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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.

Friends, I'm so excited about today's episode because today we're talking about how to date with confidence and how to stop settling for less than we deserve.

Our guest for today's episode is my new friend, Faith Brooks. I had the privilege of hearing Faith speak at a conference a few weeks ago, and I immediately knew that we needed to have her on Girls Night.

Faith is an incredibly talented writer, speaker, social worker, activist, and podcaster. She's also the author of a book called *Remember Me Now: A Journey Back to Myself and a Love Letter to Black Women*, which you're going to hear all about in this episode.

Faith has amazing wisdom when it comes to identity and also dating and relationships. She's gonna teach us how to be confident in who we are as women and how to bring that confidence into our dating lives. Towards the end of our conversation, she reads a letter from her book, and it is truly so beautiful and such a great reminder about who we are and who God created us to be. I can't wait for you to hear from her.

But before we dive in, one of the things that Faith talks about a lot in this episode is counseling. And so I wanted to make sure to share a counseling resource with you that I just love. It's one of our amazing Girls Night Podcast sponsors, [Faithful Counseling](#).

Faithful Counseling is a website where you can get matched up with a Christian counselor for professional online therapy sessions. This truly is the easiest and most affordable way to find a Faith-based counselor. You've probably heard me talk about Faithful Counseling before, but just in case you haven't, I wanted to tell you four quick reasons why I love them so much.

The first reason is, it's easy to get started. All you have to do is go to their website, fill out a form about yourself, what you're going through, and what you're looking

for in a counselor, and within 24 hours Faithful Counseling will connect you with a licensed, vetted, Faith-based professional counselor.

Second reason why I love them is that it's really easy to schedule your appointments. Once you're connected to a therapist, you can start communicating with them in less than 24 hours. You can also log into your account at any time, send a message to your therapist, and you'll get timely and thoughtful responses back.

You can also schedule weekly video or phone sessions. And the best part is you can do it all virtually. No commute, no awkward waiting room time, less time away from work. And you can even do your sessions in your PJs. Just saying.

The third reason I love them is that it's super easy to find the right counselor for you. In order for counseling to be truly beneficial, you have to find a counselor you really connect with. And often we don't find the right person on our first try. So then we're stuck going through the whole process of breaking up with our counselor, which can be awkward, and then starting from scratch to find a new one.

But with Faithful Counseling, if you don't have your counselor or if you find that you're looking for something different, you can switch by clicking a button. It's easy and it's free. They really make it so easy to find the best fit possible.

And then the last reason I love them is that it's so much easier to fit into your budget. While I love traditional in-person counseling, it can cost more than \$100 per session, which just makes it a total no-go for so many of us. But Faithful Counseling is significantly less expensive, and they have financial aid available. And if you sign up to this special link that they gave me, you can get 10% off your first month.

Friends, if therapy is something that you've been considering or something you think might be helpful for you right now, head on over to [stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling](https://stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling). And that link will also give you 10% off your first month. Again that [stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling](https://stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling) for all the info, and you can get 10% off your first month of counseling there too.

All right, you guys, you ready? Let's jump into the episode with Faithh.

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**Stephanie:** All right, friends, I am so excited for who you get to meet today. I'm sitting here with my new friend Faithh Brooks. I had the privilege of hearing her speak at a conference a few weeks ago and I'm sitting there in the back going, We have to

have her on Girls Night. So I basically begged. I mean, she didn't make me beg. But I asked immediately and I'm so glad that she said yes.

So, Faithh, thank you for coming on Girls Night.

**Faithh:** Thank you for having me. I'm so excited.

**Stephanie:** For women who haven't met you yet, can you tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact about yourself?

**Faithh:** Yes, of course. So my name is Faithh and I am a writer and a speaker. I'm a newlywed. My husband and I have been married for a year now and we live in Maryland. There's so much I can tell you about that but we'll get into it later.

I have just spent my life and time writing and working in nonprofits spaces. And I've just been a really big champion for justice and for seeing people thrive and succeed. I just love women and I love cheering us on and seeing us do well in the world. So I have been spending a lot of my time focusing my efforts on writing and talking to us.

As for a fun fact about myself, well, when I was younger, I was on Discovery Channel. They had this kind of like educational programming they would put on, and so my brother and I did a lot of their educational programming for this thing called *Voyage* way back in the day, like so, so long ago, but it was just a lot of fun. So, yeah, we used to do that all the time. We used to film stuff and do stuff in the studio, and it was a good time.

**Stephanie:** That's so cool. That's a really good fun fact. You know I'm so tempted to Google now.

**Faithh:** I don't even know whether it exists. I think we have like VHS somewhere. But yeah, it was definitely fun.

**Stephanie:** Yep, yep. I love that. Okay, so you have a book. When did your most recent book come out?

**Faithh:** It came out in January.

**Stephanie:** Fresh.

**Faithh:** Yeah.

**Stephanie:** I wasn't sure how fresh from the oven it was. So it's called *Remember Me Now: A Journey Back to Myself and a Love Letter to Black Women*. Tell us about the book, tell us what inspired the book, give us all things book-related.

**Faith:** So this book is just so special to my heart. It's just talking about my own personal journey, my own life story, if you will. And it's also, you know, at the same time a book that is this encouragement and love letter to black women.

It's a book that I have found that really so many people can relate to. I've had so many of my friends say, like, "Oh my gosh, I relate to so many different parts of your story or the things you're talking about." I talk about identity and finding yourself and feeling loved or unloved, and how to heal and healing from trauma. I also talked just about my own family history and where I come from and why that's important.

So there's just so many different aspects of this book that mean a lot to me. And I was really inspired to write it in 2020. I saw so much of what happened with Breonna Taylor and I saw that when her police report listed her injuries as none, that really struck me. And I thought, "Man, is that how people feel about us? Is that how people think of Black women? How will we be remembered? How will our stories be remembered?"

So I was like, "You know what? I want to write a book and I want to call it *Remember Me Now*." And I want to encourage people to, you know, know us, know our stories, and know our names. So I decided to write my story in hopes that that would be a good conversation starter.

This book, while I've written to Black women, it is a book that anyone can read and glean from. So many of my white friends have read it and said, "Oh, my goodness, I relate to so much of what you're talking about and I've learned so much. And I'm so glad you wrote it."

It's just something that I hoped that would touch people. There's so many different letters and poems I've written throughout the book that I would, you know, hope speaks to people's hearts or different areas of their life and where they're at.

**Stephanie:** I love it. I love it. There were so many things that you shared during the session that you led. The conference was all about dating, and so that's really a lot of what I want to talk about today. But so many of the things that you shared were about like how we see ourselves and where that's come from, and then how to change that.

And that's been such a through line in my own life and my own story. There were so many things where I'm like sitting in the back just like, "Yes that. Yes, absolutely

everything that she just said." And then we'll talk about this in a little bit. But there's one thing that you shared where I was like, "I have so many feelings about this." So we'll get to that. It's about how we deserve to be treated while we're dating.

Can you tell us more of your story when it comes to relationships? You know, what did your dating journey look like before you met your husband?

**Faith:** Yeah. I was raised in a time, especially with purity culture, when it was dating wasn't necessarily celebrated, if you will. It was you're just supposed to wait well and you're supposed to court. So you know, the idea is that you're gonna meet this person and they just want to be your husband and that's just how it was supposed to go.

That was not how it was. I did not have a boyfriend until I was 20 years old. I had met him in college, we dated for a few months. And then I would say I probably had three boyfriends maybe. Like three boyfriends officially before I met my husband. And then I had several situationships. And as a church girl, we are so familiar with that.

You know, guys that like you and you're talking but you never got out of the talking phase. I know people can relate to this. I had several of those over time. I had that throughout my 20s. So I went to college, and I had this idea in my head that I was just going to meet somebody in college and I was going to get married young and that that was going to be my story. But it just absolutely was not.

My college experience was very interesting to say the least. I write more about it in the book. And it was just not what I anticipated. There were not very many of us Black girls on campus. It just the dating playing field, if you will, it just was not in our favor.

There weren't very many people that were interested in dating me in college. So I kind of left, you know, with my self-esteem feeling a little bit down because I thought, "Man, nobody wants to date me? Oh, my God." I only dated one person in college. So then I moved-

**Stephanie:** People put a lot of pressure on college. I mean, depending on where you go, you either think that you're going to be like... It depends on kind of where you go to school, but on one end of the spectrum, it's like you're going to hook up with everybody, this is a chance to sow your wild oats and this is a chance to... or date around or whatever. Or all the way to the other end of the spectrum where you're like, bring by spring, like this is where you meet your husband, you must be engaged by the time you graduate.

It's like either way, you know, there's just an expectation that it's going to be a time full of lots of romantic activity. And I think that that's kind of the expectation that we all walk in with. So if it doesn't end up being that way, it's easy to turn on ourselves and be like, "Is this my fault?"

**Faith:** You're absolutely right. And I was raised in the south. My family is from Chicago, and that's where I was born. But I was raised in the south. I mean, everybody was getting married young. That was just kind of a part of the culture.

And I went to a private Christian school. So it was even more heightened because it was like this, you know, every school has their own things, but at this one, it was like you could walk around the prayer walk this many times, and you know, that person is probably going to propose to you. And it's just like weird stuff like that. Did that happen to me? No. But there was a little rumor-ish thing, you know.

So it can really set you up for so much disappointment when you go into school and you know, that's what you're anticipating. It probably didn't help but that I had this lady that I used to work at a daycare for. It was a small little daycare. And she told me, "You try to meet somebody while you're in college because when you leave college, it's incredibly hard to meet somebody."

And I remember taking that pressure with me, like, Oh my gosh, I gotta meet somebody in college. Then I graduated and I hadn't met anybody and then I was like, "I don't know how I'm gonna meet anybody."

Anyways, years go by and I go throughout my whole 20s watching all of my friends get married and have kids and just feeling so left behind. And I was still dating but just nothing turned out. So when I turned 30, I was like, "Okay, I am ready for a change. I really want to meet the person for me."

There was a friend of mine who was just like, "I am doing some stuff. I want to talk to you about it. I think I might be able to help you meet your husband." So then that's kind of helped me transition to that next phase where I met my husband. So yeah, that's kind of my journey up to then, I would say.

**Stephanie:** Love it. Maybe we'll let people hang on for another minute because I feel like everyone's like, "Okay, so then how did you meet? Tell me about them." Talk to me about some of the things that were the hardest about that time when you were single, when you were feeling disappointed.

And for women who are going through that right now, what are some things that you... Like if you could go back and tell yourself some things in the midst of that, what would you tell yourself?

**Faith:** I think one of the hardest parts was feeling like I was being left behind. And also the older you get and you're single, the more you just feel out of place. You can feel like this in church setting, social settings because there's so much focus that shifts to marriage and the family. Also, there's this other side of it where the assumption is that you can just be the babysitter or you don't want to hang out, you know, can you come over and watch the kids?? And it's like, Wait, I still want to have fun too.

So I just really found myself feeling like I was just out of place and like I didn't have a spot. It was enough that I wasn't married but then also moving into the fact that most of my friends had kids young. It was also the fact that I was in a different phase of life than them.

In many cases now, I mean, I still am—I don't have kids yet—so I am just older in a different phase of life. And that really caused me to have a lot of questions. And it also meant that there were so many changes to my friend group outside of a few core people. Because you know, when your friends get married, and then have kids, their priorities shift and change and the relationships always look the same.

And I don't fault any of my friends at the time for that. That's just kind of the natural, normal thing that happens over time. But it does happen, which meant that I would cycle through friend groups like, Okay, these people are single, we're friends and hang out. And then those friends would get married. And then I was cycled through another friend group.

So I just felt like it was a lot of change and transition in friendships, which was hard for me. And then it was also a lot of feeling out of place. And then even struggling with my identity and feeling beautiful. I think if I was to say anything to myself back then, it's you're more beautiful than you think you look. And in this moment you feel really hard on yourself but you're beautiful and you're confident and you're right where you need to be, and everyone else's timeline doesn't have to be your timeline.

That's really hard to hear right now. But when you get to the place where you want to be, you will feel like it's well worth it. It was well worth the wait.

**Stephanie:** I love all of that. One of the things that I resonated with the most when you were talking at the conference was about identity and about feeling beautiful. What does that journey look like for you, and what are some of the things that have helped the most to help you feel confident and beautiful in your skin?

**Faith:** I think one of the things that even still helps me to this day is just reminding myself that who I am as a person, who I am is not tied into just my body, just my physical appearance. It is so hard to disentangle yourself from that, especially when we live in a society where you're judged by the way that you look and that's the first thing people see. That's the first thing people have comments on. And it's oftentimes the thing that we're the hardest on ourselves about.

And I had to remind myself, like, I am not my body, I'm not my weight, I'm not my hair. I am beautiful. I'm the woman that, you know, God called me to be. It's easier said than done, right? It's easy to say these things than it is to actually live it out.

But I just had to make this a practice often in my life. It couldn't just be like a little pep talk I gave myself and then moved on from. It was something I consistently had to make sure I reminded myself of. And if that meant I needed to write 10 positive things that day about myself and about my life, that's what I did. I would write it even when I didn't feel like I believed it, even when I felt unsure of myself. I would speak the things that I really wanted to see and believe about myself.

And not only that. I surrounded myself with good people. People who are going to encourage me, people who are going to gas me up, and not people who are comparing themselves to me or saying things that might cause me to feel bad.

These are just people who said, "You know what? I see these things in you and I'm proud of you. I think you're beautiful." Because we all have those days. We're human. Like we don't feel as strong or we don't feel like we look the best. That's pretty normal. That's natural.

But the thing is, is, we can't get into believing that. And I knew that if I wanted to have a successful relationship one day, I had to believe the good things about myself that people said to me. And I couldn't just rely on their words of encouragement. I had to believe it because I wanted to attract the right person to myself. I wanted to attract the kind of person that I felt like I deserved.

I was attracting some interesting characters, so I was like, "You know what? I need to shift some things. I need to talk better about myself. I need to believe more about myself. And I need to believe that I deserve love and kindness and somebody who is willing to go out of their way to actually date me and that's really interested in me." So it took me time. But positive affirmation for myself and for those around me I think is really key.

**Stephanie:** I love that. I have two things I want to ask about that. And I'm like, do not forget. So hang on, I'm getting a piece of paper. The first thing I wanted to ask is like, I



think one of the things that holds us back and that I wrestled with because affirmations have been such a huge deal for me also. But I think one of the fears is like, "Am I lying? What if it's not true?"

There was a long time where I felt like I needed to have the worst opinion of myself, because maybe if I did, then nobody could think less of me, nobody could hurt me in that way. And then also it was like, Well, I need to be honest about where I am. Because if I'm not honest, how am I ever gonna get better? So it was like I needed to be the harshest critic so that I could push myself the hardest. So talk to me about that.

**Faith:** First, I think we're all our own worst critic. I don't think that there's anybody that can criticize us more than us. Because we tend to hold ourselves to a higher standard than we do other people.

The second thing that I would say is when it comes to affirmations, it's really about getting me to believe in me. Because if I don't believe in myself, I really won't have the success and... like getting the direction of where I want to go.

So even if I know that there are things that I need to improve in my life, I need to believe in myself because I want to be able to do those things. If I have no belief in myself, if I'm just hard on myself, to me, that kills all motivation, because then I'm like, "Okay, well, it doesn't matter because I don't know if it's gonna happen. I can't really see myself doing it. So I'm just gonna give up and I'm just gonna throw in the towel."

And a big part of changing and shifting mindsets is that in order to do that, we have to really talk to ourselves. We have to retrain our minds. For me, writing things about my life. And it's not even just always just about my body or physical appearance or things. Sometimes it's just reminding myself, You know what, I have a good life. I'm glad I have a great family. I'm thankful for my home.

Reminding myself that things aren't as bad as I'm making it in my head is something that really helps to re-center me. We can get so caught up, especially in the Western world, with a lot of superficial things that actually have nothing really to do with our happiness if we really look at our lives.

So it just causes me to reframe my mind and to stay grounded. And when I do that, I'm able to also stay motivated to continue pushing towards my goals and to continue pushing towards change. I think you can 100% be a realist and affirm yourself and also believe the best about what you can do or what you can accomplish.

[00:24:07] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Our Girls Night sponsor for today is an amazing company called [ZocDoc](#). Now, I know you can totally relate to this, but leading into the spring and summer months, my schedule tends to fill up quickly. As a result, if there's something that's going to make my life easier, I'm all ears.

And that's why I was instantly intrigued by the ZocDoc app. Finding a doctor through their app is a seamless process with just a few taps on your screen to find quality care you need. Not only is it easy, it's also reliable.

ZocDoc has thousands of medical professionals that are ready to help you, listen to you like a friend, and help you get the care you need. If you're not familiar with them already, ZocDoc is the only free app that lets you find and book doctors who are patient-reviewed, take your insurance, are available when you need them, and treat almost every condition under the sun.

When you're just not feeling your best, the last thing you want is to use all your energy browsing the internet for hours trying to find a doctor with decent reviews. But with ZocDoc, you can just click a few buttons on their app to connect with the doctor that aligns with your needs. And that means that no time is wasted and you can feel like yourself again so much faster.

One of the best parts of the app I think is that it has verified patient reviews from real people who've made real appointments with these doctors. And I love that. Every month millions of people use ZocDoc, and I'm so happy to be one of them. It's my new go-to when I need to find a quality doctor in my area, and it has saved me so much time.

Friends, I'm so happy to get to share ZocDoc with you. If you go to [zocdoc.com/girlsnight](https://zocdoc.com/girlsnight), you can download the ZocDoc app for free, then you can find and book a top-rated doctor today. Many are available within 24 hours. That's [zocdoc.com/girlsnight](https://zocdoc.com/girlsnight).

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**Stephanie:** There's a difference between being a realist and being cruel. And I think that that's the line I didn't see. Also, I think that there was also a long time where I thought that the way to motivate myself was through fear or anger or judgment or cruelty, you know. So it's like the voice in my head wasn't saying, like, Hey, this morning, let's get up and let's go for a walk because that is what your body needs and that's the kind way to treat yourself or whatever.

Like I would get up and say things that I would never say to a human to myself to get myself up and moving. That's just sort of a random example. But that's a pretty long stretch of my life for a while there. That's not how I'm motivated. That doesn't motivate me to get up. That motivates me to crawl in a hole and never ever want to come out. If someone spoke to us that way... It's really hard to perform in any area of life when someone is whispering in your ear how much you suck.

**Faith:** Yeah. Shame doesn't motivate us to change.

**Stephanie:** Yeah. Yeah. I want to just walk into this a little bit more. We kind of just touched on it. But specifically in dating, you said you knew that something needed to change because you were attracting guys who were like this, and you wanted to attract guys who were like this.

I think we know in theory that it matters how we see ourselves and what we believe that we deserve. But how does that actually play out in real life to affect our dating life?

**Faith:** I think it might look different for everybody. But for me, I had to believe that I was that girl, like I am the girl. I am beautiful. I have what it takes. I know myself. I have confidence. And I was really attracting a ton of super, super insecure guys.

We all have our places of insecurity but I just mean their whole existence. Like they were just so insecure about themselves and they just were not exuding confidence. Or if it was confidence, it was a false sense of confidence which created a lot of conflict in our relationship because I was still doing a lot of great things and I was really successful in my career, and that was intimidating for guys.

I was also told that I was intimidating quite a bit. And that really threw me for a loop. So some of the things I did number one, I went to counseling. Because after a while, after hearing like you're intimidating, you're intimidating, it was really like playing with my head.

Because I would hear from guys that I had dated or I would hear it from, at the time, like co-workers or people and I just felt like people were constantly putting me in some box I just did not want to be put in. Or was like, "How did I get put in these boxes? I just prefer not to be in them."

So I went to counseling and started to just work on healing my own personal inner trauma and just things in my life. And I started there because that's just an important aspect. And I've been in counseling since I was 25 with my counselor. So that's something I've kept up over the years.

The other thing I would say for me that I did and decided to change about myself was I took myself out on dates. I took myself out to dinner. I took myself out to the movies. I just created experiences for myself that I enjoyed. I wanted to get to know myself. What do I like? What do I not like? What do I enjoy?

I started trying to do those things and cooking and hosting parties at my house. Just doing things that I liked and figuring that out for myself. Because when I was really insecure about myself and try to fit into what these guys wanted me to be like, I was still compromising aspects of myself, whether it was trying to change the way I dressed or trying to please them by what they wanted, whether it was agreeing with their statements if I didn't agree with it or trying to damned myself down a little bit, so they wouldn't feel like I was shining too much. All of these things. It just wasn't healthy.

And I had to say to myself, like, "Am I willing and okay with being alone if I don't meet somebody that I feel like I can be my full self with, if I don't meet somebody that I can't be successful and happy and just the leader that I know I am? If that doesn't happen for me, then can I be okay with being alone?"

And after a while, I became more and more okay with it and it's because I became more okay with myself. It didn't mean that I still didn't have the desire or that the desire went away. The desire for companionship never went away. I just started to learn more about myself that it made me okay with being by myself, if that makes any sense.

So I just feel like it's really important to get to know who you are and who you are alone. Because once you do get married, your life changes. And your life is not just your life and yours. It's your life in this person's life. I did my best, and I think I did well to soak up the advice other married people gave me, which was: live your life and do the things that you desire to do. I traveled. You know, I went to 19 countries. I lived my life.

People said, "Well, what about when you get with somebody?" I was like, "I'll go back. I will go back. I don't have to stop. I don't have to like not go because I don't have this person or I'm waiting for these plans." I just kept going. I did things that made me happy.

That's what I would say to people. Like if you're unsure if you're feeling you're at this place where you're not in a relationship, you want to be, you're trying to know yourself, you don't know who you deserve or what you deserve, treat yourself the way you'd like to be treated.

And then when you start to get to know some people, you think, "How would I have liked to be treated? What kind of things do I enjoy doing? Did that person really meet those needs for me? Do they show those characteristics?" And then just take things from there. But I feel like the more we get to know ourselves, the more we understand what we're willing to accept or not.

**Stephanie:** It's like you don't have to wait to be in a good relationship until you're in a good relationship.

**Faith:** Exactly.

**Stephanie:** I think that that's one thing that's been totally revolutionary for me over the years is realizing that my relationship with myself is a relationship. It totally is. You said this earlier, but it's hard to disassociate our body from ourselves. This was even just getting kind of, like, you know, mind-bending to even talk about it.

But we talk to ourselves, we interact with ourselves, we have to take care of ourselves. We treat ourselves a certain way. We ignore our own needs, or we tend to our own needs. Like it is a relationship. So thinking about it that way and upping our own standards and showing ourselves respect and love and care, just in our relationship with ourselves.

There's so many needs that we actually can meet ourselves. And some of those needs, a lot of those needs will still need to be met once we're married. Our spouse or partner may not be as good at planning dates as we are. I feel like I always want to plan my birthday because I'm like, I know exactly how I want things. So I'll like maybe tell Carl or I'll just do it. Like there's no one better to play in the perfect day for me than me. There's something really beautiful about that.

I want to back up because I said that there was something during your talk where I just was so mad and so frustrated. And it was when you were talking about some of the things that you put up with from guys that you were dating. And you gave just a couple examples that I immediately thought of examples in my own life, and I know that other people will too.

And they sound more ludicrous when they come from someone else but you're like, "What? That's so... No way." And then you're like, "Mm, I've done that too." And I think it's just an important conversation to have. So do you remember the examples?

**Faith:** I think I remember some of them. One was one guy just did not like how I dressed at all. And he made sure to tell me that he didn't like my style, he thought it was too childish. Another guy was, while we were dating, there was this other girl he used

to have a crush on. Well, maybe they dated or something like that. I think they dated but they broke up. It just didn't work out and then him and I got together.

And he, the whole time, though, while we were dating, was telling me about how he was torn between me and her. And he didn't know if you want to be with me or want to be with her. And that relationship really put my self-esteem in the toilet because I was like, "Um, okay, I don't know what to say to this."

You know, there was him, there's another guy who just didn't have any money. I felt like I was always paying for everything for us. I was fine being generous, but at the same time, after a while, it's like, "I feel like I'm being used."

There were so many instances where I was entertaining these guys who really did not have my best interest in mind. What makes me feel good, though at this stage in my life, is that, even though I didn't have everything together, I knew what direction I wanted to go in in my life.

And I would always talk to these guys, I remember it, like, "I'm gonna be a writer. I'm gonna write books. I'm gonna do this, do that." And they're like, Oh, yeah, that's nice you see doing that one day" or whatever.

And being here today and having published two books and looking back on who I was then and the dudes I was entertaining, I'm just so glad that I didn't end up with them because they probably would have hindered my growth and progress. I truly did become what I always said I would be, become the woman that I knew I was.

And even though I might have needed to give myself pep talks and encourage myself and, you know, talk to myself to say good things about yourself, say good things about your body, I ended up doing the things that I really wanted to with my life and continue to do so.

You have to be with the right person that also has a vision for you and sees where you're headed and says, "That's amazing. I want to get behind that and I want to encourage you." Otherwise, these guys, they were always in competition with me or feeling like they weren't good enough or whatever the case might have been.

And it was so unhealthy for me because I couldn't fully be myself and I couldn't fully thrive. And letting them go, while painful, was one of the best decisions I could have made. Because who knows, if I was with them still, I might not have written the books that I wanted to write or do the things that I really wanted to do because I was so concerned about not standing out too much and not making them look bad or feel bad. So you definitely have to trust your gut.

**Stephanie:** Yes! Yes! Gosh, I can remember being there so clearly, relationships where I put up with things that were not what I deserved. But I was putting up with them because I really, really liked this person and I really, really wanted it to work out.

I think I've shared this on the show before, but there was a guy that I dated, and the way that we met, we were spending 10 weeks together in a ministry setting. So we were like our best selves for those 10 weeks. I mean, it was the perfect situation for us to get to show, to get to pull out and be the very best, purest, most amazing parts of ourselves, to share them with each other, to like do really cool things together. I had no cards left. I laid them out, they looked good.

And he told me one time that he was 90% sure he liked me, but not 100%. And I remember first of all being devastated by that. And my first thought was like, "Okay, how do I earn that leftover 10. But then realizing like, I have shown 100% of what I have to give here. Like, I do not have any super fancy tricks that I have not pulled out. They're all out here.

But I didn't walk away. I didn't be like, "Okay, well, so if you don't think you like me 100%, that's actually a deal breaker for me. So I'm going to end this or I'm going to walk away now." And there were so many things where I was like, "Okay, well I guess I'll just like stay here and try to earn that last 10."

And I completely agree with you. Some of the relationships that I look back on where I'm like, Oh, this could have... At the time, I was like, "This could work out. This would have been so good. Why isn't this working out?"

I'm like, it wasn't necessarily a personality thing. It wasn't our faith didn't line up. It was that there were so many situations where it's like I wouldn't have been able to do the things that I know that I meant to do in the world if I had been with this person because they didn't want to walk down this road or they didn't believe that I could, or they didn't believe that I should, or because they wanted to walk down it, and they wouldn't have been okay with there being room for both of us, or, you know, different things like that.

So when I met my husband, he didn't like me despite the things I was doing in the world. He liked me because of them. Especially initially that's not the thing that had him shrinking away from me, it's the thing that drew him in. And then also, he hasn't just put up with my dreams. He's been behind them, helping them, you know, behind the scenes, hooking up wires to make sure it all... you know, just doing everything he can to help me.

And I think at some point along the way or maybe many points along the way, we kind of have to choose. We have to choose between, do I want to be my full self or

do I want to be with this person? I love how you're saying the way that you were treating yourself, the way that you were loving yourself you knew you wanted to pick you. You wanted to be your full self. And it wasn't worth it to be with this person to keep him but lose you.

**Faith:** Right. Exactly.

**Stephanie:** Tell us how you met your husband.

**Faith:** That's a really fun story and very unconventional, I will say. But we met because my friend was doing a matchmaking service. I actually kind of thought she was joking, to be honest. But I love watching dating shows like *Indian Matchmaking*, *Love is Blind*. If there's a dating show, I've probably watched it. So I was like, "You know what? This might be fun."

So I messaged her and I just said, "I'm really interested in whatever you're doing." And she said, "Awesome. I'm gonna send you an application." And I was like, "Oh, wow, she's really serious. She's sending me an application."

**Stephanie:** I was like, "I have a friend. Here's his picture."

**Faith:** Yeah, exactly. I had no idea what she was doing. I just thought she was just gonna, you know, like, "Here's a friend, y'all meet up." Like a blind date type thing. But anyways, I ended up filling out this three page application and she asked for references. And I was like, "Oh, wow, she's really serious. Okay, okay."

So I gave her references and then she set up a meeting with me because she was like, "I want to talk through all your preferences and just get to know more about what you're looking for, and see if I have somebody that kind of meets that criteria." So I talked to her some more and then she said, "Okay, I think I have a person in mind for you but give me some time. Let me look over your profile and his and then I'll get back to you."

She asked me if I liked nerdy guys and I said, "Yeah, I do. I have a soft spot for nerdy guys." So she connected us via email, but only with our initials. She didn't tell us each other's name because she knew that we would go try to like internet-stalk each other, and she felt like that could ruin it because who a person is it's not always who they are online. So it's really important to get to know that person for who they are.

So all that being said, I had no idea what he looked like and I had no opportunity to look him up before meeting him on Zoom. I said I was open to a long-distance



relationship. So this person was long distance. So Zoom was where we met. So we met via zoom and we talked.

She kind of just introduced us to each other and told us why she matched us together and some of our hobbies and stuff. And then she said at the end of the conversation, "Marcel and Faithh, I'm gonna give you all each other's numbers. Marcel, you need to call Faithh and let her know if you want to continue talking, but she's not going to reach out to you first." So after that conversation, he reached out to me like 15 minutes later and we talked on the phone-

**Stephanie:** Really played it cool.

**Faithh:** Oh, for sure. We talked for like a few hours, I think. I can't remember but it went really well. And obviously we've been talking ever since because we got married. But it was cool. I don't think either of us ever expected to meet the person that would marry via a matchmaker but it's what happened.

So it was just really amazing. And I loved it because I had been doing online dating. And I was like, "You know what? At this point, I might need to try something unconventional. So it worked out really well. And yeah, we're really happy that it happened for us.

**Stephanie:** I feel like I know that this happened at the conference, everyone was like, "What's the name of your matchmaker?" So you definitely don't have to give it but maybe talk through... Because I know she has like a process. For women who are maybe wanting to explore this venue, what can they do?

**Faithh:** So my particular matchmaker, she's closed for now. I mentioned her at the conference and her email literally blew up. And I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I meant to tell you."

**Stephanie:** She's like, "What happened?" You're like, "I gave your email from stage."

**Faithh:** So yeah. She's on pause for now. But I don't know a whole lot about other matchmaking services, but I know that there are some. I would say, you know, never count out something unconventional to meet your person. I also tell people to network. You should be networking and encouraging your friends to network with you and for you. So if you have a friend that's, you know, married, ask, "Hey, do you have a friend that knows a friend that knows a friend?" You never know these days how you can meet somebody.

I always encourage my friends who would just be like, "Oh, my gosh, you're such an amazing person. I want to see you with somebody. I'm praying for you." And I

would say, "Thank you so much for praying, but Faith without works is dead. So please get out there and start networking for me. I would greatly appreciate it."

Because after a while, you know, the older you get, the more people will still tell you're young, you know, all throughout my 20s. "You're still young. It's fine. It's no big deal." I get into my 30s, "You're still young. It's fine. It's no big deal." That does not help people. Because the older you get, the more you change, especially if you're a woman and you want to have kids, the more your body changes, and all these things.

So those little anecdotes are actually not encouraging at all. So I would just say that having people you can say, "Hey, listen, thank you so much for your encouragement. Do you know anyone? And if you don't know anybody, are there matchmaking services that you know of, or would recommend, or that you can look up yourself to get information on and try?" It just never hurts to get outside of your comfort zone.

The other thing that I would say is, you obviously want to be with somebody that you're attracted to. But oftentimes we have these unrealistic standards that I think hinder us from being with a good person, and some of it's just like vanity.

So for example, my husband is not tall, he's short. And I almost didn't even want to be with him because it was like, "He's short. I don't even know if I can even do that." Me and him went back and forth about it. I never told this to him. I never said to him these feelings. I kept them to myself and or to a family member when I was saying like, "I don't know."

And the one thing that really got me was my older brother who can always just get me. He said, "Faith, if you're saying that this man has everything that you want in a person and the only thing is that he's short, then you just want to be single, and you need to accept that and just be single." And I was like, "Ah." I just could not believe that he said that to me but he was exactly right.

Because if I was literally right in front of the person that I felt like just clicked with me and it was my person and the only reason why I didn't want to be with them was because of, you know, a vanity kind of thing, then that was a problem within me. And he was 100% right.

So I have learned from my own mistakes in how I was thinking. You know, even how to talk it through like way later with my husband. But I'm just so glad I didn't let that hinder me from being with my person. I just think it's really easy these days with social media and all these other things to compare and I want this or I want that.

And it's just like, more than just the physical things, of course, be attracted to that person. But more than that, it's their character, it's who they are, it's how they show up in the world. These are things that matter more than anything. And once you get married, man, oh man, you're gonna see that because you're up close and personal with somebody. So all those things that really matter you want to make sure you have that in a person.

**Stephanie:** Yeah. Yeah. I was with a group of girls last week, and one of the girls was talking about how she really likes this guy and she was like, "But he's way shorter... Or he's not way shorter than her. She said, he's not taller than me. So I think maybe they're like the same height or something. And like, I get that. I'm 5'9, I've had the conversation too.

And she's like, "He isn't my type and he's not taller than me." And my friend was sitting next to me, and she goes, "Girl, who cares!" She's like, "In a couple of years, we're all going to be prunes anyway." Or maybe she said shriveled grapes. Like either one. She's like, "Either way, we're going to be shriveled grapes in a couple years anyway." So she's like, "That's not the stuff that matters."

And I just was sitting there thinking like, That is so true. It really is so true. We're picking a lot of times or not picking someone based off of something that will not last for that long. And it really doesn't matter. I mean, we've all met the person where we're like, Oh, my gosh, this person is so beautiful. And then we meet them in person and they start talking and we're like, "This is not a match."

**Faith:** Exactly.

**Stephanie:** "I am not attracted to you. I need to get some space. I'm not attracted to you." Or someone where we're like, "I wouldn't have noticed you originally but we're in this situation where I'm getting to see you in action and I'm getting to see your character and I am into this."

You know, whenever I talk to anybody about online dating, I'm like, Get off the app as fast as possible. Connect, go on a date, and then give it a shot because that's just something you can't tell from a picture.

**Faith:** Exactly.

**Stephanie:** You just can't. Or from a first meeting.

**Faith:** I completely agree with you.

**Stephanie:** You read something from your book at the conference that I just loved so much. I'm totally asking you to do an impromptu awkward author reading right now. It just was so encouraging. I just felt like my heart got a hug as you were reading it. So I just wanted to share with everybody.

**Faith:** "A letter to my sister who was longing to be loved. Sis, I know how it feels when the world seems to revolve around women deemed beautiful. When your skin is too dark, your hair too kinky, your curves too curvy, or your body too skinny, you feel like you don't fit. You don't get asked out as often as other girls. Many nights you feel lonely and can only begin to imagine what it would feel like for a significant other to truly love you unconditionally.

Or maybe you can't relate to that. You are what the world defines as beautiful, but you still feel ugly. You don't see what everyone else sees. You obsess over your body and maintaining your image. You get asked out on dates all the time. But I've started to see that most aren't interested in who you are as a person. They just want to be seen with you by their side.

Your friends say, 'You always get the guy,' or 'You're so beautiful. I never get the same attention as you,' or 'What is it like to pull whoever you want?' How can you complain about getting mindless attention? You don't have an outlet to express your insecurities because you have what everyone says they want. You dare not be insecure let alone complain.

Or maybe you're the girl who has found herself once again, hanging up a bridesmaid's dress and wondering when her turn to be the bride will come or if it will come at all. Maybe you're wondering if something is wrong with you. The words 'Am I lovable?' are silently whispered in your soul so quiet no one else can hear them.

You're tired of all the clichés about love coming to you when you least expect it. Some people will leave you feeling like you're an old woman if you're single at 30. Don't let people's timelines and for theology spoil your fun. Enjoy your life. Resist the peer pressure to follow the same old path. Carve your own path and write your own story.

I know how you feel. Your thoughts ebb and flow with positivity and negativity about singleness. On one hand you're proud of the life you're building as an independent single Black woman and at the same time you wish for a life you can build and share with a partner. Tired of being strong and fierce, you long for a space to be soft and tender, maybe acknowledging your longing to be seen and loved and known intimately.

Your heart has room for those feelings to coexist. You aren't crazy for wanting to be loved and spoiled by a partner who adores you. You deserve the best, Sis. I can't promise that serendipitous love will find you or that you'll have a love story unfold like *Love and Basketball*, *Love Jones*, or *Brown Sugar*.

But if your past is haunting you and making you feel like you'll never find your person, I encourage you to open your hands, open your heart, open your eyes, and open your mind to the goodness you want to receive. Fear will hold you hostage and cause you to close your heart to love. You have the ability to cultivate a good life, where the shame of your past doesn't grip your soul. Let yourself experience love and loss. A time of loving and letting yourself be loved is never wasted. Faithh.

**Stephanie:** I love it so much. Thank you so much for coming on the show. Thank you so much for your story. Thank you so much for your wisdom. Thank you so much for your words. I feel like we're all just gonna be rewinding that and listening to it all over again.

And you guys we're gonna have links to everything Faithh-related on our show notes. We'll have links to her books, to her social media just so that you can follow her and so you can be friends. But friend, thanks so much for coming to Girls Night.

**Faithh:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

[00:56:37] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, isn't Faithh amazing? Seriously, she's our new best friend, right? I just love her and I love her story. And there were so many times where I was just bowled over by God's truth and His love as she talked. Game-changing, right?

Don't forget that if you ever want to find any of the links for anything we talked about in our Girls Night episodes, you can always find those over on our show notes. Just head over to [girlsnightpodcast.com](http://girlsnightpodcast.com) and you'll find links for everything, including links for Faithh so you can pick up her book, listen to her podcast and follow along with all the great stuff she's doing.

Alright friends, that's it for today's episode, but we have so much good stuff ahead this season. And with that in mind, now's the perfect time to make sure you're subscribed. Subscribing to the show is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It won't send you an email or anything. It just makes sure that your phone downloads the latest episode when a new one's released.

And I did want to take a quick second to ask you a favor. If you enjoyed this episode or if you've been a Girls Night fan for a while now, would you take just two quick seconds to leave us a rating and review on iTunes? Those reviews help out our podcast so much and it really would mean the world to me. So if you take two quick seconds to do that, I'd be so grateful. Friends, thanks so much for joining me for Girls Night. I'll see you next week.