

The Flying Free Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Episode 348 - Beautiful Prisons and Golden Lies

Heads up, friend: What you're about to read is a raw, unedited transcript straight from the robots. That means you'll find some weird words, funky punctuation, and moments that make you go, "Huh?" If you want the real experience (and to actually know what's going on), I recommend reading the polished article, listening to the full episode, or watching it on 1.5x speed with captions on. Your brain will thank you.

Natalie: What if the cage you are in was never locked? What if the voice that you've called God was actually fear, pretending to be love? Today, I'm gonna tell you a little story that just might wake something in you. You've been told to silence. Let's talk about freedom.

Once upon a time there was a house, and inside that house there was a cage, a bird cage. Actually there were many bird cages, but let's zero in on just one yours. The cage was beautiful, golden bars catching the light. Look at that lovely cage. The big people would say when they saw it. That bird is so blessed and you believe them at first.

The big people told you this cage was your creator's design for you, his protection, his will, if you wanted to please your creator, and you definitely did, you would stay right where you were. Safe, contained good. They painted pictures of the world outside your bars, predators, lurked there. They warned storms would destroy you.

Evil. Waited in every shadow, ready to devour reckless little birds who dared to leave their cages. You heard whispered stories about those who flew away and were never seen again. So you stayed. Your wings grew soft, your flight muscles weakened. The rhythm of your days became predictable, comfortable even.

You told yourself you were grateful. You should be grateful. This was love, wasn't it? This was safety, but sometimes just sometimes you caught a glimpse of the sky through the window wide and endless, and calling to something deep in your chest, something that felt suspiciously, like longing. The voices were quick to shut that down.

Temptation. They said, discontent is sin. You have everything you need right here. You weren't the only one. The room was full of golden cages. Each one housing a bird just like you. Each door cracked open, always open. They reminded you. See, you are not trapped. You are choosing this. And when your daughters were old enough, they lifted them gently into their own beautiful prisons.

And this is how it worked for generations. This is how it would always work until the day she came back. She swept through that open window like a force of nature, feathers, gleaming wings, strong, and sure she had lived in this room once, sat in her own golden cage and believed the same stories you had been told, but something had changed.

Her voice trembled with joy as she spoke of skies that stretched beyond imagination, whims that carried her higher than she had ever dreamed possible. Yes, there were storms out there. Yes, there were predators, but she had learned to fly through the storms to outmaneuver the hawks to rest in trees under a canopy of stars.

Freedom is possible, she said, and her eyes held a light you'd never seen before. It's beautiful. It's worth it. The other bird shrieked and turned away. The people in the house drove her out shouting that she didn't belong anymore and she knew they were right. She didn't belong in the house. Not anymore, but before she left, she looked straight at you.

Your cage was never locked. She whispered. The window has always been open. You were made for the sky. Here's what they don't tell you about cages. They're not about your safety. They are about their control. The system needs you small. It needs you to stay afraid. It needs you to believe that the bars around you are love instead of what they actually are.

A way to keep you manageable, predictable, useful. You've been programmed to believe that your smallness pleases God, that your silence is somehow holy, and that your fear of the unknown is wisdom. But what if it's not? What if the God who created you with wings never intended for you to forget how to use them?

Jesus came to set captives free. He flung the cage doors wide. He opened the windows and called you to come out to come up to come alive. But here's the thing, and this is important. You have to believe it's possible before you'll ever try to fly. I'm not asking you to spread your wings and soar tomorrow.

I'm not asking you to figure out the whole journey from here to there overnight. I'm asking you to do something much smaller and much more revolutionary. Believe that freedom might be possible for you. Just believe it. Let that tiny seed of possibility take root somewhere in your chest right next to that longing that you've been told to ignore.

You were made for more than this beautiful cage. You were made for wind beneath your wings and sky as far as your eyes can see. The cage door has always been open. The window has always been there, and the sky, oh, the sky is waiting for you. But I don't believe in forcing birds to do things that they don't want to do or that they aren't ready to do.

I only believe in invitations because isn't that what God does? He invites us to the banquet. He invites us into love and freedom, always. His invitation stands every moment of every day, but he will never coerce or manipulate or threaten. Do you remember the story of the prodigal son? The father in that story represents God the Father loves his son, whether he is living in slavery or coming home to freedom.

Did you know that both sons were living in slavery? One was enslaved to his lusts. And the other one was enslaved to his good works and the father held loving invitation open to both of them, and he embraced both of them when they were ready to come home to his love. And this is how God is with us as well.

Our lusts will never satisfy us and our good works will never satisfy us. Only the love, the perfect unstoppable love of our creator can satisfy us and set us free. If any of this resonates with your soul, and if you want a little guidance and help in getting from the cage to the window and from the window to the sky, I would love to show you the way.

I've been helping Christian women find their wings for almost 10 years now, and there is nothing more incredible to me than watching them fly free. My Flying Free program is ridiculously affordable, and you can learn more and complete an application to join us by going to [join Flying Free dot com](http://joinFlyingFree.com). But don't go there unless you feel inside your heart like it's time, like you need a change and you are ready for it.

When you are willing to do what it takes, when the cage is no longer appealing to you and you sort of suspect that it's all been a lie, if you're still feeling kind of comfortable there, you can stay. Jesus loves all of his daughters just as much, whether they are living in cages or Flying Free. When I was in my cage, Jesus

loved me just as much then as he does now, nothing has ever changed on his end, only on mine.

I wanted to learn the truth. I wanted to get the skills and the tools. I wanted to stretch myself. I wanted to get strong. I wanted to fly, and Jesus supported me and he will continue to support me forever. This is the good news. When the prodigal son was squandering his money and starving, his father loved him, and when the so-called good son was bitterly working hard in the fields, his father loved him too.

The father's love never changed. The one who changed was the prodigal son because it's all about our sonship, our daughtership. When we finally believe that and lean into that true identity that belongs to us because of Christ, that is when we are free. I'm gonna help you see this. Go to join Flying Free dot com if you wanna learn more, and if this episode moved you in your heart, share it with someone else.

It just might help someone else to fly free as well. And one final thing, if you like stories and allegories and metaphors, I wrote a book *You Will Love*. It's my spiritual memoir called *All The Scary Little Gods*. Even the title is a metaphor. It's funny, it's sad, and it might be your story too. I think you'll see yourself on most of the pages, and that is a very healing thing.

You can go to Amazon and get it in paperback, Kindle, or audible formats. It's a story of how my life changed after a lifetime of living in a gilded cage, and it just might change your life as well. I'll see you next time. Fly free.