S3 EP 38: The Father’s Porch: Waiting, Wandering, and the Hope That Never Leaves Transcript

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Podcast Introduction and Guest Welcome

Welcome everybody to the Eat Pray Faith podcast with Dr. Tracy. [music] That's me. And today I have a very special guest, Dr. Sheren McCoy, who is not only one of my top practitioners in my teleaalth company, but she has been an incredible woman of God, lover of Jesus, and overall Christian mentor in my life.

you know, she and I had been friends for years prior to even working together, and now we have the opportunity to actually sit by side by side and help people see better ways to health and Jesus. Today though, we're going to be talking about the release of her new book, The Father's Porch, a journey of hope for parents of prodals. And this conversation, I believe Dr. Sharen is going to share the heart behind her book, The Father's Porch. And I have to say, it's a powerful reflection of the parable of the prodical son and how it collided with her own personal journey. We're going to talk about what the porch symbolizes, what it means to wander, what it costs to wait, and how the father's love looks when life gets really messy. So, if you've ever wrestled with anything like this in your life, whether it's shame or distance or grief or rebellion or or a longing just to come home, this episode is for you. So, Dr. Sher and McCoy, thank you for being here. >> Thank you. Thanks for having me. I uh I have my cup of Earl Gray, you know, just like if you're sitting on my porch. And I just heard my new dog barking in the background. So, if you can hear him, I apologize. Or her. I apologize. she's new and we're just learning how to have a a big dog in our life. So, um hopefully, you know, that won't be too much of a distraction.

The Father's Porch and the Prodigal Son

I love this story and um several people have asked me like why a porch and you know I'm from the south. I don't know what it's like in the north, but um I have some friends that live up in Pennsylvania that have these big beautiful porches and you get to see you know so many of the seasons change. Well, we don't get to see seasons change too much in Texas. It's either hot and brown or hot again, you know. So, we have a a few little cold spots here, but I've always loved a porch. And so, whenever I was reading uh Luke 15 through my own personal journey, that's the vision that I have in my mind of that the father is waiting on the porch waiting for me to come back. And um yes, I have my own personal story about my own personal um you know, my child. However, what has taught me through this whole specific situation is that all of the emotions that you go through when you have a prodal in your life or you have a person in your life that um maybe didn't meet up to your expectations that's very much of a a thing sometimes and I think that's for everybody right like we always have these expectations especially as parents of what we think we want our kids to do and they don't um you they blow it out of the water. Sometimes those expectations are amazing and wonderful and you never would have dreamed that on the good side. And sometimes it's maybe a little lackluster that you wanted more for them. And sometimes that's because they truly have walked away. And sometimes that's because you have to clean up your own porch and realize that you have to, you know, readress some things. And so, um, just running the whole gamut of that. So that's kind of what the the whole porch part of it is and then just walking through the seasons of it. >> Awesome. Well, I have a copy of it here.

It also comes with a workbook. But before we dive into the actual kind of material and flow and your heart behind it, can you just refresh our listeners memory of the story of the prodical son in the Bible, which is kind of the root inspiration of where this came from? >> Yeah, absolutely. So, um, a parable whenever, um, in scripture when, uh, when when Jesus is talking in parables, it's not always a very specific person. I think when we read that, especially when we've been in church for a long time, you know, I've been in church my whole life. Um, we think, oh, this is a specific person that this really happened to where in this situation is really never named. So, um, it it's a story of a person who leaves and then, you know, he's a it's a he's a rich the father's a rich ruler. He has everything and then the the son says, "Hey, I want mine now." And so the father wants him to stay, but he decides to leave. The father gives him um all of his inheritance and then he, you know, he blows it all, right? finds himself in a place of eating with the pigs and not any, you know, not even as good as what his his father's servants have.

Meanwhile, there is another son that has stayed by who's been very faithful and has looked at all of those things and and this angst that this father has is like, I want him to come back. I I hope that he comes back. And um finally when the the son has um really hit rock bottom eating with the pigs, he says, you know, even if I can be my father's servant now, I I'm better off going there. So he comes back. And in Luke 15:20, it says while the he was still a long way off, the father waited. And what an incredible, beautiful story that is of how the heavenly father waits for us while we're still a long way off. He still waits for us. So, I love that part. So, he comes back and what happens now is while the father is rejoicing, the other son is ticked off because he's like, "Hang on, I've been here the whole time. What about me?" Right? What I think is interesting in that part is that first of all, in this moment, the father also runs the risk of now losing another son. but not losing another son to moving away and taking his inheritance, but losing that son to anger and bitterness that you know really causes a problem for all of us.

Why the Book Was Written Now

And so this father has to think, I've got to welcome in this son, but I really want to make sure that this other son that's been so wonderful and faithful understands what the father's love looks like. And um that's the story of the prodal. It's absolutely one of the most beautiful stories and it affects every single one of us whether we have a true prodal child or family member or if we just look in the mirror and realize we are that prodal.

>> And I think uh people will pick this book up maybe because they have something like this in their life happening. But I really think in some way all of us have been a prodal whether you know we were running from Christ himself or from a human person or whatever that looked like. And so it hits home for a lot of people and we talked about this on the quarterbacking cancer podcast that you know when you have a disease you can feel like a prodal. And so it's it's such a relevant book no matter where you are in your journey. And it's something that as I'm reading through it, it's something that I would tell people like just read it. You never know when this will happen.

And it's such a good tool to walk through. Like you said, you first have to learn to clean up your own porch. So, you know, this book, The Father's Porch, why did you I know I know your personal journey, these things have been going on for a while, and the concept of this probably became real to you a while ago, but why did you write it now? Um well, I mean, we had a a huge change last year in our family dynamic and so it was very sad to me and um I spent a few days in bed and you know really feeling like you know our generation says you know nobody likes me, everybody hates me. I'm going to eat some worms.

And so I felt that way for a while and then I decided I can't live my life like this. I have to get up and find the joy in my life because I have so much joy in my life. And um but then the the biggest aspect of this is like first of all what you said of all of us can be prodicals when I spoke to the Lord about it. I always felt convicted of him saying but you are that too like you're denying me.

You are not listening to what my word says. And so I dug into that. And then the next part of it is okay Lord help me to find the joy. And then the the really the epitome of this was for me and why I ended up writing this was because I started journaling it. But as I just to help my own you know self um and what I realized in that moment was this is a spiritual battle. We we hear so many things all over the internet about estrangement, about this therapy, that therapy, this program, that program. Everybody needs to buy somebody or something. And everybody has a truth. I always say everybody has a truth. Truth.

Your truth. My truth. Everybody has a truth. Truth. But there's only one truth. And the one truth that I keep coming back to is that we don't battle in flesh and blood. We battle in the spiritual realm. So this is not a battle with my child. This is not a battle for anybody else with their child or th that person that they love. It's a spiritual battle. It's a spiritual battle that the enemy wants our heart. When he can't have our heart, he's going to try to steal our testimony. He's going to try to steal our joy. And he's going to try to steal our family. And so if we can work through those seasons of grief and pain and cleaning up our own porch and the anger and like you said the rebellion and um and how it comes all back again. We understand that we're not battling a person, but we come into this place of interceding for them, but waring in the spiritual realm for them and let the Lord take care of it and trusting him. And ultimately, isn't that exactly what happened in the prodical story of he's like, "Okay, well, I'm at my wit's end. I'm eating with the pigs, so I might as well go back to the father's house and figure out what the father wants me to do." And so that's where it brought me coming back to the father's house. I come back to the porch and he's like, "Glad

you finally made it, Chariot. Now let why don't you sit down and let me help you work through all these things." So I'm a person of if I it helps me. I want it to help somebody else. And that's where it came from. And it really helped me to heal and I hope that it helps somebody else. >> Yeah. Well, let's talk about a few case scenarios. And I want to talk about parents of aranged children. Let's just start with that. >> And that can mean anything. It doesn't necessarily mean uh just leaving the house. It can be leaving the faith. It can be a rebellion within that child. So to you and reading the book, what does it mean to love without chasing? >> Oh gosh. Le really learning how to That's a really hard question. It's a wonderful question.

Loving Without Chasing and Surrendering Control

And recently I heard someone um criticize when Christians say love like Christ because then the criticism is oh so you can't love me just for who I am. You have to have this supernatural love. Right. A God. >> I [clears throat] do I do have to have a supernatural love because if I love you just like I love you, I'm going to take all of my junk that I love incorrectly or I don't love completely or I think you need to say something or do something and then that makes it me not be able to love you completely. But the love of the father is merciful and graceful. And yes, because we love him, when we come to know him, there are requirements of us, but the requirements are not what get us to heaven. It's his grace and his mercy. So, learning to love like that and to learn to forgive, man, that's a that's a very hard one. What does it mean for me? It means for me getting my own self out of the way and uh realizing that some things that I've said and the things some things that I've done need to be not only forgiven from maybe my family member but also from the Lord you know and walking in that forgiveness of myself even if the family member does not forgive me >> right >> and that's a hard thing >> right and not walking in shame or guilt And you know the not chasing part I think we have a desperation as parents when we see our child doing something right and we know that we know that we know because we've lived 20 30 in my case 35 years more than that child and I just want to grab them and be like don't do that like but it's in their resistance at the time they're not receptive to that and so I had a friend of mine And um we were talking yesterday and it was a situation that happened in my personal life and I was like I just can't do it anymore. And she said you sometimes feel like that's failure.

She's like but that's really surrender. And she said what you're saying is God I can't do it but you can. And you lay it down finally and you step away. and she said, "And it's messy and it looks really messy, but you have to because if you don't get out of the way, God can't step in." And I was like, I always looked at the fact that I can't do something as failure. And I never looked at it God finally saying, "I know you can't, but I can. So come here, my daughter. Sit up on my lap and let me handle it." And I hope parents can receive that, you know, because when a child does walk away or do something like you're sitting there like, >> I don't know if I can do this and God's like, you can't. >> I can. Right.

>> Right. You know that that's so true. Um, a friend of mine where and I were talking about that this year and I think one of the biggest lessons for me is that scripture be still and know that I am God. That the be still means to stop striving. you know, it doesn't mean to just obliviously like not do anything.

And for th for the two of us, like we are, you know, we're high achievers. Like we go go, right? And so to say to us, stop striving. You look at somebody and say, "What? Wait, you don't want me to work?" No, I didn't say I didn't want you to work. I want you to stop striving to get to someplace that God's trying to take you to because he's going to take you. And and that's so important as a parent. I mean, my children are in their 30s. I'm a grandchild. And now I get to look at my grandkids and you know, my two-year-old grandson who says every single day, I did it. I did it. You know, and so we call him the great conqueror because he does everything every single day. And that's a wonderful kind of thing. But even in that, as a mother of a 2-year-old, you have to stop striving. Sometimes, like right now, when he's in this wagon, instead of sitting in the wagon, he stands up on the edge of the wagon and holds on. And you know, my daughter has put him down over and over and over. And I looked at her one day and I was like, "Aren't you nervous?" And he she's like, "He's going to find out." I mean, I've tried to put him down over and over and over, you know, but he's just going to have to learn. That's stopping that's that's making sure that you put safety around them in certain places so that you know his head doesn't hit the concrete. But if his butt hits the wagon, he'll learn that either he needs to hold on a little tighter, maybe he needs to step down. That's the stop striving so that God can work it out for us. And as parents, oh my gosh, that's so difficult. And you're right. When we do stop that, it doesn't mean that we're failing. It means that we're actually moving forward to where God wants us

to be.

>> Mhm. Yep. Absolutely. And it was very freeing actually. I was like, "Oh, I can just say I can't and God will be like, okay, like that's >> I got you." >> Yeah.

>> Finally, Tracy, >> I know, right? So, yeah, I work on myself. Um, so for parents that are listening that may be going through something like this where they had these expectations for their children and didn't come to fruition. Maybe I mean parents are dealing with so much today that I don't feel that my parents' generation had to deal with. Socio sociological pressure. Um, and then we have trans movement. We have, you know, things like homosexuality. And I'm not judging anyone's walk in this life. I'm mentioning things that are hard on parents. Maybe uh they wanted their child to go to college and they chose not to. Maybe they got married young and the parent wanted them to wait. Maybe there was an unexpected pregnancy outside of wedlock and it was a big disappointment. There's so many things.

How do you wait and pray and trust in the Lord without becoming bitter and resentful and and even hopeless in some of these cases? Well, I always I've always always always said to my kids that while you're breathing, there's always hope. >> So, you know, that's you have to keep breathing. That's the main thing. Even if it seems like it's the darkest of days, keep breathing because the Lord's still working and doing something in your life. The anger and the bitterness part is such a hard thing. Um anger and that bitterness, when we hold on to that, it's usually because of unforgiveness.

Waiting Without Bitterness or Shame

And so um people don't like to forgive because they think that it makes the situation okay or gives permission to what has been wrong to you. But forgiveness or unforgiveness is two things. Unforgiveness is like giving the person poison and hoping it you know or you taking the poison and hoping it kills the other guy and then and that's never going to work. You're the one that's always going to be the one that is ends up being horribly sick. And the other thing is giving up hope for a better past. And that's a hard concept. Um, I had a good childhood and a not so good childhood. You know, I had two parents that were polar opposites.

My mother was my absolute best friend. And my dad was a very, very, very difficult person. 25 years later after he's passed away, I can also tell you that I'm the person that I am. And you see him shining in me more than you probably see my mother. Although I also say the practitioner side of me is my dad. But me sitting here, you know, on a podcast talking about these things or sitting on a porch and crying with someone is absolutely my mother. But the reason that I could say that and I can say, "Oh, he had some really good parts." Is because I gave up hope that I would have had a different past. I can't change my past, right? But it shaped me for who I am. And I allowed the Lord to change some of the bad parts and help me to to move into that part. And so that helps guard against the unforgiveness, the anger, the bitterness of things that I absolutely could be bitter about. And yet, what's it going to do if I hold on to it? It's really only going to destroy me.

>> Yeah. And I think that's hard because, you know, the father is patient and as we see in the parable, the father waits and he doesn't force anything. And so, you know, why is that concept so hard for us to accept? You know, there's I think it's because there's a lot of shame and fear that comes along these unexpected turns in your kids' lives or something that happened in your life and it distorts our view of God's posture towards us.

>> So, um >> I wanna I want to press into that. We talked about this, you know, on the other on the other podcast. I talk about shame so much because the number one thing um that parents do is shame themselves. When their kids do something and and the world does that does it to them. You see a 2-year-old acting out, it's the parents fault instead of the fact that they're just two and their brain is all wonky and they're two, like they've only been on this world for two years, you know? Um, but then you >> I know people have been on this world for like 80 years and they still don't act right. >> Right. Right. Exactly. Right. So, Right.

That's exactly right. I mean, I saw a person that was about that age yesterday and I was like, I didn't think, oh, that's his mother's fault, >> you know. [laughter] I totally gave it to him as his responsibility. Like, you should know better, you know. But when our kids are young, our teenagers, young adults, you know, coming into this um thing,

um we still blame the parents so often for, oh well, they must have done something wrong. And we do that in church circles and in not church circles, right? is that they should have said something, done something, prayed more, you know, not had something in their life, had something in their life. And then the parents, even if it's unsaid, the parents say they do it to themselves. Um, we say, "What did I do wrong?" And I said this before is that shame and conviction are two completely different things. Um, and shame and guilt often come together. We have that emotion of guilt that the Lord has given us so that we're convicted to draw closer to him. But shame does not draw us closer to the Lord. Shame takes us away. Go back to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve hid, God was walking in the garden and said, "Where are you?" Even though he knew where they were and they said, "We were naked and we were ashamed." He did not shame them. They shamed themselves and they hid. But the Lord in his grace and his mercy and his great love for them provided a blood sacrifice and then clothed them and drew him tr drew them closer to him. That is the ultimate love story of all kinds. It was not I told you so. You didn't do what I told you to do. Why did you do this? all of the things that we do to oursel or that we do to others when they do something that they might not should have done, right? Instead, he provided and he drew them closer. So, every time when you're seeing a situation and you see, is there chaos and confusion? Well, that's not of God. So, it has to be of the enemy. And is it drawing you closer to him or is it drawing you away? If it's drawing you away or you want to hide from everybody, you can guarantee that it's shame and it's the enemy that is trying to take you farther away. And I think you asked me in the beginning what started all this. That's where I realized I was like, I'm hiding in bed. I don't want to talk to my friends. I don't want to talk to my family members. This is exactly what the enemy wants me to do. He wants to shut me up. And you know, that's not an easy thing for nobody on earth has been able to do that yet.

It's never happened. Nobody's that powerful except Jesus. >> That's exactly right. So, I realized, oh, this is shame. No, I'm not going to be I'm not going to walk in shape, you know. Um, and the other thing, too, is that, you know, that's that's abuse of of the enemy that he's abusing us and we are allowing it. And I'm not just a survivor of abuse. I'm an overcomer. A survivor is still laying on the floor after they got the crap beat out of them, but an overcomer gets up and says, "Nope, I'm not done." Right? And so, I want to be an overcomer of um of of life in general, not not just what circumstances happen in life, you know, just of all of that. The the problem with all of this in our culture right now, too, is exactly what you said is that you and I are from a different generation. My parents were not boomers.

My gen My parents were of the silent generation. You know, they would be close to their hundreds. So, they grew up in the depression and the things that they were around and the things that they did, they raised us based on what they knew at that moment in that time. And so, I'm Gen Xer. You know, we, you know, all the things that everybody says on the internet, we drank out of the water fountain. We stayed out outside all day. And, you know, we were just, you know, feral. Absolutely, Frell. You know, we just did whatever we did. You You skinned your knee, you get up, you brush it off, put a little dirt in it, and you'll be fine, right? Um >> what's that?

>> You said, "Rub some dirt on it." >> Rub some dirt on it, put some monkey blood on it. You'll be fine [laughter] if you're lucky. But then we ended up saying, "Oh, well, we don't want our kids to be raised completely that way." And so we did some things different just like our parents did some different things that their kids did. And so now we have this new generation. And oh my gosh, Tracy, aren't you glad that the things that we did when we were teenagers is not on TikTok. >> No video. There's no video. There's no evidence of anything. >> And I am so glad.

>> Was an angel, man. No one can prove different. I [laughter] I saw something today that said that they were really glad that their kid their parents didn't have Ring doorbell. I'm like, "Oh man, that's so true. [laughter] I'm so glad that my parents did have Ring doorbell." So, it's a whole different thing. But everybody, you know, with everybody on the social media and the net all to everybody, oh, you've been abused. Oh, you need to do this. Oh, you need to cut them out of your life. Or you need to do this. But then what I also found is in so many of these accounts, um, they always end up leading to some kind of program or some type of, you know, therapy thing that you need to buy. And yeah, I have a book and I would love for you to buy it, but the heart of it is I want you to heal. You know, there is not one single thing, no class, no therapy, nothing that is going to you're going to go through all of this and you're going to pass it. you're gonna get and you're gonna have all the things to say exactly at the time to say it and then everything's going to be normal with your kid or your family member. It's not going to happen.

>> And sometimes the healing and the closure doesn't happen on this side of heaven.

What God Taught Through the Waiting Season

And we have to that because >> even if our time passes without resolution with whatever said person in your life, that doesn't mean that they won't come to their own resolve later or repentance or forgiveness or you know just absolute conviction of the situation. And I think that teaches us if we hear that to pray differently. You know, we can ask for people to come back into our life or we can ask God like, "Can you just convict their heart, Lord, to see you more than anything?" And wherever that leads, I'm okay. That's really what the ask is. Because if God is in their hearts, if if they have Christ in them, you I find it hard for people to to not want to be with people that are also Christc centered and love them. You know what I mean? It's when someone comes up against someone that's filled with the spirit of God and filled with the love of Christ and they themselves are walking in shame and guilt. It can look like a big ugly mirror in front of them and they're just not quite ready and they run. They run away from the father because they're afraid of what he really will reveal about themselves. And all they understand is condemnation. And they don't understand that conviction is not condemnation. Conviction releases you of shame. Because you know when you're convicted of something truly by the Holy Spirit of God, you it it calls you to run towards God because he's the only place that's left, >> right? >> And you run in his arms. So really important um you know that we understand the difference. So, I guess I'll ask you during this whole season and even while you were waiting, what did God teach you about his heart? >> Oh, wow. I I think that's probably the sweetest thing. Um, you know, I've had I've had my own personal physical challenges, especially in the last 16 months. And, um, so that's been an additional challenge to it. And uh we watched this >> it's because you work with me. [laughter] >> We'll cut that part out. No, I'm just kidding.

>> We we watched this um we watched this program I guess last year and at the end of the program, you know, it was like a one of those royalty programs like king and queen like ancient times, you know, 15th century or something. And the the mother falls dramatically on the floor and she says, "When will the darkness ever end?" And I was really into the into the show, but I just started balling at that moment of like when is the darkness ever going to end? You know, that it just seems like it's this physical thing, it's this emotional thing, it's this spiritual thing, it's this financial thing, it's business, it's all of those things. And so it seemed like all of those things were an accumulation of this darkness that just would could not be penetrated. And so in that moment again because I know I've been a believer for such a long time, I do know the Lord and I do know that light and darkness can't be there. And so I had to let a little bit of light in. And so what happened in that is this year I was very intentional about reading the Bible through. Um and I've I've missed some chapters and you know some days and here and there, but I I didn't shame myself about it. I just kept moving and kept going. But in the midst of that, especially in the Old Testament, about story after story after story about how what the character of God was, about who he really truly is.

Because I think that for me, that's when I begin to doubt when situations are arising is who is God in this situation? In this situation, he's just, in this story, he's merciful. in this just just or in this in this story he's peaceful.

You know, in this um way he is going to bring redemption. Uh in this place, he's going to bring restoration. And so knowing that he's all of those things every single time and the healer and the provider and where he comes. But it's his timing. And you know, for those of us that are not very patient, that's the hardest part. And so, where do you go when you're not seemingly getting your own way is just pressing into who he is, you know? And I think that's the thing that the Lord has taught me this year is who's his character. And what it has done in my own heart is made me just love him so much more. Not just Jesus, but God the father, you know. Um, and in the midst of that, he healed things with about my relationship with my own dad, my own earthly dad that I didn't even know still needed to be healed. And how incredible is that? That he doesn't waste anything. Oh, so Sherian, you're wanting me to heal this situation, but oh, by the way, I'm going to, you know, sweep off your porch over here in this corner, you know, and I'm going to heal that, too. And so I think that's really what it's been for me is just to see the character of God in so many incredible ways and I've learned to trust him so much more.

>> Yeah. Amazing. So I'm sure parents are listening to this now and you know maybe they don't have such a relationship yet with God. And I think your book I want to talk a little bit about uh what the book does for people.

How the Book and Workbook Are Structured

uh can you just explain how it's set up along with the workbook and in your mind how a a person could walk through this and maybe you know I think the hardest part about surrendering an outcome is just trusting that no matter what it's going to be okay according to God's will and that's so hard so can you walk us through how you put them all together and the work >> so the first part of it is um really talking about um the mothers in the Bible and of the men. And the reason that I put that in there is because so often in the the stories that I've heard of parents that and and mainly I, you know, talked to um I talked to moms mostly, but I've talked to a few dads, but they um the one single thing that they say is, "Well, this child has been different." You know, that something is different about them. Um, in my my personal opinion of that is that usually that child is a pretty strong willed child. And so in our generation, we were taught to break that will. And thankfully, I had a mother that told me never to break that will, but to mold it. And so I started looking at that. I was, well, well, what are the mothers in the Bible? We don't really see a lot of them, but what do they see in their children? And so we I started talking about the disciples and their their personalities and maybe what their mothers might have thought of them or what they might have gone through in that aspect of it. And then we start with the porch, the winter porch. And that's the hardest one. Um because that's where grief is and where we pick up that blanket of grief. And at first when we pick it up, it just seems, you know, so heavy and we so we go through that aspect of it. And then before we go on to the next porch, we really go onto that um that self-reflection of cleaning up your own porch because you really can't go into the next seasons until you repair what needs to be broken within you, which you have the power to to do.

You can't um you can't repair something in someone else or even with someone else until you repair what is there for you. Um, so that's kind of going into the spring cleaning aspect of things, you know, getting that kind of thing moving and going and freshening up. And then you come into um the the summer the summer porch. Uh your summer is a whole lot different than my summer is, but that's how it is in everybody's uh porch. But um this is where we wait and where we really start looking at where how love grows and how it grows within you and what you can do. There's different stories um from scripture that I weave in and out of each of those um those seasons uh thankfulness and um and waiting. Uh, one of the stories is the story of Rahab when she had the faith in God that she'd never even seen before or known about and yet she um, you know, she was very useful in doing all the things that she did to save a people.

And um, and she did it sight and scene. And so that story is is in there. And then we start really talking about the father and how he runs to us. And finally, we go into the fall and um we have to have a sad chapter in there. And that chapter is what if they never come home because sadly, you know, I've talked to a few people that um their children have taken their own life or someone in their life has taken their own life and and I have some people in my life that have done that and that's a hard hard thing. Um and to understand the emotions that go through that that even if that happens, it's not your fault. Um, even if you're never able, it doesn't it doesn't release your own responsibility for the things that you have said or done, but it does not cause them to do that situation or or make that choice because we have free will, right? We all have free will. Um, and so um it goes through that and then then there's just for me personally, there was letters uh to the on the porch. So letters to my prodal um or to a prodal, letters to the one who stayed and and letters to myself, you know, of like remember this, you know, you're going to you're going to move forward and you're going to get through this. I never planned on doing a workbook. Uh but my very dear friend said, "So when's the workbook coming out?" [laughter] So I was like, "Okay, I think I can do this." And I did teach a study at our church um last spring. and um shared some of the stuff uh with that group of ladies and um they wanted a workbook too. So I put it together and I didn't want to make another like leaders manual so I put that free on the website so that anybody that wants to use it they can use that leader guide or do it how you feel led to do it. Um and that's you know that's kind of how it how it comes comes together. So, >> it's super comprehensive and I love the scriptures and the reflection points in the workbook.

>> So, it's very interactive, very well thought through. Excellent. So, I'll ask you one last question. When you wrote [clears throat] the book, >> who did you picture holding it? >> Oh gosh, that's a good question.

Um, I would say probably first parents uh and parents of adult children. That was probably who I thought of first. But as I continued to write it, um, I have personally given it to children or parents of younger children because not as a oh no, this is going to happen, you know, but a but realizing that your parenting doesn't belong doesn't doesn't require everything that you're doing but what he's doing and so so to try to give them some encouragement.

Who the Book Is For and Final Encouragement

So I would say mainly parents I see them doing it but through the eyes of other people that have read it and like what things that you've done or you've said to me about it I I I think it would be helpful for anybody you know um often when we write something or when we do something we write it from our own perspective. Um but um I have a very dear friend that has already walked through major major drug addiction with her child and her child has is an overcomer of it and is doing amazing and wonderful and you know that season of life for that child is completely over and she picked it up and she said it has helped to heal so much of her of the emotions and feelings that she still had that were left over even though her kid is already back. >> Wow.

>> So, I would I'm grateful. I'm so grateful. That's that's really what I want it. I want it to be a blessing to other people. Whoever needs the blessing. >> Very much is. And you know, this book is for anyone who feels absolutely have any ever felt lost, anyone that's ever been waiting or wandering. You know, it's written from a mother's heart, but it's about the father's heart. So, it's it's a very read. So, if someone's listening right now to this podcast who might feel lost or is waiting for someone they love, like what do you want them to know about the father?

>> He loves you. >> Awesome. So, would you mind praying for parents who are waiting and the ones who feel too far to return? >> Absolutely. Oh, Father, thank you so much for your graciousness and your love and for never ever giving up on us. Father, I pray for those that are listening right now, that their minds would be called, that their eyes, their spiritual eyes would be open, their spiritual ears would be open to what you have to say, Lord. Not what the world has to say, not what their own thoughts are telling them or saying to them, but that you would completely envelop every aspect of who they are and where they are right now.

Open their hearts to soften to the spirit of of you, Lord, and what you want to do in them specifically before they work on any other relationship in their life. I pray for their children or their family member or whoever it is.

And even if it's themsself, that they would picture themselves running back to the father with you with their your arms completely open wide, receiving them, that they don't have to do something or say something or be something different before they come back, but that you love them. And Lord, help them to be the parent that loves that way, too. Father, if there's been any any weapon that has been formed against this these families or these people in any word or indeed I ask that you send it back to hell where it belongs that it has no power here that we keep our eyes focused on where you were and we thank you for all these things. Thank you for tracing and for allowing me to be here today.

And may you use it and divide it in the words that have been spoken here today in every possible way that you want it to be divided. Lord, use it for your glory and our good. In your precious name, we pray. Amen.

Now, if you cry, I cry. That's how this works. So, all right, guys. Don't forget to get your copy of The Father's Porch [music] and grab the workbook. It'll be so worth your while. Sharen, thanks for your heart for writing this for everybody. And [music] if you found this podcast helpful for you, please share it with somebody and bless them with it. Also, [music] don't forget to subscribe and follow us on all social media channels. Till next time, may God bless your journey. >> Thank you.