



QUESTIONS

for your real life journey

Episode 21: Danielle Strickland

How do we face change?

1. THE ADVENTURER (5:42)

Danielle introduces the Enneagram, which is a self-discovery system that looks at various aspects of personality (See enneagraminstitute.com for a summary).

She explains that her personality is the 'type 7, or "Adventurer" type' – so she is curious about change and sees it as an invitation to 'wonder what God might have in mind here.'

She finds it a helpful tool for understanding herself and others better. One of its most helpful elements is how it describes what unhealthy and healthy versions of each type look like: 'For me that is super helpful, because as soon as I lean towards that unhealthy list, it's a really good signal to come back to the centre, to a healthy place.'

Have you come across the Enneagram before? What other personality systems have you found useful, and why? What other strategies could you use to help you know when you are displaying healthy or unhealthy behaviours?

2. WHEN'S THE PARTY? (18:50)

Danielle was a Salvation Army officer for 23 years. When her friend heard Bob Goff heard that she was leaving officership, he rang to ask her, 'When's the party?'

She tried to explain that this change wasn't one she welcomed – she was actually finding it very difficult. But Bob told her he wasn't talking about a party because she was leaving, but a party because of all that God had done through her as an officer: 'Either you throw the party or I will – but someone has to throw a party because there's so much to celebrate.'

Danielle explains, 'The reframing of that was so powerful to me. With all change, there's a mourning of what could have been or what should have been – but there's also a celebration where you remember what God's done in that season or chapter of your life.'

Have you ever felt that a chapter or season in your life was ending that you didn't necessarily want to end? How did you feel? Did you take the time to celebrate that part of your life? If not, do you think doing so would have helped you to face the change more easily?



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How do we move through suffering?

3. AUTHENTIC LAMENT (21:28)

Danielle's choice for her living walking companion on the hypothetical hike is Leymah Gbowee, a Nobel Peace Prize winner from Liberia who led a movement of over 300,000 women to publicly pray out prayers of protest and lament against the country's dictator, which led to the election of the first female president in Africa.

In answer to the question about moving through suffering, she says, 'I have been reading a lot these days about lament, in terms of properly expressing suffering, giving suffering a voice – actually voicing the pain.'

'I think for most of my life, if I'm honest, I dealt with suffering by not feeling it – by just suppressing it, pushing it down, not mentioning it, or fighting through.'

When you suffer, what do you think you tend to do – voice or suppress your pain? How has that worked out for you? Are songs or prayers of lament something you've experienced much in the context of a church gathering? Why do you think that might be?

4. SERVING THOSE WHO SUFFER (26:02)

'I think a meaningful way of dealing with suffering is by serving people who suffer too. I have to stay connected to real people struggling and to serve them. Or else I lose touch with my own healing somehow.'

Danielle describes watching a scene from the live-action film Hercules where the protagonist, a charlatan pretending to be half-god, is injured, and, seeing this, the captain of his secret team rushes over to cover the injury with a cape, with the words, 'Never let them see you bleed.'

'As soon as that scene happened, the entire screen just went blank for me. And I saw Jesus crucified, and bleeding everywhere. And I felt the Holy Spirit ask me what kind of a leader I wanted to be? – Like Hercules, covering all my wounds, pretending that I'm better than I am? Or like Jesus, willing to suffer openly, willing to be angry, to weep, to be weak, to be vulnerable?

'And the answer is of course: I want to be Hercules! Every single thing in my culture, in my makeup, and even in my religious background has taught me that the herculean ascent is real, and that that's what I'm supposed to do.

'But in those moments where I'm most attuned to the Spirit of God, I'll understand that the Jesus way is the most powerful, kingdom way. And that it's costly to me, but actually, it is the means by which grace, forgiveness and love enter the world, which is the only hope for redemption.'



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What do you think about the idea that you can only move through suffering, only be healed, if you engage with the suffering of others? Do you agree that we are taught so often to have a herculean mentality that refuses to be honest about our weaknesses? Why might Christ's authentic openness about his emotions and his weaknesses be so powerful?

How do we receive joy?

5. IRRITATION OR INVITATION? (39:24)

Danielle says that we're so prone to functionality that we often view the interruptions or disruptions in our days as irritations rather than invitations for joy.

She suggests, 'I think a large part of what the Sabbath is for is to get us out of the grind just long enough that we might open.'

How do you respond when someone or something – for example, a child's question, a stranger's conversation or a busker's song – interrupts what you are doing? How do you use the Sabbath? How might using the Sabbath as an opportunity to be open and attentive allow you to recognise opportunities for joy during the week?

6. PICTURING YOUR FUTURE SELF (41:28)

'One of the things I actually do practically is to start my days off with the INFINITUM postures of surrender, generosity and mission. So I pray, "This life is not my own, I surrender the day... I receive what I need, and I'm going to give it away... And I make my life open to the needs of others today.

'And then at the end of the day, when I'm lying in bed, I usually go through the postures again. And I ask myself, "Where were the opportunities for surrender today?" And I just thank God for them – whether I missed them or got them. And then I ask, "Where did I freely receive or give today?" And I celebrate those times. And then I look back over my day for places where I was others-focused: "Where did I serve? Who was I open to?"

'And what I've discovered happens to me now is that I'll have an encounter in the day, and I'll picture myself later that night reflecting on this moment now and think, "Oh, this is going to be one of those moments I'll regret missing when I look back on my day." And I found that practice has been really useful in opening me up to invitations to joy.'

Do you have any morning or evening routines (of any kind – not just spiritual)? What positive impact(s) do they have on your daily life? How might practising the postures of surrender, generosity and mission positively impact your discipleship, your thoughts and your character?



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How do we mature in service?

7. BATTLING ENTITLEMENT (46:23)

Matt asks Danielle how, in an age of self-obsession and counting *Likes* on social media, she battles the entitlement that can come with the platform of someone who communicates to thousands of people on a regular basis.

She explains, 'I think that we have to battle entitlement by intentionally serving.

'As soon as I notice that my dominant thoughts are me-centred, I change my question to "How can I serve?"'

When was the last time you felt 'entitled'? In that moment, what kind of thoughts did you have about other people? How might intentionally serving help to battle that entitlement? How do you learn to notice that your dominant thoughts are becoming too 'me-centred'?

8. TRULY HUMBLE AND TRULY DEPENDENT (41:41)

Matt asks Danielle what the biggest difference is between the Danielle Strickland of today and the Danielle Strickland of 25 years ago:

'I would say the biggest difference is that I've come more into agreement with who God says I am, which has liberated me from trying to prove myself, please others or be what other people want me to be. True humility is just agreeing with God about who you are.

'And then the other difference is that of seeking true dependency; trying to create places in my life where only God can show up. And I feel like the more self-sufficient or successful you are, the harder that can be.'

Do you feel the need to prove yourself, please others or be what others want you to be? How might you come more into agreement with who God says you are? What do you think of the idea that true humility might be agreeing with God's view that you are 'his masterpiece' (Ephesians 2:10)? How could you create places in your life where only God can show up?



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Act: INFINITUM PRAYER WALK

Find a good place for walking with your group – for example, a large park, or somewhere with a bit of scenery where it's difficult for anyone to get lost!

If possible, plan to do this first thing in the day – perhaps on a Saturday morning, or before the church gathers on Sunday.

Download the free [Daily Prayer resource](#) from the INFINITUM site and share it so everyone has a copy on their smartphone (or a printed copy if necessary), as well as a way to keep track of time.

Surrender: from fighting to stillness

- Read: Ask someone to read the prayer of surrender aloud for the group.
- Pray: Set your timers for 15-20 minutes, then go for a walk as individuals and pray this posture of surrender, listening to what the Holy Spirit wants to say to you.
- Consider: The prayer lists seven things to surrender to Jesus – preferences, prejudices, position, fears, finances, friends and family. Do any of these resonate more strongly as you spend time surrendering to Jesus?
- Share: Come back together when the alarms go off. Allow for a short debrief for individuals to share any insights they had.

Generosity: from grasping to giving

- Read: Ask someone to read the prayer of generosity aloud for the group.
- Pray: Set your timers for another 15-20 minutes, then go off in pairs and pray this posture of generosity.
- Discuss: The prayer states, 'I want to live an open-handed life in a closed-fisted culture.' What does this closed-fisted culture look like for you? What small action could you take today to live an open-handed life?
- Share: Come back together when the alarms go off – and allow for another short debrief for pairs to share any insights they had.

Mission: from disengagement to engagement

- Read: Ask someone to read the prayer of mission aloud for the group.
- Pray: Set your timers for a final 15-20 minutes, then go for a walk in groups of 3-4 (or as a whole group) and pray this posture of mission.
- Plan: The prayer identifies eight different groups: the lost, the last, the least, the lonely, the poor, the powerless, the privileged and the persecuted. Do any resonate with you as a group? If not, pick one anyway and brainstorm creative ways that you could engage with that group in order to live for something greater than yourselves.
- Share: Share your ideas and commit to how you will follow up on them.

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