

## S11 e04 Transcript

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**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Hi friends, and welcome to season 11 of the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement in your journey with Jesus Christ. Every week, I'm joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger and we talk about all things Christ, about life, about beauty, about sorrow. We laugh, we cry you'll fit right in. So grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the "Abiding Together" podcast. Michelle's kicking me under the table right now in the spirit of full disclosure she totally started it, I'm not going to even react and that's what's going on. Are we doing the sister? No, we're doing mothers.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Oh my goodness, White Christmas was on the other day and I saw your sister on. So maybe you should sing the sister song.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We did last time, it was a duet, it was lovely. Where were you?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Anyway, I don't remember. It's been a long day.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It has been, here we go. So we are journeying into our second part of our series on motherhood. So last week we talked about the power of motherhood and about receptivity and this week we're going to talk about the wounds of a mother. And we're also gonna talk about the feminine genius attribute of generosity, right? So once again, we'll start with our biblical quote. We've been using one quote for every identity and we'll just keep reading that and just allowing it to sink more deeply into our hearts. So our guiding scripture for our series on motherhood is from the book of the Prophet Jeremiah 1:4-5, and he says this, the word of the Lord came to me saying before I formed you in the womb I

knew you. Before you were born I set you apart, I appointed you as a Prophet to the nations. So Heather, as we dive into this second part of our series on motherhood, what are some things that stir in your heart as we talk about wounds of a mother and kind of where we're gonna go today.

**Heather Khym:** Wounds of a mother, wow, doesn't that make you just. Like, wow.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Warm and fuzzy inside, yeah.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, I mean, I'm simultaneously struck because I am a mother, but I'm struck with both like the wounds that I have inflicted upon my children like not intentionally but they happen. Things that have happened between my mother and I, that we've had to heal from and work through. And then also wounds that sometimes happen from your kids too. I'm like, there's a lot of things in here, like a lot of different layers that we can talk about and it's hard things, but it's good things. I always think the impact of stuffing it all and never talking about it, never acknowledging about it is never gonna lead to fruitfulness and holiness and freedom. But it's the talking about it, the learning these conversations are so important because I myself have learned from other people who have shared things that I'm like, oh, it's opened up a category for me that I didn't know about myself or it's brought a place of hope. And so that's my desire for this conversation is that as we talk about and share our own things, that maybe it will unlock something in another person who's listening or maybe open up an area where they need hope for their own healing so it's deep.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I love the, our guiding quote for this episode is love can be reborn by John Paul II. And I saw that and I just thought, yes, that's amazing. Love can be reborn. And like when you study any kind of attachment theory, like how we all attach to our mothers and how we learn how to really be in John Paul II language, learn how to be a gift, learn how to be received as a gift and how to give ourselves as a gift that in attachment theory they tell you like the repair is more important than the rupture of attachment or the break in attachment. If you can repair well, then you can heal well, whatever rupture that has taken place. It's almost like if you break a bone, but if it's healed better, sometimes you can even build back up so it can be stronger than you it was before. So realizing it, looking at through that lens, that it is like love can be reborn and there is nothing that the Lord can not redeem or restore, nothing is off limits.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And I think as we talked about this a little bit last time, but I think when we speak about generosity and we speak about every single human person ever on earth has been born of a woman. That every single one of us spent more or less nine months in the womb of a woman of intimately tied to her and I was listening to a podcast earlier several months ago and it talked about by

the time you're like 12 to 15 weeks old that you can discern as a child between the touch of the womb of the mother and then somebody else's touch on her womb. By the time you're 20 weeks old a scientist shine beams of light into the womb of a woman and they shine a beam of light look like more like a laser and then one look like a face and the child directed toward more of the one that looked like a face. So already you're intuiting like what life is, like the part of the nerve endings of your brain that could intuit a face. Your mother sets the baseline for your heartbeat. She, her emotional regulation releases all kinds of chemicals within you there's an exchange of cells. Scientists know now that the cells of a child exists like you had biological children they're already in your body and they don't understand how they work, but they think that the cells of your children in your body have actually healing properties. That when you have a wound they find, when you have a wound, like a physical wound, they find that the cells of the child that you've had is actually has a healing agent and they can't even quite figure out how it works yet. So you just think about like the generosity of a mother. And we all have friends who have children and one of my friends she has several kids and she's like I had several kids and I love my kids, but she's like, my body looks like this, my husband's looks like a Greek God. She's like, I don't even know what got us thinking about there. She's like and it's true like how many times women fear like if I have children and my body is, I'm gonna lose my figure or my husband's not gonna be attracted to me anymore. And just even like the generosity of her body to nurse a child at her breast, to wake up all the time and just like the generosity that it takes a body and soul to have to house a child, so to speak, to make a child at home and then how that generosity or lack thereof affects the child for all of us. And then the people that we biologically mother, spiritually mother has a profound effect on their growth as well. I think that's just a staggering thing to think of and I know even talking about like a closest like that to a mother you know, for my own self I was adopted. So my biological mother was a high school student and I don't know my story, but just the intuition of being 17 years old and being pregnant and unmarried it's not really usually a welcome gift. And so just the things that may have been spoken over me in the womb or what her emotional state was, or what her family said about her being pregnant and unmarried and then being put in a foster home and just things like that. So I think sometimes even just as we think about being that close to a woman or some of us part of our it's like, oh, like, that's really not that closer or intimacy has been smothering or intimacy has been emission or co-dependency versus true intimacy is seeing the other blessing, the other giving space for the other to come into their own and to humanity. So just really having space at the table for everybody's reactions right now, and whatever's happening in your heart, it's okay the Lord will talk to you about that.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Just realize, like it says, like, okay, but it says like in the commandments, we need to honor our mother and father. So I don't want to dishonor my mother by saying anything like, I don't want to dishonor. And one of

the most honoring things that you can do is to tell the truth in love and not let anything lie in the darkness, is to bring things in light that is actually a loving response. And my mom and I just as I've gone deeper in a healing journey, my mom and I've had some really good, hard conversations this year. Just not, there's no blame or no shame. Like there's no pointing fingers, there's like, okay, this is how I perceive this experience and my mom told me, this is where she was and man, as a mother, I keep on telling my mom like, mom, there's no judgment here, I don't blame you at all, because I'm like now as a mother, I'm like, oh, you can offer a lot of grace because I think for the most part a lot of people are just doing the best that they can with what they have. Well, you know what they have. Like with what they had and just honor our stories in love and honor the other person's stories in love, but also to make sure that you also say there has to be a truth part to it and that things in the dark have to come into light and when you catch yourself, but it wasn't that bad, but it wasn't like minimizing the pain or minimizing what happened. And I love what it says, how we experienced things, like one person can experience the same situation and how your body reacts and how you react are two totally different ways. It can be traumatizing to one and not the other and to really realize that and a lot of times we went just going more into causes about trauma, it is not actually the situation that happens, it is feeling alone in the situation that happened. Yes, that creates the lasting trauma when you feel alone in the situation. And so just realizing like, okay, it's just time to bring every area into light and that's a beautiful place.

**Heather Khym:** It does take awhile to get there what you were saying, and what you were saying, you know, I don't judge you and I don't blame you and we can talk about this. Because I think for a long time when you're younger you look at your mom or adults in general and you think a certain thing about them. Like they have it all together, their story, all of that stuff and now you get to this age, I'm like, oh my gosh, I don't have all my stuff together and neither did they, oh my goodness. So it brings this perspective of like you think as a young child or as a younger person sometimes that when you're that age you should have it all together and you should know better or whatever that there's just a different level of maturity sometimes in there actually is. It's not until you get into those stages that your compassion grows because you're like, wow, your compassion grows because you're like, wow, There's actually a lot of other things going on and maybe the marriage wasn't great or maybe they were suffering with depression or anxiety or maybe like that they have their own story. I know as a kid I never thought that my parents had their own stories.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** You don't think your mother is human, you really don't think she is her own person.

**Heather Khym:** No and I actually remember, this seems so dumb, but as a high school student, I remember having a lot of my own struggles and I think because

my mom was one of the safest people to me and my family, that I would take some of that out on her. So I can be really mean with my words. And honestly, I don't think it ever crossed my mind that it hurt her. I just assumed because you're kind of all about yourself at that age that she could handle it, that I could throw anything at her and it was fine. And there was one day where we were in the car and I remember so clearly that she let me know it hurt her and she reacted and I was like, whoa. And it was, I felt embarrassed, it was less a fight than me just going, oh my goodness, like what have I done? Like I've crossed a line and I didn't even know that she was a real person with real feelings. So it was just like a realization as a young person of like, oh my goodness, I can actually wound this woman. She can't take it all, she's a real person too. You know what I mean? So I think there's layers that we go through of like, sometimes we need to grieve certain things. Sometimes we do have mothers or people in our life that intentionally did hurt us. And sometimes they're just doing the best that they could and they have a wounded story too, and that doesn't justify behavior, but it can put it in context of like, instead of this being about what you did wrong to me, it can be about how can we repair which is a different approach, but it does take time.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I'm glad you said that because I told another girlfriend about one of the conversations I had with my mom and she said, Michelle, I would never be able to have that conversation. It's just not a place like we could. Like, I can have that conversation with the Lord, but I could not have it with her. And that's good to know, can you have those conversations? And it just depends upon their own journey.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, sometimes you can't and that's okay. Like you can't ever have that conversation with your biological mother, although there's many conversations I'm sure you've had in your mind with her, but that will never be able to happen and same with me, there's certain conversations I can't have, but can still healing still occur? Absolutely, absolutely. There's other ways for that to happen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Which is why I think it's so important that we started with the daughter identity and the fact that our mother and father on earth are just a mere icon, the beauty is and kind of how God loves us in the best and the truth is whether our mothers in their own story quote, unquote wanted us or not, whether they were able to be there presently and kindly and attentively or whether they were harsh or just said very hurtful and hateful things to us. Like every single person listening has a so many different stories of the truth of the goodness of our being is eternal and I think that's something that I've had to go back to over and over and over again, because for me like the lie planted in the womb is like you're a burden, you're not wanted and you'll never be good enough to be kept. And that pervaded every cell of my being and going back to the Lord again and again and again and resting in the truth of I was created my mother and father came together, but I was

created because God wanted me here. And it's that eternal love that gives us the covenant of healing, which means that it helps us understand, because you just think of, and just think of obviously, say for example, having a natural child, like there are times when that's probably a wonderful and a waited thing and then there are times when it feels very inconvenient or it feels like a sorrow, Ooh, there's all kinds of stories when women get pregnant and you just look in your heart and I don't think at the heart of any woman in the fullness of who she is we don't want to reject our single person, we don't want to push that away, but whatever our story is, whatever's happening at the time and then whatever happens like after the child is born or just how we receive people, there's all kinds of things, but that's largely subjective to the person it's not the eternal truth of the goodness of every person. And this is not just a pie mystical thing, I have wept over this, I have grieved. I mean, these are eternal truths of like Lord, whatever the story was in our mothers, our adoptive mothers, our foster mothers, our biological mothers, whatever their story was, the eternal truth of that is that you want me, that I'm here, that I'm made in your image, likeness, I'm eternally good. And Lord speak the truth to me of who I am and which helps gives us a framework to offer mercy, forgiveness, to experience the feelings that we have when people have hurt us in all truth and honesty and also to receive the truth and honesty as well.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, I can give an example of what this can look like because I had this experience that was very profound in healing journey, remember when we did restoration therapy, it was one of those sessions. So part of my story is that when my mom and dad love each other, came into this world. I was the youngest of four, but when I was three months old, my brother who was seven, Mark passed away in a horrible accident. So here I am this newborn and then my family is going through this intense trauma that I can only perceive on a certain level, I'm just a newborn baby. And so there's things from that where I always felt this impact within my family and even for me, but I couldn't perceive what it was exactly. And it wasn't until I was going through this healing encounter where I was back in this memory, it was almost like just a picture, I don't know if it was a real memory, but it described a feeling within me. And so I'm in my mom's arms and she's holding me so tightly, so like secure and there was love there, but she's staring at a wall and tears are streaming down her face. And as a little baby, I'm looking at her and I'm one, wanting to protect her and then the other part of me is going, do you see me? And I remember a counselor saying mothers cannot grieve and bond at the same time. And I was like, oh, so then she couldn't bond with me. It wasn't that she didn't want to, it's this holding of like she wanted to and I know my mom has said that I was such a comfort to her during that time, but she couldn't give me what I needed it was just impossible the situation, not her fault. Like these are the things that you're like, not her fault at all. So I remember just bringing that to Jesus and saying like, inviting the Lord, what do you have to say? And I said, because I feel like the lie is I'm not seen, and this has carried through my life that people don't actually see who I really am,

like when I'm hurting or when I need something, they don't see it. And so I had this whole prayer experience where I saw Jesus and he was on the cross and my hand was written on his name and he said, Heather, I see you. And that scripture came to mind like, although your mother may forget you, I've carved you in the palm of my hand, I will never forget you. And he said, Heather I see you and I'm acknowledging you for all to see and there was all these people staring at him and there was my hand.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Your name on your name on his hand.

**Heather Khym:** And it was profoundly healing for me because it was something that my mother wasn't capable of not through her own fault, like I said, but God wanted to restore whatever I needed then. And that I needed throughout my life because of the little lie that crept in there that was actually very powerful. And he was able to heal and restore it. I didn't have that conversation with my mom. I didn't need to talk to her about it, I didn't need to, there was no guilt, there was no nothing associated with that, but it was such a profound healing within my own heart. It restored something that I can't even put words to.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah, when I was praying through that book, "Sheltered Within Her Heart", the moment I mentioned last on as my one thing, there's a meditation on it and I was praying through it when I was doing the consecration, because my spiritual director said like, you need to go back to the womb and see if there's anything else. So I was going, but I was like, oh, my parents were happily. But, and then when I was praying about it was the same sense as a sense of overwhelm. And I'm thinking of the age that my mom was, she was 23, 24, but newly married, moving, like there was just a lot going on and that it was like, there was overwhelm in the situation like, you know, I'm the oldest with that. And I was praying through it and the meditation's like, the Lord is like, go back deeper than when it was like the Jeremiah before, you know, I created you, I knew you and it was like, when I was sitting there in prayer and I was looking, I was actually, adoration, I was looking at the tabernacle, it was this beautiful moment with the Lord. He's like, no, like, it was almost like up in heaven. He's like, when I created you, I was at rest and there was still light and then I was like, oh, now is the time that she comes about. Like he said, that is the most foundational implicit memory that you can have is me as foundation, is me of creator, he goes, go back even further Michelle, like you are a delight and you were not like a burden or overwhelmed or what, like, it was intentional, but the word was delight. I created you in delight and rest and I was like, oh my gosh and if that is the posture that I take, that I was created out of, that trumps the lie that I, you know, like, oh, overwhelmed and I need to make sure everything's okay so people don't get overwhelmed and just to go forth and to realize that like the Lord is bigger and he can redeem all of that. And I think for a lot of us the way that I think a lot of times that we felt like mothers have wounded us,

it's just like, when mothers are distracted, when we don't have the mother's gaze upon us. Or they're fully present. Or there's been harsh words said. Like a friend of mine just was telling me she just got back from Thanksgiving and she was just like, it was taking her a couple of days. I'm like, what's wrong with you? And she said, the things that were said to me over the Thanksgiving table. She said, I'm still, like they were just harsh. But I think there's something special about a mother's words that just pierce and grab you. And I've seen it myself when I've said things to my kids and I'm like, oh, I have to go back.

**Heather Khym:** There's a weightiness to the words of a mother.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes, of a woman I think, woman and mother, yes.

**Heather Khym:** Especially a mum towards a child and that goes for the good too. There's a weightiness to your words. Like when your mom speak blessing or you're speak encouragement life, like all of that, there's a weightiness to that. But yeah, just the other day I had this thought just the other day, I said to one of my kids, we were talking about something and I kind of laughed and I said, "oh, you're so fickle". But she repeated that twice in the next day to other people and I was like, whoa, whoa. I didn't mean that as a label, like in my mind I was like, whoa, she took this as potentially a label so there's something I need to undo here. And I think those dynamics happen all the time and often we're not aware of them as a mother or as someone in a spiritual mother role that we can speak blessing and we can speak curse, or we can speak labels that can tie you down or we can speak identity over our children or people that were in a maternal role with. So it's just really important I think to repair where you can and as quickly as you can. And sometimes I realize through my actions that I've given my children a certain message and Jake and I, my husband talked about this a long time ago when our kids were little. We're like, what are the messages that we want them to know? What are the core messages through our actions, through our words, through the way that we touch them, that we want them to know. And alternatively I've realized there's other messages that we sent that we may not have said, because we're really careful about our words, but like maybe the impression like you have to get it right, that you need to suck it up. You need to pull yourself together, whatever it might be. And I've had to undo some of those things as I see my children operating in a way I'm like, oh, I can see a negative impact here so now it's time to speak blessing to undo what I may have communicated. So there's always hope like these situations are never lost, but we have to be willing I think, to open our heart again, whether there's pain coming from what we did or what we've received.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I think we have to be able to hear the hard things that we and this takes when your children get older. Like when there's a little bit of a olderness, older I mean, it depends on the age or the maturity level of your child,

but a good friend of ours Shanen McGahn I love a question that she asks when she's just been doing deep interior work in herself, she said, I'm noticing these things about myself, that the Lord is really bringing up. I would love to know how this has affected you or if it has affected you as a child. And I'm like, darn girl, that's a great question. So I asked one of my high school boys that question, and he answered and it was hard to hear some of the things and you're like you're right and I'm so sorry, like you are right that is something that I really need to look at and I am so sorry that I hurt you this way and that was never my intention, but it doesn't mean that it didn't hurt. And he was so funny he goes, I felt really good about our conversation now. I'm like, and I'm still carrying it, but I'm like, oh my gosh he was like, okay. But for him just to speak it and to let it go, but it was just this posture of learning from one another. Like that's what family is being a school of love, and that we are quick to forgive and we are quick to ask forgiveness and for me it was a big thing just to own responsibility like, you are right. And I think also I was thinking about it after, I don't know if I would even have used the word right because I think right or wrong, it's not a right or wrong It just kind of, it's just messy, it's just humanity, I'm not saying that.

**Heather Khym:** I just wanna honor that that's your experience.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Exactly and the beautiful thing is that we also have full permission to go back to the Lord and sit with the Lord and say, okay, Lord, it's true, Like, what do you want me to know about this? And I think that's the struggle. All of us when we are in hard conversations often we like Bernie brown says we armor up and we start like, even we can feel our body we stop breathing usually, we can just feel our bodies tense up of like, oh my gosh, what's this person gonna say? Or we are already like thinking in our minds of like, how am I gonna respond to this? And just learned that big fat lesson just the other day. And just having a hard conversation with a friend of mine and just listening to their heart and I had to will myself not to butt in and interrupt, like just be quiet and just listen to their experience they're not asking you to explain yourself, just listen, just listen. And so being able to just to listen to that person and just say, oh, I thank you for sharing that with me I will certainly take that to the Lord and see what the Lord wants me to say there and please know that I had no intent to hurt you, I am so sorry that was not my intent at all. And I think that helps our hearts and a woman came up to me at a conference some time ago and she's a mom and she's like, I know I've hurt my kids And she's like, well, some of them haven't talked to me in 20 years. And she's like, is there hope for me? I was like, yes, there's hope. Like, there's always, have you ask our lady even now to open their hearts ask her guardian angel to intercede for them, ask the Lord to help you have openings where you can go back and say, you know what? Like Janine, like I've realized he about myself, I am sorry as a mother, I'm sorry for what I've done and I'm sorry. And your kids will be like, oh mom, it's not a big development. I was like, I can tell you that it means a lot to your

children when mom comes back and says, I think I hurt you here and I'm really sorry. And then it gave even my own mom, like all the conversations we've had since my dad died in the last 20 years of me going back to my mom and saying, mom, I was not a good daughter to you and I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. And I just, yeah, like that's the beauty of being human, just the continual growth of our hearts of the receptivity of the generosity. But like you both are saying it requires us with the Lord to say, okay, Lord open my heart here because it's so easy for us to shut our hearts, to double down on our position and we don't grow like that. It takes vulnerability for all of us to grow.

**Heather Khym:** Defensiveness can shut down healing so quickly, it's unbelievable and I think those are places that we have to be I mean, we really have to look within and go, why am I getting defensive? Why am I feeling defensive right now? And is it possible, like you said sister, like you knew that you had to hold some of your comments to yourself and just listen. If we're not capable of doing that, why? what is it that we're so afraid of? And I think for many of us we're afraid that we failed, that we're not a good mother or that we're not a good person or we're not that we've done all of this and all we've done is wound our children, no. I'm gonna pay for my kids to go to counseling for anything that I've done.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I always tell my kids it'll make you funny though and relatable, move on.

**Heather Khym:** But I've asked my kids that too. I've asked them at times where like, have you guys ever felt like this because of how dad and I? I'm just curious and if they're like, oh no, I'm like, you can be honest, you can really tell me, but it's because I have the capacity to hear them and not get defensive. I shouldn't ask that question if I can't deal with the truth, so we have to be in a place where we're growing in maturity so we can handle that. And I think maturity also enters into the picture in a big way when our kids hurt us. I've noticed at times like there's been times where my kids have hurt my feelings, just like I did for my mom and that other story. We can get hurt, we're just people, our hearts are tender. There's little parts of us too, you know? And sometimes our kids can be flippant or they can be not very thoughtful and things come out or you feel like you're being taken advantage of and they're just gonna take, take, take, and like all of those things. So it's like how do I handle that with maturity, but with love? Like how can I say, hey, I feel like you're asking for a lot, but we're not really having like great relationship with each other. Can we talk about that? The alternative is that I'm not mature and I just start reacting and being passive aggressive with my comments and which I realize for some of my children can be very, very hurtful. Like even though I'm not snapping back and being mean per se, there's something in there that they're so perceptive that they know that I'm communicating and it's hurtful. So I've realized, do I want to keep the hurt growing between us through these exchanges? Or do I want to be

able to just come to them and say, hey, what you said really hurt my feelings, I need you to know that. And the times that I've done that especially with my oldest daughter because now she's older, it just happens in a different way. It's been so good for our relationship to just address it right away and to be like, I've had to look within myself and say, I don't want her to respond like a child and shut down and push them away cause that's not what a mother should do. Like when I get hurt by them, I need to go to them and repair, I'm the adult, they're not here to take care of me, I'm the mother, I need to initiate even if I'm the one that's been hurt. So what do I wanna do in my littleness sometimes? Yeah, I wanna wall up, I don't wanna talk to them. I wanna like play that game, I'm just like, go away I don't wanna do anything for you. No, I'm not giving you a ride, I can do that, like I can just go there, silent treatment, all those things, you know? But I'm like, no, if I'm going to teach them, what love truly is that even when you're hurt that you still give, that you still love, that you still repair these are hard things, very hard things.

**Michelle Benzinger:** The hardest and you're looking around like, who's the adult in the room, oh, crap I am, I am the adult in the room. I'm the parent in the room. I've got to respond different every time, every time. Yeah. There is a funny meme around going around and made me laugh they're like, I wonder if I put a bow on my head and lie under the Christmas tree my kids will realize what a gift I am.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, that's a good one.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I was like, okay, but I was laughing cause I think for like mothers, just even creating, like we have to create Christmas or do this and there's a lot of behind the scenes things and for both parents, but I think especially mothers, but yes, oftentimes like, oh my gosh, I'm responding like a child here. And like, my question is, do I wanna be right or do I wanna be loving? Really because I'm like, but I'm right in this situation and it doesn't make a difference, it's not right or wrong like I said earlier before, it's all right, what is the deeper issue? Why is this child responding this way? There is a deep root issue, can I be present to where they are at and love? Even though sometimes it's like, everything in me just wants to be like, ah, go away, but you're like, no, I realize there's something in my body when something is hard like that, I want to become a escape artist, you know? And I was like and that is and there's a difference between stepping back, gaining your composure or you just wanna run away. There is a difference and like, when I wanna become the escape artist, that's when I turned back around and like I really rain them the love. And I'm really noticing, I think it's easier with children almost than it is in marriage. Like when it's really close in marriage and you're like, okay, I'm going to run right now cause I don't want. Like there's a nerve that's hitting and there's a deeper intimacy that's being asked of me like, I don't know what to do or I just want to big leap up. But with your children, I think it's the armor because you're like, I'm wanna guard my heart because they are a part of my heart. Now they're a little parts

that are walking around of my hearts, you know? And like, I know for two of my children, like there's a lot, when it comes to adoption it's made me cry. Like there's parts like they test you to make sure is she gonna leave? Like my other mother leaves. So I was it's like it gets old being a punching bag sometimes because like they try to and they don't do it. And you realize this is not you against this child it's you against this part of their story where there's abandonment,

**Heather Khym:** and can we go higher?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Can we go higher?

**Heather Khym:** Can we go higher than their words, than their whatever is coming at us. To see what their need is, their real deep desire.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh my gosh.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And you cannot take it personally, you can't. I used to have it that on a sticky note on my refrigerator, you can not take it personally. Because it's not, it's about a deep wound in the him and that you need to lean into love. And that's the sacrificial love and that's the generosity. But to respond that way, you need to be being poured in and receptive from the Lord filling you up.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We can't do this on our own.

**Michelle Benzinger:** You cannot do it by yourself it is only by grace receptivity because you loves these children you'll do anything for them.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, that's exactly what I was gonna say just listening to both of you. Like those are the places especially where we just turn to Lord and say, Lord, I don't know what here. Or Lord, show me what I need to know. Oh Lord gave me the grace to respond with your love. Like, cause we don't have it on our own accord and for many of us many times like that's an invitation to either go to counseling or to like start reading about like areas where we have fight or a continued pattern of responses that are not helpful, that are destructive. Okay, Lord, what's happening? Cause nothing is random or arbitrary, even the way we respond to people, it is never random or arbitrary. And I think those are the places where all of us in our hearts have to dig very deep many times and just turn to the Lord and say, Lord, I don't know, like Holy Spirit, I don't know what to do here. Like I don't know how to, I don't know what my child needs can you tell me like what or what am I like a coworker and well, what do they need? Or how can I respond in love? Like help me, everything in me wants to lash out right now. So Jesus come and tend to this place of my heart and teach me. I really believe when St Paul says pray

without ceasing, these are the things that he's talking about, it's not just Lord's prayers that we're praying without ceasing it's the cry of our heart. Like St. Teresa said that prayer is a cry of our heart toward the Lord. We're like Lord, bring me grace, bring me wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord. Lord, come and fill my heart because I need you here and I can't do this by myself and the Lord once again, rushes in to the areas that we're receptive and it fills us with his generosity to be able to give us so we can love the way he loves and that's the, the masterpiece like CS Lewis says, all of us are a masterpiece in progress and the Lord is always refining us and amen to it.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, and so many of us I think, are looking to children, husband, other to fill something in us, the gap in us that only God can fill. And so like if our identity is found in our motherhood, instead of as a child of God, we're gonna be asking our kids like implicitly to fill this void in us, to affirm certain things or to act a certain way so that we look like a good mother or whatever it might be. And so if they act out of order in some way then we feel the shame and the failure and all of those things. So I think it's important to just notice there could be a number of dynamics at play when we release the other to just be who they are and to love in the ways that they wanna be loving and to not force them to fill certain things within us or else we're not gonna respond in love, you know what I mean? The games, the codependency, all of these unhealthy behaviors, these can all be healed. They can all experience the healing and the touch of God. And I know for my husband, he has this beautiful thing happening in his own life where he's been really desiring to know God the Father and the Father has told him there's men that I've given you in your life and that I'm gonna continue to give you that become like a mosaic of who I am, that they have a part of my heart, of my attributes that I want you to know. And so when you put all of those people together, they create this mosaic of the Father and I think similarly, we need that to happen with mothers too. And there's people that we can open our hearts to, like let's say your mother, isn't great and there's been a difficult relationship, or let's say she is great, but there's still areas that you have need for. That there's other people that God wants to bring in your life that can reveal the face of a mother and I think Mary is also an important role in that too.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Amen. Yeah, that's a lot, that'll be a lot just to continue to just sit with and let that unfold in each of our hearts. So should we talk about our one things for the week? Anything else y'all want to add that's burning on your heart? Any burning desires?

**Heather Khym:** No.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** All right, Heather, you wanna talk about your one thing for the week?

**Heather Khym:** My one thing, this song is my favorite right now. I have a lot of songs right now.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah girl, you do what, you want to sing first?

**Heather Khym:** No, I don't, but thank you for the invitation. Yeah, I spend a lot of time at home, I just have a quiet life and I just turn on different music, I listen to music as I'm working and doing the dishes and take care of the doggos and all that stuff. So this one is called, "On The Altar" by Upper Room. Oh my goodness, you guys just take it to your prayer time and sit with it, it's so good. I love the "Tiny Hand" right now.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Okay, thank you, mine is a song actually from JJ Heller and it's called the "Mother Song". And it is just a precious song about the relationship with her mother and just honoring her and learning as she learns how to be a mother. And I think there's something, if you've never listened to JJ Heller lyrics, she is lovely and she has two albums that are lullaby songs too that are just lovely also. So, oh my gosh, they both have the tiny hands in front of their face, I'm so sorry people. Sister Miriam, what is your one thing?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** My one thing for the week is actually a gift that somebody gave me, I was at a conference and somebody gave me two bags of Verso Alto coffee from the Verso Alto coffee roasters. They're a coffee, a Catholic coffee company and Verso Altos is to the heights like a pair of Georgia where this famous sayings. And so they've developed a whole coffee roasting company around that theme and it's wonderful tasting coffee and they're a great Catholic family and it's small batch roasted and they have so many different roasts available.

**Heather Khym:** I want to taste all the Catholic coffees. I mean, not that I'm making a plug to Catholic coffee roasters to send us coffee.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, we would never do that. I would never say, please send us all your coffee and your roast cause we would love to do like a, we could do a whole episode on that. We'd have to be together though, but anyway, there's a lot to a coffee roasters, yeah.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I like how you say it. Verso Alto.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Verso Alto. How would you like to say that Michelle?

**Heather Khym:** Let's have a whole episode of Michelle trying to say Latin words.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes, exactly, especially all the Latin, you know.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh dear friends, we'll thank you for joining us on our second installment of our motherhood series and we will continue next week with part three. So until then we'll be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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