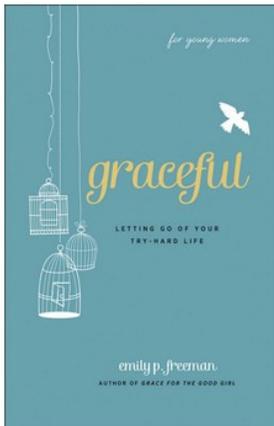


***(in)courage Blogger to Young Woman: ‘Stop Trying to be Good’***  
*Author tells teens there’s more to life and faith than hiding behind a ‘good girl’ persona*

“When you read certain writers, you know it’s a calling, because on every page, it’s there: the echo of God’s voice. Emily Freeman’s one of those rare writers: profoundly biblical, lyrical, transparent—memorable.”

—Ann Voskamp, *New York Times* bestselling author of *One Thousand Gifts*

As girls grow up, they are told to be nice, make good grades, don’t complain, serve the poor, find the right answer and above all be a *good girl*. But what happens when a girl’s identity is overshadowed by the idea of being “good” rather than being loved by God? The girl next door who hides behind her image, the activist who hides behind her causes, the bystander who hides behind her comfort zone – each of these girls need to hear that she doesn’t have to try harder.



Paperback; 126 pages  
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Emily Freeman shares this life-giving message with young women in her newest release *Graceful (For Young Woman): Letting Go of Your Try-Hard Life*. After working with teen girls for ten years as a small group leader, Freeman saw a familiar type of hiding – one she struggled with herself.

Freeman empowers young woman to stop hiding behind their ‘good girl’ identities and allow God to find them. With the same candor and gentle spirit she showed women in *Grace for the Good Girl*, Freeman now gives young women what they need to be free on the inside, no matter what’s going on outside.

Freeman’s message to young woman: “You are not merely a rule-following, reputation-making, image-maintaining, responsible, intellectual good girl You are not just a girl who needs to try harder, do better, be more, look good, be perfect. You are not the boring one, the responsible one, the counselor, the peacemaker, the background friend, or the problem solver. These hiding places may have been helping you cope, but they are not who you are.”

“Life isn’t about trying hard to be good,” Freeman tells her readers. “It’s about trusting God to be *graceful* – to be specially marked by divine grace.” Through an honest look at the roles girls play, she helps them learn to stop trying and start trusting that the Jesus who came to save them also comes to live with them.

**Emily P. Freeman** is a writer who loves to read and a speaker who would rather listen. Every Sunday night, she leads a small group of high school girls at her house where they talk about real life, real love and the God who makes a difference. Emily’s husband John is a youth pastor and they live, love and serve together in North Carolina with their twin daughters, their son, and their crazy dog, Finn. The author of *Grace for the Good Girl*, she attended Columbia International University to study the Bible and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she earned a degree in Educational Interpreting for the Deaf. Connect with Emily online at [www.ChattingAtTheSky.com](http://www.ChattingAtTheSky.com).

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## Excerpts From *Graceful* By Emily Freeman

### **On Being a Good Girl**

We all have at least some things in common: we feel the weight of holding it all together; the longing not yet met; of worry, anxiety, and fear about the future. And sometimes, if we are really honest, we wonder why we try so hard to follow the rules if all it gets us is more worry and anxiety. (23)

For a long time, I have listened to the good girl voice in my head rather than the voice of God. In moments of brutal truth, I wondered if being a Christian was all about simply trying to be good. At times I knew that wasn't the case, but I couldn't figure out why my experience walking with Jesus seemed so hard. I don't want to tell you what to do. Instead, I want to walk with you as you learn what God has already done. And I want to dare you to believe him. (25)

God does not want us to find our safe place in a list of rules. (100)

### **On Hiding**

When we talk about this word hiding, it simply means that: anything I turn to in order to get my needs met. When I want people to think I'm smart, capable, and put together, I hide behind my performance. When I fear you will see what a mess I am, I hide behind my positive emotions. I hide behind my good reputation rather than risk trusting an unpredictable Jesus. I hide behind my list of rules so I can check off each one, as if I'm another step closer to God because I've always followed them. I hide behind my strengths because I'm ashamed of my weaknesses. (29)

The problem with hiding in your dreams is that you can get stuck inside them. You can hold them too tightly and begin to feel like real life isn't good enough. You miss the living because you are waiting for perfect, and so you let goodness and blessings pass you right by. (119)

### **On the Graceful Life**

As it turns out, understanding grace doesn't come from study. It comes from need, and I'm talking more than a need to know. (64)

There is no actively that is somehow more Christian than another. God looks at the hearts, and that is the good part that Mary knew. He simply asks us to come as we are and to be willing, open to receive whatever he might have for us this day. That is what it means to be in relationship with Jesus. That is what it means to live a graceful life. (66)

### **On True Identity**

You have the freedom to decide where you are going to hide: behind your good girl identities or in the truth of your identity as beloved in Christ. (133)

You are not merely a rule-following, reputation-making, image-maintaining, responsible, intellectual good girl. You are not just a girl who needs to try harder, do better, be more, look good, be perfect. You are not the boring one, the responsible one, the counselor, the peacemaker, the background friend, or the problem solver. These hiding places may have been helping you cope, but they are not who you are. (131)

**For an interview Emily Freeman, contact Robin Barnett**



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**Suggested Interview Questions for Emily Freeman**  
**Author of *Graceful***

1. How do you see young girls struggling with their identity? What do you tell them when you see them hiding behind the concept of being a good girl?
2. The title of your book is *Graceful: Letting Go of Your Try-Hard Life*. What is a good girl and what is the try-hard life?
3. Should teen girls not try to be a quote-on-quote *good girl*? What should they be?
4. You talk about several types of girls and what they hide behind – The girl next door who hides behind her image, the activist who hides behind her causes, the bystander who hides behind her comfort zone, etc. What do these girls all have in common? What advice do you have for them?
5. You've lead a small group of teenage girls for the past ten years. What's the most surprising thing you've learned from them?
6. Why did you decide to write this book specifically for young woman? What do you want to tell them?
7. What advice do you have for parents of young woman? How can they help their daughters be authentic?
8. What is the number one thing pastors should know about teen girls in order to help them stop hiding?