in less than a minute. The biggest thing, and we don't like to admit this, are those pictures. That's the first thing someone's gonna see.

I always say the opening shot should be like a bachelor or bachelorette opener. So if you Google Bachelorette, literally the TV show, the reality TV show, all of the contestants are photographed in the same way for their bio shot. It's a three-fourths up. So it's not full body. Its eyes direct to camera, smiling, laughing, engaging. That should be your opener shot.

You don't want a shot where your sunglasses are on or a selfie at the gym or a selfie with your seatbelt on in the car because you had a good hair day that day. Go outside, grab some of your girlfriends... I think this is a super fun thing to do with your girlfriends is be like, "Hey, everyone, pick three outfits. We're gonna take some online dating profile pics today. And let's just have some fun with it." And have that first one be of you looking straight at the camera smiling, engaging.

Now, number two, you do want a full body shot in there. Why? Because it's important that we show people who we are. Whatever your body does or doesn't look like, own that and be proud of that. You have nothing to hide. We have nothing to hide.

Just as we don't want to show up on a date and be like, "What? This guy totally cat-fished me," they don't want to feel that way either. So full body shot. And not a full body shot of you 10 miles away from the camera. Think like lifestyle blogger shot is what I call it. So you're smiling and looking at the camera. I don't know, maybe you're holding a coffee or you're on a hike or something. But just make sure it's full-bodied so people can see what you look like.

And then number three, I say use a shot that captivates curiosity. What's something that you love to do? What something that is important to you. So for instance, on my profile, I have a shot where I'm doing a funny, silly yoga pose in the mountains. I took a trip to Colorado and I have no makeup on. I'm in workout clothes. That's me. I'm outdoors all the time. I love yoga. I love being silly. I don't wear a lot of makeup.

I wanted to show something that showcase that and also captivated curiosity. Like, "Where was this picture taken? What were you doing there?" So have a picture that can make someone say, "Hmm, I want to learn more. That's something I can ask about."

So I think if we're talking about three photos, start there with the bachelorette photo, three-fourths, like a portrait, and then full body, and then something to captivate curiosity.

And then, as far as things that you can put in your profile, most apps offer just within the app to say what you're looking for: casual, don't know yet, or relationships. So be sure that you're clear with what you want and your profile says that. And also usually says faith. So if your faith is important to you, go ahead and mark Christian or Catholic or whichever that is.

And then from there in your prompts, I always say be light and playful. So I typically do, in mine, two truths and the lies. Two truths and a lie. And then I'll say something like, "Guess mine and then show me yours." I'm not just giving information like, "I like long walks on the beach." I'm saying, "Here's two things that are true, one thing that is a lie." And to create a conversation, they have to engage with me.

And then other things, you can ask a question prompts. Like, what are your favorite things to do on a weekend? Or what's your favorite Sunday activities? A lot of people go to church. So it could be like, "Oh, I love to go to church. I love to go to brunch." So you can kind of feel out, is there a faith conversation there?

Also, I make it clear on mine. So I'm asking questions. I'm trying to get them to engage with me. And then I'm being light and playful. Here's two fun things about me and here's a lie. You pick. And then I'll just do like a quick little bio, like, "Hey, here's what I like to do. I like yoga. My face is important to me." And I say something along the lines of like, "Hey, looking for a real connection. No pen pals, please."

And I just saw that there is something on my profile where I'm making it clear, like, "Hey, here's what matters to me. Here's what I'm looking for. I am looking for relationships. Totally cool if you're not, but no penpals." Because it can be super easy to just get into the DM game. So those are a few ways that I try to distinguish my profile.

And just remember... or maybe not remember. Maybe I can tell you for the first time, online dating again is low stakes. Aziz Ansari, in his book *Modern Romance*, calls online dating just an online introductory service. You going on that first date isn't really even a date. It's just two people hanging out to see if there is any sort of interest in actually going on a date.

So lower the stakes and lower the pressure as much as you can. I always say get in person as quick as possible. I'm typically within a day or two saying, "Hey, do want to meet up." So just removing that pressure and remembering this is just getting to know another person that God really cares about.



Even if you don't know exactly where they're at spiritually, meet up with them. Be willing to go on a few dates, because what we love and who we love comes out in our conversations. So we can get the perfect resume on an online Instagram profile or online dating profile and yet meet that person and they're a total dud, or they're kind of a jerk, or they're arrogant. And then we might swipe left on someone who maybe they're not as vocal about their faith and their faith really matters to them and they want to talk to you about that in person. So I think be open to the unexpected.

**Stephanie:** I love that. That's so good. I love this thing you said about "no penpals pleased." And I know that when we did the workshop together, there were a couple of profiles that were... I know that it's really frustrating to repeatedly get what you're not looking for. Whether it's like, I don't know.... I'll leave it at that. It's really frustrating to just not get what you are looking for and get what you're not looking for.

So there were a couple of women who had on their profiles things that were kind of sassy. Like, "Don't message me if whatever. Don't message me if whatever." Talk to us about that. Is it important to put something like that up there? And then also, how do you be truthful without being unnecessarily snarky?

**Kat:** I mean, I think part of it is just checking your heart. Am I coming from a place of entitlement right now? Because what is the type of connection you're wanting? Are you wanting a connection based off what you mutually are interested in or based off what you're not interested in? So are you wanting to bond over the drama or bond over the possibility?

So when I see a profile sometimes on Bumble or Hinge, I can't remember which app, but it's like, "You should not swipe right if..." And it's usually something pretty snarky. "If you're a player or if you're just gonna endlessly DM me and not call me. If you don't have a good attitude or you're a snob." That instantly turns me off because the energy there feels so negative. And it feels bitter as well.

So if that's the place you're coming from, from that place of bitterness and from that place of burnout, first, what is it to check our hearts? And how can I communicate what I want from a place of abundance, from a place of connection, from a place of hope and possibility? I think it's keeping things light and playful and unattached to the outcome.

So, hey, like, "I'm on here. I'd really like to get to know you. Let me know if that sounds fun to you" as opposed to "Don't waste my time. I don't want to go out with anyone who doesn't spend an hour quiet time with Jesus every day." You're saying similar things, but the way it's coming across is completely dependent upon your

heart. I don't think that we're entitled to anything. I think that we can communicate what we want. But I think if we don't show up with a heart posture of possibility and curiosity, it's so easy to slide into that bitterness and entitlement.

And the thing about online dating is, yeah, you are going to match with people who are not a good fit. You're gonna go on dates with people who are not a good fit. That's just a part of the process. And instead of viewing that as annoying or a waste of time, how can you show up and be curious about that? What does this date teaching me?

What can I learn from this dynamic? Is there anything I could have seen beforehand that could have helped me predict this? Is there anything that I'm learning that I need that I didn't know I needed? Is there any way that I can communicate clearer next time?

Again, showing up with a posture of like, How can I grow? As opposed to if my first date that I go on from online doesn't end in marriage and online dating sucks. There has to be like an in-between space between the two extremes.

**Stephanie:** I love that. That's so good. We've talked a little bit about what to put on our profiles. I know you have thoughts on this. What are some of your favorite apps or websites? Where should we be creating profiles?

**Kat:** Oh, I do love that question and I do have thoughts on that. First I will say it's city dependent. So I can give you a couple different options. And then depending on where you live, one app might work better than another app. And that doesn't mean that the app is bad, the app doesn't work. Even in the same city, some people might get better results from one app versus the other. So I think it's just being open to trying different ones.

I typically do two at a time. The ones that have worked well for me are Bumble and Hinge. Bumble... like I said earlier, there's like a ton of people on Bumble. So there's definitely going to be more swiping. What I like about Bumble is the girl gets to make the first move. So you match, but you only get to have a conversation started if the girl initiates that conversation, which I think is fun.

What I like about Hinge is there might be less people but there seems to be more quality matches from my experience. And with all of the apps, there's free options and then there's paid options. With every single app I would say you get what you pay for. And you can use them free. I've used all of them for free. And then I've used all of them on the paid versions as well. And you're gonna get better matches if you're doing the paid version. You're gonna get higher priority, you're gonna beat the algorithm if you're paying.

That makes a lot of people upset. "Oh, I don't want to have to pay for that." But what is it to invest \$20 a month into your dating life and into your love life? \$20, that's nothing. That's a couple of cups of coffee or a dinner out. Get creative of how you can create space in your budget for that \$20. And you don't have to do it every month. But maybe say, "For these three months, I'm going to try the paid version of Bumble and see what results I get." Just approach it with curiosity.

And maybe the next three months you are going to try the paid version of Hinge. Maybe the next three months after that, you can try the paid version of Coffee Meets Bagel. I've also had good results on Coffee Meets Bagel.

There's a newer app called Upward that Kate and I have been working with for the last few months. It's a Christian-based dating app. What's good about it is that if you want to be super intentional about your faith, I mean, you have to have a statement of faith on there and say what your favorite Bible verses are, which for some people might be like, "Well, that's too much." But it really works for other people.

So kind of a recap of apps that I really love. Bumble, Hinge are kind of my top two. And then Coffee Meets Bagel, Upward. Now, I will also tell you this. We think apps like Tinder are just for hookups. I have a really, really great Christian friend who really, really loves Jesus who dated and married an incredible Christian guy off Tinder. So you just don't know.

I hope that I'm not giving an overwhelming answer. But I would say, try Bumble, Hinge, Coffee Meets Bagel, OkCupid, throw that in there, too, and see what works best for you. And I would say with any of them, give them three months. Don't just download and decide in one week that this doesn't work. Really be willing to give something three months.

**Stephanie:** And I like how you said that you're on two at the same time. Because that seems like it takes pressure off the one but doesn't make it so that your phone is like... It doesn't make it quite as overwhelming.

**Kat:** Yeah, absolutely. And it just helps switch things up and remove some of that pressure. And what's also fun is if you match with the same person on both apps, because you can kind of make a joke about it like, "Oh, hey, recognize you," or "I think I've seen you before." So just make it fun and light.

Which brings me to another point of one reason why I love online dating is because it is such a low stakes way to connect with people who are already in your life. I connected a couple years ago with a guy from my church who I had a crush on,

actually we're friendly and knew each other, but he never would have asked me out if we hadn't matched online.

**Stephanie:** Because you don't have "Hi, I'm single and I would really like to go on a date" tattooed on your forehead when you're at church. There's really very few ways to know what someone's status is. But that's a way of finding out "Oh, this person's single and they're looking to go on dates. I wouldn't have known that otherwise."

**Kat:** Totally. And you can keep it light and silly of like, "Oh my gosh, so fun to see you on here. What brings you online?" You're both on the app because you're looking for love and it's super low stakes. So you don't have to be like, "Oh my gosh, we're at a party, everyone's watching us flirt." You can go on a date and not be in the fishbowl of the church with everyone watching you.

**Stephanie:** Yeah, that's really nice. I know that we've talked a little bit about being open-minded and getting to know people before we decide that they're completely wrong for us. But we still have to decide if we have to make kind of a split second decision on yes or no, when we come across someone. So how do we decide that?

**Kat:** I would say number one, what are they looking for? Like I said, almost every single app tells you... or it's something that you have to fill out. It's not a prompt you have to answer. It's not something you necessarily have to fill in "I'm looking for this." You check-mark it.

So if you are looking for a serious relationship, but the person you matched with says "don't know yet," or "looking for casual," then don't swipe on them. Make sure that what you guys are both looking for is in alignment. And if it feels unclear, perhaps swipe right and chat with them. And in one of your first questions, you can say, "Hey, what are you looking for on this app?" Most of the time it's clear before the swipe. Sometimes when it's not, ask. So clarity is key here. So number one-

**Stephanie:** I mean, you could get into a situation where you're like, "Oh, this is going kind of well and then you get down the road and either the person already told you that they're not looking for a relationship or you find out that they're not looking for a relationship. It's so much easier to find out right at the beginning kind of where in the whole process this person is so you can avoid a lot of heartbreak that way.

**Kat:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Communication, communication. And most profiles communicate that on the profile. So what are they looking for? Two, faith. Most people who are people of faith are gonna say it somewhere in their profile. Now, typically it can be like a checklist thing and or something communicated within the profile. Like my faith is super important to me or I'm looking for someone who is a Christian or whatever.

I don't necessarily think that there needs to be a prompt on the profile saying that. I think as long as they have that box checked and if that's something that's important to you, then swipe right. Be open to that conversation.

Then I would say, number three, is there any level of interest or curiosity? Is there anything that you're like, "Oh, man, even if you see a picture on their profile that looks fun, or they have a dog or, oh, there's a picture of them running a marathon, that's cool," swipe right on them. If there's any level of curiosity, swipe right because you don't know what you don't know.

This is the fourth one. So take this with a little bit of a grain of salt is character. Now, we cannot know someone's character, their multidimensional character just based off an online dating profile. But we can have inklings of it. So I would say someone who is showing, like I said earlier, body shots or only shots all in the club or half-naked gym selfies, or even just the... If I see a profile where all the shots are a selfie of a guy without a shirt on, I'm like, "Okay, I feel like you're just looking for something casual here."

You can kind of get a taste of, Okay, well, what matters to them here? Are they looking for that party life? Are they just looking to have a good time? Use your discernment and discretion there. And then also remember that you're not going to know everything about a person. So as long as there's no like, oh, I have a picture of me showing people that I embezzle money or that sort of stuff, like the prompts of "you shouldn't go out with me if you're a snob and have a bad attitude," that negative energy is like, oh, that doesn't make me feel good.

So use your discernment there. Kind of hold the character one with a grain of salt because we show people who we are over time. And a person can say the exact right answers and not be great people. I mean, have you seen the Tinder Swindler? It happens.

So I would say with all of this, hold it loosely. But I'm swiping right on people, when I see that they're looking for a relationship, there's similarity in faith, there's some sort of curiosity that's been captivated, and I can see through their profile that there's some sort of character there.

**Stephanie:** I like that. I like that. I feel like the conversations that happen are so... Like that part gets really frustrating. Because when you've matched with someone, then you're like, "Hey." "Hey." How do you slide into someone's DMs in a way that makes it so that you actually have a meaningful conversation and you actually are getting to know something about them, standing out yourself, figuring out if they stand up to you, that like...? Help us.

**Kat:** I would just say the number one thing is to get in person as fast as possible. I'm not trying to have deep conversations with people online before I get in person. I'm just trying to see, is there any level of interest to meet? Then let's meet. Let's have a conversation.

Or if you don't want to meet first, have a FaceTime. Whenever I am initiating a DM or initiating a connection, I'll find something from their profile that stood out to me and say, "Oh my gosh, it looks like you went hiking duh duh duh. Where was that?" Or "what's the next trip you have scheduled?" People love talking about themselves. Ask them questions.

Remember, we often especially as women and especially online treat dating like it's a job interview. "Well, I'm only going to go out with this person if they check these 10 boxes." This is a date. This is another human being who really matters to God. It's not a job interview. A person can pass a job interview with flying colors and still not be a good fit for the job.

So when I'm interacting online, I'm keeping it light, I'm keeping it playful. "Hey, what are three books that have really impacted you?" "Are you listening to any podcasts that you like recently?" "Or let's do two truths and a lie?" "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." "I don't know if you know who Hannah Brencher is."

**Stephanie:** Hannah Brencher, yeah.

**Kat:** Hannah met her husband online, Christians, amazing people. And how she initiated a conversation with her now husband was "send me five emojis that describe your life right now and then I'll see if I can guess what's happening in your life and who you are. And then after I go, then I'll give you five emojis." So that's their first interaction.

And I think it gives you a fun way of showing, "Okay, here are a few things that matter to me. Here are a few silly things." Because ultimately, you want to be with someone that you can banter with and talk with and not just if they can pass a test or not for you. So I would just say lead with playfulness, be fun, be relaxed in the process.

For me, after a few back and forths, it's, "Hey, would you be interested in meeting up in real life this week?" or "What's your plans look like?" or "Hey, I love chatting with you, but let's get together." I think that thing is just to remember the point is to meet people. I think what can happen is we want to learn so much before we get in-person that then we're developing these weird online attachments with people.

Like I'm from the AOL generation, where we had AOL Instant Messenger and chat rooms in high school. And you would have these amazing connections with people on instant messenger, and then literally not talk to them all day at school. I think that can totally happen with online as well is you can have this vibe and then you meet in person and there's nothing there. So just have those conversations in person.

Like you don't have to have these deep, meaningful connective conversations on the app. Just go for a walk. Like, "Hey, do you wanna go for a walk?" or "do wanna grab some coffee?" Just get in-person? I can't say it enough.

**Stephanie:** That's so good. I know that there are some women who, either because of church dating advice, have heard this, or just kind of how they feel about it. Like, I don't want to necessarily be the one to initiate. They don't want to be the pursuer in the relationship, or they want someone who's gonna ask them out. Thoughts on that?

**Kat:** I mean, who doesn't? That feels awesome to be asked out, right? I think we have this weird narrative in the church that says boys or men have to do all the work. In reality, I want a mutual reciprocal relationship. Do I want to be pursued? Heck, yeah.

But asking someone out, especially if it's online is, again, such a low stakes game. You are not setting a precedent, you're just being clear about what it is that you want. So when you're clear about what you want, you give the man the opportunity to either step into that or let you know that he's not interested in that.

So putting yourself out there and even asking a guy out is not leading the relationship. You're just being honest about what you're looking for and what you're open to. And then they either get to meet you in that or reveal to you that that's not what they're open to. Either way you have clarity. I mean, I have asked many guys out and I have been asked out many times. Honestly, if you want to be quote, unquote, "pursued," I think that's all in the way that you show up.

And also it's communicating. What does that pursuit mean to you? Because it means something different to every single woman. I was at dinner with one of my girlfriends recently and we were talking about do you pay or not on the first date? And we're both women of faith and I'm also this like mega feminist and I'm kind of traditional when it comes to dating.

So I put this feminist vibe forward, but I don't want to pay on the first date. And she was like, "You can't have both." And I was like, "Why not? Why can't I have both?" Part of it is me communicating what I want, but I'm definitely the type of person

who I'm like, "I believe in the pink tax. I've done all this work. The least you can do is pay for this first date."

So I don't even go for my wallet on the first date. And my girlfriends think I'm a monster because of that. But that's kind of the precedent I want to start in the relationship is at least in the beginning I would like to feel taken care of in that way.

Well, this girl, my girlfriend, she feels so disrespected as a woman of faith if a guy tries to pay for her meal. She wants to feel from the very beginning that a guy isn't entitled to her, that he doesn't feel like if he pays, then she owes him anything, especially if she doesn't know him, especially if it's online. She doesn't want there to be any unequal balance of relationship. And so for her, she feels safest if she splits 50/50.

And we were talking about how she judges guys who offer to pay and how I judge guys who don't offer to pay, but both of us have different expectations, and neither of us are wrong. And I think guys want to please us. But we all have a different playbook. And even women of faith, what it means to be pursued, what it means today, what we all want is all different.

Do you want him to open the door for you? Do you not? Do you want to split? Do you want to have phone calls versus text messages? Every woman is different just as every guy is different. So I think instead of just immediately judging the process of "Oh, I can't ask a guy because I want to be pursued" or "this guy isn't a legit guy because he doesn't know my exact formula" it's way more vulnerable to communicate what you want.

Even to communicate, "Hey, online dating process is kind of uncomfortable for me, because I'm kind of a traditional girl. I want to be asked out, but I don't know how to walk through this process well because I know it's different online." So just owning where you're at and owning what you're wanting and seeing if that person can meet you in that instead of basically what a lot of us women want is we want guys to be mind readers. And when they're not, we just kind of slap a sticker on them that says they're not good Christian men, or they're not good leaders.

I think that we get to be right when we do that but we lack vulnerability. And I think vulnerability is our medicine and vulnerability gives us opportunity to connect with people on deeper levels.

**Stephanie:** I love that you're saying this because... Carl and I are teaching a marriage prep course right now and we have just an incredible group of couples that are... You know, we have some that aren't engaged yet, we have some that are engaged and then we have a couple who are already married, but feel like there were maybe



some holes in the way that they kind of prepped for marriage. And so they're going back to sort of fill some of them.

One of the things I hope couples take away more than anything else is do not expect the other person to be a mind reader. You are setting that person up for failure every single time. A great example of this, as you and I are recording this, it was Valentine's Day last week. And Valentine's Day or holidays or milestones or whatever is the perfect example of this. We feel like our person in order to be romantic needs to know what we want without us communicating. That is impossible. It is totally impossible.

And we feel like that's the only way that it's romantic is if we don't say "I want to go on a date for Valentine's Day" but they take us anyway. Or even if we say, "I don't want to go on a date for Valentine's Day," or "I don't want to present" but they somehow guess that we're lying and they get us on anyway. And that's the only way it's romantic. That's crazy.

We will save ourselves and the other person so much heartache and we will be able to connect so much more deeply if we just tell them what we want and talk about it instead of not telling them what we want or lying about it and then being mad at them for not being able to know what is in our mind when sometimes we don't even know.

So the fact that you guys had that conversation about what paying for a date means to you is so good. I just was feeling like I'm so confused for every guy ever. And that's just not a way to set anyone up for success. We just need to communicate. Like, do we want to be paid for or not? Do we want to split the bill or not? What does pursuit look like to us? We need to have a good idea. And then we need to be okay telling the other person so they have the opportunity to get it right.

**Kat:** Yeah. And in that, what if we stopped trying to make men wrong? Because I think in that it's like we're looking for ways for guys to be wrong. I do a mentor Monday on Instagram every week. And I got a question of "is it a red flag if a guy responds to quickly online?" So they respond to you immediately when you match.

And I thought, "Man, we give guys crap if they take too long to respond and now it's a red flag if they respond too quickly. What is this really about?" We say that we want guys who are chivalrous and respectful and then they think they're respecting us but it's not our brand of respect because we're all different. And so we're making them wrong.

That is just another strategy of trying to find control. Because if you're right about it, you got to be right that there's no good guys out there as long as you're willing to

make every guy wrong. And as long as you're looking for perfection and looking for a mind reader, you're never going to find a good fit. So you're going to be right about it, but what's the cost you're paying for being right? What are you paying for that?

**Stephanie:** Okay, Kat, as we're finishing up, I know that we have some women listening who are kind of in two different camps. In one camp, I feel like they're thinking, "I haven't really been putting myself out there. I think I'm going to, but I'm nervous." In the other camp, I know that there are women who have been doing this for a long time and are just feeling really tired and burned out. Can you give just sort of each group a last piece of encouragement?

**Kat:** Yeah, for sure. So for the first crew who is open but scared and uncertain, on New Year's Eve this past year, so just a month or so ago, I went skydiving with my sister. I've wanted to skydive for so many years, yet I also really struggle with anxiety. So I was scared of not the actual skydiving part, but I was scared of what if I have an anxiety attack in the airplane beforehand, and then I'm not able to do it. Like, what happens if I'm having an anxiety attack from 20,000 feet? Yet I knew it was still something I really wanted to do. So I went ahead with it.

As the plane is going off, I'm feeling a little nervous and my sister is with me, so my sister is holding my hand. And I was breathing and just praying. I'll never forget the feeling of that airplane door opening up where you're just like, "Oh my gosh." And he's like, "Put your legs out the airplane." And I had this moment of total fear and then this moment of "I'm already here, I might as well do it."

And then we jump. It wasn't scary at all. In fact, I felt so peaceful in the air. I have pictures that I can send you. But I just was overtaken with the beauty of the sky and the land below me. And I just kept thinking, "Wow, the fear of this thing is so much scarier than the thing itself."

That's what fear does. Fear makes whatever the thing is, dating, online dating, putting yourself out there, it makes the fear of it so much worse than it actually is. So life isn't about waiting until the fear ceases, but it's acknowledging the fear and then going forward anyways. It's saying, "I see you fear and I acknowledge you, I respect you." Because what fear is really trying to do is keep us alive. "But hey, you don't get to be in the driver's seat of my life right now. So I'm gonna go scared and I'm going to do it anyways." So that's what I would say that the first camp.

And the second camp, I just want to say, I see you. I am 36, I got out of a relationship recently that I thought would be the relationship. In a lot of ways, I felt like, "Oh my gosh, am I back at square one? Online dating again?" I thought I was finally done with this. And no, I'm not back at square one because I've grown. I've

learned so much in the last year. It's never going back to square one. And I get being tired of it. I really get it.

So I'm not going to pretend that it's not hard. I'm not going to pretend that being single when it seems like it's happening for everyone else around you, but you, I'm not going to pretend that that's not disappointing or disillusioning. I'm not going to pretend to say that I feel so connected to hope all the time because I don't all the time.

I will say, in the moments where I don't have hope, I have friends who can believe for me. In fact, recently I was sitting on my couch crying. This was a couple of weeks ago. So it wasn't like, "Oh, back in the day when I didn't have hope..." This was like three weeks ago I'm sitting on my couch crying. And I just said to my girlfriends, "I just feel out of hope. I just feel like what if God doesn't have this for me?"

And my friend literally came on to the couch and she said, "Can I hold you?" And she physically held me, like put her arms around me and held me and she said, "It's okay." She said, "It's okay if you need to give up for a minute because I believe for you. I have hope for you."

For the girl who is feeling hopeless, I want to say, "I can hope for you. Will you hope for me?" I think we need that because we do get tired and weary. And it's fake to say that I feel hopeful all the time. I feel hopeful a lot of the time and sometimes I'm tired of it. And that's when I need my community.

**Stephanie:** I love that. Kat, will you just pray for us real quick?

**Kat:** Yeah, yeah. Oh, God, thank You that You are close to us, that You desire intimacy with us, and that You are the great pursuer. What we really long for, what we're really looking for in marriage is what we actually already have access to with You: acceptance, love, knowness, being known. And being known by You God is profound, it's life-changing.

God, thank you that You take note of us, that You hear us, that You remember us, and that You move on our behalf. God, thank you that when we pray, we're not praying to the universe, we're not praying to the abyss but we're praying to You. And You hear us. Thank you that You hear us. Thank you that You see us. Thank you that You are mindful of us. Thank you that You love us.

God, I speak hope over myself, over Stephanie, over every person who is listening to this. God, that where our hope feels too risky or too pricey that you would bridge that gap. God, that where there is weariness that You would bring rest. And God

show us pictures of your love. Show us pictures of breakthrough. Show us evidence of what's possible. And show us that You care just as much about our love lives as we do. Show us that You haven't forgotten us, that we're not left behind, that Your timing is perfect. We love You, God, and we just ask that You would help us to stay close to You on our days and in our lives. Amen.

**Stephanie:** Thanks, Kat.

**Kat:** Thanks for having me.

[01:17:49] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, isn't Kat amazing? I love her and I love this conversation, and I am 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 my website, [Girlsnightpodcast.com](http://Girlsnightpodcast.com).

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 Kat's contact info so you can follow her and so y'all can be friends.

The other thing I wanted to mention is if you haven't had a chance yet, it would mean so much to me if you would 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. It means the world to me and it 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 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'll see you then.