



Welcome to God's Faithful Pursuit with me, Shannon Bishop, your host. We are a ministry of Family Church in Port Charlotte, Florida. Join us as we share stories of God's glory and faithfulness in the lives of others. And it's my hope that you are spurred on to love and good works through the encouragement that you find here. Thanks for joining us.

Hey, welcome back, friends. Thanks for tuning in. Today I've got Mackenzie Emily with me. She is a high schooler and she's actually going into her senior year. Say hello, Mackenzie.

Hello, guys. I'm so excited to be here. We're so excited to have you. And Mackenzie just recently went on a trip to Africa. Yes, that's true.

A mission's trip, but not just any mission's trip. What kind was it? It was a medical mission trip in Kenya. Wow. So that's amazing.

So, before we get started, tell me, because the theme of this podcast is God's faithful Pursuit. I always like to ask if you have any sort of story where someone was pursuing you or you were pursuing someone, or did it go well? Was it a funny story or anything like that? Well, I think the thing that I can think of right now is how I feel like God's been pursuing me recently in my life, and just wanting me to say yes to him in many ways. And I think that's just powerful that God wants a relationship with me, and he's just definitely been pursuing me in so many different ways.

And to tell him yes, that's awesome. Look at you, like, already getting into it. Like, that's perfect. That's exactly what we want to talk about today. So, before we get started.

So, you're. Are you 18 yet? Are you still 17? I'm 17. I just turned 17.

Okay, so you've got a whole year to go till you're a real, live adult. Yes, I do. One more year. How are you feeling about that? I'm a little nervous to be an adult, but I think it'll work out.

I think it's gonna work out good. Yeah. Feel like God's got your back. Yeah, for sure. For sure.

And so, tell me a little bit about your background. Were you born and raised in Florida? I was born and raised in Indiana. So, yeah, out there in the cornfield in the country. But we lived out there for, I think, 12 years of my life, and then we moved here about three or four years ago.

So, yeah, if that does not math up, it's fine. Something like that. Yeah. But yeah. And so, what brought you guys to Florida?

The weather? Indiana does not have good weather. And it's cold and it's gloomy, and Florida is so much more sunshiny and pretty in the beach. And my grandparents do live here. Okay.

We did have people here. Gotcha. So, you guys had maybe visited over your lifetime? Lifetime? I meant childhood.

Yeah, no, we visited a few times. Like, I think one or two times, but it was just kind of like, we need to move. So, we just did it and just hoped for the best, really. So. Wow, that's awesome, though.

Props to your parents for being like, you know what? We're moving to Florida. That's great. So, you like living here, I assume? Yes.

It's probably like, the biggest blessing ever. Meeting so many new people and just the community is so nice. I love it. And just the tropical climate, it changes everything. Even your, like, mental state.

Totally different. Yeah, no, I would agree. We lived in Illinois for nine months, and that was nine months too long for me. Yeah. I mean, for any listeners out there that love Illinois, you're talking.

I was a California girl, Arizona girl, and you take me to Illinois in the winter, and I was just like, I don't what's happening? Like, I got depressed so fast. Yeah. And it just. Yeah.

We had to stay inside a lot because, you know, I'm so used to heat that I was just freezing. Yeah, yeah, exactly. Even now that we moved to Florida, you think I would be, like, acclimated enough to the cold temperatures, but when it gets cold here, I'm still like. Yeah, me too. Shivering.

Yeah. And I always carry a sweater with me everywhere I go. I know it's cold inside. It is, anyways, so that's funny. And.

Okay, so you lived. You moved to Florida, and you've been living here for the past few years. Yes. And what else have you. Were you raised in a Christian home?

I was raised in a kind of Christian home. Well, I don't know what you would define as Christian. We went to church every single Sunday. Okay. For a little while, and then we just kind of stopped.

So, whether you think that's Christian or not, I'm not sure, but I don't think we ever really spent time in the Bible growing up or anything like that. So, I'm not sure where that falls. Yeah. Yeah. Well, it sounds like your parents might be like, they believe in God.

Yeah. But there's maybe some following that Phil is in process. Yeah. And so how did you come to know Christ just from church? Well, I think a few things happened in my life that led to it and where I really Needed reliance on God, and specifically with, like, my family.

And then Covid happened, and that's when it really hit, and I was, like, alone, and I had time to really, like, look into the word of God and be like, oh, my gosh, this is. This is it. Like, he loves me. That's the greatest blessing ever. Wow.

Yeah, so I love hearing that because, you know, we all look at Covid with this, like, disdain, and we're so mad. It should happen. It never should have happened. And then the way it isolated so many people. But look how God has redeemed that in your life.

Yeah. Like, that's how he drew you closer to him. Oh, yeah, for sure. It definitely was a huge blessing just to have time to spend with him, because I feel like sometimes, I get caught up in so much schoolwork, so many sports, but the time that I got to spend just focused on his word. And I heard him in so many ways during those, like, year or so, because we were out of school for a certain amount of time, and just getting to spend time with him was so fruitful.

It was amazing. That's awesome. I'm so glad you brought that up, because that reminds me, too, of our time during the pandemic. You know, you just. Everything slows down, and all of a sudden, you're thinking, okay, I have all this time on my hands.

Yeah. And so, my. My experience was very similar where I. I really got into the Word. I spent way more time with family. We spent way less money because we weren't going to restaurants.

And I actually wrote a book during that time, actually. Whoa. It's. It's not like a full, like, book book. It's more like a small devotional, I would say.

And it's how to help people define their relationship with God. Like, how to write your love story with Jesus. Oh, wow. And so awesome. Yeah, it's like a little journal almost, and so just self-published on Amazon, but.

Wow. It's like. That's so cool. Actually, you know what? In your face, Covid.

Yeah. Literally. For real. Well, that's awesome. So, tell me more about this Africa trip.

What made you want to go there? Did you always have, like, a. Like, something in your heart pulling you towards missions? Yeah, that's a great question. I think I definitely had a feel for

Africa before I went there, but I felt like it was kind of too far out of reach because Africa is really far.

Yeah, we spent, like, 16 hours on a plane, so I always thought it was just too far. And, like, I'm never gonna get there. But the doors were just opened, and my heart was definitely pulled towards them. We were actually supposed to go to Utah. Me and my dad, we signed up for a Utah trip because Africa wasn't open to people under 18, so I technically was not supposed to go to Africa.

Interesting. So, the doors are definitely open for it. So we showed up to our Utah meeting, and it was all good. We get there, and the entire team canceled the same day, so the whole team fell out. And we get there, and they're like, well, here's your options.

You can do Dominican Republic. And we were like, well, we can't really do that, because that one was actually scheduled during the school year, and I can't miss a certain amount of days, so, like, that's not really an option. And then they're like, okay, well, we'll open Kenya up to you. And I was like, that's crazy, because my mom is a nurse, and Kenya was specifically a medical mission. And so the doors are just opened.

And I went home, talked to my mom, and I kind of convinced her. Yeah. I kind of let her, like, think it out and stuff, but that's kind of how it all stemmed from. And then we committed, and that's kind of how it all started. Wow.

Yeah. That's amazing. And, I mean, this was probably really amazing experience for your mom as well. Yeah. I think she got to help a lot more people than she would have ever imagined.

Yeah, it was wonderful for her. And do you think it helped in her walk with the Lord to kind of help her? I think so. I know she mentioned, while we were there, maybe going into a different career. Not really like, different career in nursing.

She may be going further in her nursing career, which I thought was interesting that she saw that, and she's like, okay, maybe I should. Should pursue that. So I think that's something she saw, and I think it also leveled her up knowing that, like, her skill levels are higher up, because it was not like normal nursing in the United States, for sure. It was definitely way different. And she struggled with that at first, but then when she got into it, she was like, okay, I'm actually, like, good at this, and I can do this.

So I think that was encouraging for her. Yeah, totally. And I think God is pursuing your mom to a deeper level with him. Oh, for sure. And I bet you that had a big impact on her, too.

Yeah. So tell me about you and your. The impact that it had on you being there. Yeah. So actually, I kind of came in thinking that I was gonna go and be with the kids the entire time.

Because there was kind of two sections. There was like the medical section and then there was the kids section. And I thought I was gonna be with the kids the entire time. But God had, like, some different plans, I guess, because he. Well, the first day we got there, I went to be with the kids.

And then our mission person came up and was like, hey, guys, we actually need people in triage. And I was like, I'm a 16-year-old. What are you talking about? I don't know how to do blood pressure. I don't know how to take any of that stuff.

What are you talking about? But I got pretty much drawn into. I was like, whatever. And so I go. And I'm sitting there, I'm like, panicked.

I'm seriously panicked because I don't even know what I'm supposed to be doing. And I'm gonna be talking to people who don't speak the same language as me. So I was scared about the language barrier. I was, like, on the verge of tears almost, because I was just so nervous. And I get there.

I got the most amazing translator ever. He was so sweet. He just helped me so much. And it was one of the biggest blessings because if I wasn't there, I wouldn't have seen so many of the injuries that I did see. And I was humbled by so many of those injuries, like, in so many different ways.

But I did get. I did get to experience the kids. Yeah. Like, one day. But even being in triage, it was just, like, so humbling.

Wow. And it sounds like God really showed up for you. Oh, for sure. Yes. Because you were so scared and so worried.

And he provided you with an amazing translator. Yeah. Oh, my goodness. I learned so many words in that four days that I was with my translator. It was just.

He just guided me through it so much. He's actually a pastor in Kenya, so he. He owns it. He owns an orphanage too. Oh, my gosh.

So he's great with people. But that's amazing. Look at that. Gives me chills. Because I just think about how you were faithful to say yes, and then God is so faithful to give you everything you needed.

Oh, for sure. To be able to serve those people. Yeah. Oh, I just love God so much. I know, right?

So, okay. I think I remember you telling me a story about getting a little nauseous or something. Like, didn't you see something like blood or. For sure. What happened?

Okay. So, it was our last day, and I felt like I really wanted to help. Yeah. Because my last day, I have to make it worth it. Yeah.

And I'm like, oh. So it was kind of a slower day, which kind of made me a little sad because it was our last one, but. But at the same time, you don't want people coming in injured. I know. Yeah, that's true.

There was a little baby that came in. It was a 13 day old newborn. Her name was Precious, and her mom actually spoke English, so it was just me and her talking. And my job was in triage was to just kind of check them in. And I just got to see what was wrong with them.

And I wrote it down. And then they got sent to the nurses. Gotcha. So I was like, what's wrong with her? And she shows me little baby's chest, and on her left chest, there was like an abscess or something.

And I was like, oh, my goodness. And the mom, like, held up medicine that she had gotten. I guess she already went to some doctor and she's like, I already went to the doctor. I could just sense, like, the hopelessness from her. She was like, I already went to the doctor, and it's still, like, there.

And I just felt so bad. So she got sent to the nurse pretty quickly. So I went down there to see, like, what they were gonna do, and they were gonna cut it open. And I was like, oh, my goodness. A 13 day old baby.

Like, that's so sad. And so I was like, I need to help.

Well, yeah. So I go. And they're like, okay, well, you can hold the baby's arm back. And I was like, okay, that's not even doing anything. I'm just helping.

Trying to be the hands and feet of Christ. Yeah. And so I held the arm back, and I saw them numb her up a little bit, which wasn't bad. I saw some stuff come out. You know, Sorry.

Not to be grasped. I know. I'm, like, getting nauseous right now. It's fine. Keep talking.

But it wasn't bad. And then the doctor pulls out the blade. I didn't really know that they were cutting her. Yeah. But he pulls out the blade, and that's when I completely lost it.

Yeah. And I was sitting across from some nurses, and I was holding the baby's arm. And the nurses are like, Mackenzie, are you okay? They were, like, saying my name, but I was stuck. I was just, like, frozen.

It was so crazy. I was frozen. And then I waited for somebody to take the baby's hand because I didn't want her to, like, touch what was Going on. And I completely passed out. Oh.

Yeah. It was. It was an experience. It was the first time I've actually ever passed out. Wow.

But I guess it was for a good reason. I wanted to be helpful, and it didn't really work out. But it's okay. You found out what your limits are. Yeah.

Yeah, exactly. But I think it did open up to some questions that I may have had. I thought I was going to go into nursing as, like, my career, but I think I also kind of leaned toward nursing because of nursing is like a job that's always needed, and I just felt like it was a safe job. Yeah. But now I really noticed that I don't want to really do that.

Mm. And that was just because, like, my mom's a nurse. So I think it just kind of opened me up to opportunities. Like, you don't have to step in the same footsteps as her. You can be your own person and do what you want to do.

And I think that was eye opening, for sure. Well, it really sounds like God used you in big ways, and you have such a heart for serving and helping people that I know he's going to use you in some way. I think in your profession, whatever that may be. He's going to put you in a place where you can serve and love on people. Yeah, for sure.

So, let's see. What about spiritually speaking? Did you. What did God show you, or did you see something happen with someone else that was like, oh, man. We've really helped them beyond just the physical.

Oh, yeah. So, there was a lot that came with the people that came into the clinic. I think there were just so many stories that we heard that were impacted in our lives. But one girl that came in that really hit me pretty hard. It was an older lady, but she did speak some English.

So in Kenya, they have different languages. They actually have 46 different tribal languages. And then they have Swahili, so some of them don't even speak English at all. But this woman came in, she spoke English, and I was talking to her, and she was like, what's wrong? And she's like, I just can't read.

I can't see to read my Bible. Oh, wow. And I was just like, oh, my goodness. Like, that just hit me deep because I'm like, I can read my Bible so easily. Like, if I need glasses or readers, I can go to Walmart and grab them.

Right. It's just we have so many privileges in the United States that they don't have. Yeah. And so much access to whatever we want. Yeah.

So she did receive like glasses, and I just felt like, oh my goodness, she's gonna be able to go and read her Bible now that she has glasses. I think that's just so impactful. I hope her life was changed from that. I'm sure it was. Yeah.

I mean, she can see God's word now for sure. That's. That was just one of the stories. There's other stories of like physical stuff where it humbled me because we have so much to be grateful for. Like there was this one kid the first day that I was in triage and this is kind of where it started.

And I was like, okay, God definitely has a purpose for me to be in triage right now. But this kid came in and his legs were. Well, his mom and him came in, so she was carrying him. And I didn't really notice at first. So I had to take the mom's blood pressure because she was over a certain age.

So I was like, hey, can you put him down? And I didn't realize it, but his legs were stuck, like bent and so he couldn't stand. He couldn't walk, like on his own. Little seven year old boy. And it was just so sad to see that.

I'm like, I can walk around so easily. I'm so grateful. Because he cannot walk around and his mom had to carry him everywhere. Wow. I saw like sweat dripping off of her face when she first came in.

Like it's because she was carrying him to the clinic. And it's just so sad to think about that. Yeah, man. That also makes me think about how God carries us. But he doesn't break a sweat, you know?

Oh, for sure. Just he will carry us when we are down, when we are feeling broken. He's right there. And what a faithful mom to just carry her son around. Yeah.

And that's all she ever. She didn't. That's all she ever knew in a sense. Like she has to do that. Right.

Because there's no help for them. And it's so sad. So, he needs a wheelchair, something because he. I don't know. But at the same time, those roads out there and the ground is very.

It's not like Florida. They need, like, they need an off roading wheelchair situation. Yeah. Or a wagon maybe. Yeah.

Honestly, I don't know. It's very sad though. So would you say the biggest lesson you learned was. Was what? Like humility maybe for.

I think so. And gratefulness. Yeah. Being thankful for the things that we have and the resources that we have in the United States because it goes far greater than you could ever imagine. Until you witness it.

It's insane. Mm. The things we take for granted, even our paved roads. Mmm. Like, goes insane.



Even like ice cubes. Right. That's. The things that you notice is just crazy. Yeah.

When it's not there. Yeah. I feel like after all the hurricanes and things that we've been through in our lives and you don't have power for a while, you get that same sense. I mean, obviously, it's on a way bigger scale when you. When you go to another country, but it's.

It's similar to that, where you're just like, okay, I don't want to live this way. I want all of my comforts back. That's so true. A few things in the cars, they didn't have AC either, but thank goodness it is wintertime in Kenya, so they have, like, swap seasons, so that wasn't bad. But even in the hotels, like, no ac, which is crazy, because think about the summertime.

It gets so hot there, but we just have so many resources and we're so privileged in the United States. It's insane. Yeah. It is pretty crazy. I'm just glad that there are mission's trips that go out there to help and do what can be done.

Did you guys go with an organization or. Yeah, we went with an organization called Church Missions Network, which I'm pretty sure they have people. They have people planted in Kenya that stay there, and they're kind of like full time, and then they have people that come in, like medical people. Okay, so you had a really good experience with them. Yeah, it's pretty good.

They actually just recently changed their head person, so I think it was a little bit confusing at times for them because they're just still kind of getting into the vibe of everything. But it was overall pretty good. Okay, well, that's good. So would you say that there were. I know you talked about that time right in the beginning where you were, like, freaking out and you were really afraid, and then God provided that translator for you.

Yes. Would. Would you say there's any scripture that you, like, cling to in those moments or, you know, something that you've memorized or written on your heart so that you can pull that out? Yeah. My favorite verse is actually Joshua 1:9, and it says, have I not commanded you?

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. I felt like that was just so apparent because no matter the situation, that was in there. He was always there, and he's always on my side.

There was also a few times when it felt uncertain. Our days were actually cut short every single day that we were on site. And one day specifically, there were some political stuff going on in Kenya, so there was to be some rioting, and we weren't sure if that was going to affect our work or not. Wow. So that was pretty scary.

And they were told. We were told that if they told us to get in the van and leave, then we had to, like, leave immediately. Just, like, drop everything and go. Yeah. Oh, my goodness.

So it was a little scary and terrifying to be out there in that uncertainty. But we knew God was there, and, like, whatever was gonna happen was gonna happen. We. We were fine. But it was just that that thought was there.

Right. And that possibility was there. Yeah. And God kept you safe. Yes.

Okay, so wrapping it up. Is there anything that you would want to tell a listener that's listening today? Maybe somebody who has always wanted to go on a missions trip, but they're like, I don't know. Or, yeah, I would definitely just say yes. Yeah.

And I think it's committing to what God has for you. For sure. And if he opens the doors for something, say yes. Because even how he navigated us to Africa was because we said yes. And what I thought was his plan obviously didn't align because I thought for sure Utah was where we were going to be going.

But he directed us to Africa, and. And he made a way. I mean, you weren't even the right age. And he was like, watch this. For sure.

He's like, get rid of these age limits. But literally. And just say yes, because his plan will prosper. Yeah. And I love how you just said, get rid of these age limits because he's a limitless God.

Oh, for sure. There are no limits with him. Yeah. Especially in triage. I was like, what are you doing right now, God?

I have no experience with this, but, like, one thing I really want to bring to the table today is God doesn't call the prepared. He prepares the called. Yeah. And I love that. I just live by that so much, because I'm never going to be adequate if I think, like, I'm not going to live up to the standards.

But with God, he's going to prepare me and he's going to let me live up to the standards. Like, absolutely. Yeah. He'll make you ready and give you what you need for that moment and for your whole life. Yeah.

So amazing. Thank you. You have a good God. Yeah, we do. Amen.

And that's what we're here for, is to glorify him. So, Mackenzie, thank you so much for sharing your story today. Thank you for having me today. Yeah, we should do this again sometime. Of course.

Your next big thing that happens in your life. Yes. I'm so excited. All right, so thank you for listening. If you have a story that you want to share, please, please reach out and email me@shannonfamilychurchpc.com and we will see you next time. Bye. Bye.