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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.

I am so excited about today's episode because today we're talking about the Enneagram and how it can help us grow in our relationships. I just heard about the Enneagram way back in Episode 17 of the podcast.

Chances are that you've heard about the Enneagram before, but if you're not super familiar or if you need a refresher, it's a personality assessment that helps you understand your emotions and your motivations at a deeper level.

The way I've come to understand it is designed to do two things. Number one, it helps us get to know our minds and our hearts better. It just helps us understand ourselves so much better.

And number two, it helps us overcome some of the roadblocks in our lives and really become the best versions of ourselves. It also helps us understand and connect with the people we love, whether that's a friend or a family or coworker or a spouse.

And that's the focus of today's episode. Because if you're anything like me, you want to connect to the people around you on a deeper level but you don't always know how to make that happen in a practical way.

You also might find yourself disagreeing or butting heads about something or feeling disconnected in a certain way, and not really knowing how to fix it.

Friends, adding the Enneagram to my relationship toolbox has been a true game changer. And I hope it will be for you too.

So to talk us through this, I invited my sweet friend Meredith Boggs onto the show. Meredith is an expert when it comes to the Enneagram. She has a new book coming out soon called *The Journey Home: A Biblical Guide to Using the Enneagram to Deepen Your Faith and Relationships*.

In this episode, she's going to teach us what the Enneagram is and what it's not. She'll walk us through an overview of the Enneagram types and teach us how to discover what type we are. We'll talk about how the Enneagram can help us communicate in our relationships, how the Enneagram can help us in our faith, how the Enneagram can help us understand and connect with our significant others better, and so much more.

If you've been wanting to cultivate deeper, healthier, more meaningful relationships, the Enneagram is a great resource to try. And I cannot wait to share more about it.

But before we dive in, I have a resource I want to make sure to share with you. It's called *The Between Places: 100 Days to Trusting God When You Don't Know What's Next*. Now, here's the thing. We all find ourselves in-between places throughout our lives.

Maybe you're waiting for something, longing for something, or working for something, but it just hasn't happened yet. Maybe you know where you want to go, but you have no clue how to get there, or maybe you know you're not where you want to be in life, but you don't know exactly what needs to change or how to change it, and you don't know how to figure any of that out.

Maybe you're trying to make a big decision, but you have no idea which option to choose. Or maybe you're feeling like the whole world has turned upside down in the last few years, taking your life and your plans and any sense of security right along with it.

And in all of it you're trying to trust God with the future, but you're just not sure how to practically do that and how to quiet the fear and anxiety, all these uncertainties brought up in your heart. Friends, that's what *The Between Places* is here for.

Through 100 guided prayer prompts, *The Between Places* will help you trust God with the trickiest, most uncertain, and most important parts of your life. It'll help you believe more fully than ever that God is good, that He loves you, and that He's taking care of you. It'll help you live today with more contentment, step into the future with more courage and faith, and rest in God's peace knowing that He's with you every step of the way.

To pick up a copy, all you have to do is head to my website. It's stephaniemaywilson.com. That link will also be in our show notes. Again, that's stephaniemaywilson.com.

Okay, are you guys ready? Let's jump into the conversation with Meredith.

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Stephanie: Friends, I'm so excited for who you get to meet today. I'm sitting here with my real-life friend, Meredith Boggs. Meredith, I think it is about time that we had you on Girls Night. Welcome to the show.

Meredith: Thank you. I'm so excited to be here.

Stephanie: Meredith and I were just talking about we both live in Nashville, and like I said, we're real-life friends, we have not seen each other in a million years. And we were trying to figure out why that is, and then we were like, "Oh, we all lost a couple years just in life."

And then she's a new mom as am I. And so also we're like, "We live in the same city, but we haven't been out in the city in a while. So that's why we haven't seen each other in forever." So anyway, I'm so glad that we get to be here and catch up.

For women who haven't gotten to meet you yet, can you tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact about yourself?

Meredith: Okay, yes. I am Meredith Boggs. I am a born and raised Nashville girl. I do a couple of different things. I'm an author. I have a book coming out in January which has really been a lifelong dream. I just tell people, I'm like, "I'm a writer at heart." You kind of wear a lot of hats and do a lot of different things when you're in that world but I'm just really a writer through and through.

Also, I'm a nurse. I have been in medical field for 10 years now, which is wild and got a background in ER ICU, but I currently work in transport nursing as a critical care transport nurse. Also, this is something I'm really passionate about that a lot of people don't know, but I helped start a program here in Nashville at the Innerbelt, a core group of sexual assault forensic nurse examiner to provide services to victims in the city. So I also take haul doing that.

I'm a wife and a mom. Being a mom is the best job ever. And it's also full-time plus. So yeah, so that's a little bit about me and what I do. I've been married for nine years now to Justin. I met him at middle school church camp. So girls just know that like it happens. We didn't start dating until high school, but then we dated through high school and college and got married after.

A fun fact about myself. I had to think about this one. And I want people probably don't know this, but there was one point in my life that I was able to speak

Mandarin conversationally. And it is long gone, but at one point, I could. So fun fact.

Stephanie: That is a great fun fact. That is amazing. It's so funny. The fun fact... the question is so tough. I make sure I send it in advance, and then I always check with people before. I'm like, "Okay, did you have a chance to think of your fun fact? Because everything else escaped. Did you figure out what that like..?" That is the hardest question to answer, but it's so fun.

Meredith: I know. I'm like, "This isn't fun. This is boring or whatever." So I was thankful that you sent that early. It gave me time to think on it. And now I have that in the bank for the next time someone asked me on the spot.

Stephanie: Uh-huh. You have to have them in your back pocket. There was a minute there where if I had any fun facts that would come to mind I'd write it down and put it in my phone. But I don't know where that note is so that's not me at all.

So you have this new book coming out. It's called *The Journey Home: A Biblical Guide to Using the Enneagram to Deepen Your Faith and Relationships*. And I want to hear just more about the book. Tell us the backstory. Just tell us about where this came from.

Meredith: I'll tell you a little bit about kind of what inspired it and then what the book is about. So I learned about the Enneagram first when I was in high school. I was in counseling at the time, and they used it just kind of as a framework to understand yourself better.

So I first learned about it then, loved it. It was kind of really helpful in that season. I was in recovery for an eating disorder and it was just a really helpful framework for personal growth and just understanding relational dynamics. Just a really crucial age and life.

Fast forward 10 years, I was coming as in my mid-20s in a season of pretty intense burnout. We had actually just moved back from living overseas in China. Which another fun fact is where I first stumbled across Stephanie and I read *The Lipstick Gospel* on an overnight train. And I remember being in that bunk reading, just like devouring it on my Kindle. I loved it. But-

Stephanie: That's my favorite. You and I met right when you were back. I remember you telling me that story and it just was the coolest... That is the power of a book, that I got to be with you on that overnight train.

Meredith: I know.

Stephanie: It's just so cool.

Meredith: And I still remember that. It's so cool. It's so impactful. So yeah, actually, it was right after that season of coming home, just really kind of like frayed spiritually. I wasn't disconnected from my faith, but just feeling really stagnant and really stuck. Also, just really intense burnout.

I went back in counseling in that season, the Enneagram kind of also reemerged during that time with like this... it just like overtook the world. And it was like, "Here's the Enneagram." It's been around for a long time, but it just really had a resurgence then.

And I was using it again in the counseling setting and was looking for a way to really integrate it with my spiritual life. But everything that I found felt really cerebral, and it just didn't feel accessible. And that was really, I would say, where the desire for this book... I didn't even realize that at the time. But that's really where it started from. I wanted this resource for myself and couldn't find it.

Anyways, that's kind of who that book is written for. It's really written for people who are kind of in two camps. One that are really spiritually on the fringes kind of feeling stale, stagnant in their faith, not really sure what's next, really do want to reconnect with God, but maybe they've experienced torture or maybe they're just in a season of their life and it's like, "I don't know that I believe everything that I grew up being taught," and they're kind of trying to figure it out for themselves, and they really connected with the Enneagram and are trying to figure out how that can possibly help them reconnect with themselves, with God, and with other people.

And then the other camp that it's kind of written to is for Christians who love the Enneagram and they're kind of wondering, like, "Should I use this tool? If so, how can I use it, approaching it with a biblical worldview?"

So, a little bit more about the book. It outlines the nine different types and it really focuses on the sin tendency and the virtue of each type. So identifying strengths and weaknesses, identifying those sentiments, how you get stuck, how to break free from them, and then spiritual practices that are really just daily practical things that you can integrate into your life to grow spiritually. So yeah, that's a little bit about the book.

Stephanie: I love that. Like you said, the Enneagram... I first came across the Enneagram in middle school actually. I was part of this lunch group with a school counselor with

a bunch of my friends. I don't know why it started. I think that she was maybe trying to just like mentor us or so. I don't know.

I don't know how I ended up in this group with my friends but it felt exclusive and fun. We got to eat not in the cafeteria on Wednesdays. But she taught us about the Enneagram. And I remember that distinctly. And so when it kind of came back around and caught fire and everyone started talking about it, I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I remember this," and started to kind of dig into it again.

So for women who haven't heard of the Enneagram, or who maybe have heard about it and are like, "I don't know what that is," can you give us a refresher?

Meredith: Yeah. So the Enneagram is a personality typing system similar to the Myers-Briggs, DISC, StrengthsFinder, any of those. The biggest thing that distinguishes the Enneagram from all the others is that it really focuses on the motivation that lies underneath the behaviors. And instead of focusing on behaviors, it's all about the motivation.

Another thing I love about it, too, it's really more holistic in nature in that it factors and things like experiences, emotions, these core beliefs, these core fears that you have. The other thing that I think really distinguishes it is it is dynamic. So as you dive into it more, you'll hear terms like you're weighing or where you going in stress and insecurity. And you have the ability...

We're dynamic as humans. We're not stuck in one state all the time. Our circumstances can influence how we show up in our relationships. So that's the other piece of the Enneagram really factors into that is those seasons where you're under a lot of stress, seasons that are not quite as stressful where you're operating in a really healthy place. And so it takes into account all of that, which really sets it apart from others.

Stephanie: I love that. I think if people don't love personality tests, they're like, "I don't fit in a box." And no, we don't fit in a box. But I feel like the Enneagram is more like a rhombus or something. It's a slightly wigglier shape. So it's a way of putting some...

For me the reason that I loved it was because I was like, "I react sometimes to situations like this, but then sometimes I'm like this." I just didn't have language to explain how I felt or how I am in different circumstances. So I love the Enneagram because it gives some language to it. And it gives language to different circumstances. So it's not like, "I am always very organized." It's like, well, I tend to be organized because of this. Organization is not really part of it. But like, you know, this is why.

But then when I'm really stressed out or really anxious, I'm different. So it's kind of a filing system for some of the things that we're feeling and going through. But it's definitely wigglier and provides more room to move around than putting yourself in a box.

Meredith: And even like you said there, that piece of like, "Well, normally I'm organized but sometimes I'm not," or "but because..." It's that because piece. And that's where the motivation comes in. So it's like, yeah, you normally operate this way but sometimes you don't and it's because of, you know, whatever the reason is. So like you said, it is more wiggly, it's more dynamic, it allows that fluctuation between different types, kind of different...

And that's the behavior piece that we can see. We can see each other's behaviors but we can't see each person's motivation. So that's a really cool piece I think about the Enneagram and understanding yourself and using it to connect with others more.

Stephanie: As we're talking about what the Enneagram is good for and what it is, I also know it's important to talk about what the Enneagram is not. So tell us about that.

Meredith: I think that Enneagram is not diagnostic. It's not the end all be all. It's not the gospel. You are not your type. And I'm really passionate about that because like you said, people hate being put in boxes, they don't like to be stereotyped.

What happens when we do that to ourselves or other people, if I put myself into a box and say, "Well, I'm just an eight. That's how I am. I'm just impatient," that gives me an excuse for my bad behavior. And that's not okay for me to be impatient.

And likewise, if I look at my husband or a friend or something, I say, "Well, he's just a three, that's how he is," I will always look at him like that. And I really box him into that and I don't ever give them space to grow and evolve and change and become something different. So I think that's a really important piece to understand, too, that it's not a label, it's not a box to put someone into.

I think it's a really helpful tool and a really helpful framework. And I tell people, I'm like, "You know what? If it doesn't work for you that's fine. Move on to what does work for you." But for a lot of people they do resonate with it and it gives them language, like you said, for parts of themselves that they didn't previously have that language for.

Stephanie: I know that this is a big question with, I mean, a whole book or a thousand full of the answers, but can you give us just a quick rundown on the different types?

Meredith: Yeah. It is a big question. That's one of the most commonly asked questions. So I'll try and get it down to where it's pretty good size.

Stephanie: I'm ready.

Meredith: So type one you may hear them referred to as the reformer or the perfectionist. They are people of high ideals. They are very morally and ethically driven. They are the people of the world that keep the rest of us from morally careening off the side of a mountain. They like keep us in check.

Their default operating mode is integrity. They are constantly self-reflecting to see how they can better themselves. And that also spills over into other people. They're constantly assessing how other people can be doing better too. But it really comes from a good and sincere place.

The type two are known as the helper or the giver. And you're type two. Is that right, Stephanie?

Stephanie: Mm-hmm. I am.

Meredith: They are deeply loving, incredibly caring. They're profoundly compassionate people. They're warm and approachable, really just highly have a nurturing energy to them. They're like superpowers that they easily perceive the needs of others. And when they're living in a really good space, they are just the picture of biblical servanthood with humility, just really generous with their time, with their love for other people.

They're all amazing. I love them all. Every time I talk about this, I'm like, "Oh, I love this one so much. I love that one." But they're also wonderful.

Okay, type three, they are known as-

Stephanie: Okay, that has a downside.

Meredith: They all have a downside.

Stephanie: I feel like that was overwhelmingly positive.

Meredith: They all have a downside. And type two a lot of times they self-forget. They just like sacrifice themselves on the altar of other people, which is obviously not good. But yeah, they all have their downside. They all have their really positive qualities and strengths as well.

Type threes are known as the achievers or the performers. They are really driven and ambitious. They have an energy that's really infectious. They're champions for other people. They're very goal-directed, success oriented. They kind of keep corporate America alive in good ways. And also in lots of great ways.

But when they are really living in a good space, they are really authentic and they bring hope to the world. They are true visionaries. They're another just really, really wonderful type.

Type fours are the romantics. They might also be called the creative. Some of these titles you'll hear a little bit different based on what teacher or what book you're reading. But they are original, introspective, true creatives. And they embody authenticity. There's nothing about a four that isn't authentic. They are really in tune with their emotions and with other people's emotions.

And the unique thing about fours is that they're the only type that's able to bear witness to pain and just sit with it. They're okay with the messy, the painfulness, and they don't have to medicate it. They don't have to do something to make it feel better. They don't say unhelpful, insensitive things. They just sit there and bear witness to it. So that's something that's really, really unique about the fours.

Meredith: Type five, the investigator. This type they are constantly taking in information in the world. They are readers, they are thinkers, they are very perceptive, and they bring a really cool neutrality to each situation there. They have this really unique ability to remain objective.

And five can tend to be a little bit more disconnected from their emotions, but that is one of the positives of that is that they do not get stuck in their emotions. They can really remain objective about things. But they are inventive, they're inquisitive, they ask open-ended questions, are really curious, wanting to learn, to gain knowledge, and just more understanding.

Because of that emotion piece, they are really able to make decisions from knowledge and wisdom again from a place of emotion. Now their work is to tap into their emotions and connect with themselves and others through that. But type five are also really amazing.

Type six, the loyalist. They're the type that they can be truly altruistic in the sense that they are really for the common good of everyone. There are some anagrams theories that say sixes make up half the world. And I can totally see that because sixes really are the glue to society.

They are committed. They don't jump ship. If they ever quit their job or quit something, you can rest assured it took them months to come to this decision if not years to come to it. But they show up, they stick it out. They are devoted, dependable, reliable, dutiful people. They are really fiercely protective, loyal. I mean, they are just the kind of friends that will stick with you to the end. So sixes are fantastic.

Type sevens are the adventurers or they're called the enthusiast. I think that's the other name for them. They are playful, optimistic. They just have this wild enthusiasm that they approach life with. They're the life of the party kind of people. They like to keep their options open. They bounce from job to job. They are world travelers. They're always there for a good time.

The thing that sevens I think that people miss is that they really bring joy to the world. Like this deep cultivated joy. That when sevens are able to sit with their pain and other pain, which is really hard for them to do, they are able to really embrace joy in their life and in the life of others.

And it's not some cheap imitation, it's really deeply rooted joy that's found in the contentment in life and in the goodness of what you've been given and the season that you're in, even if it's not everything you wish it was or even if it's got some painful pieces to it. So that's the type seven.

The type eight is the challenger. They are strong, self-confident, really champions for justice. They're pretty independent, protective, passionate and they can be really boisterous. And they really just have this energy when they walk into your room.

Again, their biggest thing is justice. So they will champion that all day long. They are really the ones that... if you have an eight on your team, they've got the energy. So whatever the goal is it's gonna get done because they will make sure that it does.

And then the type nine are known as the peacemakers. They are easygoing, just provide a really calming, reassuring presence. It's like you feel a sense of stability. Like you can take a deep breath when they walk into a room.

They really are true empaths. They sit at the top of the Enneagram. And a lot of people say that that's because they can see every other type and really, truly empathize with what they're feeling, what they're thinking, what they're needing.

They are really supportive, genuinely loving people. But yeah, that's kind of the superpower of the nine is that they're empaths. They're able to see what everyone else thinks and feels. So that's kind of a quick overview of all the nine types.

Stephanie: What are you?

Meredith: I'm an eight through and through.

Stephanie: Through and through.

Meredith: I will not get to this, but I when I first took a test in high school, I actually typed as a one. And that's also part of why I'm not a huge fan of test. But I typed as a one. And then when I started reading about it, I was like, "Oh my gosh, no. I'm an eight." So I think tests are great, I think they can be really helpful, but don't always rely on a test because sometimes it's not as accurate.

Stephanie: That's exactly what I was gonna ask is, how do we... Well, okay, before we get into that, I love the way that you described all of these types, because I think sometimes when people go through the list, it's like all the negative things. But it really is like two sides of a coin.

We all know this about ourselves. Like a lot of times our greatest strength also in a way is our greatest weakness, or kind of the flip side of it is our greatest weakness. That's why the Enneagram for me has been so helpful, because, you know, different personality tests will give you clues into what you're good at or what you like, or what you're drawn to.

But more for like in concrete ways, having some language to identify what your superpower is, is a really great way to figure out where you can really impact the world. And it's not like, "You must do this job," but it's like, "Hey, you might really enjoy or thrive in a job where you get to fight for justice." It's just kind of this filter or this compass. But then also-

Meredith: [inaudible 00:24:02] you can see yourself and others.

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah. But then also as you learn about each type and you learn about the things that are hard about that number or kind of like, "You're great in this way but also this is a way that you might have some work to do," that gives us a place to start. Kind of a path forward of, "Okay, I know. You're right. I do really struggle with this or this situation I do show up like this, and I wish I didn't." But I have some language for it. And when you can wrap some words around it, that's a really important step to move-

Meredith: It really is where a transformation starts, which is why it's so helpful.

Stephanie: Okay, so figuring out what type we are, one popular way is a test. And there are a handful. If you look up like "Enneagram test," there are a bunch, right?

Meredith: Yeah.

Stephanie: Talk us through. How do we figure out what we are?

Meredith: A test is definitely the most popular way. Like I said, I'm not a huge fan of tests, but that is one of the most frequently asked questions is, "Oh, what test do I take?" So I do tell people, there's one test that I recommend, and I do not get a commission off of it. It cost 12 bucks, but it is the best Enneagram inventory. It's called Wagner Enneagram Personality Style Scales, or WEPSS, W-E-P-S-S.

The reason I like that one is because it's the only one that's actually been statistically validated. So if you're like a little bit of a nerd in that way, and you're like, "I need something a bit more objective than something someone just made up," that will give you that.

It's endorsed by the Western Psychological Services. They sell it on their website. So I think that also speaks to the credibility of it. That they wouldn't sell something that was just like made up.

But the thing I like about that test is that, for example, when I take that test, it scores you in every type. So I normally score pretty high... Obviously, it's an eight. But I also score really high as a three and a one. And so the reason I think that is so helpful is because you can take those scores, and really use that as a jumping-off point of like, "Oh, let me go dive into these three types and then figure out which one actually fits in terms of the motivation."

You don't have to take that one. You can take another free test. But I just always caution people that whatever your test result is, really hold that with an open hand. The Enneagram actually started as an oral tradition and was like that for years. There really weren't tests to take until like the 60s or 70s. So the toll testing piece is relatively new still.

So the way that people used to identify their type was through telling stories, was through talking about it with other people. Workshops are an amazing place to learn about it, or just hanging out with other people, talking about what type they are, talking about what type you think you are. You really gain a lot of insight and understanding from talking about it, from reflecting, from self-assessing instead of just simply taking a test. So, again, tests are great. They can be really helpful.

But I do think that another piece and this is not like the most popular answer, but if you know that you're in a season of really intense... like you're just not in a good season of life, you're like, "I know that I'm not operating in a healthy space. I'm

doing all the things that I... I don't like how I'm living right now," I think when we live like at the polar ends of like, I'm in a super healthy space, or I'm super unhealthy space, those are really telling seasons. Because again, all of our worst characteristics are going to be on display or all our best characteristics are gonna be on display.

And I think most of us live our life somewhere in the middle. We live kind of in this middle ground where sometimes we're in a good space, sometimes we're not. But we have these adaptive strategies that we've learned and there's things that come into play. Like how you grew up, there's some trauma that happens in our life that really complicates and confuses things. So I do think that tests are helpful in that sense. But I think ultimately reading about it, listening to podcast talking to other people about it will really help you.

And then the other thing that I always tell people is be okay with miss typing. And it's okay if you think, "Oh, I'm an eight," and run with that for a while. And then you come back a year later, and you're like, "Wait a minute, actually, no, I'm a type one because I really identify more with those motivations." Be okay with mistyping. There's a lot of freedom in that. Don't die on a hill over what type you are. Again, it's not the gospel. It's really helpful, but it's not the end all be all. So...

Stephanie: That's just such a beautiful and essential part of any journey is like, you know, wandering in one direction. And then it's only through wandering in that direction that you figure out you want to go in a different direction. So you learn so much about... That's the point is learning a lot about yourself.

And so by walking down a road and going, "I think I'm a three. Oh, wait, I'm not a three, I'm actually a seven." That journey is part of it. There's so much to be learned from that.

Meredith: Absolutely.

[00:28:44] <music>

Sponsor: Hey guys! I want to pop in for one quick second because our show would not be possible without our sponsors. So I wanted to take a quick second to thank the company sponsoring us today.

Our sponsor today is a company I love. It's [HelloFresh](#). Now, I know that lots of y'all have heard of them. But just in case you haven't, HelloFresh is America's number one meal kit that shops, plans, and delivers your favorite step-by-step recipes in pre-measured ingredients so you can just cook, eat, and enjoy.

So you guys know this about me, but I'm not the best cook. Now, I've definitely gotten better, but I still don't love meal planning or cooking. It's just not my gift. Plus, if you're anything like me, you want to savor every last second of summer. And so cutting down on meal prep and shopping time is absolutely necessary. And that's why I love HelloFresh.

First of all, with HelloFresh, there's something for everyone including vegetarian calories, smart choices and family-friendly recipes. One of the best meals that I've ever made was their chicken sausage spaghetti bolognese. It was so good I'm still thinking about it.

Not only is the food delicious, but the process of making it is so easy. All the ingredients come pre-measured in handy labeled meal kits so you know which ingredients go with which recipe and there's less waste. And I'm telling you I am a beginner in the kitchen and I can cook these recipes.

They are simple, they come outlined on pictured step-by-step instruction cards. They walk you all the way through the whole thing. And it actually kind of feels like a fun cooking lesson.

I'm also a huge fan of HelloFresh because it's actually over 72% cheaper than eating an average restaurant meal. And their pre-portioned ingredients help so that no food is wasted. That's great news for those of us on a budget, right?

Plus HelloFresh owns Green Chef, another one of our amazing sponsors, so there are even more meal plans to choose from. I love switching between the brands and now my listeners can enjoy both brands at a discount with me.

Speaking of discounts, I love HelloFresh even more because they want to give you a promo code to get 16 free meals across seven boxes, and three free gifts. If you go to hellofresh.com/girlsnight16 and use the code girlsnight16 you can get 16 free meals across seven boxes, and three free gifts.

Again, go to hellofresh.com/girlsnight16 and use the code girlsnight16 for 16 free meals across seven boxes and three free gifts. HelloFresh thank you so much for sponsoring our Girls Night. We just love having you.

[00:31:07] <music>

Stephanie: So talk to me about relationships. I want to ask first just about our relationship with God. I love the things that you said at the beginning about the different people that the book is for. And so I'd love to know, how can the Enneagram help us if we're in sort of loss or distant or kind of confusing spot with God?

Meredith: I mean, for myself personally, it was one of those things that was like I knew that I still loved God and I really valued my faith, but I was like, "What do I do with it now? I've experienced a lot of the pain and the brokenness that the world has and I still believe in His sovereignty and His goodness, but this doesn't fit, this is I feel good. I gotta figure this out."

I think the Enneagram offers a couple of different... And this is where as you dive deeper into it there's more layers. But for me really understanding the sin tendencies specific to my type. So as a type A, my sin tendencies is which is not like people think about less in a sexual sin.

It's really just like this general too much just that you approach life with and kind of like this ravenous, gluttonous consumption. Or just the way that you show up is aggressive, it's boisterous. It's just too much. It's not bridled. It's not metered. It's not wise. Yeah, it's not any of that.

And understanding that was really helping me see where I was showing up in life in a way that was not healthy and that also was really not in alignment with who I wanted to be. And then on the other end of that spectrum, understanding the virtue that I uniquely could bring to the world.

So as a type eight, it's true, it was like, "Oh, that is the gift that I bring in this role. Drive for justice is a good thing if it's harnessed in the right way and if it's used appropriately, not just using, you know, truth as a ticket to say whatever I wanted to whenever I wanted to that was not in a kind and healthier, constructive way. So I think that that understanding your sin proclivity or your virtue.

And then the other piece when you dive into the spiritual side of the Enneagram is that it offers three kind of like cardinal spiritual practices: silence, solitude, and stillness. And they're grouped based on your triad. So for the two, three, four, their spiritual practice is solitude. For five, six, and seven, there's a silence. And for the eight, nine, and one, there's a stillness.

Again, it's one of those things that is dynamic. Like, as an eight, I still need silence and solitude in my life but stillness is really my chief spiritual practice in the sense that it is finding... Sometimes it's physically a still place with myself and before God of like, "Okay, I'm gonna stop this fast-paced moving about the way that I interact with the world and really show up to hear what it is that you have to say, where it is that you want me to be.

So I think that those are three ways to really kind of begin that journey of reconnecting with yourself and with God, those spiritual practices. Those are

practices that you do your whole life until the day you die. And they continue to be so rich in what you learn in different seasons and the gifts that they offer.

So those three spiritual practices, I think, are really key when it comes to whatever it is, whether you're in a stage of really kind of figuring things out, reconnecting, or whether you're in a season of really looking for what's next in terms of growth.

Stephanie: I love that. Those are silence, solitude, and stillness, right?

Meredith: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Stephanie: That's so good. I feel like I need to spend a while thinking about that. That's really good.

I know that the Enneagram can be really powerful in our other relationships as well. I would love to know like... I mean, what does this look like in your life? The more that you've learned about yourself, the more that you've learned about the Enneagram, how has this affected your relationships?

Meredith: I think the biggest thing is it's helped me to have so much compassion for other people. And really a lot of that just start with yourself having compassion for the way that you show up in the world, whether you're showing up in a good space or whether you're showing up in these really adaptive strategies that are unhealthy. It's like that was a way that you figure out how to survive in the world. But looking at other people through that lens of compassion has really helped my relationships.

And with the Enneagram, you begin to understand their unique challenges, their weaknesses, you understand their core motivation, what their needs are, what they fear. And it just helps you really stay out of judgment and in compassion.

One example that I give... I have a lot of ones in my life and I love my one friend so much. Also, I have a sister who is a one. But sometimes ones can really hurt my feelings. I don't get my feelings hurt a lot but ones know how to do it. They do it. It's like, "Hey, that really stung."

So for ones, it has really helped my relationship with my friends and with my sister. When I remind myself I'm like, "Okay, this little pang of criticism that I felt from them, I need to let it roll off my back because that is not how they met to come across."

The type ones, they have a really intense inner critic. And we all have an inner critic, but theirs is like ruthless. Like never nice about anything. So when I can remember that and be like, "Okay, you know what? What fraction of criticism I just

felt here is like a drop in the bucket compared to what they live with every day," it gives me so much compassion for them.

And it also helps me not take it personally, knowing that ones are very... That's just the way that they see the world. They see the world, black and white, right and wrong, good and bad. And they really are just trying to make things better, that it's not some personal affront to me.

So that's just a small example of ways that it's really helped. But I think as you continue to grow and learn about yourself and other people, you take things a lot less personally and realize that it's probably more about someone else's wounding. And yeah, it does still hurt but a lot of times that helps to not take it so personally.

Stephanie: I think that for me it's been... I have a lot of threes in my life. And then also Carl, my husband is a five. So there are a lot of people in my life that are... I mean, I have a lot of people in my life that are great. I also have some eights. I don't know.

I have a lot of people in my life that are really great at talking about their feelings, but then I also have a lot of people in my life who it's not their first language. And so that has been so helpful to understand that there are some friends in my life that, you know, really spending a lot of time like digging deep in their feelings isn't comfortable for them and it's something that they really have to practice. Again, it's just not their first language.

So it helps me translate a little bit and it helps me understand... It just give some context, I think. But that's been so helpful. And just in all different ways to understand like what my friends are naturally best at and then also what they're naturally not best at. It really does. It just gives some context to who they are and why they might react in a certain way to something. And it just helps me speak to them and then also understand them in a way that's more true to... I guess more effective.

Meredith: That's another piece to it. That's the gift that being in relationship with other types offer. Like you as a two are able to give them that language for their feelings when normally they wouldn't have it and it would be so difficult.

It's funny. You said you have a lot of threes in your life. I have a lot of threes in my life too. And I love them dearly. And also as an eight I like sometimes look at them and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, they're in authenticity here. It's just like appalling when they're living into such a bad space."

And I realized that's a huge growth opportunity for me of like, "Get out of judgment and have some compassion for them. Because like, man, they've operated

their whole life on this stage of performance. I don't know. Maybe it was their childhood, maybe it wasn't. Maybe it's just the way that they are in the world.

But for some reason, they have this belief that who they are, their worth as a human is contingent upon, you know, their performance and how they show up. So it's like, no wonder they would show up like this in the world. But that's also for me I have a lot of opportunity for growth and compassion there.

But yeah, like you said, I like that second language thought. Anyone can learn a second language. And I think the older we get... Actually, I can tell you the older we get, the harder it is. Learning Mandarin was not easy. But it's possible. It's absolutely possible.

And the more that you do it, the more instinctual it becomes. I always think about like going to the gym. Working out is never easy, but it's not as bad as it is when you've taken months off and you just go back for the first time and you're so sore you can barely move the next day. If you keep going day after day, you build muscle memory, you build strength.

And so like, No, you're never gonna go and be like, "Oh, that was so easy," but it's just not going to be as taxing and it's not going to be as difficult.

Stephanie: I like that a lot. Talk to me about marriage. Because I know that there have been so many conversations about how the Enneagram is helpful in marriage. It's honestly not a path I've walked down super far.

Carl knows about the Enneagram, likes the Enneagram. We talk about it some but it hasn't been a big thing in our marriage. And so I'm excited to hear how it is helpful. Talk to me about the Enneagram in marriage.

Meredith: I mean, I think compassion... Again, we've already talked about that. That's the first piece. But especially when you're in that deeply connected relationship with someone, understanding what their basic needs are, what their core fears are, what drives them really helps you when you... I think when you enter into conflict. It really helps you approach that more from a collaborative standpoint. And rather than dying on a hill of like, "I want this or I need this," it really helps you understand the other person and where they're coming from and why they're coming from that place.

Again, this is kind of another layer of the Enneagram once you dive into it, but there are stances. So they're broken down into... The Enneagram is kind of all divided into subcategories of three. So there's three stances, the assertive,

dependent and withdrawn. And I think that this—and I'll break it down a little bit more—but this is so helpful, especially when it comes to conflict.

The assertive stance, that is the three, seven, eight, kind of self-explanatory, they're very bold and assertive—at times this can translate as being kind of aggressive—when they're wanting something or they have a goal that they're working towards.

My husband and I we're type three and eight, we have very direct conflict. There's not a lot of passive aggressiveness. It is just like, "Hey, I'm pissed you didn't take the trash out." And now today is Monday, it's trash day. He's supposed to take it out Sunday night, he forgot. I was pissed this morning. I told him, I was like, "Hey, you forgot the trash again, and I'm now mad."

Stephanie: No beating around the bush.

Meredith: Instead of like clanging around the kitchen and passive-aggressively being mad about the trash. And it was also like, "Hey, I'm not about this. Can you please set a reminder on your phone so you don't forget." So that's kind of how that type shows up in general, but especially in conflict.

The dependent is the one, two and six. They are less assertive, and they rely more on their relationships to get what they want and need. And this isn't like in a manipulative way. Every type absolutely can be manipulative in getting what they want. But this is not that. They just kind of like use the pulse of their relationships to kind of navigate through conflict and rough waters.

Ones fall into this category, but a lot of times people will say that ones can also flip to that more assertive side too. So they kind of flip between the two.

And then the withdrawing stance is the four, five, and nine. And this type they're not conflict averse, but they definitely need time to think, to plan how to best pursue the goals of the relationship or the situation or whatever it is at hand. I think that's really helpful.

It's also helpful too. Again, as an example, as a three and eight, sometimes we just need to let it go. And because we're both assertive, we just need to walk away. We just need to be like, "Okay, we're not gonna argue about this. This is really dumb. This is a trash. It happened. Let's get over it. So I think it's important to know that.

And then sometimes, you know, if you're in the withdrawn stance, like maybe the work is to like step up and say something about it that day instead of waiting five

days or two weeks, or never saying anything about it. So I think that's another really helpful way when you're in marriage to really utilize the Enneagram.

Stephanie: I like that. I like that a lot. There are million quotes like this, but just the idea that everyone who you see everyone in the world has a story or everyone in the world has something going on, everyone in the world is going through something and just kind of interacting with each other with that in mind.

I think that that's one of the reasons I like the Enneagram so much is because the more that—and I think this is probably true for all of us—but the more I understand someone, the more compassion I have for them. And it's really hard to just see someone from the outside and we, I think, either assume the best or assume the worst. Like we either assume that they have no problems and everything that they do is perfect, and their life is perfect and I'm the only one who's a mess. Or we assume that like, you know, what they said was they were trying to be hurtful or they were trying to be mean or something like that.

I think neither of those are true. Everyone's going through something. And most of the time people are really doing their best but we all have different stuff that we're going through. And so knowing that a whole section of the population has just this brutal inner critic helps us be so much more gentle with each other. Or knowing that, you know, giant sections of the population have a really hard time talking about their feelings and have a lot of fear surrounding facing their emotions—I think a lot of people feel that way—just helps us be a lot more...

I think even if you don't know what someone's type is, knowing about the different type is and knowing what... imagining what people could be going through just helps us approach each other so much more gently. I think that's really powerful.

Meredith: Yeah. Like you're saying, I think Brené Brown is the one... I don't remember which one of her books but it's something about people are hard to hate up close. Move in.

Stephanie: Oh, I love that.

Meredith: And I always think about that. When people do something that really irks me, or just rubs me the wrong way, I'm like, "You know what? They either completely didn't mean that or it's more telling of something that's going on inside of them that's really painful or really hard experience that they're living through and walking through."

And like you said, people don't wake up every day and like, "You know what? I'm just gonna be really terrible version of myself." People are really doing the best that

they can. And yes, sometimes, the best that I can do every day is not great. But you know what? I'm still waking up, but I'm still giving it my all.

And yeah, I think you're right. That's really where compassion comes in. I think about it too a lot of times. It's like, "I want people to give me a break when I don't show up well." Or when I am quick to be critical or harsh or unkind, I want people to be understanding and forgiving of me. And so I need to extend that same understanding and forgiveness to them.

Stephanie: I love that. Have you found that as people are trying to figure out what their type is, and you know, whether they're doing it... I think, if you're taking a test, and you get the results, and then you're looking through the descriptions or if you're just looking through the descriptions, have you found some sort of connection between the one you really, really, really don't want to be being the one that you are?

Meredith: Yes, it usually is that one. And that's why people like... I mean, I'm not trying to cast a blanket statement. But a lot of people are not truthful with themselves. My husband... I mean, he will tell his story about himself. When he learned about the Enneagram, he's like, "Oh, I'm a seven." And as a three there's a lot of his behavior that looks like a seven. He's very entrepreneurial, has hopped from job to job, and like done all these things, is very spontaneous. He can look like a seven a lot of times and he is a three through and through.

I think he was like, "Oh, I knew it for a long time but I just didn't want to admit it because of the reality of like the shadow side of each type." So yeah, I think that's also part of the gift of the Enneagram is that when you're willing to be honest and truthful with yourself, that is where transformation can start. And it's really the gift of it. But it does require that you're honest with yourself.

Which is kind of what I was talking about earlier when it comes to identifying your type. If you're in a season where you are just really not being your best self, or if you're in a season where you're just like killing it, you're like 10 out of 10 crushing life every day, it's gonna be pretty easy to spot your type.

But a lot of us live in that kind of average middle ground space from day to day where it's like kind of doing okay but we're kind of not, and we are also employing these adaptive strategies. But yes, I think it's hard to be honest with yourself and others. But a lot of people say that that's how you know your type is the type that you read and you're like, "Oh, I don't want to be that type," but you absolutely are.

Stephanie: That's definitely how I felt about it too. I was like, "That is so lame. I don't want to be that one. That's not fun. I don't want to be that." You know, it was a good reminder for me that everything looks different. This provides really, really good

language to us about ourselves and about each other, and like a common language to be able to talk about who we are and where we come from and what we need and how we're feeling with each other. And that's so powerful.

But also it doesn't mean there's a t-shirt that goes with each type that you like have to fit into. I think that's why I was like, "I can't be a two," because when people talk about it, like the stereotype of a two is that you're the one like single-handedly organizing every church bake sale. Like you don't let anyone to help you. And you are this amazing host that can cook the best cookies for everybody and does it all by themselves and never ask for help.

And I'm like, I could ruin a batch of breaking bake cookies. Like truly I am not... That's not me. I'm not the one organizing the base sale. I'm the last person that would volunteer for that. I was talking to a friend and she was like, "Yeah, but at the church bake sale, would you be sitting in the back of the room with someone you just met talking about their life until, you know, all hours of the night?" And I was like, "Well, yes, I would definitely be that." So it can look different.

And so just because you've seen... You know, everyone's t-shirt looks different, even if they're the same type as you, I mean, they can come out in different ways. I don't know. It is just really helpful to have... I know I keep saying this, but just have some language to be able to describe yourself even to yourself.

Just to understand... at least a starting point for understanding about kind of who you are and why you do some of the things that you do it... When you can have some words to even just explain them to yourself, it makes it so much easier to move through some of those things and grow and heal and ask for help, and you know kind of where to ask for help.

And then also when you're talking to someone else who you're in relationship with and you want to be understood, it makes it so much easier when you actually have some words, especially common words to use to talk about yourself.

Meredith: Yeah, yeah. It's that common language that's so powerful. Like you understand this, I understand this.

Stephanie: Do you have any last resources that you can point women to who are like, "I want to figure out what type I am. I want to learn more about this." I didn't even know about the stances. That was the first time I've ever heard of that. So what are some of your favorite Enneagram resources?

Meredith: A couple of things right off the top of my head. I think *The Road Back to You* is probably the best Enneagram primer out there. Suzanne Stabile and Ian Cron just

did a fantastic job of really describing each type. That's one of my favorite books out there.

I think if you're looking for something kind of to bolster relationships, *The Path Between Us* by Suzanne Stabile or *Becoming Us* by Beth and Jeff McCord.

Then I also recently read *The Journey Onward*. That's another Suzanne's Stabile book. That really dives into a deeper layer of... that kind of incorporates things like the core emotions, the stances, all of that to really help you get a better idea once you know what your type is. That to me too was really transformative in the way that I saw other people and having compassion for them. Those are, I would say, so my favorite books.

There is one called the *Enneagram Made Easy*. If you have kids, or if you're looking for something pretty high level, that's a really good one as well. And then there's a lot. Like if you want to deep dive into things, Helen Palmer and Beatrice Chestnut, they have a lot of great books out there. And you can get real deep into that.

But then some things in the podcast space. Christa Hardin has The Enneagram and Marriage Podcast. So again, if you're looking for something in the relational space. She's also a therapist. She's fantastic. Typology Podcast with Ian Cron. A lot of people are familiar with that. I think he does a really good job. He interviews people. That was really helpful.

I think, if you don't know what your type is, you're kind of trying to figure it out or if you have different types of people in your life that it's like, "I just don't understand them," or "I want to relate better," it's that type of person talking about their experience and just the way that they operate in the world. So I think those are a couple really great resources to start with.

Stephanie: That's so awesome. Okay, we're gonna link all those in our show notes because I want everyone has access to those.

Meredith, I'm so grateful for you. I love the work that you're doing and I love the way that you explain this. It's just really easy to understand. It's really relatable. And I'm so excited for your book to come out. So we'll link to that in the show notes also, all of your information. But really, thanks so much for the work that you do and for coming on Girls Night.

Meredith: Thank you for having me. This was so fun.

[00:53:55] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't Meredith amazing? Seriously, she's our new best friend, right? I just love her and I love her wisdom. I'm just so glad you got to meet her.

Don't forget that if you ever want to find the links for anything we talked about in our Girls Night episodes you can always find those in our show notes. If you head over to girlsnightpodcast.com, you'll find links for everything, including links for Meredith so you can preorder her book, listen to her podcast, and follow along with all the great stuff she's doing.

All friends, that's it for today's episode, but we have so much good stuff ahead this season. And with that in mind, now is 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'll just make sure 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 podcasts so much, and it really would mean the world to me. So if you take two seconds to do that, I'd be so grateful.

Friends, thanks so much for joining me for Girls Night. I will see you next week.