

Announcer

Welcome to transformed by the word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:27

Thanks for joining me for Episode 29 of Transformed by the Word.

In God we trust. If you live in the United States, we see that written on our money on some of our government buildings, and even on car license plates. But what does it really mean to trust in the Lord in practical ways?

Well, today I've invited a special guest to the show to talk about trusting in the Lord. Her name is to Tennille Blackwell, and I had the privilege of studying with her for several years as we worked on our Master of Divinity program at Denver seminary. Tennille is a licensed minister under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Gerald Folsom, and First Lady Joyce Folsom.

She currently serves as the Commissioner of the evangelism and community commission, and coordinator for women's ministry at Hemingway Memorial AME church in District Heights, Maryland. Tennille leads workshops, she preaches, teaches Bible study, and facilitates leadership training and development in local churches in the Washington DC metropolitan area.

God has anointed her to speak life into all the people she encounters, and lead them to Christ. Her main focus is people who have been through the worst of situations where she encourages them to be who God created them to be, through her business. Unique Encouragement, LLC, and ministry, The Well Experience. Her motto is, change your perspective, change your life. One of Tennille's key scriptures that keeps her grounded is Romans 12:2, and it says, And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Stay tuned. We'll be back in just a moment.

MUSIC INTERLUDE

Debora

Hey, Tennille. It is such a blessing to see you today. I know that God has been doing some really amazing things in your life. And I would love for my listeners to get to know a little bit about you.

Tennille 3:40

Well, hello, everyone. First, I would like to thank Reverend Barr for inviting me out to do this on today and a little bit about myself. So my name is Tennille Blackwell. I am a licensed minister, at Hemingway Memorial AME church. I am a wife and mother, I have six children 5 boys and 1 girl. I work a full time job. I'm a senior manager for the Federal Aviation Administration, responsible for budget, staffing and contracts. I also have just launched my own LLC, and it's a business that God has given me since 2005. And I've been just working at it over the last 15-16 years, and I decided to take it to the next level.

Debora 4:26

Wow, that's amazing. I don't know how you do any of that with such a large family. And I know that you and I attended seminary together, which was a whole nother thing and a whole a lot of work. So I know you have a great capacity that God has gifted you with to juggle all of those things and do very well in all of them.

Tennille 4:49

Yes, I will say that with everything that I do. I seem to love to multitask, but I've learned over time that everything that's a good idea - it's not for that season, and everything I want to do is not something that I need to do. So I'm still learning how to balance in process at all. But I just love to do things. So you know, I found myself even involved with what my kids are doing. And it just keeps me well rounded.

Debora 5:18

That's awesome. Can you tell us just as we get to know you a bit, what brought you to faith in Jesus Christ? And when did that happen, and just kind of tell us about that experience.

Tennille 5:32

So I believe, and this is something that I always share is that from a young child, I do believe that I believed in the Lord, it was because of my grandmother instilling that in us and taking us to church and things of that nature. It wasn't until I became a teenager, that I started to go off track and do what I wanted to do, right and try to test the waters.

Because how many of you are out there know that people will tell you not to do something, but you become curious of those things that you're told not to do? And it wasn't until I was in a mall, in Forestville, Maryland. And this lady walked up to me in a group of my friends. And she said, Are you saved? and they kept walking, but I'm like, What do you mean? Am I saying that? She said, Do you believe? And I say, Yeah, I believe. And she asked all of these questions. And I was puzzled because I grew up in the Catholic faith. So all of those questions were never asked to us in that manner. But I knew who the Lord was.

And I believe for the Lord right there in the mall, is when I made the sound decision myself at like 12 or 13 years old, to say, Yes, I believe in the Lord. I believe God raised Him from the dead I made that confession. And from that moment forward, I will tell you that my life seemed to go on as normal. But it unraveled in a way that it was out of control. And it was because the moment you take steps to truly believe that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, opposition comes.

And so I became a teenage mom, and then it just spiraled from there. But I'm grateful to say that I stuck with it. So no matter how far off, I got off track, that I was able to wrap me back up and his love and put me right back on the right track, even if it was later on in life. That's something that I've been working to instill in my kids that that unconditional love is what has kept me grounded this whole time.

Debora 7:14

That is so true. I didn't know that about you. I didn't know that you grow up in the Catholic faith, I did too. So that's really cool. And that people walking up a lady walking up to you in the mall that you would actually stop and engage with her and be curious, and then the Lord use that to draw you to him. Our

topic today centers around trusting in the Lord. And I would like for you to share with us how you have personally experienced God as trustworthy in your life.

Tennille 7:50

I will go back to 2006. And in 2006, I went to a funeral of one of my dear friends growing up, hang out, have fun, he was younger than I was. But I happened to be driving home from work one evening, and traffic was gridlock. And I couldn't understand why there was no reason for traffic to be busy where I lived at that time. And what had happened was he was shot and killed in traffic while he was riding in the car with a friend of his that person got out and left the car with him inside at that light. And it had caused that confusion.

When I went to that service at Victory Christian Ministries International, I'll never forget, I walked in. And I always say with a drive-by I was gonna leave from work on my lunch break, go pay my respects and go back to work. However, the pastor Pastor Tony Brazeton, he started to speak some words that spoke right to my situation. And he said, clearly, if you leave out that door, you will never walk in or out another door. God is talking to you.

So I turned around megachurch turned around look. And I said he couldn't be talking to me, it's too many people in here. And when I looked I was the only one standing at the opposite end of the aisle by the door about to leave out. And he was of course at the altar. And I just slid down in my seat because of course how many know all the people in the church turned around to see. So I was embarrassed. But I also was thinking about my job. But when you walk into a service or an experience, it doesn't even have to be in the walls of the church conviction happens. And that's what happened to me. I had tried everything else in life. And I was 25 years old. And I had the weight of the world on my shoulders. I had tried everything, but returning my attention back to Christ.

Debora 9:32

Wow. Yeah. The pastor was speaking directly to you. And the Lord was drawing you again. And that's something that I would like our listeners to know. There are times in your life when you feel like there's a voice or somebody's saying something and it arrests you in a particular situation that you're in and that truly is the Lord God speaking to you. And so it's it's very smart to just stop and listen and hear what he has to say, isn't that true?

Tennille 10:07

It is very true. And something you just said is bringing tears to my eyes because I remember, I used to go out and I used to party at the club, and I used to hang off the wall and was the life of the party, I'll just tell you about that. Because people that are listening, no matter where you are, no matter what you're doing, God sees you, he knows everything about you. And so that weekend, that service happened through the week, that week, and I said, this is gonna be my last time going to the club, this is gonna be my last time taking a drink. This is gonna be my last time doing this. And I said, I had so much fun at night. And I said, Lord, if you want me, you are gonna have to arrest me.

So when you just said that, I literally said that a sad to say that weekend, I went to jail for a DUI. And it was the best thing that happened in my life. I was a contractor for the federal government. I was living on the edge, I was trying to handle my own problems. And God met me with not only a lawyer, but a

judge and a counselor that said you were at the wrong place, but at the right time, and they helped me to just put my life back together. And that's how I believe trusting God, because even though people looking at that situation will say, but you ended up in jail, or you ended up with a DUI.

The pastor clearly said that once I left out that door, I may not walk into another one, if you would have saw my car, if you would have saw the accident, there's no reason I walked out without a scratch. There's no reason that I'm allowed today to talk about it, because that accident should have ended my life. But instead, I was arrested, and my life was saved and the course of my direction has been different ever since. And I rarely share that outside in the public. But that is something that's convicting me right now. Because someone right now you're listening and you don't know how to trust God. You don't know how you're being viewed by other people care less about how they see you and care more about what God knows about you.

Debora 12:02

Hmm, you just said something there too. And for those people that are listening to us right now, and you've been praying to God, you've been asking God for something, but you don't feel like he is answering your prayers. When challenges come? How do we maintain trust, that he will in fact, work it out for us? Can you share any examples in your life to nail where you were praying, and you felt like God wasn't answering your prayer, but in the end, you see that he was?

Tennille 12:33

I will say that in that same situation. I was sitting in the back of the courtroom. And I was more concerned about what my job thought I was more concerned about what the police officers thought that was sitting on the side because it was about 13 people that went before me, those seven officers never stood up. So my mother said, Well, what are they here for? I said, I think they're here for me. And she said, Well, what did you do? And I said, I don't think I did anything that will warrant them being here. So then I got silent, she said, What are you doing? I said, I'm praying. I said, because in this moment, if God gets me out of it, he has my he has my Yes, I don't even know what this means right now. But I remembered the sermon that the pastor gave when I walked up to rededicate my life at a funeral.

And it's one thing seeing my friend and a casket. And another thing being in an accident that would have put me at the same place, or can I change my life arm so that I can or other people out and trust it. And God was, it didn't get easy. It got hard, but it was because I had to put an investment in it. God is not a genie in a lamp and trusting him means, even when it doesn't look like it or feel like it. I know that he's going to make a way for me.

And so I applied to be a permanent federal employee, and I had to fill out the form and say, have you ever been arrested? Have you ever been charged? Have you ever been convicted? And all of those questions, never been convicted, but I was on probation before judgment. There was no reason why she did not accept me for the position. When I checked the box. I just knew that it was over. But she came to me and she said, I have worked with you. I know your character. You had a bad night.

She's like, but I'm gonna give you the chance. She said, I'm gonna take this risk on you. Because I know you have what it takes. I was a young woman. And I had the people around me who supported me. And I had one manager who tried to use that against me, but every time she tried to share it with someone

else, it's private. It's confidential. You can't share my personal information with someone just because you want to get back at me.

God made it happen by surrounding me with the right support system. And y'all it took total strangers, total strangers, these people did not know me outside of working with them. The people in the courthouse definitely did not know me, but everybody was thinking, What is your plan? What is your goal? What is it that you want to do? And they took time to nurture me through that and that's what I needed. And that's trust the things that you can't see faith, I couldn't see the end in sight. But I said, God, if I commit to this, I know you'll make away.

And it did not get easy every day. But I stayed the course. And now and I'm not just a federal employee 20 some years later, I'm a senior manager, I'm not just serving in the church, I'm a licensed minister headed to ordination. And I have helped many people to get their out. And I look for people who are overlooked, overwhelmed, cast aside, we're not preaching to the church, we're not preaching to people that already healed and hope we're going out after people who are unsaved, who are hurt, who need to be healed, who needs to be helped. And that's what I like, if you're addicted to drugs, if whatever the problem is that you're faced with, that's what I'm drawn to.

Jesus did not sit in the four walls of the church, he was out in the street, and he attracted many people. And so God has allowed me to do the very same thing. And I use that platform wisely, because I know we can miss handle people.

Debora 16:06

Yeah, so many people saw something in you, even though you made a mistake. And there's many people out there right now they've done things, thought things got caught up in things. That's just a mistake. And there is hope that your life can turn around.

For any of our listeners who might be struggling to trust God in their current situation. What can you say to encourage them? I know this is this is what you do all the time. So just imagine you've just met a person who's struggling to trust God in whatever situation they're in? How do you encourage them to hold on a little bit longer?

Tennille 16:52

I would encourage you, to tell you that you're more than enough. this past Wednesday, I did a Bible study at noon. I do what every Wednesday for our church. And I think we hold what people say to us how people see us when people know about us, and we make ourselves feel less important. Our self worth is depleted. But I want you to know that you're more than enough you may have been faced with a divorce, you may be faced with identity crisis, you may have been a teen parent, you may be suffering and that you may be walking out of a divorce, whatever it is, don't blame yourself and take on the ownership of that thing by yourself.

Because that weight will depress you to a state of no return. You have to see yourself the way that God sees you. You have to trust him and know that God always wants what's best for us. always wants what's best word for us when it says we're fearfully and wonderfully made. That means everyone is fearfully and wonderfully made here. Some of us have bad days. Some of us have ugly pasts. But as long as you have breath in your body, and this is what I love to tell people, you too can overcome. When I

used to do prison ministry, it was birthed because I went to jail for a weekend only went to jail for a weekend. But it was birthed because I saw how many people slammed down the phone, I saw how many people just over a weekend didn't get to interact with anybody on the outside, and they were depressed and suffering. So I started to go inside, to talk to them to have Bible study. And it made a difference, because all they want to do is be seen by someone. See people and if people are not seeing you change, who's on your front row, change who you surround yourself with, because God never intended for us all to suffer in a way that we are going through by ourselves. We have to do this as a village.

Debora 18:45

That's very good. God created us to be in relationship with one another. And people that isolate themselves are causing undue harm. So if, if you're listening today, and you find yourself completely isolating from other people, take that bold step. Get out there. talk to somebody be around other people so that they can encourage you because God will often use them to speak to you directly to bring you out of whatever you're going through. Tennille is there anything else that you would like to share with our listeners about the topic of trusting God?

Tennille 19:26

I think that we have to associate trusting God with God, and that with trusting a church, a building, or trusting a pastor or a minister or a Reverend or some leader that's over your life, that you have to develop a relationship outside of that entity, because when you get church hurt, or when the church is not doing enough or those leaders are not showing up in a way you feel they need to then you disconnect from God and you got to know that those that is two different types of relationship.

And so the relationship with God is built through language of just praying, you can pray to God you can speak out to God, I talk. Every morning I just say thank you, Lord, for waking me up to the point I put it on my Facebook to get everybody else to be in a posture of just being grateful for being alive this last year. So we've lost so many people to COVID. So many people have been shut in not just because they have been sick and depressed, not just because they were impacted by COVID. But because we had not had social interaction. So in that time, we had to trust God, we don't know what COVID was, we were afraid to even hug our loved ones, hug our children hug our spouses, and it got us all into a state of shock where it pushed us back in that setback for me made me to reflect on it God is really the Lord and Savior over my life is Christ is the center of my life.

If the Holy Spirit is leaning in my way, how then do I trust him? Even when I don't see the end in sight? How do I trust him? When my kids get out of track? How do I trust them in my marriage may not be good today, but how do we work together so that we're not at all? How do I trust them with my bank account? don't align with my bills? How do I trust him when my health starts to fail? How do I trust him? When I just don't feel like having the right character? How do I trust him? When I can't see him?

That's the biggest question I get all the time. How do I trust something or someone I can see. And what I want to encourage everybody to know is when the heat of the moment come when you fall to your knees. I've seen people who have been shot, I have seen people who have been on their deathbed. And if they don't call on Him every day, trust him believe in those moments when they think is the last moment they say God help me. God saved me, God delivered me whatever it is take a step back and just

develop that relationship today. So that is not just an SOS is not just the 911 call, you don't call him like a genie in the lamp. But you build that relationship. That has been the most important relationship in my life, to grow me as a woman, as a wife, as a mother, as a minister. And that trust, because people can break your trust every day. It was very hard. It was very hard. So I'm not saying as it's easy to do. But I will tell you that as well worth the trusting God read in Genesis to Revelations, you'll see how he used misfits because I'm a misfit how he used sinners, because I'm a sinner, how he turned their lives around and how impactful their lives have been.

We're still gleaning from the pages of how they trusted him. And so I encourage you to find yourself in His Word, to find someone that will take you under their wing to mentor you, counsel, you empower you, and get back into the fight for your life. That's where that trust comes in at but to anyone that you out there alone, please reach out, you're listening to Reverend Barr's podcast, or you're following on Facebook. Reach out because people put these type of things in place so that you can have an outlet and you can be able to connect with God's people who are sincerely looking to cover you and walk this journey with you forward.

Debora 23:18

Yeah, that is so good. And just in line with that, I would love for you to tell us a little bit about your business. How can our listeners connect with you and what you are doing in ministry?

Tennille 23:28

Okay, so the businesses Unique Encouragement, LLC, I used to make cards and do crafts, and I used to do motivational speaking at that time, I was definitely not on the track to be a minister. I didn't even know God was calling me to do that. Because that was the furthest thing from my dream. My dream was to be a lawyer. And so it was something that just wouldn't leave me alone. So I thought, How can I package things you're always going into the aisle for greeting cards and things like that. And you never find the right word you want to say? Or you're looking for gifts that are very sentimental.

So I applied for internship at Hallmark. And I said nope, not going to do that God had gave me the idea for Unique Encouragement. So I've been used and I do the motivational speaking, I go to prison ministry, and I was doing all of these different things. And so now I'm building a store. That's what I'll be doing over the weekend. And I'll start to do things through my website which is UniqueEncouragement.org. You can follow me on Facebook Tennille Blackwell. I have a profile and a Facebook page. You can follow me on Instagram unique encouragement. It's at a unique encouragement or add Tennille Blackwell as well as the same handles on Twitter, LinkedIn, all of the different social media sites.

And you can email me at [Tennille.Blackwell@uniqueencouragement.org](mailto:Tennille.Blackwell@uniqueencouragement.org). But I am about to make my presence wider known on the virtual platforms because COVID has produced an opportunity for a lot of people. To add good beneficial information and encouragement to what's being currently share on Facebook and those platforms, we need to get out there and speak louder, to help people as they're searching in the middle of the night and give them encouragement to help them through.

We don't know what people are going through, we only know what we can see what we hear. But there's a lot of unspoken prayers, there's a lot of people suffering in silence. So I want to use this business to impact lives far and wide and then the ministry side of it is The Well Experience. So I do

currently preach and teach and I do leadership development at churches under the well experience but I'm going to branch that out as well.

Debora 25:41

Great and we will put all of these links on my website so that our listeners can reach out to you and get connected with you.

Before I let you go, would you please pray for our listeners, especially those who are listening today that needs some kind of encouragement about trusting God?

Tennille 26:02

Yes, ma'am.

Dear Heavenly Father just come right now thanking you for the opportunity to cover your people. And thank you right now for each and every listener whether they're watching or listening live or they're listening to the replay in the future. God you have drawn them near to this podcast for a specific purpose in their chapter. May their yesterday's be just learning curve so God may they know that their past does not determine or dictate their present and it can only set them up for failure in the future if they allow it to. I ask that you wrap them up in your unconditional love or surround them with the people that they need in the season where they lack. You are the source with all of the resources you can make a way out of no way Lord, we know that although weapons form they shall not prosper Lord God build up someone's self-esteem on today Lord God speak to those negative thoughts. God heal some broken hearts on today repair some marriages, repair, some households will show people who their identity is and you look out every chance they look in the mirror Lord God, may they see the best versions of themselves, oh God, and for those who suffered with the weight of not being accepted, for those who are suffering with not being seen, for those who are not being appreciated for those who are overwhelmed, burnt out and drained oh God give them the strength to keep moving forward. Oh god. Show them the way for longer highlight the path beneath their feet Oh God. And where there is someone listening Lord God, maybe it's a young person, in search of a mentor or counselor, assign people in the season look up so that we can all walk this thing together we are indeed better together. Lord God show us how to function and collaboration will guide and eliminate competition. And where someone is struggling in their faith, struggling with the trust in you. Lord God, I ask that you draw them near to you day in and day out. In Jesus name. Amen.

Debora 28:09

Amen.

Don't go away. We'll be right back after this short break.

MUSIC INTERLUDE

Debora 28:56

We just heard from Tennille Blackwell, about trusting in God. She shared from her heart some of the ways that she has trusted him in her past and how she also continues to trust him today. Proverbs 3:5-6



says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all of your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path.

If you do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have trouble trusting Him. And you will have trouble trusting and acknowledging him in all of your ways. But he is trustworthy, and he desires to have a relationship with you. So if you've never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you can do that right now. You can get back into right standing With God, it is by faith that we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Exercise that faith right now and declare that you want to place your trust in Him and receive the forgiveness of your sins.

You can pray this prayer with me right now.

God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life. I repent of my sins, and I turn to you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, He was buried, and rose from the dead. And I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart. Thank you, Lord, for forgiving me, and saving me. Amen.

If you just made a decision for Christ, I would love to hear from you. You can visit my website at [TBTWPodcast.com](http://TBTWPodcast.com) and click on the link to let me know about your decision so that I can encourage you and support you in the next steps of your faith.

Also, please visit to Tennille's website. All of the information that she shared with us will be on the TBTW website under the episode extras for Episode 29.

My prayer for you today is that you will trust God with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding, that you will acknowledge Him in all of your ways and allow him to direct your path.

Stay tuned for our next episode of Transformed by the Word where we will discuss the Fear of the Lord.

Announcer 32:04

Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at [TBTWPodcast.com](http://TBTWPodcast.com). Until next time, be blessed.