

**RISE UP AND SHINE – Episode #1: Welcome To Rise Up and Shine!**



**FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

**Ashley**

Welcome to rise up and shine. We are two women at different stages of life who have overcome feeling stuck, and are now living life fully with peace and joy. Join Us Weekly for a real raw and faithful conversation about our trials and triumphs, bringing hope, insight and weekly tips that you too can rise up and let your light shine bright.

**Claudine**

It's great to be here with you today. Yeah. And I'm so excited that we have this opportunity to share our stories where we've come from dealing with depression and anxiety and coming to the other side.

**Ashley**

Mm hmm. Yeah, I'm really grateful that we found our way to each other. You know, I mean, we've had this friendship for quite a few years now. But that as we've shared our own stories, and just our friendship growing, that we realized that we had very similar struggles that we went through as wives and moms and just women, and that we kind of our journeys aligned. And we really learned the same tools and the same strategies to, to get ourselves to that place of peace and joy and feeling more fulfilled in our life.

**Claudine**

Yeah, I think it's interesting. For me, having gone through a bout of depression, it was really difficult as a Christian woman. And when we first met, just knowing I wasn't alone, knowing that there was someone else that had gone through the struggle was really eye opening.

**Ashley**

Yeah, cuz a lot of Christian women, it seems scary to say that word depression, because it feels like if we're depressed, maybe we're not faithful. Right? And it could be scary to say that word specifically, of just what result? Can you know what someone might say?

**Claudine**

Well, I know Ashley, that you struggled with depression and anxiety. So what do you share a little bit about your story?

## Ashley

Yeah. So I have had depression several times in my adult life that I can remember. And in my, it has really been situational, depending on really hard, kind of traumatic experiences that have happened for me. I was teaching and I just had a challenging experience there. And I just felt really depressed for about a year. Even when you know, young kids, or if there's been challenges with my marriage, I have just fallen back into that depression, anxiety, I didn't realize came until my kids were younger. They were probably my youngest son was about five. And just some of the challenges that came in that stage of children brought a lot of anxiety. And I didn't realize that I had struggled with anxiety in the past. But then I started seeing the patterns, and what was happening in my circumstances or my situations at the time, and how my body was responding. I didn't label it as anxiety. I just thought I was stressed out and overwhelmed. And you know, especially being a young mom, I just, I don't know what's going on. And so it um, it really took me on this journey, where last year, actually, exactly a year ago in October, that I started going to counseling. I finally voiced to my husband, I think I need counseling, I need help. I don't know what's wrong with me. And I just got sick and tired of feeling overwhelmed and not happy. Because I felt I had the quote unquote, dream life that I always wanted. Why was I not happy? Why was I stressed out? Why was I reacting to my kids? Why was I like, just not joyful, you know, and it was really sad. It was hard for me to come to terms with that and voice it out loud. That here I have this amazing life, but I wasn't happy. And so I just got to the point that I need help. There's, you know, this is beyond me. I don't know what to do. I was tired of feeling that way. I knew there was more. God promised. There's more for a there's peace, there's joy, there's fulfillment, an abundant life. I mean, those promises I wasn't feeling and so I knew I want to get there. So I went on about an eight month journey going through counseling, and it was really helpful and eye opening and I learned a lot about my depression and what was causing depression. I learned about my anxiety that it was fear. And a lot of times it could be more fear about as a person. It might have been do a lot with specific people in my life that I, that caused a lot of anxiety for me. And around that time it was my son, and just his stage he was going through, really brought a lot of that out. So with the counseling, I was able to dig deep and to make connections to even my past experiences of why my body essentially was responding the way it was. And that was really eye opening. But I also took it beyond that I didn't just go to counseling, talk to my therapist, and then I was healed. You know, I did a lot of work at home, I started paying attention to what I was thinking, I started paying attention to the circumstances that was happening in my life. You know, I learned I can't control my children, much as I want to, I can't control my husband, I can't control my situations. And I really had to come to terms with that. And believing that I would still be okay. And believing that feeling uncomfortable emotions was part of life, and to accept that and not avoid it, because I would avoid and it will cause bigger issues. And so once I was able to come to terms with feeling my feelings, going through, you know, the situation, praying a lot meditating on certain scriptures that are key Scriptures for me, it helps me to not be so tied in with others emotions, and to let the hard circumstances that were coming my way, just knock me down into depression, or just keep me filled with anxiety. And so that really helped boost me into that life. And finally kind of pick myself up and start walking in that life that God promised was feeling peace and joy again.

## **Claudine**

So how did you feel as a Christian woman battling depression, anxiety? Did you have any preconceived notions? Was that a battle in and of itself?

## **Ashley**

Yeah, it definitely was, I thought that there's the stigma, you know, that comes with the word depression, it's like you're broken, or something's wrong with you, or, well, you're not praying enough, or you're not faithful enough, or, and in my heart, I felt really faithful. I felt, I mean, I knew went beyond that God exists, and went, you know, God is there walking with me through this, it was not necessarily a matter of faith. For me. It was, how I was thinking, and my beliefs about myself, that, you know, kept me in depression, and kept me anxious and kept me from vocalizing it. And when I finally opened up to share, and it took a lot of courage, you know, even to my closest friends, it took a lot of courage to say, I think I am depressed. I don't know what that means. I don't really, you know, I just can't explain how I feel physically. But I think I'm depressed from what I read. These are my symptoms. And so once I built the courage, or not just build the courage, I knew it was there, you know, it was I had to practice it. And once I just spoke up, and then I found more women who struggled with the same thing. Me too. Me too. And so by my courage, it gave others courage to share theirs, you know, their story. And so it really helped us get together and just help support each other, to get ourselves to that place. But it was scary. And once I pushed back past that fear, it was an amazing blessing.

## **Claudine**

That's great. It's great to be on the other side, like it feels at the time that you're never gonna feel good again. It feels like I'm never gonna feel light and happy and peaceful and joyful again. Yeah, but now I've seen you and you're living on the other side where your life is full of love and joy and peace. And the thing is, your circumstances haven't really changed. In the past year is your friend I've seen you go through even additional trials, be able to overcome and not let your circumstances dictate your emotions.

## **Ashley**

Yeah, it seemed that's a funny point because it didn't make those trials disappear. I had a friend who encouraged me to like, well, just don't let it bother you. Just don't let it bother you. And for years, how did I do that? I don't know how to I have a fight with my husband or an argument and I don't know how not to let that bother me. Or if he says no to something, how does that not bother me and I finally stepped into that place where, hey, it's not bothering me anymore. It's not knocking me down feeling depressed, feeling unworthy feeling like I'm not enough feeling like I'm a burden all those negative beliefs that were in my brain and in my mind racing around it. I wasn't going to that place. I wasn't allowing myself to go to that place. Right. It's a choice. So Claudine, I would love to hear more about your story too, because we found ourselves on this path where you were one of the people I opened up to, and you shared, you struggled with that also. And so it really brought us closer, right, strengthen our

friendship. So I'm so grateful for your vulnerability to share with me. So I gives me the courage to just open up and share all the raw feelings with you. And so and you're in a different stage of life.

### **Claudine**

Right? Right. Yes, we're in different stages. And it was interesting, because my struggle, my battle was several years ago, and you and I started spending time together a year ago just starting to write and have that time together as writers in sharing our lives, sharing our struggle, sharing our triumphs, sharing our stories together. And one of the things for me is it was very difficult my battle was about seven years ago. And it was at a time where again, a lot of it was circumstance It was our house was in foreclosure. My husband, I basically both lost our jobs. Were both in the real estate market and things had really fallen apart there. And our two teenage children were going through incredibly difficult times one of them was actually living on the streets, it was very difficult. It was very hard for me as a Christian woman, to dig deep in my faith, to see the circumstance differently. But my circumstances were such an I didn't know how to have empowering thoughts. So I let the circumstance overwhelm me and depress me. And I too, is at the same point where it was really hard to get out of bed, I felt like I was drowning. And I felt like I was alone drowning. And it was very hard to share with others. I think it's something that we don't talk a lot as Christians, because for me, I remember reading, Rejoice, rejoice, always. And I thought I don't feel like rejoicing right now, this is really difficult. And it's terrible. And I don't feel joy in my heart right now with what's going on, my life is falling apart. And there's not much about it that I feel great about. And I remember sharing with several women that I know their hearts were in the right place, they just didn't have the tools to help me. And one of them in particular said, well, you just need to have positive thoughts. And I thought, well, I am positive, I'm positive, my house is in foreclosure, and I'm positive, my son's living on the streets, and I'm positive that my other child is struggling and my husband doesn't have a job. And I'm positive that everything is falling apart. And it didn't give me the tools I needed. And the other suggestion was you just need to have faith. And I thought, I do have faith that I do have faith. I have faith in God and I have faith in him. But what I didn't have faith in at the time not realizing it was myself. Yeah, in my queue. I started realizing there were some underlying a subconscious programming in my own mind was attacking me from within. Yeah, like that word. Yeah, from my childhood that I wasn't even aware of. And so intellectually, I had faith. And in my heart, I believed but there were thoughts that were going on that I wasn't even aware of that really led me down a path of depression and not being able to dig myself out. And so I was really fortunate that a good friend of mine is a grief recovery specialist. And she realized that I was drowning, saw me watched me decline rather rapidly, and in essence came to my rescue. He said, I really believe you have some griefs you need to and some losses that you need to process. It was it was amazing. I had never learned how to process my emotions. I learned how to stuff em.

### **Ashley**

Me too. Yeah, I think many of us do that.

## **Claudine**

Yeah. I don't think we're the only two that are great stuffers. And the other thing I did, which is a side note, but I would eat my emotions. Yeah, not a healthy thing to do. So anyway, she took me through that process and I was able to, in essence, unpack some heavy bags. I was carrying bags of loss bags of disappointment, hurts betrayals, all those things that just really weighed me down. And once I was able to unpack those bags, and I was able to walk in my faith with a fresh heart, once I finished that process, it really freed me to start seeing things with fresh eyes, my heart was lightened, I felt like I had my head above water. And now I was able to get a few more tools to help me live that life life full of joy and peace, and get back into a state of love. And it was amazing journey. It wasn't easy, but it was, I'm really grateful that I had the opportunity to learn how to do that, because I didn't have those tools. And by this time, I was in my 40s, with almost all adult children. Very different place. So I had gone through a lot of life, just stuffing and pushing through and just making it happen. And when more we do that, the better we get at doing that, right? Right, but the healthier we get. And so what happened at that time is physically, I had some pretty intense physical challenges, financial challenges, emotional challenges, mental challenges, spiritual challenges, it was like every part of me had to be torn down to the studs, I had to start over and build from scratch. But the first step was processing some emotions and unpacking those heavy bags I've been carrying for far too many years, and then be able to attack all the other aspects of my life.

## **Ashley**

Now, the word you said earlier, that I love, I want to bring that back up the programming. So our minds our brains have really programmed from our past experiences. Right, right, is that that's one of the things that you and I came to find that we learned in our own separate journey, our own stage of life, that our brains programmed a certain way. Right. And that is what was keeping us held hostage, it felt like hostile to our circumstances, to our emotions. And then when we're trying to cope with our emotions, or mask them or stuff them, avoid them, deny them all those things, we just do whatever we can to not feel them, they don't go away, they get worse and bigger and more weight to carry on our shoulders. But you and I really learned that trick, that key word programming. So we were programmed based off of our past experiences, our opinions, even part of our personality has contributed to that we have learned we can change it. And I think that's where you and I have had that aha moment, right? We don't have to stay here. Because when we get bogged down by our emotions, we feel stuck. And we don't know what to do. Right. And then we're like in quicksand. And we're trying everything we can on our power to get out with the resources we've had at our disposal, trying to get out but we're sinking deeper and deeper, as much as we put in we put sink deeper and deeper.

## **Claudine**

Yeah, that's exactly it. And it's so funny. Because if we don't deal with what's under there, in our subconscious, we can make all these efforts and take all these actions and do all these things that all we do. You're exactly right, we get more exhausted and sink deeper. And I had spent so many years doing more doing it better doing it right, that I made myself sick physically, and emotionally. So that was one

of the key things. And I think spending a couple years reading, going to workshops, seeing counselors, I finally realized that there were some things I had to deal with that were underneath. They were sub i didn't I wasn't aware of them. And that's what I needed to deal with these beliefs, these foundational beliefs that were deep within me that I wasn't aware of. And once I was able to change those once I was able to really redirect those beliefs or create new beliefs, yeah, that were in line with my faith and in line with where I wanted my life to be. Everything started changing. And that's why I'm so excited that you and I are going to get to share over the next few months this year years, however long and we're gonna be able to share these tools. These tips that have really helped us because we did have different journeys, but so many of the same things overlapped and what's been really exciting for me is to see the science of these tips and tools that match up with the scriptures. Yes, that's been the part that has just opened my eyes wide open. I love sharing with other women because there is science but it is backed by scripture and all of a sudden it came to light for me. And my life has radically changed in the last few years. And now I, and you as well are helping other women grow in their faith and their love and the joy and the peace that they have in their lives and living life to the full which we are promised. And that's been exciting.

### **Ashley**

That was one thing that really excited me as well is the science that I was learning and all of my research tied to the scriptures. And just like you said, the scriptures were popping up, hey, that's the scripture where God says, think about all things true and noble. And, you know, or take your thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ, or when you're anxious by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, it was those scriptures came to life, but then it put it in such a practical sense. Oh, so when I am being yelled at by my child, I'm not going to react to his emotion. He's entitled to his emotion. I don't like it. But he's entitled to it. And he's does not have a fully developed brain yet. So I have to keep that in perspective. But my reaction is, is what he's saying to me true. No, Mom, this is not true. He's just venting his emotion. We're working through that. But it's not a reflection of me. And so I had to train my mind in those circumstances and situations again, right, that I can separate myself from his emotions. It's not a direct reflection of me as his mom. You know, it's I'm not a failure. I'm not responsible for making him happy all the time. If I tried, I have tried, it puts me in a very bad spot. But I had to protect my mind and tell myself, okay, I need to focus on what's true, what's good. It's like all that positive thinking, right? What's noble what's right. And it really helps me to respond in situations rather than react emotionally. Right. And that is one thing I learned with all the circumstances that come our way. They're inevitable. It's part of the human experience, that circumstances we most likely cannot avoid, unless it's directly resulted from our choices. But we are in control of ourselves and our reactions and our emotions. And it really starts with a thought. And so write scripture, take your thought captive, that's like step number one, I can protect my mind and choose what I'm going to think about in this situation. And then it will cause me to respond in a much better way versus react and escalate a situation, right?

## **Claudine**

Well, one of the things we talked about is our circumstances. And I love that scripture where Paul says he's learned to be content in every circumstance. Yeah. And I know that there. There's science behind that. And there's tools in order to be able to do that. And I'm excited. Our next podcast will learn how to respond not react to our circumstances. And we've got so much more thought work, our emotions, our actions and the results we want, and learning how to put all those together so that we are living the life that we want that we dream of that we are living life to the full, and that it is full of love, joy, and peace. So any parting thoughts?

## **Ashley**

Circumstances are part of life, that was the first thing that helped me get to a place of healing, and feeling more joyful, and I'm on my quest for peace, because last year, I was on a quest to find peace. But I misunderstood what that meant. And even though as much as I read the scriptures, and you know, Jesus brings peace and not peace that the world gives. And where is this peace? I don't know where it is. I need a lot right now. And I realized it was because I was expecting and hoping my circumstances would go away. Right? I want the smooth, easy life. I don't want the valleys and the you know, the treacherous terrain and the hardships and the challenges and I want everyone to be in a good mood, and I want everything to go smoothly. And I realized I was expecting that in my mind. And I was constantly disappointed and frustrated and irritated which caused me to react in a very kind, unhealthy manner. So I learned to gain that peace. The circumstances, we have to accept it and welcome them as they come and learn the tools that we will get to share Yeah, of how to walk through them.

## **Claudine**

Well I appreciate that you said that about circumstances. The other thing is that what I really learned that helped me so much is that our circumstances are neutral. Yeah, but I attached so much value to my circumstance, like, well, this is happening. So that's bad, or this is happening. And that's good. My emotions were based from whether I attached a value of positive or negative to my circumstance, but when I started looking at my circumstances is neutral. It really changed my perspective, and it changed my thoughts. Well, we have so much to cover over the next few we can sit here for a couple hours and we do usually by ourselves with our coffee, but I'm really excited that we are embarking on this journey.

## **Ashley**

Friends, thank you so much for tuning in with us today. We hope this episode has brought you one step closer to living the life you love. Until next time, remember the world needs who you were made to be.