

## WHY DON'T I FEEL CLOSE TO GOD? INTERVIEW WITH KRISPIN MAYFIELD

*Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [FlyingFreeNow.com](http://FlyingFreeNow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.*

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 198 of the Flying Free Podcast. A couple of months ago, I bought a book on Amazon called "Attached to God." And I do not remember what rabbit hole I was exploring when I found it. I don't remember if someone recommended it or what, but I bought it — and I buy a lot of books. I probably buy one to two books every week, and I always start them, and they have to really hook me in, otherwise I discard them. I just feel like I don't have time to waste on a book that I don't like. So I'll buy them and I start them, and when I bought this one, I could not put it down.

I finished it in a week, and then I wrote to the author, who I'm going to introduce you to in a second, to see if he'd be interested in coming on the show, and today's interview is the result. So Krispin Mayfield is the author of "Attached to God," and he is a licensed professional counselor. He also co-hosts a podcast called The Prophetic Imagination Station. Is this an allusion to "Adventures in Odyssey"?

KRISPIN: Yes. It's an allusion to Walter Brueggemann, this Old Testament theologian who wrote a book called, "The Prophetic Imagination." And so we tied that with "Adventures in Odyssey."

NATALIE: That is hilarious.

KRISPIN: It's a lot of fun.

NATALIE: Okay, and you and your wife do it?

KRISPIN: Yeah.

NATALIE: Okay.

KRISPIN: And basically we are looking at evangelical media that we grew up with. So we started with "Adventures in Odyssey." We looked at "This Present Darkness." Right now we're going through a DC Talk album. So yeah, it's a lot of fun.

NATALIE: That is hilarious. Okay, so I would've been immersed in all of... I graduated in '85. So I was in high school then. And I think you're a lot younger than I am.

KRISPIN: Yes.

NATALIE: But you're still kind of looking at some of the things... I mean, my kids grew up with "Adventures in Odyssey," and I read "This Present Darkness." I was totally into all the pop Christian stuff, okay? So I need to go listen to your podcast, because I think I'd probably get a kick out of it. Do you guys try to be funny too, or is it pretty serious?

KRISPIN: It's funny and serious. It's all the above.

NATALIE: Okay. And do you bring other people on to talk about their experiences with it, or...?

KRISPIN: Yeah. We hit on just a lot of the different themes and stuff. We'll kind of pick out a theme and then interview someone that is an expert in that area a lot of times or that sort of thing.

NATALIE: Off the top of your head, what's the episode that has been the most popular or the most intriguing for people, do you think?

KRISPIN: We're about to launch the "DC Talk: Jesus Freak" season. I think that one is going to resonate with a lot of folks. But I would say beyond that, actually related to a lot of the themes you talk about, there are a couple of episodes where we talk about "Redeeming Love," because we did a Christian romance season.

NATALIE: Yes — oh my word.

KRISPIN: So yeah — we talked about the book and the movie. So just look up "Prophetic Imagination Station: Redeeming Love," and you will find those episodes.

NATALIE: Okay. We will put those links in the show notes for sure. Well, the reason why I wanted to have you... First of all, welcome to the Flying Free Podcast.

KRISPIN: I'm so glad to be here. Thanks for asking me to come on.

NATALIE: We're glad to have you. So most of the listeners here are Christian women who have experienced tremendous amounts of trauma due to emotional and spiritual abuse in their churches and their homes. And because of this, many of them struggle

with whether or not God sees them or cares. And they often will say things like (this is how they articulate), "I believe in God, but I don't really necessarily feel His presence. I don't really know for sure if He's with me." And I think your book addresses some of the underlying reasons for that, as well as practical ways to help remedy that situation so that people can feel attached to God in a healthy way.

So I'm wondering if you can first tell us a little bit about why you decided to write this particular book. You're a licensed professional counselor, so you have... I love how you married the idea of counseling and therapy and attachment theory to this idea of God and our relationship with God. It's amazing. So tell us what was going on behind the scenes for you personally when you decided...

KRISPIN: Yeah. Some of it was... I was just reading this attachment theory about what happens between parents and children and what a healthy parent/child dynamic looks like, what an unhealthy parent/child dynamic looks like. And a lot of that was processing my own trauma and my own experience growing up. And so it was recognizing that it makes so much sense that if you, in childhood, go through emotional neglect or emotional abuse, you have this sense of, "I'm not lovable, I'm not likable, other people wouldn't want to stick around, they wouldn't want to be near me."

And so I was looking at that and I was recognizing not only is this true in my own healing process and recognizing how it showed up in my human relationships, but this is also a lot of how I feel like God feels about me. And so it just really started to make sense that this feeling like God is disgusted with me, that God doesn't like me... When I understood that through attachment theory, I was like, "Oh." It was kind of validating in a way of like, "Oh, this is just naturally how we end up feeling." And so that then made me think, "Okay, if this is how I'm feeling, what are the abusive messages that I've gotten from the church growing up?"

And so that was kind of where I went next, because a lot of people have these feelings of, "God doesn't like me; God wants me to be better." For me, I always felt like growing up it was like God was holding on to me because of who I would become in heaven, like this perfect, heaven version of Krispin — God likes that version of Krispin. And so, "I just have to go through my whole life feeling like God is always disappointed in me," for that to finally get to this point where I could be loved and find belonging. And so just recognizing, "Oh, I actually got those messages from my upbringing, and they're not healthy messages," and that made me want to go back to scripture and ask, "Is there better news here than, 'God likes you if you're perfect,' and, 'Don't worry — God is making you perfect, or God will make you perfect in the future?'" Because that doesn't actually help me as a teenager — needing to know that I'm loved and needing to know

that God is there even if I really feel like there's a lot about myself not to like.

NATALIE: Right, right. I love how you put in your book, you have different quotes from different Christian people that we probably all recognize. And I realized in profound ways all of these different people, they had the same kinds of messages. So it wasn't even just our parents — it was all the people that we were surrounded by in Christian culture that were all telling us the same thing about God. And our idea of God was, I think, very abusive. It was a very abusive God. And so that's probably why it was hard to attach to Him.

KRISPIN: Right. And that was really important to me. That was why I spent lots of time going back through and reading these authors and leaders and theologians, because in the church, a lot of times if you have a problem, like, say you go to a pastor and say, "I have a really hard time trusting God," a lot of times the message that we're given is, "Well, that's because of your issues," right? And it has this gaslighty feel to it of like, "No. You should be able to trust God even though God is presented as this really wrathful person that is just waiting to throw you away and punish you," right? And it's like our bodies know that it's not safe. And so then we end up in this place that's like, "You know, actually, I have a hard time trusting God," and then people will say things like, "Well, it's because you grew up in a dysfunctional family" or whatever.

I remember I had coffee with a friend one time and I said, "You know, I grew up in a dysfunctional family, and I'm worried that when I talk about my experience in the church that people are going to dismiss it and say, 'Well, that's just because your family was dysfunctional.'" And he was like, "I think because you grew up in a dysfunctional family, you have an eye for this — you can see it more clearly than other people." So when it's like, "Oh yeah, this is a God that cares more about their image than actually your wellbeing, you know, the sort of narcissistic parent God," he's like, "Yeah, you know what that's like because you lived it, and you're a gift to the church to say, 'Hey, something's off here, because this feels more like my dysfunctional family than a healthy community.'"

NATALIE: Totally. Yes. I love that. I love that your friend said that. I actually did write down some of these quotes just because... And I was going to insert this in a little bit later in the interview, but I actually think it's a good spot to insert them now. Here's just a couple of quotes. John Piper said this: "It's right for God to slaughter women and children anytime He pleases." Actually, John Piper, you can just go do a little google search, and he's got literally millions of quotes like that out there. The church that excommunicated me was his church.

KRISPIN: Oh, okay. Yeah.

NATALIE: So there you go. Oswald Chambers has written... And I was a huge Oswald Chambers fan. I had his book and it was dog-eared. My mom gave it to me when I was younger, and it was part of my daily devotions for years. He wrote, "If through a broken heart God can bring His purposes to pass in the world, then thank Him for breaking your heart." I remember that quote. I was all in on that. John MacArthur: "Lack of joy is a sin for the child of God." And then you wrote, "What does this mean for the countless Christians who'd struggle daily with depression?" And then one more I wrote down here — former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, JD Greear, said, "One of the surest signs that you've never met God is that you feel pretty good about yourself." And then you write, "This means either that getting close to God requires feeling bad about yourself first, or that getting close to God causes you to feel bad about yourself. With our attachment glasses on, we can clearly see that neither of these is a sign of a healthy relationship."

I hope that those resonated with people. Those of you who are listening, you can probably think of things that you learned or were taught that almost became cliché in your mind, and, "It's just a given that this is just what we believe in Christianity," and it's not true. Tell us what attachment theory is, just in case people don't know. What is a broad overview of that?

KRISPIN: So basically it's this idea that we are driven to connect with our parent, and we will do whatever it takes to get that connection. And so we will adapt to what they need as a parent in order to get that connection. So for some parents it's like, "I will only pay attention to you if you get really loud and really big and your emotions get really big," so then we learn to be really clingy. For other people, maybe if you grew up with parents that were really uncomfortable with emotions, it's like, "I'm just going to stuff my emotions down, because that means that I won't get rejected or shamed by them" — that sort of thing. And so we all have these different strategies, and then we end up using those same strategies often in our marriages, in other relationships, that sort of thing. And also I just want to say a quick caveat is that to have a secure, healthy relationship with your child, if you're a parent, you only have to get it right actually 30% of the time.

NATALIE: I'm glad you said that.

KRISPIN: Yes. So there's lots of room for failure, and there's actually a lot of research out there that rupture and repair is really important. But one of the key pieces is are you able... You don't have to get it right, but are you able to listen to your kid and take

in their perspective and talk through it? So especially if you've been thinking of religious communities, church communities, it's like, I can think of church communities I've been in where it's like, you didn't have to get it right, but it was more when I came to talk to you to work it out when you were just super defensive and couldn't hear me — that's where that insecure attachment piece comes in.

NATALIE: Yes. I'm so glad you brought that up. I know there's a lot of women probably listening to this... As we've gotten out of that kind of environment and that culture, but we were raising our kids in it — we raised our kids in it — and then we look back and go, “Oh my gosh, I totally screwed up my children.” And there are things that we did wrong, but I will say this: Most of us did know how to repair. Most of us actually did, when we crossed that border or crossed that line where... We thought that our kids had to be perfect. We had to make sure that they sat quietly in church and looked like little stairstep kids and were quiet because if they didn't look good, then we didn't look good, and then people wouldn't love us, and we wanted to be loved. I mean, I don't think we ever articulated this consciously, but I think that was what was going on underneath.

But I've had to go back to my older kids, especially. I have nine kids, and they kind of are two separate families in a way. My older kids were raised in the really hyper-conservative culture, and then my younger kids are, you know... I've never spanked two of them, and I just love that. So it's a little messier with the younger kids, but honestly, they're more vibrant and alive in themselves, you know? So I think the fruit of that in the long run is going to be more amazing. But my older kids, I've had to go back to and just apologize and do that repair — I love that word, “repair” — do that repair work with them, and that makes all the difference in the world, honestly.

Okay, so there was this experiment, and I've heard about it before I read your book, but this still face experiment — can you talk about that? Because that is a fascinating experiment.

KRISPIN: Yeah, so basically what they did was they had a mom and an eighteen-month-old infant. So they had this infant and the mother and they were interacting, and then what they asked the mom to do was to just stop engaging. So the mom was still there, but her face just went blank. And so then the infant is pointing around, cooing, doing all the cute things that babies do to get attention, and the mom's face just stayed blank. And so over the course of basically a minute, the baby goes from “We're okay” to really upset because mom is there, but mom is not responding.

And so what they find is we have... You can look at that tape and see there are all these strategies we do to try to get connection. And by the end, the baby is just totally melting

down. And what we see there is that when we lose that connection, we melt down. And it is actually interesting, because the person that did that experiment made a video more recently where he did it with Sue Johnson, who's a couple's therapist, and they looked at some tape from one of her couples and they put them side by side. So this is what babies do when they lose connection, but this is what couples do when they lose connection. It's really fascinating.

NATALIE: Oh my word, is that online somewhere?

KRISPIN: Yeah. You can just google "Love Sense" on YouTube. And so I do training sometimes for people in ministry and we watch those, and then we think about what are the strategies people use to try to get that connection with God when it feels like God is absent?

NATALIE: Wow. That is incredible.

KRISPIN: When we are in that place where it's like, "I don't know if you're there," as mammals, we do this thing called primal panic where we get really anxious. And from a scientific standpoint, that's because as humans, we are meant to live in a herd. We don't survive very well on our own. And so when it feels like that relationship is in jeopardy, it actually can throw us into fight or flight. And when we're in that place, then we do things like we get really clingy or, like I said, we sometimes get really standoffish, but that's because that's a way of staying close. If you had a parent that if you got too clingy, they would push you away, then you actually learn to shut down, because that's how you learn how to keep the people you need close to you.

NATALIE: Oh my gosh, my brain is just exploding with... I can think of so many things in my life where I've reacted... I remember my mom used to give me the silent treatment a lot, so that's kind of a trigger for me. But I remember when I was trying to get out of my relationship with my ex, I was trying to get the church to understand what was going on, and I would send them an email and I would just pour my heart out, and nothing. They wouldn't respond. I got nothing. So that was like still face. I felt panicked and I was absolutely terrified because I thought I must have done something wrong, I must have said something wrong, I must be a really horrible person — there's so much shame... And not really even sure what to do to... I would apologize: "I'm so sorry that I wrote that. I'm so sorry that I... Did I write too much?" and you know, I mean, it was just awful. Okay, do you think that our attachment to God comes mostly from our relationship with our parents, or do you think that it's...? Talk about that a little bit.

KRISPIN: Yeah, because that is what is kind of believed out there. Some of the research



supports that. But I think when we look at some of the themes that we're given, like those quotes I read, right? Many of us are raised in this culture that tells us from an early age... Just think about the way that the American Evangelical gospel is presented. It's like, "God needs you to be perfect. You're not perfect, and so you can put this Jesus mask on and then God will let you close," right? And so especially if you grew up in that, that just becomes so deeply ingrained that we learn, "Yeah, if I want to keep God close, I need to perform the right way, I need to do the right things, and if I can't, then at least there's grace." But having grace... The way that that is presented is not in a way that helps you feel loved or gives you a sense of belonging.

It's sort of like you're being loved despite who you are. And I don't think anybody wants to be... Like, I don't want my partner to love me despite who I am, right? "You're horrible, but I'm going to stay married to you." So I think it really creates this impact in us of feeling like, "There's something really wrong with me," that "I'm not lovable" — that sort of thing. But it's also worth mentioning that our picture of God is often correlated with the way that we parent. So the picture of God that you were brought up with is going to fall in line with the way that your parents parent you. And so at some point, it's like they tend to go hand in hand if you grew up in the church.

NATALIE: Yeah. There was a story that you told in your book about an image that God gave to you of a mother and a child that resonated with you about who you felt like God needed to be for you. Can you tell that story to us?

KRISPIN: Yeah. This was a few years ago, and I was just going through my own trauma therapy and just going through a lot at that time. A lot of shame coming to the surface — just feeling like there's something really broken and wrong with me, that it's hard to imagine that anyone would want to love me.

And so I woke up, and my wife was like, "Why don't you go to this Catholic garden and just take some space." So I did that, and I was walking around and I was just telling God, "I'm so tired of You judging me all the time, of just always being disappointed in me. This is exhausting. You say that You love me, but it never feels that way." And I saw this picture of a statue of Mary and Jesus, and I felt like God said, "This is like you and me. You can cry. I'm just going to hold you. I'm here for you. I'm not judging you." And so then I was walking a little bit more and I was like, that doesn't fit at all with the theology I was given. For one, thinking of God as Father, but for two, if you're in these spaces, there's always that, "God is love, but... God is love, but God is judging you and God wants to see more from you," and those sorts of things.

And so I just felt like, it seems like it would be heretical to let go of that part. But I



walked into this chapel and I was sitting there and I was telling God, "Give me a sign." And in this very quiet chapel, this mom and baby walk in, and the baby is just wailing and the mom is holding the baby. And to me, it was this picture that I could take with me that God is with me, God is holding me, God is not judging me.

If you're a parent and you put on those parent lenses, you get it. It's like, "Yeah, I don't have to approve of everything my kids do. They need help and they need guidance and they need coaching, but I'm not judging them. I love them so much." And I would say becoming a parent was one of the biggest shifts for me to be like, "Oh. Maybe if I could borrow a tenth of the way that I feel about my kids and attribute that to God, that would so shift the way that I've been told God sees me."

NATALIE: Yes. In your book too, you give a lot of really practical exercises that you can do to create those shifts in your brain. I actually even took one — I was recently speaking at a conference — and I actually gave one of those examples to the women, and they loved it. It was the one where you think of someone that loves you, that you already know loves you — maybe a good friend or your husband — (actually, for these women, it wasn't their husband, but someone who cares about them) and how they look at you if they haven't seen you for a long time — I think it was how their expression would be if they saw you for the first time after a long time — and then to imagine God having that expression and looking at you. That really resonated with the women. And I just want to say that I noticed that you had several exercises like that in the book that were really helpful. And I think you even had some that were specifically designed for each type of attachment problem that someone might have.

So there are three attachment issues that people have that could be problematic: an anxious attachment, a shut-down attachment, and a shame-filled attachment. So I'm wondering if... I don't know if off the top of your head you can think of an example of ways to heal each one of those?

KRISPIN: Yeah. So with the anxious attachment style, that tends to be that idea of, "I have to work really hard to make this relationship work." And so finding ways to practice spirituality in ways that are actually restful is important. For me — kind of going along with the story I just told — for me, quiet time, right? We have that idea of quiet time. Quiet time was the time that either God was going to tell me, "Here are the things you're doing wrong" or "Here are the things that I want you to do," right? People talk about marching orders. And what I found through the research is that healthy parent/child dynamics, there are times where you just spend time together. It's not about doing anything, it's not toward any goal. It's like with my son who's seven when we hang out and play games or tell jokes or whatever, right? And it really takes some

intentionality to figure out, "What does that look like if my whole life has been, "Time with God is towards some goal or end'?"

So I like to encourage people to just set a timer on your phone for five or ten minutes and just say, "God, this is a time I'm giving to you. I'm just going to be quiet. I'm going to breathe. I'm going to notice, you know, if I could be outside, notice some beautiful things." But this isn't like you have to hear something from God. This isn't like you have to take something away from it. It's really just about being present with God and saying, "Yeah, this is just time that I'm going to spend with You." And for me it's kind of an act of faith, because it's like, "Okay, I'm not being productive, and is that okay?"

NATALIE: Oh, totally. I was just going to say too along with that, even taking a walk, I used to think of taking a walk as, "I'm going to just go take a walk." And now I think, "I'm going to take a walk with God." And again, I like the idea that when you're taking that walk, it doesn't have to be about anything. You don't have to come home and go, "Okay, these are the five things that God showed me on my walk. I'm going to journal them and then make sure that I implement them over the course of the next week." I just enjoy it, just being with God and knowing that... I was talking to someone recently about finding things that, you know, "This is like a wink from God." For me, it's cardinals. If I see a cardinal, I'm like, "That's a wink from God." Is it silly? Maybe. But in my brain it really resonates and helps me to connect.

KRISPIN: I love that. It's beautiful. And I think figuring out ways of engaging spiritually that are like that, that are life-giving and not just another thing that I have to do... So yeah, like you said, I have a few exercises throughout the book, but yeah, that's one of the go-to ones for if you have that anxious attachment style.

If you have a shut-down attachment style, that tends to be where it's like, especially my negative emotions, are not okay. It feels like if I'm sad or worried or upset, that's going to be a threat to my connection with God. And so thinking about the John MacArthur quote where he says, "If you don't feel joy, then you're not a true Christian," something along those lines, right? And so that means that I have to stuff down the negative emotions.

And so what I suggest there is taking an approach to scripture of noticing the story and the people in the story. Because when we shut down our emotions, we tend to go a lot more towards a logistical, systematic evaluating, like, "What is this saying in scripture?" And so trying to step into the story can be a really different way, especially if you grew up in that church or have spent time in that church that mostly just like, preached from Paul, because there are these didactic statements that you can say, right? Scripture,

there's so much story there. And so I think that can be a really different way of engaging spiritually. And there's also more practical things in the book about people that are like, "I don't know how to engage my emotions." I have a lot of experience with that working with people in therapy.

And then in terms of the shame-filled — so this is this idea that there's something at my core that is rotten and broken and drives other people away. What was so striking to me — I'm just going to give a little tidbit here before we go to the exercise — what was so striking to me is as I was doing the research, I found that kids that have been through emotional abuse and neglect had this feeling like their heart was dirty or black or rotten. And I thought, "Wait a minute, this was what I was told in Sunday school. Is this a coincidence? What is going on here?"

So I actually went into some of the history about some of those metaphors and images and found that the theologian Charles Spurgeon, who really promoted a lot of that idea of, "The core of you is rotten," the people that he first presented it to were people that had gone through attachment trauma. And so it makes a lot of sense that it resonated with them, because they were mostly orphans in London. But then he also had his own attachment trauma. And it's really striking, because there are so many metaphors of sin and grace in scripture — being lost and found, being orphans and adopted. There are all these pictures. But in the churches I went to, it was always going back to that theme of, "There's something really broken or rotten about you." And so undoing that is a process of healing from that.

But I think that exercise that you mentioned is one of the best places to start, because what we think is, "If I could get clean enough or if I could get forgiven enough, then I won't feel this way anymore," right? Because we're told, "It's because you're sinful that you feel like you're broken and rotten, and if you're not sinful anymore, then you'll feel better." But the reality is you feel that way when you feel like you're unlovable and unloved. And so the more that you can notice that feeling of being loved, the more that that feeling goes away. And so finding people in your life... and maybe if there's not a person in your life, maybe there's a pet in your life that loves you.

NATALIE: That's right. You mentioned that in that exercise.

KRISPIN: Yeah. Like maybe if you have a dog, if you could imagine that God feels a tenth of the way your dog feels about you, how would that change the way that you view God?

NATALIE: Yeah. I love that.

KRISPIN: Yeah, and that fits a lot with what we know about psychology currently, is that our brains need images and metaphors. And unfortunately, the way that our brains work and respond to metaphor is so powerful, and if we're given these really toxic metaphors early in our lives, it really shapes the way that we see ourselves and the way that we see God.

NATALIE: Yep. I don't know if it was your book or another book that talked about this, but this resonated with me, because I was taught that Jesus had to die on the cross for us and then He was our go-between. So God can't look at us because we're so disgusting, but Jesus — thank goodness — Jesus is going to stand between us and God. And so I always pictured myself peeking around the edge of Jesus but hoping that God wouldn't see me, because I'm just this ugly, decrepit little thing. That is a big fat lie. It's not true. But that is what I grew up 100% believing. And I thought that was the gospel.

I don't picture that anymore — I picture other things. I just think that deconstructing this theology that we grew up with — (and I like how you pointed out a lot of it is metaphors. It is stories and pictures in our mind that we were taught from the time we were small) — is going to be part of the process of actually healing our relationship with God and then feeling like we can actually be close to Him.

And I want to say too that God is 100%... I tell people He is so close to you. He's all around you and in you, and He's right up in your face all the time. We just don't see Him because of what we're believing or not believing in our minds. And so seeing Him is going to involve working with those neural connections in our brains that are preventing us from actually... They go hand in hand.

I wanted to close by... I actually wanted to read a couple of reviews that I found on Amazon about this book that I thought were really good. I think you have all five stars.

KRISPIN: Mostly.

NATALIE: Mostly. Okay. Well, there's always one or two, you know, that...

KRISPIN: That's right.

NATALIE: And when did this come out? Didn't this just come out this year?

KRISPIN: In February.

NATALIE: Yeah. So it's just this year. So that's amazing. Here's what someone said: "This

is by far one of the most healing books I have read. Mayfield uses his understanding of attachment science to explain to us how our attachment style impacts our relationship with God. He discusses in depth the three attachment styles — anxious, shame-filled, and shut-down — what leads to them, and what each kind of attachment style with God looks like. Here are the things I found most helpful.” (And I'm reading this because I totally agree with this.)

“Number one, the description of a healthy, loving parent. Helpful parenting information in and of itself,” (which I totally agree with) “and translating that to God. Number two, the direct quotes from various Christian leaders both past and present that have reinforced the unhealthy messages that undergird the beliefs about God and our connection to Him. And number three, ways for each attachment style to heal into a healthy attachment to God.”

And you also provide, it's like a quiz or an evaluation. You can answer these questions to find out what your attachment style is with God. And that's also helpful. And then she says, “I must say, it was super helpful to have been given the vocabulary and framework to understand what I have experienced but could not articulate. And it was so helpful to see how the shame-filled messages of my childhood have been reinforced rather than challenged by the messages I have received from my Christian community and influences. The book gave me a path forward to see and experience God in a different light based on His character. It was incredibly healing.”

And then I'll read one more that I thought was good. “It's only March, but I...” So this must have been someone who got your book right when it came out. “It's only March, but I feel confident this book will be in my top ten for the year.” (I have to say, it's in my top 10 for sure. And I read a lot of books, okay?) “Krispin Mayfield draws on his expertise as a therapist to apply attachment science to faith. I have attended some of my dad's foster parent trainings on attachment, and I'm somewhat familiar with attachment science as an early childhood educator, so I was intrigued to read about how it could apply in a faith context.

In this powerful, important book, Krispin describes the styles of attachment and how they impact our relationship with God.” (Blah blah, blah — kind of says what the other one says.) “Reading this book gave me a different framework to consider how and why my faith has shifted over the past five years.”

So I just want to point out, whoever's listening who may be feeling panicky, like, “Why is my faith changing? Why is everything kind of falling apart,” that's actually a really, really good thing. You want it to fall apart so that you can figure out what actually is of

substance and what's actually real and what isn't.

They say, "I saw so many direct connections between what he explained and what I've experienced in my deconstruction and reconstruction journey. It helped me realize that most of my healing and relationship to God has been related to attachment wounds, many of which are often perpetuated in the church. I can't recommend this book enough, especially for those who've been wounded in Christian settings. This is a must read."

And it really is. I hope after this podcast episode gets out that your book actually rises up in the... You know how Amazon does that? if everyone buys it, then it goes back up again? So it'll be exciting to see. Everyone needs to get this book. You guys will love it. It'll be one of your go-tos. And it will help your parenting, it'll help how you parent yourself. I feel like re-parenting yourself is so important. And then of course, obviously, it'll help your own feelings of attachment to God. So do you have anything you want to say before we close out?

KRISPIN: I just appreciate that so much. It's just nice to hear. And it's also really nice to hear that what I was... What was really personally important to me is resonating with people that are reading. I think that one of the most important things for me... Which is this idea of I feel this way, but I don't know how to put words to it. And so I've heard that a lot. Just that idea of, we were told these things like, "God loves you," but it doesn't always feel that way. And so I hope that it continues to help people. And I really appreciate the conversation today. I appreciate the work you're doing. So thank you so much.

NATALIE: Yeah, thank you so much for being here. And thank you to everyone who's listening. Until next time, fly free.