

Music:

Denise:

Hi, and welcome to your Velvet's Legacy podcast this month. Sarah and I are here with you. Hey, Sarah.

Sarah:

Hey!

Denise:

And we have a really special episode today. In fact, we're doing this, um, just kind of a introduction to let you know about what we are bringing you this month. Sarah, talk a little bit about who we're getting to talk to this month.

Sarah:

Yeah, well, this is our first topical discussion, and we actually had two different conversations. So you get to hear from two different women who are on the field, and we're talking about women in leadership. So we got to talk with Junia, who is a single woman who's been serving on the field a long time, and, uh, serves as an area director, and then also Caitlin, who is in leadership with her husband. So I love that we get to bring these two different perspectives to this really important conversation.

Denise:

And I just encourage you to listen in. It's a maybe a little bit longer this month, but you got a whole month to listen to these two women and just be inspired by their stories of courage and leadership in all of its forms, whether that's up front or serving quietly in the background. We hope you'll be inspired as you listen in this month to your Velvet Ashes Legacy podcast. Alright, let's get to the interviews.

Denise:

Hey everybody. Welcome to season two of the Velvet Ashes Legacy podcast. We're here with our very first, um, topical offering for you this month. We're really excited about that. I'm Denise Beck, executive director of Velvet Ashes. I'm here with Sarah Hilkemann. Hey, Sarah.

Sarah:

Hey everyone.

Denise:

And we have a special guest with us to talk about this month's topic of women in leadership. And, um, I'd like to welcome Junia to our conversation. How are you? I'm

Junia:

Doing good. Thanks for having me.

Denise:

We're so excited that you joined us. Junia, you are serving in Eastern Europe and you are serving in a leadership capacity. And I'd love for you to just, um, talk to us a little bit about that today. It's, it's something that I think is interesting, just the dynamic of women in leadership. There's so many different facets and ways we could go with this, but one of the other things that is interesting that you bring to this topic is that you are serving in a leadership position as a single. So I would love for you to just introduce yourself to the community, talk a little bit about your, your role in leadership and, and then I'll just, I'll ask you some questions around that, but just introduce yourself a little bit to our community.

Junia:

Sure. I would love to, um, I, I'll just start by saying that I am probably more surprised than anybody else that I'm doing what I am doing right now. Um, <laugh>, I first came to the field, um, I guess it's been almost 14 years now, and I planned on staying for two years. Ended up staying for much longer than that <laugh>. So the fact that, um, God has led in such a way that I am serving in the role that I am and being a, being able to be a part of what I'm able to be a part of, it's a huge privilege. And it's, I'm, there's a, you're right, there's a lot that I could say about just the things that I get to be a part of, but then also the leadership role that comes with that. So I do serve, um, over in Eastern Europe, and my role is serving and overseeing teams and ministries in my area.

Denise:

Okay. So when you joined the field and for that two year stint that you thought you were gonna join, did, is it the same organization? Do, were you, is this a consecutive growth with one like organization?

Junia:

Yes, and it's been a great fit for me with this organization. It's been like, even, and when you talk about women in leadership, I have felt nothing but supported and empowered and almost championed through, through this organization.

Denise:

Honestly. That was one of my questions that I wanted to ask you about because I feel like, so you also serve in a Muslim context, is that correct? Mm-hmm.

Junia:

<affirmative>, yes, that's correct.

Denise:

So, so in general, there's so many different things that could be pushing against you as a leader, um, that could make it challenging and difficult. And so I, I love hearing that you said your experience has been, has been really positive. But are there certain challenges even that you personally wrestled with, maybe early on when you were asked to take those next steps in leadership? You know, I assume it wasn't just all of a sudden here you're in charge of teams and all of these things. Were there gradual steps that led you to this, um, path and what were challenging about those things?

Junia:

Yeah, absolutely. Um, I, I would say a couple of things come to mind when I've had heard other people mention the role that I'm in now, they would say things like, it's a shepherding role. It's a pastoring role,

even a leading role. And anytime anyone used those words, I was like, I can't do that <laugh>. I'm not a shepherd. I'm not a pastor and I'm not even meaning to make a theological statement. Maybe I am. But even those words, I just did not, I did not relate to those words, but I've just been, but my heart is for the Lord and my heart is to empower other people to strengthen teams. I wanna see, I wanna see churches planted everywhere. I wanna see teams thriving. I wanna see people thriving. I wanna see people come to the Lord, see them come to know the Lord.

Junia:

And so those types of things were coming out. So I found it really important to kind of change my framework and how I thought about my role. Mm-hmm. Um, when being invited and asked to step into leadership positions, thinking of it more as serving, servant leading, thinking of it as coaching, thinking of it as empowering those things really helped me. Um, so when I, when I thought of it, when I think of it in those terms, it helped me to step into it more than thinking of it in terms of how most men would probably look at it. Hmm.

Denise:

Sarah, I know that, you know, you served on the field in a single context and in some leadership positions. What are those issues and questions that, you know, maybe are applicable to a single wrestling with this leadership role?

Sarah:

Yeah, well, one of the things I was thinking about and would love to hear your perspective on this, Junia, it can be difficult as a leader to have a way to process things. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, and particularly as a single, if you're married, you might be able to do that with your spouse, you know, to be able to bounce ideas off of them and or process after, you know, you've gone through a meeting or something. And so, what have you found in being able to process things? What has that looked like as a leader, but also as a single leader?

Junia:

Yeah. A single leader who is an external processor <laugh>. Mm.

Junia:

So this is, this has been one of the biggest challenges for me, um, as my, as my, as the leadership responsibilities have grown over the last couple of years of trying to figure this part out. Um, one thing that I have tried, the principle that I've tried to live by is I think of Jesus who was also single. Um, he, he had his relationship with the Father, which was his number one. And then he had three close friends, and then he was pouring intentionally his life into 12. And so I, I do try to have three people at all time at times that really know me, that are asking me hard questions that are kind of pursuing me, 'cause I'm often pursuing other people in my role. And so that's something that I really look for. But it's hard because it's as being on the field, the only constant on the field is change.

Junia:

So those three people change. And I've had times where those three people are with me in the same city, in the same neighborhood. I haven't had that two of the three in the same neighborhood. But for example, during Covid, all of them left <laugh>. So it's, it's trying to figure, it's trying to figure that out again. And so that's, that's one principle that I've, I've had to, had to really be intentional about. But it is

one of the biggest challenges for me by far, is trying to figure that out because it's not just processing, it's also knowing who I can process with. 'cause so many of the things are confidential. Um, but that, that has been something to, to try to figure out.

Denise:

You know, the three that you mentioned, are those three on your team or have you found that you find those outside of your team?

Junia:

I find I can have close friendships with people on my team and that I'm serving and overseeing. But as far as the three that I'm mentioning, I'm actually thinking outside of that mm-hmm. <affirmative> mm-hmm. <affirmative>, just 'cause I feel like I need somebody who I, it's, yeah. It's better for me to, for them to be outside of the team and outside of my ministry context.

Denise:

Yeah. I, I felt when you were saying that, I, I was thinking about the complications of, you know, being able to process things with people whose the decisions directly affect that, that makes, that makes it challenging. When I was serving, um, my husband was team leader and one of the things somebody told me early on was, it's, it's lonely at the top. And I wonder, do you find that, do you find that it's lonely or have you been able to, with these, you know, 12 and three foster really great relationships?

Junia:

No, I, so I remember somebody saying, yeah, it's that leadership can be, I, it's, it's isolating. And I'm like, well, I think it, like, yes, I'll say it this way, it's lonely, but I try everything I can to not make it isolated. That's the word I would probably use. So I think leadership, being in a leadership role, there are, by the nature of it, there are really lonely moments when you're having to make decisions and process through things. Um, but I try as much as possible to not be isolated, which is really hard to do. And it's, it's extremely difficult to do. So I would say yes to your question, there are definitely lonely moments. There's lonely times. Um, but I would dis, one thing that I'm trying to do, and I try to help other people to do that I talk with, is to try to differentiate or try to distinguish between the idea of isolation and loneliness. 'cause I feel like sometimes people put those things together. Mm-hmm. We're all called to be in community, especially, everybody including leaders.

Denise:

Absolutely. Absolutely. One of the things that I was curious about is you have indicated you've had a really great experience with being a woman who is asked to lead, but that's not always the case. That there are other, you know, churches sending orgs, teams that may wrestle with that idea of women in leadership. Have you, um, I don't know, would you have any advice for people that maybe find themselves sitting as a woman being asked to lead and who are coming against, you know, some pushback, maybe being in a room, but not feeling like you're being taken seriously or other people's, men who are in the room, um, not knowing how to lead well in partnership with you. Have you any advice for people who might find themselves in situations that aren't as, you know, welcoming as you have found yourself in?

Junia:

That's a good question. I feel like I'm not the right person to give that 'cause that has not been my experience. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, yeah. I'm not sure. The only thing that comes to mind for that is just try to help people think kingdom minded. That's one thing. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's the first thing that comes to mind. The other thing that helps me is I, I do put a difference between church leadership and organization leadership. So that, that I think is really key. So some, I, some people don't do that, but I think some people haven't even thought of it in those terms. And so if you're within a, a, a mission organization, really challenge people to, to think about that. Is it if, even if, let's say they're against like female elders or female pastors or something like, or something of that context, but really leaning into that and saying, why would you be against a female, you know, area director or regional director or the CFO, you know mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I, I don't know if they would find a good theological answer for that.

Denise:

That's a really great point. I love that distinction. And, and you know, even going into this call, we recognize that a lot of our community are gonna have different opinions and, um, convictions about egalitarian complementarian mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know, conversations around the table. And yet this topic of women in leadership is still relevant mm-hmm. <affirmative> and to all of us as we, as we interact for the kingdom. And in some cases, even, you know, as we, Sarah have talked about women of the past that have served, there have been women that by necessity have had to step into leadership positions because there were no men to do that. You know? And so, um, Lottie Moon, I'm thinking actually, is that one of them, Sarah, that you know mm-hmm. <affirmative> Yep. Was in that situation. And there's like men that are wanting to hear, and no men that are there to tell.

Denise:

And so you find that you have these women in, in leadership positions that maybe find themselves that I don't even wanna be in this position, and yet here I am. And we talk about just number one, the realities of the reason Velvet Ashes even exist are there are so many more women serving cross-culturally than there are men on the field. And so following that out is you are going to have women in different categories of leadership, whether that's team leadership, whether that's leading a project, whether that's leading in some other capacity. You know, just helping people to understand how do we interact with, encourage, support, remove obstacles for the gospel, and what does that look like for, for women who are in those places. And so, yeah. I I totally really appreciate that distinction of even, you know, kingdom, organizational, church and mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And I feel like that's a really helpful distinction for some people who may be listening to this today.

Junia:

Well, and if I can just add to that, I have, I have, I won't say the number I have out of the, out of the people who were directly report to me, the majority of them are married men. And I'm, I think the majority of them are complimentarian <laugh>. And they've, they're fine with me being their supervisor. And so you see that distinction even in how they operate in their homes is different. And they really are, they're totally fine with, with me. I'm with me. I mean, I don't know if they're fine with me, but they're fine with having a female <laugh>.

Denise:

So, yes. And I, I think that, um, that was another question that I had. It is, how, how does that dynamic and that, you know, relationship work for those that you know, report to you mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

And have you had any challenges with that, that you had to overcome or work through or have discussions about? You know, I think leadership crossing genders in itself, you know, we've, we've all, even when there's men that are leading women, there are safeguards that you put into place, you know, in lots of organizations or churches or even just, you know, your preference as a follower of Christ is like, well, we wanna make sure that we, you know, protect, um, different, leave the door open, always include other people in the conversation. You know, things like that. Have you, um, found any of those things, ways that you, you know, operate that make people feel more comfortable or address any of those types of topics?

Junia:

Yeah, I, I remember my mentor who also was in the, one of my mentors who was in a role like I'm in now. One of the things she said to me is one of the most important things that I can do as a single female is to intentionally develop relationships with the wives of the men that I am, I'm supervising. Which I have found that to be so important. And I mean, it's a blessing to me too. 'cause I just love spending time with them. But the reality is that I just spend a lot of time with their husbands <laugh>, you know? Yeah. And we, and we talk about strategy, we talk about, you know, vision, those types of things. And then the, the wives are at home doing the real holy work of, you know, spending time with the kids and doing those types of things.

Junia:

So I just, I found that that was one of the most helpful things somebody told me stepping into this that was, that I've tried to put into practice and has been really, yeah. It's been really helpful. And then, I mean, and there's limitations. Like I am, because I'm not male, I'm not gonna be asking the same questions that maybe I would that mm-hmm. <affirmative> to, to like another male that if I, if I were the same gender as him, yeah. But at the same time, I can be more personal with more of the women. And like you said, there are more, there are more women on the field, and I don't know the percentage anymore, but there's a lot of single females. Yeah.

Denise:

There really are.

Junia:

Right. So there's just like anything else, there's advantages and disadvantages to it.

Sarah:

Junia, you mentioned having a mentor mm-hmm. <affirmative> and sort of being mentored in this process. What was the most encouraging in that mentorship process or the most helpful for you in getting to where you are today?

Junia:

It's interesting 'cause I, I automatically think of multiple mentors, <laugh>, and this kind of goes back to the organizational question, Denise, that you asked earlier. One of the things that meant most to me is that I was asked to speak at like a training event. And it was the first time that I ever spoke at a training event. And I went in to speak to these outgoing, um, workers that were gonna go into the field. And there weren't any other trainers that were in the room. Like, it was just me with these 40, with these 40 candidates, <laugh>. And I remember thinking, wow, there's so much trust there. They don't have any

idea what I'm gonna say to these people. But, but I think of that. And then the, the male, uh, director of training afterwards, like in a way he was mentoring me. So I think of like, the amount of trust that he was showing me and just trust, but then also affirmation.

Junia:

I found that to be just really empowering. And that's just an example of how I felt really affirmed in my organization. And then just more directly as far as, um, mentoring, uh, one of the things I love about this woman that has been intentionally mentoring me is, uh, I, she's, she's very good at pointing out blind spots. Hmm. Which, when you ask that question, you, you think you want people to ask that answer your question. I mean, you really do <laugh>, but, but she was really, really good about, with like speaking the truth in love for me of just showing just some areas that I could grow in. And so, but she was really, really good about just being really intentional. But I knew that she was doing it in love and I knew she was doing it for my good and just pointing out some things for me. But I would just say there's been so many mentors that I could point to too. There's the big ones, like the one I just mentioned, that woman that it's been multiple years and she's very intentional. But I also just think of others that I feel like have given me bits of wisdom and trust along the years that I, I feel like have also joined on the journey at some point.

Denise:

You know, sometimes, you know, outside of personal mentors, we find resources that are really helpful, like books or podcasts or things. Have you found any of those that, you know might be helpful for other people who are feeling maybe the call or the draw toward taking more leadership roles, even as a woman or as a single?

Junia:

Yeah. I, I would highly recommend there's a ministry that's called Shoulder to Shoulder, and they have done a lot of teaching on a theology of singleness. It's just been very, I'm gonna keep using this word very empowering for me because one, they just, they talk about how marriage is a picture of Christ in the church. Then they also talk about how singleness is also unique reflection of the gospel and how you can use that again for Kingdom orientedness. And that's kind of the big picture of it. But it's also just showing the value of singles with married, and then the whole picture of serving shoulder to shoulder. That's something that was really huge for me, was being, was, was learning more about their ministry, being taught by what they were teaching. Um, and it, it just, and I've shared that I've, I have, I have shared that time and time again, uh, within different contexts. So that's, that's the first that comes to mind.

Denise:

Absolutely. And in that, you know, do you feel like in your team situation, you know, with, you even mentioned lots of singles on the field. Are there specific resources even, you know, if you're not called into leadership, is Shoulder to Shoulder being one of them, you know, even if it's not resources, like encouragement for people who are serving as single and some of those challenges that just come up just because you live cross-culturally in general, you know, would you have any thoughts just from your years, 14 years on the field, you know, for those of our listeners today who are finding themselves, maybe not in a leadership role, but just, you know, dealing with, what is it like to serve as a single?

Junia:

Yeah. So I, I would say I would start big and then go small. That's my, that's the way that, and what I mean by that is, um, we know that God can be glorified in the midst of healthy marriages. He can also be glorified in the midst of a single life lived to the glory of God. Mm-hmm. That doesn't mean that it's easy. It doesn't mean that it's simple, but if someone is single until they're 20 or 30 or single again, you are able to use your singleness to the glory of God. And there's ways of living that out more. I, I even, I, I could talk a lot about this, but I'll try to succinct, succinctly kind of put this end, but I just find it fascinating that Islam and in and in Judaism, singleness is seen as a bad thing, but it's the gospel that ends up saying that it's good.

Junia:

And so even that, you just think about the power of that, and you think about just how important that is for singles, but then even for married to understand that more. So anyways, I would start there of just saying that my single life is, is something that God can use as a vehicle to glorify himself just as marriage can be. I say that saying it can also be very difficult <laugh> to be a single on the field. I do not wanna minimize that. Um, I definitely have had moments where I'm like, oh, I would just wanna be married and <laugh>, you know, why am I the one that has to make all these decisions about what I'm doing and fix my car and make my own food? And

Denise:

Yes.

Junia:

Those types of things. And so I, it is hard. I, I would just say you have to find things that are, I, I know people talk about self-care, but it's soul care. <laugh>, like, talk about soul care that's going to help, you know, not just to be on the field, but just because you're a beloved person of God to feed into your soul. Um, and that may look different for you. To me it's running and being in the mountains. Other people, it's, you know, cooking. But I would just say that don't be shy about prioritizing those things that are going to bring, that are going to enhance your soul. And then I would just say, be really honest about the things that are hard, hard about being single. One of the things that drives me the most crazy is car stuff. It just that you talk about overreactions on the field, I don't know anything about car stuff in America. And then I come to where I live and it just becomes more frustrating. So I, I have someone that helps me out with that. Like as soon as, as soon as my car has problems with it, I call him <laugh> and he takes care of it. And I, he's, he's gold. He's like my favorite person in the world because he do does things for me. So, but that, that's, that's what I would say about that. Can

Denise:

I just ask, because I, you know, was on the field as a married with family, and sometimes we wanted so badly to incorporate, include our single, you know, expats that lived around us. And what would you say to people in this situation? Like, what is a good way to do that? What is an honoring way to do that? You know, not just as, you know, your only role could be to give us a date night by watching our kids <laugh>. Do you know what I mean? Like what, what would be an honoring way for those who want to include singles well?

Junia:

Yeah, I think, I think the pendulum has swung so far, so many married couples now are, are afraid to ask singles to look at their kids that, or like, look, look over, you know, have them babysit for at night. That



they, it's almost swung too far <laugh>. So. Okay. Great. I think, at least in my context, you know, so I, I just really love the word that you use as invite. And it's like, I mean, some singles, I mean, well, I even, I think of myself, it's, you know, the hardest, the hardest people for me to leave are my, my nieces and nephews. And now that I have been here for as long as I have been, it is a tremendous joy for me to be able to see kids, you know, go from being born up to and growing up here and feeling like I'm, I'm an aunt to them.

Junia:

So, so, I, I appreciate, I wanna, I want to say I appreciate, and I, I do appreciate the fact that people aren't recruiting singles anymore just to babysit their kids. 'cause that is a reality that does, that does happen. And it used to happen all the time. Um, but I would just say the whole invitation, like we are all coworkers, equal coworkers, and we're all brothers and sisters. And so as much as we can operate both as all being ambassadors and all being part of the same spiritual family, I think that's where, I think that's where the sweet spot is as far as teams and, uh, field life.

Denise:

Just kind of even building on, I know we are kind of getting away from a little bit of the topic of just your leadership, but your experience of 14 years of being on teams and things. Um, and you mentioned, you know, being a verbal processor mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And, and are there any advice, like even for, for team meetings or for the way things are run when you know that there's, there's not gonna be somebody that you go home and process with, but everybody else maybe does have that. And so, um, are there tips or advice for, you know, how do you run team meetings well or engage in team discussions and decisions that need to happen knowing that, you know, I maybe need time just like you do to process this with somebody? Or, um, I don't know, are there things that you have found helpful, even just as being a single on the field to help those team decisions, team meetings, you mentioned even we're all equal in this team, you know, um, those types of decisions, leadership, things that happen on a team, um, that could help singles not feel like, just because I don't have a spouse here, I'm not given as much of a voice in decisions that are being made.

Junia:

Yeah. So I would say the first thing that comes to mind is as far as someone being in leadership role that needs to make decisions and wants to hear a variety of different voices, you have to remind people of that. And I, my personality is one that if I hear an idea, I automatically think it's a good idea. I also like change <laugh>, and I might like, that's, that's not always a good combination, <laugh>. And so

Denise:

That's a fun combination, <laugh>.

Junia:

But, but I have one of my team leaders, he always saw this as a weakness, but he just always sees what's wrong with things. Like he's the Eeyore of, of our, like, of our area, you know? And I mean, it can be a weakness, but I love talking with him and he knows, he knows that I need him to tell me all the reasons why an idea will not work, like, and <laugh>. So, and it's, we work really well together before that. So, so I think as far as, um, again, it's, it is hard to be the person making decisions, and you don't just wanna be up in your own head and you don't want, you do wanna get a variety of voices, but a lot of times you have to directly ask people and affirm people pushing back on you. So that's the first thing I would say.

Junia:

And then the other thing I would say, I, I remember when I was a single and I was, for a long time it was me and a married couple on the team, and that was it. And I just always, it was always felt like two vs one. Mm-hmm. And so, and even the way they sat, it was always on the opposite side of the room. I was on the biggest couch and they were on a small couch, like cuddling, you know? And then I would have no one next to me, and I would just feel the, I would just feel like it was against me, and they weren't meaning to do that. Mm-hmm. They would also say things like, oh, we, we, we thought about this for a week and prayed about it. What do you think about it? You know? Mm-hmm. And so, and so it wasn't, it just, it didn't feel very, it did not feel very equal.

Junia:

Um, so yeah, that's something to be really conscious of. Um, I also, yeah, that's just kind of a practical thing when people are in team meetings that it can feel, it can feel really intimidating for a single, um, to speak up. And I also know, I've heard that from married women as well, that they're like, it's not just my husband <laugh>. You know? So that's where asking direct questions is really important. And then I guess the last thing I would say, too, probably one of the hardest things for me, um, and being in the role that I'm in is if I do have a really difficult meeting, uh, I, I know that the married couples are going back and processing with them, and I feel it when the married couples leave, and it's just me. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's probably the, one of the loneliest parts is that part. And so I have as much as possible given people I have, I have some, um, some like a, like a virtual team and a prayer team that I text that I let them know that I'm going into a difficult meeting, ask 'em to pray, and then there's people that follow up like right afterwards, which always means a lot to me. So that's something really practical I've tried to do. 'cause that that lull after those meetings, that is really hard.

Denise:

You know, what I hear you saying is recognizing where you feel attention point and being proactive about putting things in place to help with that. You know? So like, I think as a, as a single, but as a leader, you know, where you feel a loneliness or an unbalance, you know, not just sitting in it, but working to be like, okay, how do I make changes? Include other people, invite people in to help this to be alleviated. And I think that that's like a takeaway from this for anybody listening isn't, you know, you don't have to just sit in the uncomfortable situation, whatever that might be. But, you know, think outside of the box. Be proactive in what could a solution look like. I did wanna come back to the leadership, um, topic and just acknowledging, you know, you mentioned you work in a Muslim context and women in leadership in Muslim context sometimes in itself is challenging. Do you find, you know, that that has been difficult to be in that context as a leader, or really you're not interacting in a leadership role with the community so much as in the team, but just talk a little bit about that.

Junia:

Yeah. Probably the part that I feel the most, um, tension with that, um, is within the, the believing community. Because we often will have meetings. I mean, the, the, the church where I live is very, very small. Uh, but there are pastors and, and the vast, all the vast majority are men. And the, and the church leaders are men, and then the organizational leaders are men. So there, it's very often, um, in these contexts that I am the only woman in that, in that room. And so there are some, there can be some challenges with that. But I also would say there's some challenges too. If I were coming in as, as a for, or i, I maybe coming in as an like as, as a white American male, there would a lot of them could be a little bit more defensive towards that. Hmm.

Denise:

When I was in Africa, I was disregarded because I was a woman, because women weren't in leadership roles and they didn't make decisions. And so if I was ever in a situation, I felt like I had to work extra hard to even be taken seriously. And I didn't know if you faced any of those types of things.

Junia:

I think, I think the biggest thing here that I find is in the culture is there's just a lot of objectification. Maybe it'd be the right word for it, is that's probably more. And, and of course that goes underneath the, to being taken seriously part it, it's interesting. I feel like those are the two extremes I have. I have local Muslim friends of mine who, who just think it's great to meet like a strong female personality, whatever that means. I'm still trying to understand what that means. Uh, so they're fine with it. But then you have the other extreme where there is just like, you know, a woman's place is in the kitchen, and I find where I live, because it is in Eastern Europe, it's, those things are probably not as pronounced as they would be in other Muslim context, but, but it is there, but it's, there's more of a variety here than there would be. And I just have to, I just have to kind of look for it and see by whom that I'm, I'm talking with mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Denise:

Yeah, for sure. I, I've been so fascinated by this conversation. Um, Sarah, I don't know, do you have anything, any other questions that I haven't already asked?

Sarah:

Well, I'm thinking of the woman on the, on the field who maybe is single, um, maybe not, but who feels this pull maybe to leadership or feels like maybe it's something they would like to grow in or, um, that even God is calling them to. Do you have any encouragement for those women of, of how to grow as a leader, how to, um, move into that if it is something they are feeling, um, drawn to?

Junia:

Yeah. I, I would say the way that I define leadership is serving and influence. And so that if there's a way that whoever that person is that feels that maybe God is calling them to lead, maybe they feel like God might've given them the, the gift of leadership, then find ways to serve and maybe in whatever that context means. And that's what I would say. And then empower other people. Like, to me that's, that's the best form of leadership is actually just empowering those around the, around you to do what God is calling them to do. I

Denise:

Love that. Removing obstacles from people so they can succeed. Yeah. I love it. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Junia, is there anything else? Last minute thoughts, words of encouragement to the community that will listen to this, this month that you might wanna just offer based on either anything that we have talked about or just your personal experience in your 14 years of service on the field, which is just amazing, honestly, in a time when people don't look at cross-cultural service as long term, you know, so just like pulling on your, your vast, um, history on the field. What, what might you say to those women who are listening this month?

Junia:

Yeah, I think I would just share something that's been impacting me recently. I, I often find myself praying for wisdom, praying for direction, not just for me, but for other people. And I feel like things change so quickly, and I'm often being like, am I doing the right thing? Are we doing the right thing? Are we going on the right direction? Um, what's the better things for us to be doing? And I, I often find myself going back to the Psalms when I feel that way. And I love the pictures that, that especially David brings of God being a refuge of God, being a rock, um, of being a strong tower. I feel that, there's so oftentimes that I have that visual when everything is around around me is hard and there's challenges, and you feel like you're, it's coming at you from every side.

Junia:

Just making sure that you are being covered by the refuge that God is, and making sure your feet are standing on the rock and recognizing that he's the one that's gonna give you the paths to go. Just making sure you're pulling back and recognizing that and not letting the, the craziness that is the world today, no matter where we are, whether it's in the States or on the field, um, not letting that become something overwhelming that you forget that you do have a refuge, that you do have a rock, and you do have a, a strong place to be standing on. Hmm.

Denise:

I love that. That's so powerful. And, and honestly, sometimes when you don't have anything, but to close your eyes and just pray and, and to see an image, you know, sometimes that's all you can do. And what a comfort that that is. So thank you so much for sitting with us today. Thank you for this conversation. You know, one of the things that you said, you know, just about the servant leadership. This, this podcast is called the Legacy Podcast. We believe that there are women that have left such a strong legacy that we are building on. And just even in the small acts, if you are never called to be a leader, if you are helping other people succeed, if you are encouraging those people in your circles, no matter where you are, you are leaving a legacy. And we are just so thankful for the legacy that you're leaving, that you're willing to just sit here and share this with us today.

Denise:

And, um, for those women that are gonna take these words to heart and be changed by it, that we may never see this side of heaven. So thank you so much Junia, for sharing with us today. And thank you everybody for listening. Um, we just encourage you to continue doing what you're doing, grow where the Lord has planted you, encourage those people where you are, and keep living out your legacy. And for those people that you are gonna change that might be impacted by your legacy, and they themselves will leave a legacy for the kingdom.

Denise:

I wanna welcome you all back to our second interview this month as we continue to address a topic of women in leadership. Right now, Sarah and I are joined with Caitlin Greer. She's staying up late to chat with us. And Caitlyn, we're so thankful that, that you chose to stay up after a busy day to be with us today. Well,

Caitlin:

I'm happy to be here and thank you for asking me.

Denise:

Okay. Caitlyn, you're staying up late because where are you joining us from?

Caitlin:

I live in Tokyo, Japan.

Denise:

Yes. And so from where we are, that is a 12 hour difference in time. So we're up early, you're up late. We've got the sun straddled here on the continent Or on that globe. So one of the reasons that I was very excited and persistent about having you on is just because of your longevity, your role, the, you hate to use the word success, but the team that you are working on has experienced some really neat victories and things to rejoice over in the, you know, 15 years that you have been on the field. So, before we even get into what does leadership look like for you being married to the team leader, could you just tell us a little bit about the work that you're doing?

Caitlin:

Sure. Yeah. We, um, so we moved to Japan in 2008. Um, we were fresh out of Bible college and, um, we'd been approached by a couple of our classmates during school, um, about moving somewhere where, you know, they needed the gospel where there wasn't really, um, many Christians. And the idea was kind of urban unreached church planting. And so, uh, we were still, I think we were still in school and had a couple years left. And so, um, I mean, I could ramble on about this story. Long story short, um, we prayed about what city of maybe out of a list of 30 unreached urban centers, some being English speaking, some being in the country that's got the language that's the hardest for native English speakers to learn. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's where we wound up. Spoiler alert, <laugh>. Um, and so I had really zero interest in Japan.

Caitlin:

Um, but at that time, Japanese people, you know, were the largest unreached people group. And there's all these massive cities. I'm learning, you know, as we're like kind of praying through this, that these cities I'd never even heard of and that you guys have probably never heard of. Um, like Nagoya, it's the same size as like Paris. And I'm like, I've never even heard of this city. But there's these massive cities in Japan, uh, with really, you know, dense population and less than 1% you have ever heard of Jesus. So, um, we, yeah, we graduated, we fundraised, we didn't have all of our money, even in and <laugh>, we'd never visited Japan. We just sold stuff, packed some suitcases and moved over there like total idiots. Um, we will never write a memoir probably, but um, my husband says the title will be God's mercy on Cowardly Idiots. 'cause that's kind of the theme of our story.

Denise:

I Love that.

Caitlin:

Yeah. Yeah. Um, we truly came in as the ultimate idiots. Um, but you know, we were young and wanted to make gospels No, not make gospels.

Denise:

<laugh>.

Caitlin:

Yes. That will not be the only, um, thing I say wrong because, well, my English is getting progressively worse the longer I live here. It's also late at night, make, uh, make disciples and spread the gospel is what we wanted to do. So, you know, we tried all kinds of things and, um, by God's goodness, we're still here. And, um, we had a lot of ideals that eventually came crumbling down as we just tried things and like, uh, so yeah, what we do now after trying a lot of things and it not, it not looking at all like what we've set out to do, what we're doing is, uh, planting churches that are like international kind of bilingual churches, um, which has been quite an adventure and it's been really, really hard, but God is good. And we've seen many people come to Christ and yeah, we're super thankful to be doing this job here.

Denise:

Didn't, um, when you set out, you know, there were a lot of ideals that, you know, you said came crumbling down, but didn't you feel like the Lord had put a, you know, timeline or you had a goal in mind of by this year, this number we're aiming for this type of, um, scenario?

Caitlin:

Yeah. Um, initially, I mean, we came in totally blind, you know mm-hmm. <affirmative> mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, I think whatever plan we had, like we fundraised to plant a church in Tokyo. We ended up not getting to Tokyo until we'd planted churches in two other cities. Um, and then sent out teams to plant in two cities after that. So we're like four cities in, and we still haven't landed in Tokyo, which is what we thought we'd be doing. Um, but yeah, along the way, I can't remember how many years ago, um, we started praying that God would provide what we needed to plant 12 churches. So it's the 12 largest cities in Japan, um, that have, they all have over a million people. Mm-hmm. And, um, some of them, like Tokyo is like 37 million people in the metro area. So, um, um, yeah, just praying that God would provide people, which that's, I mean, finances, of course, we always need finances, but finding the leaders mm-hmm.

Caitlin:

<affirmative>. So we're talking about leadership, finding leaders and teams and people, um, willing to do this work. That's really hard. <laugh>. Yeah. Um, especially, I mean, he has provided Japanese, uh, teammates. Um, I mean, we started with a group of 10. Jay and I are the only two still in Japan from the initial team. Some of them, um, you know, our, our dear teammate moved back to the States, uh, just a few months ago. Yeah. Um, from that original 10. But we've got like, I think around 25 people that are on staff at our churches, you know, that are Japanese. And if you count like spouses and everybody, we've got like 70 people gathering at our staff retreats now. So it's grown quite a lot. Um, but just finding people that are willing to come and try to learn how to live in Japan, um, you know, try to learn this crazy language.

Caitlin:

Um, and I'm sorry, I know that I should be a lot more gentle saying, oh, it's a beautiful language. No, it's crazy to try to Japanese. Yeah. Really hard. Um, yeah. So yeah, it's, it's been a challenge, but by God's goodness, you know, even with Covid, like we, we really, we, we don't have 12 yet, but we're getting close mm-hmm. <affirmative> and we're hoping that he will provide as he usually does, like, just enough where we're totally sweating and like, this isn't gonna happen and it's only gonna take a miracle of God Yeah. For this to actually happen. Um, and he's, we've been in that situation time and time again mm-

hmm. <affirmative> mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And that's part of the, the beauty of doing the work that we do is like you set out to do something that is truly impossible if it's only by your own blood, sweat, and tears. It needs god's, um, you know, working God's power mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so, yeah, of course, it's just a goal. And goals are kind of like, you know, human ideas. Um, and we, uh, but of course we want to do this for God's glory, and if we get these 12 churches planted, then um, majority of the Japanese population can reach a gospel teaching church by train. So that's what we're setting out to do. So yeah, Jay preaches in Tokyo. Um, and I have done many different things. Currently I'm helping lead worship at the church, um, and I'm also teaching, uh, music at a private Christian school where my kids go, um mm-hmm.

Caitlin:

So that's my life right now.

Denise:

And so that, uh, that was one of my next questions was, do you have kids? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, how many of those do you have?

Caitlin:

We have four.

Denise:

Love it. That's how many I have. So I always Yeah. Like the four, the four kid role. Yeah. So, so when you went to the field mm-hmm. <affirmative>, did you have any children?

Caitlin:

No. And, um, I was like full on, you know, staff, went to, you know, I was at every staff meeting. I had a very clear role of what I was gonna be doing, and I loved that. And, um, I didn't really go into motherhood gracefully. Um, but I'm super thankful <laugh>, I'm thankful for my children, and I'm thankful for the, uh, sanctification that I have gone through. Um, you know, through becoming a mom. And, uh, for me, I realized this massive idol of loving to be up front. I was, you know, I was leading worship in English and Japanese, leading a band bilingually. And that was all really exciting to be able to, and it's a good, it's a good thing, right? To be like helping lead people in worship in, you know, this place where people like have not worshiped the true God that created everything.

Caitlin:

Um, but when I had to kind of pull out of that for a time because it just wasn't sustainable for me, uh, to, uh, you know, have an infant and then another infant, and then another infant, and then another infant all piled on, um, yeah, there were seasons where I had to like, train up other people and God provided what we needed and, um, it was, it was ugly. My heart was pretty ugly for a while mm-hmm. <affirmative> because I loved feeling like the leader, and I loved feeling like, Ooh, I'm good at my job. And then staying at home was,

Denise:

You don't always feel like you're good at your job. <laugh>.

Caitlin:

Yeah,

Denise:

Yeah, yeah.

Caitlin:

<laugh>.

Denise:

Yeah. Oh, man. So, so you, I imagine, so you're explaining that that leadership role changed in, in different seasons of your life, and at the same time that you are having children, you are welcoming new people to be trained up and sent out. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, what, what did you feel like your role was maybe in even other women that were coming? I'm sure like by default they're asking you questions about how do I find this and where do I go for this doctor? And, you know, like, what, what did your role look like in different seasons of, you know, mothering and team leading and, you know, just how has it changed? Yeah.

Caitlin:

Well, even though I came in totally clueless, I, there was eventually a shift where I felt like I do actually have information that I've gained <laugh> that I can share with other people. And, um, this might not be what you would expect me to say, but this is <laugh>, this is my experience. I felt like I'm seeing my, my teammates that I love going through some of the same challenges that I went through, and I just wanted to solve it for them. Like, here's, here's how you handle this. And I found that, um, you know, I had to be careful, um, with how much I tried to solve other people's, you know, I don't even wanna say problems, just challenges, I guess. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like trying to balance, you know, sometimes people need to just experience this and go through this. Yeah. Without me being like, here's my advice, <laugh>, um,

Denise:

The growth is in the struggle.

Caitlin:

Yeah. And that's a lot of God's work in our life, right? Like mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, we experience challenges and we see God work through them. And I don't, I, I guess I kind of realized like, maybe not everybody's looking to see Caitlin's great workings, but they need to see God's great workings mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so, um, trying to balance that and also trying to, um, deal with the immense guilt I feel if I'm not helping to the extent that I feel like I should be helping. Hmm. Um, and I, I'm always like this pendulum between feeling like, oh, no, did I, you know, was I too pushy or Oh, no, did I not help enough with, you know, my teammate that just had a baby and mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know? And so that's really a hard challenge for me that I'm still, you know, dealing with <laugh> all the time.

Denise:

So when you and Jay, you know, you have experienced losses of mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you even mentioned a dear friend that, you know, they've, they just left not too long ago and mm-hmm.



<affirmative>. And so the pressures, I imagine, you know, you look at each other and you are, you are the longevity you have, you two are the only two that share all of the memories now. Of the last 15 years that are on the field together. What, what does that look like in different seasons that you, you both deciding what is your, what is your role and, and do you have to have conversations about I wanna be asked into these kinds of conversations now, and this is not too much for me, and so I'm not, I don't wanna be asked into these types of conversations. How, what does that look like to navigate that as a leadership couple about how you're, how you're involved or not involved?

Caitlin:

You mean with like, things that our teammates are going through or,

Denise:

Yeah.

Caitlin:

Like what kind of conversations, sorry, just for clarity.

Denise:

Absolutely. So, um, when you first came to the field, you were more mm-hmm. <affirmative> involved in staff and doing things, um, that were ministry oriented. And throughout different seasons, you've pulled back, you have re-engaged, you know, what, what does that conversation look like as you support him in his leadership role? And how do you decide when you are involved and when you're pulling back for season.

Caitlin:

Oh, yeah. That's a super good question. Um, it's tricky, right? Because, um, kind of the nature of being a pastor's wife is, um, it, it's challenging because there's definitely expectations. And I think for me, I don't really entertain the pressures and the expectations, uh, that maybe some people feel as a pastor's wife. Um, I do to some extent, like one feeling that guilt of I need to be more caring for God's people. I need to, you know, and if I'm just maxed out on time, it's, it's not something I'm able to do to the extent I want. Yeah. But, um, I think that I had to learn really early on that I needed to be okay with not being in all of the conversations. Mm-hmm. Um, because I realized, um, there's conversations that, um, my husband would have with people in the church that they're like private conversations or sensitive conversations, and I had to learn to be okay with trusting him in, like, if I needed to know something, then I would know it.

Caitlin:

But, um, I kind of had this desire to just know all of mm-hmm. <affirmative> scoop on everyone. And that's like not good <laugh>, right? That's gossip. Um, or you know, just, being a busy body. And so learning to let go of that and know that, you know, it's not my job to solve everything. It's not my husband's job to solve everything, right. But there's times where, you know, people need listening ears and, um, I don't always have to be that listening ear. Um, and it was a, a really tough thing to, uh, for me to like not be in staff meeting, not be involved for the season where I had little kids mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, and so just learning, like to submit that to God and realize that was the idol that I had of my own performance, my own praise, wanting to feel good, um, at my job, wanting people to see me doing a good job.

Caitlin:

And just like learning, this is actually leadership in a different way of leading my family, leading my little kids for this season. And it's very valuable and good in God's eyes. And I think that we can easily put pressure on ourselves to like, do that plus this and this and this. And maybe some people can, but I couldn't. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, if I tried to do anything else, I just was ugly. And so, and even when I wasn't trying to do extra things besides just like, taking care of my kids sometimes I was still ugly. 'cause it was hard. It's so hard. Yeah. Um, and, but it's good. It's valuable and it's important for them. And that was, um, you know, I know that many people choose to do different things and, um, you just have to listen to God's leading for each season. And, you know, like learning that, uh, sacrificial love and care for others is actually beautiful Biblical leadership. And me realizing that a lot of what I viewed as leadership and what I wanted to be involved in was my own, you know, selfish ambition and <laugh>, like vain conceit rather than Being you know, full of humility and valuing others better than myself. And so that's tough for me. Yeah. I like being awesome at everything in front of people. <laugh>, <laugh>.

Caitlin:

That's not what Jesus did though. Right. So,

Denise:

Yeah. But I love, I love that. Thank you so much for pointing that out, that mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that sometimes the best leadership we can have is taking a back seat to those bright, shiny places and leading quietly in the background. I think that's really gonna resonate too with so many of our listeners who don't find themselves with the opportunity to lead up front. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, women in general sometimes just aren't because of the places they live, you know, their mm-hmm. <affirmative>, their service is quiet and in the background and, you know, and that is still leadership. So one of the things just in your unique position, like you said, you are sending out leaders to other big cities. Um, what advice do you give to those wives of the lead pastors, if, if indeed they are married, you know, like, Hmm. You know, as they set out to, to experience what you have, what you have done and experienced, what advice do you give them?

Caitlin:

Oh man, it's usually a little scary. Um, and, and I think that in this time in history, being a leader is very lonely. I think if that's true for all time, it's lonely. Um, but I think there's, um, with kind of our, our world climate right now, cultural climate, um, especially in America, but that, like in our case, you know, there's, we're an international church, so you have people with all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of expectations. Um, there's no way that you can please everyone. And there's, um, <laugh>, I mean, I think hater's gonna hate all the time. It's kind of like this cathartic, but not biblical, but it's like somehow like helpful. Like there's, I'm a people pleaser mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so I would love for my husband and I to always be pleasing everyone. Yeah. Yeah. And I've just learned it's not possible and, and being, um, in leadership, I don't think of myself as different, but maybe I can't help this, but other people think of me kind of differently than I realize.

Caitlin:

And so trying to have like a realistic understanding of that, where it might mean that people are a little more distant mm-hmm. <affirmative> mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, it might mean, I mean, this is unavoidable. Like people get annoyed at their bosses, right. Even if they're the best boss in the world. Um, I mean, even Jesus who was perfect and sinless, people out of their own ignorance, you know,

turned on him. And so often, you know, it's not even the leader's fault. Sometimes it is, of course, but often people can get embittered towards their leaders. And, um, that's what's really tricky as like a lead pastor's wife is going back to those conversations. I don't get to be a part of, if I know someone has like, hurt my husband. Um, and then of course to be following <laugh>, uh, Jesus. Yeah. You know, he will seek reconciliation as far as, you know mm-hmm.

Caitlin:

<affirmative> it, what's the, what's the word I'm looking for? As, as far as it can like, uh, depend on you. That's not the Right, yeah. That's not what the scripture says, you know, the scr <laugh>. Right. Um, anyway, as, as much as is possible, he seeks reconciliation always, but I'm not part of those conversations. So I have to learn to not get bitter at people who turn on my husband. And that's like super hard, you know? 'cause if somebody is mean to someone you love, you feel that too. And that takes, um, lots of, you know, holy Spirit, um, supernatural forgiveness, power, <laugh>. Oh, that I can't conjure up myself. <laugh>.

Denise:

In that loneliness that you mentioned, where do you find friendship and, and is that on the continent of Japan? Is that with expats? Is it other teams? Is it virtual? Because that is a reality, you know, like where do you find those friendships?

Caitlin:

Hmm. That's tricky because there's some, you know, as much as I wanna just like spill and dish out all my feelings, there's some things that it would be very unwise or hurtful to others, um, for me to do that. And so in some cases, there just isn't a person outside of Jesus and Jay, my husband. And that's okay. Um, yeah. I've learned the longer I've been here that the, the circle of people that I feel understand me is shrinking and, you know, rapidly getting smaller, smaller, smaller, smaller. And for me, that was one of the biggest, um, like sacrifices. Um, in the first few years I really missed Taco Bell. Now I don't care for Taco Bell. I'm fine without Taco Bell <laugh>. The, the need to feel like you're understood by others is something that I think I'll always miss. Mm-hmm.

Caitlin:

<affirmative>. But I think that the longer I've been at this, the more I'm okay with not being understood, knowing that, you know, we're not supposed to feel fully comfortable. We're not supposed to feel fully at home because heaven is our home. And we will, we will feel fully understood in the presence of Jesus. And he does understand us now, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but we don't get to fully embrace the joy and like, um, peace yet. Um, but I, I trust that he does know. And, um, and when I am fully cognizant of that, it also helps me with the ugly hurt that I can feel mm-hmm. <affirmative> of, you know, those things that are really hard about leadership because right now with like cancel culture and words like spiritual abuse and, um, I don't know, just things that are really tossed out, um, freely. It's super scary to be in leadership because no matter what, if you're just trying to follow <laugh>, the great commission and you're trying to share the gospel, you know, it, it takes one person to, you know, really cause a lot of hurt.

Caitlin:

And, and, you know, so it's scary. It's scary to make, to make big moves as, you know, leaders in ministry in this, um, day and age. And so it's, it's lonely, but I know that, um, I mean, the reality is like, you know,

we, we don't know what the future of our ministry is. Um, it could change at any time. We pray that God will continue to make disciples, um, and maybe it's apart from us. And, and that's fine. God will continue his mission. We just wanna serve him every day. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and trust that he is with us. Um, even when it feels lonely and even when, um, yeah. When it, it hurts. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Sarah:

Caitlyn, I feel like so much of what you have shared will be so encouraging to women, but if, if there are women out there listening to this who really feel like they want to grow in leadership and, um, you know, feel like maybe that is something God has for them, do you have any encouragement or advice for them as they are growing in, in leadership?

Caitlin:

Oh, man. Well, I don't know if I have any great wisdom to share about that, but what I can say from my own kind of journey is like the Bible is our guide. Um, and so look to what Jesus says about how to serve him and how to love him. And, you know, we see him, you know, he did not come to serve or to be served, but to serve. And so finding ways to, um, to lead in a way that, um, is full of humility. And, um, and this is so hard for me. I read, I, I should have pulled this up so I could actually quote it correctly, but this massive gut check that I saw recently was, um, a quote from Elizabeth Elliot where it's like the measure of one's love is the measure of your willingness to be inconvenienced. Mm-hmm. And I was like, oh gosh, I'm not really willing to be inconvenienced a lot of the time, <laugh>.

Caitlin:

And so I think, um, I think if that is our posture, if our posture is humility and not the stage and not the pats on the back, then I think God, um, will do great things. And you can see, you know, him as the true leader and him as the one who does the amazing things, um, with us being his hands and feet. Um, and that's really hard. 'cause like for me, I'm, I, the things that I feel like God has given to me in is a lot of up front stuff. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I love people. I, I'm a musician, so I'm up on stage doing that mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so it's really easy for me to switch and view that as the leadership that's valuable, where really it's, um, my willingness to serve others that's gonna be the true leadership, even if it's just in my family. 'cause they are the ones who inconvenience me a lot, <laugh>. And so,

Denise:

So true.

Caitlin:

I love them, but they're not convenient. It's

Denise:

So not convenient. <laugh>.

Caitlin:

Yeah. Um, so, you know, it's like, I think I set out thinking I'm gonna change the world for Jesus. Um, but when it gets down to it, a lot of leadership is like getting up in the morning, brushing your teeth, and, you know, letting God lead you, um, in those daily things Yeah. That are not glamorous. And so, um, definitely God wants to use women, uh, for amazing purposes. And I think that, you know, everyone is

gifted differently, so mm-hmm. <affirmative>, depending on the ways God has gifted you, you know, follow his lead mm-hmm. <affirmative> as to how he wants you to lead. Now, I think I'm just rambling. <laugh>.

Denise:

No. You know, actually, I feel like it's the perfect place to end because I think that we underestimate sometimes the legacy of kindness of mm-hmm. <affirmative>, just encouragement of daily faithfulness, and that those leave lasting impressions on the people you go to serve, your teammates, you know, the grocery store guy that you go to every week, you know mm-hmm. <affirmative>, those things also can leave a legacy. And that's, I mean, that's what this podcast is about, is just inspiring people to, to live in a way that maybe will give courage to other people and, and we'll be surprised at the legacy that is left by others because of our small life and our faithfulness in one direction. And so, um, Caitlin, thank you so much for, for sharing, for being open with us about your experience. And, and honestly, it's just encouraging and inspiring because the truth is, is it's just you kept going, you know, <laugh>, you just keep, you just keep going in whatever season God has you and wrestling with him about what his leadership for me look like. Yeah. In this season, whether that is on a stage or at home or in a secular job, you know mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And we didn't even touch on that. And that's something that a lot of people wrestle with is, you know, when do I say yes to working in a different capacity? And so, you know, I just I so appreciate that. Yeah. So thank you so much.

Caitlin:

No, thank you. I really appreciate what you guys are doing. It's such an encouragement to people all around the world, and yeah. So keep up the great work that you're doing for God's Glory.

Denise:

Thank you so much. And, and thank you everyone for joining us this, this month. We know that this episode is the first in our series of topics that we wanna start covering. And so this episode might be a little bit longer, but we think it's worth it. We hope you've enjoyed it, and we hope that you join us back here next month for the Velvet Ashes Legacy Podcast.