



Podcast Title: *Today's Heartlift with Janell*

Episode Title: Becoming Stronger in Our Faith

Welcome to *Today's Heartlift with Janell*, where host Janell Rardon invites listeners into a journey toward living a meaningful life! Today's conversation continues the ongoing series "Becoming Stronger Every Day," a series inspired by Janell's new [book](#) by the same name. In this episode, Janell encourages listeners to settle in with a journal and drink of something delicious and join in her exploration of a specific season of life that, while challenging, can be a catalyst for great personal growth and strengthening: the season of transition.

Today's episode begins with a particularly inspirational introduction of guest Dr. Kristi Gaultiere, who has been counseling and ministering for over 30 years. Together with her husband, Bill, Kristi founded [Soul Shepherding](#), a nonprofit ministry with the aim of helping believers discover their next steps in growing intimacy with Jesus, emotional health and loving relationships. In their new book [Journey of the Soul](#), Kristi and Bill draw on over 70,000 hours of providing therapy and spiritual direction to show readers how to identify their current state of faith and the next steps to take for their individual journey. They utilize biblical characters, church history and personal stories to illustrate their six stages of faith. Kristi will share her interpretation of these six stages, all of which will be woven into their discussion throughout the episode.

Janell initiates the conversation by asking Kristi to share what things prompted her to co-author her book. Kristi shares the significant role the six stages outlined in the book had in helping her and her husband navigate their own lives. With the passion and desire to reach others as intimately as possible, they felt called to share this treasured knowledge in a more publicly vulnerable way. It wasn't without assistance from God that the book was possible, and Kristi recalls acknowledging the fate of the book to be in His hands all along.

Kristi offers a brief explanation of the six developmental stages in our relationship with Christ, which she refers to as the "CHRIST stages." They decided on this acronym not only because of the relevance of Christ in relation to a guiding principle, but also because it helps readers to remember and understand the intent of each stage. The six stages are as follows: Confidence in

Christ, Help and discipleship, Responsibilities in ministry, Inner journey, Spirit led ministry and Transforming union. They discuss the wall that everyone encounters at some point in their relationship with God. Unfortunately, many people tend to let this metaphorical wall block them from progressing in their faith, which brings us to the overall theme of today's discussion.

The real hope for today's episode is to help people conquer the wall in order to pursue the endless possibilities of freedom, spiritual growth and intimacy on the other side. Kristi uses an abstract idea of the COVID-19 pandemic to illustrate the idea that the enemy lies within temptation in times of desolation and difficulty. The true test falls upon the individual in how they navigate these trials and the direction they choose to lean into. Kristi portrays the ways in which the idea of "leaning in" may look different for everyone, depending on which stage you are currently at in your relationship to God. Janell shares a story from her own life articulating the moment she realized what leaning into God really meant to her. Regardless where we may be in our journey, He is always there to walk alongside us with empathy and support.

In addition to the six CHRIST stages, *Journey of the Soul* also outlines six types of walls one may face in their journey building their relationship with God. These walls include physical burnout, faith crisis, spiritual burnout, moral blowout, personal crisis or dark night of the soul. The book offers an exercise called "Pathfinder to the Wall", which aids readers in determining which wall they are presently faced with, and ultimately surpassing it. It also articulates two distinct spiritualities often encountered in the stages of one's Christ journey. The first, Kristi explains, encompasses the "CHR" stages, when one is first building a foundation and Christian identity. Here, thinking is typically more black and white concepts such as light vs. dark and good vs. evil. The second spirituality occurs once one has made it past the stagnancy often encountered in the midst of a Christ journey, and encompasses the "IST" stages of the acronym. It implies the realization that a relationship with Christ comes out of not only identity and belonging, but is an intimate, ongoing and interactive relationship. Here, nuance is adopted, and complexities considered. This is when love really takes control to guide and nurture one's endeavors. Kristi points out the difference in loving one's neighbor as yourself, rather than instead of yourself.

Values in the first three stages are focused heavily on tradition, rules, authority, and finding security in God's blessings while cultivating a Christian identity. Eventually, the values shift towards valuing the freedom God allows in his abundant unconditional mercy and love. Rather than finding identity in God's blessings, we now begin to find it in His presence. Common lies one may tell themselves involve being lonely and feeling invisible. When we push through these untrue beliefs, it is revealed that Jesus's words are true, and He will never leave us.

There is much significance in understanding that we are not working for God, but with Him. The model for spiritual development Kristi has co-created and outlined for us today acts as an easily digestible and insightful companion. Janell encourages everyone to go back and listen to the episode as often as needed. In being patient with ourselves at each stage in our own journeys, we may be equipped with the knowledge to overcome the walls that inevitably will appear at

different times. In closing, Kristi shares her story of encountering a wall and how she was able to work through it, then she reads her own beautiful rendition of Psalm 23.

Key Takeaways:

- 2:32 - Janell introduces herself and the current podcast series.
- 3:10 - Dr. Kristi Gaultiere joins the conversation and we learn about her career and credentials.
- 7:00 - What prompted Kristi to co-author her book, *Journey of the Soul*.
- 10:30 - Description of the six individual CHRIST stages.
- 16:27 - Introduction to the concept of the wall.
- 18:30 - Kristi describes how the pandemic affected her while working on her book.
- 22:55 - What the idea of “leaning in” looks like for Kristi.
- 31:00 - Kristi’s insight in connecting with others in times of social isolation.
- 32:20 - Kristi articulates the six potential types of walls.
- 37:45 - The two spiritualities encountered in the CHRIST stages.
- 42:20 - Values in the first vs. second half of the CHRIST stages.
- 49:00 - Kristi shares a story of encountering and overcoming her own wall.
- 54:50 - Closing words.

Bible Passages Referenced:

- [Psalm 18:29](#)
- [1 Corinthians 13](#)
- [John 17](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)

Links:

Learn more about [Kristi Gaultiere](#) and check out her [ministry](#) and [book](#).

Learn more about [Janell Rardon](#) and join the [Stronger Every Day](#) online community.

Learn more about the podcast: [Today’s Heartlift with Janell](#)

Tags:

faith, christianity, spirituality, God, Godliness, Believer, Jesus, God, Women, International Women’s Day, Psalm, scripture, biblical, Bible, Christian, spiritual growth, church, ministry, missionary, Christ, journey, Christ journey, faith journey, individual, intimacy, intimate, personal growth, transitions, empathy, kindness, understanding, spiritual journey, scripture, Lord, preacher, guilt, shame, repression, growth, transformation, graceful, sin, sinner, confession, honesty, purity, forgiveness, devotions, devotional, biblical, prayer, boundaries