



QUESTIONS

for your real life journey

Episode 15: Gemma Hunt

How do we face change?

1. SCHOOL SHOES AND BUTTERFLIES (8:52/10:17)

Gemma uses the image of new school shoes to describe what going through change is like for her: 'When you're in a new school term and you've got your new school shoes on, they really hurt at first and it's really uncomfortable. But by the end of term, they're scuffed up, worn in and comfy. So you know, change is gonna be alright in the end - you just have to go through that breaking-in season.'

But even though facing change gives her 'some anxiety - butterflies in my tummy,' she knows that she'll 'be okay. Because God hasn't let me down yet. So I'm pretty sure he's not going to let me down in the future.'

Do you think Gemma's image of breaking in new school shoes is a good metaphor for facing change? Does the prospect of things changing give you butterflies? Do you have experiences that give you assurance that God will look after you through change? If so, what are they? If not, how might you ask God for that assurance for the future?

2. PIGEON HOLES AND NEW CHALLENGES (8:52/10:17)

Despite Gemma initially fearing change, and being comfortable with jobs that she doesn't really have to think about, she says she knows that new challenges grow her and prevent her from getting stuck in a rut:

'I do like to mix things up a bit so that I don't get stale. I think it'd be very easy just to kind of keep churning out the same old things as a performer. And I don't want to just be pigeon-holed into a particular category, style of presenting or genre.'

Have you ever felt pigeon-holed, where people keep asking you to do the same thing because you've done it before? How does that feel? What's good or bad about it? What could you do to avoid being pigeon-holed in the future?



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How do we move through suffering?

3. SUPPORTED BY OTHERS (18:22)

Gemma talks about her experience of trauma:

'Something happens in your life where you then sink to the bottom of this big pit - the grief curve - and it takes such a long time for you to heal and to work your way back out again, to get to a level field.'

Visiting a professional counsellor helped Gemma find a way through this trauma. And throughout the Bible, we see the importance of having the close support of others when facing challenging and difficult situations: Elizabeth was supported through her pregnancy by Mary; Ruth refused to leave her mother-in-law Naomi's side; Elisha stood with Elijah, declaring: 'I will not leave you!'; and Jesus himself is Immanuel - 'God with us!'

Do you think it's a sign of strength or weakness to have counselling, or even simply to ask for help? Why? If you've faced a challenging situation in the past, how did it feel to have (or not have) the support of another person? Do you have people you could rely on for future support?

4. RANTING AND RAVING (21:41)

Matt asks Gemma what she does, when she's right at the bottom of the curve, to help sustain her up the other side:

'For me, I journalled and I wrote all of those feelings down because I felt like nobody else got it. And they're all saying, "Oh, it'll be okay." And, "God's with you. He hasn't forgotten you and he loves you." And I'm like, "Yeah, right! I'm so angry. I feel so disappointed! Where are you, God? What is going on? Why am I experiencing this? Why haven't you answered my prayer? I'm really hurt right now. It's not fair!"

'And I'm just writing it all down. Because God can take it, right?'

What do you think about this idea? Has anyone ever suggested it's okay to have a rant at God when you're angry? Why do you think we don't very often hear sermons or worship songs about getting angry at God and asking him why he's not answering our prayers?



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How do we receive joy?

5. BE ABLE TO RECEIVE IT (26:46)

Thinking about receiving joy, Gemma suggests that 'Unless you are in a place to receive it and believe it, I think we find it very difficult. Some of us struggle with our self-worth. And so we don't feel like we are worthy or deserving of happiness. Because we don't believe we are good people. We've done things that we know we shouldn't have done and we feel disappointed ourselves – and we feel like God's disappointed with us.

'So I think we just have to actively open our hands, receive it and say thank you.'

If you picture the most joyful people you know, do they tend to also be those with the strongest sense of self-worth? What could you consciously do to actively open your hands, receive his joy and say thank you for it?

6. MAKING OTHERS SMILE (28:29)

Gemma explains, 'I've got a real heart for others, and a very discerning spirit. When I see somebody, there's something I can see in them that they need, whether it's a word of affirmation, or whether they need some support financially or physically, I just see something and I love serving people. I love bringing joy to other people.

'Often I get emails that say, "Oh, there's just something about you on the TV. So I just looked you up and I found your website, and I found out that you're a Christian. I can totally see the joy of the Lord shining through the screen," and I think, "Hallelujah, that's it! That is exactly my heart's desire for people to experience the joy of the Lord through my bounding around on screen.'

Do you relate to Gemma's love of bringing joy to other people? If so, when in your life have you felt most joyful because you made someone smile? If not, even if it's not your biggest strength what could you do to intentionally bring others joy? Which one person could you encourage today to let them feel affirmed and valued?



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How do we mature in service?

7. LEARN DEEPLY, BUT FRESHLY TOO (33:12)

Gemma says, 'I think we can learn a lot from those around us. And not just from those who are older and more mature and wise in the ministry - but also from those who are up-and-coming and youthful, with new fresh ideas.'

Which people do you know who are older than you and listen to your ideas? Which people do you know who are younger than that you listen to and learn from?

8. CHEERLEADERS AND GROUNDKEEPERS (34:33)

Gemma says that she's 'had some great cheerleaders along the path.'

But that on the other hand, 'keeping close those good friends who knew me and loved me prior to my public profile has been really crucial to making sure I don't let myself get lost in the celebrity world and instead keep my feet on the ground.'

Who are your cheerleaders - those people that are super-positive about you and what you can achieve? How have they helped you to mature? Who are your groundkeepers - those who help keep your feet on the ground? How have they helped you to mature?

Act: ALL-THE-TIME CHRISTIANS (23:05)

Gemma is very open about her Christian journey. She explains that growing up she realised she had the choice between being an 'alternate weekend Christian' or a 'Christian all the time.'

If we are honest we face the same choice, so below are three activities that you could do as a group, based on some of the wisdom she shared during the podcast, that can help you choose to be a 'Christian all the time.'

Prophesy for one another

- Gemma shares that the prophetic word she was given at the event Soul Survivor has been something that has sustained her, carrying her through the changes she faces each day, week, month.
- If you're unsure what a prophetic word is, it's basically when God's Holy Spirit gives a Christian a message for another individual that speaks into their life in a way that encourages, comforts or inspires them.



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- Anyone can prophesy. The Bible says that we should 'eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.' - 1 Corinthians 14:1 (NIV)
- You are most likely to sense that God wants you to use you to prophesy into someone's life if you:
 - a) believe God still speaks to us through his Holy Spirit
 - b) keep your heart open to the possibility of him using you
 - c) listen prayerfully, and
 - d) if something does pop into your head (whether that's a picture, a Bible verse, worship song lyrics, a phrase, or something else) be courageous and share it in a spirit of humility!
- Why not give it a go. Ask the Holy Spirit what he wants to say to others in the group.

Prove them wrong

- Gemma shares about how foundational the Christian summer camps she attended as a teenager were for her social, emotional and spiritual growth. She realised she needed to be a Christian 'all the time.'
- But her mum's reaction when she told her this decision was, 'Alright. How long will that last?' She became determined to prove her wrong and says 'I needed that kick up the backside to take it seriously.'
- If we're honest, those of us who've attended Salvation Army summer schools, Easter camps or similar may have very similar experiences of the difficulty of living out our new-found faith when we get home.
- Discuss: which people in your lives have given you that 'kick up the backside' that have caused you to take your Christian faith seriously?
- Think of some practical ways you could say thank you to those people - then do those things!
- The Bible says, 'Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith and purity.' - 1 Timothy 4:12 (GNT)
- Also brainstorm some of the best ways you can 'prove wrong' those who may be cynical when we say we're a Christian.

Don't be so weird

- Gemma says that she 'came home after "becoming a Christian" / "given my life to Jesus" / "becoming best friends with Jesus"' and tried to use lots of different terms so people might be able to understand what it meant, 'because often it sounds a bit weird.'
- Do you find it odd talking about what becoming a Christian means? Do you identify with the idea that sometimes the phrases we use sound 'a bit weird'?
- The Bible says we should 'be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you' - 1 Peter 3:15 (GNT)
- Brainstorm ways you can 'explain the hope (of Jesus) you have in you' in ways that don't make Christians sound so weird.