



**This Undone Life Together Podcast**  
Season 2 – Relentless

Introduction to Season 2 – Relentless  
February 25, 2020

*Are you aching for a love that will never leave, a presence that will push back the dark? If so, I have good news for you. God's love is relentless even when your faith isn't.*

Well, hello! Welcome to the *Relentless* Podcast. I am Michele Cushatt, the author of the book, *Relentless: The Unshakeable Presence of a God Who Never Leaves*. I have put together this 15-episode podcast to go along with the book. However, even if you haven't read the book, hopefully, you will find something valuable here within this 15-episode podcast that will give you hope, will make you feel less alone, and, ultimately, will help strengthen your faith.

The goal of this podcast is to provide, very simply, some behind-the-scenes information and insight to the stories I share in the book, *Relentless*, but also to create a space for us to have very honest conversation about the struggle between an authentic faith that can really last and withstand any difficult circumstances and the reality of lives that are often filled with a whole lot of pain, a lot of unanswered questions and doubts, and suffering that doesn't go away.

Is it even possible to believe in a good and loving God when life seems to go off the rails at times? I hope to at least, in a little bit of a way, to the best of my ability, provide a space for us to have some honest conversations about that, and maybe (this is my goal) for you to be able, at the other side of this, to see more proof and more evidence of God's reality, of God's goodness, and of God's unending affection and relentless presence with you even when you can't feel or see him.

Before we get started, this is kind of the introductory episode of the podcast. There are a few things you need to do. First of all, you need to get the book, *Relentless*. I'll put it right here in front so you can see. Isn't that pretty? For those who are looking at the video, you can see that I held up the book. For those of you who are listening to the audio, you can't see it, so you're just going to have to go online and look at it. It is a beautiful cover.

You need to get a copy of the book. You can get it at Amazon very easily and have it shipped overnight. You can go to any major bookseller and find it. You can also download it on Kindle or on Audible where you can listen to it. I actually read the book myself, so you get to hear even more of my voice. You can also find it on my website. Those are some options for you to get the book.

Like I said, if you can't get the book, hopefully, this podcast will still have a lot of great takeaway for you without it, but the podcast will be so much richer if you can actually have a copy of the book. First, get the book. Secondly, read it. Now, you don't have to read it all at once. You can read it in tiny, bite-sized pieces. You can read it all at once.

I'm told it's hard to put down, which is the best compliment any writer can get. You can literally read it at your own pace. There is no rush. You can read a chapter, listen to the podcast, then go back and read another chapter, and listen to the podcast. It would be helpful if you read a chapter before you listened to the podcast episode that goes along with it.

Thirdly, subscribe to the podcast and to my YouTube channel. This is going to be sent out in audio format on multiple podcast platforms, but you can also find every episode on my YouTube channel. My YouTube channel is *Michele Cushatt*. You can watch the video of me recording this in my home office. You can do it that way. Whatever works for you, but I want to make this as easy as possible.

Fourthly, I highly recommend you invite a friend or two to do this with you. This is not a lighthearted journey. I keep asking God to let me write books about things like napkin folding and donut eating, but unfortunately the topic I've been given to write on for the last several years is all about faith and suffering, so it's not a lighthearted topic, and yet, it's a topic you and I need to have conversations about.

We need to spend more time wrestling with this, and that is best done in a group of trusted friends in a community setting. It's a great place for us to ask our questions, and when we ask them out loud in a community setting, we often find out we're not alone, that God is with us, and we end up learning something through the wrestling of this together. I highly recommend that. I want this podcast to be not just the only conversation but simply the beginning of a conversation.

There is a really important quote I share in the book that has kind of summed up this journey for me. It's a quote by John Ortberg. I read his book, *Soul Keeping*, over the last few years, and it was one of many that have supported my journey of faith. He simply said, "If you ask people who don't believe in God why they don't, the number one reason will be suffering. If you ask people who believe in God when they grew most spiritually, the number one answer will be suffering."

One or the other. The funny thing about suffering is you don't remain neutral. Suffering has a way of pushing us out of our complacency and comfort zone and making us choose. Do we believe what we say we believe or not? I just want to do everything I can to provide a resource that would help those of us who are in really hard circumstances actually grow in our faith, not lose it. That's my hope.

There are some important resources and notes that I want to make before we go into Episode 2. The first is that on my website, if you go to [relentless-book.com](http://relentless-book.com) or you can go to

[michelecushatt.com/relentless](http://michelecushatt.com/relentless)... Either way gets you to the same place. That is the webpage for the book, *Relentless*.

If you go there, you will find all kinds of resources on that page including a premium expanded study guide with additional questions for you. There are questions for discussion in the back of the book, but I've put together a very expansive study guide that is much more in depth, so if you wanted to do this book as a spring study with your friends or a book club study over a period of a couple months, you can use that premium expanded study guide for that.

In addition, I recorded prayers to accompany each chapter. My goal was to pray over each of you at the end of each chapter. If you'd like to download those, they are available as well. We also have some different resources to help you create your own Altar Stones. Now, if you don't know what that is yet, I'm going to tell you about it on the next episode. Just to let you know, those are a few of the resources that are available to you. You simply need to go to [relentless-book.com](http://relentless-book.com) or [michelecushatt.com/relentless](http://michelecushatt.com/relentless) to get those.

This is another note I wanted to make. This is a bit more serious. I have heard from some people who have read the book (some very specific individuals who have gone through very hard stories) who have experienced some pretty significant traumas...abuse, major losses, tragic accidents, different things like that. If you are living a hard, hard story, I want to give you a head's up. Don't be surprised if some of the topics I discuss hit you in a tender place. That would not be surprising. You have been through a lot.

If the topics we talk about and the chapters in the book hit that tender place, I just want to give you a head's up so you're not surprised about that, but most importantly I want you to get the resources and support around you that you need. That means if you need to read a little bit and stop and walk away from it for a while, that is totally okay. This is not a race. We are not

frantically trying to get through this book. There's not a checklist you have to complete in order to get an A. That's not what this is about.

You do it at your own pace. I have no doubt God will lead you through it every step of the way, so take your time. Make sure you take really good care of yourself. You may need to find a really good, trusted Christian counselor where you live. You might need to connect with a grief support group at your church. GriefShare is a great resource that has helped a lot of my friends and family.

You might need to get a circle of friends and just tell them, "Hey! I'm doing this journey. I'm walking through this book. It's kind of stirring up a lot of things. Would you pray for me?" or "Can we just talk about it?" Just don't be surprised. Okay? If you have a hard story, make sure you're very smart and you take good care of yourself and surround yourself with good, safe, trusted community to walk you through that.

There is a story I'm going to share with you. I got a message from someone not that long ago. I had done a presentation that was aired on a national platform, and a gentleman sent me a message online. He found me online and sent me a message. This is what he said. "I'm sure you hear this all of the time, but I was surfing the radio channels hoping to find some decent rock to listen to.

I always quickly change the station if it's religious, but I landed on a station, and I was drawn to listen to something you were saying about a little girl who was asking you why you talk funny. For at least the first 10 minutes, and maybe more like 20 minutes, it didn't feel religious at all until well after you explained your life changes.

This speech brought me to tears. First, because of what the subject matter was, and, secondly, because I have some strange spiritual things happening to me recently. It's like God has been trying to get my attention, and I feel he put me in the path of you.

I am a truck driver. It's not an easy life in any way. I attend church only on major holidays. Besides, the fact is my belief is I can pray anywhere I want, not in need of a church. Yet, there are certainly things about me that I'm looked at for in a bad way. This speech hit all of those buttons. For now, I just want to thank you for sharing your life. What a great way to leave a footprint in the sand."

The reason I'm sharing that with you is because some random stranger in a truck driving across the country happened to be surfing the radio one day looking for rock music to listen to. He's not even entirely sure where his faith rests. He's not entirely sure of that, but at the same time, in the middle of the US in a truck driving across the country, God found him there using just a radio channel to do it that he happened to land on. It didn't even sound religious. It's funny how God does that sometimes. He finds us in ways that don't sound religious at all.

Yet, it's his way of finding us. This is what I want you to know. What is at stake here? The stakes are high. What is at stake here right now for you and I aren't our circumstances. It's not the diagnosis you received. It's not the child who you don't know where he or she is if they've lost contact or are not speaking to you and you don't know where they are.

It's not the addiction of a person you love. It's not your doubts, your questions, or your confusion. It's not the job you want that you don't have or the financial bill you need to pay and you have no idea where you're going to get the money for it. It feels like those are the biggest stakes right now, but they're not. What is at stake right now more than anything else is your faith and mine, and our circumstances or our pain can blind us to the reality that what is most at stake isn't in this life; it's the one to come.

There is a story in the Bible where Jesus is talking to his disciples. This is before Jesus was arrested and crucified and died. This was before that. Jesus knew what was coming, and he looked at Peter, one of his 12 disciples. Peter was well-intentioned, but he was often impulsive

and emotional and maybe a bit self-righteous at times. Jesus looked at Peter and said, and I paraphrase, "Peter, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat."

In other words, and this is my paraphrase, he said, "Peter, Satan has asked to kick your butt. He's going to make your life really difficult here shortly. You're going to go through things you never thought you'd go through. He has asked to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that when you turn back and when you realize what really is most important, your faith would not fail." Jesus said, "I have prayed for you, Peter, that when you have turned back your faith would not fail and when you turn back, you would strengthen your brothers."

This was such a critical moment in Peter's life. Jesus knows what's coming. He's getting ready to face a really hard circumstance. Everything he believed in will come into question. What Jesus prays for in that moment is not Peter's health. It's not Peter's extended family and not Peter's fishing career. What Jesus prays for in that moment for Peter is his faith. He tells Peter, "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith would not fail."

That entire story in the New Testament has meant so much to me because it has helped me to remember that what is most at stake in our lives isn't that really hard thing we're dealing with right now (this impossible circumstance that feels like it's taking us under). What's really at stake right now is our faith, and Jesus himself has prayed for us. Jesus himself has prayed that our faith would not fail, and secondly, that on the other side of it we would turn around and help each other.

That's what I hope to do for you throughout this 15-episode podcast about the book, *Relentless: The Unshakeable Presence of a God Who Never Leaves*. My hope is that, as you read this and as you listen to the podcast, watch the video, and process with friends, you and I would become the kind of people whose faith would not fail no matter what comes, that we wouldn't lose hold of what we believe but we would hang onto it even tighter. Thank you, friends. Let me pray over us, and that will be it.

Father, thank you for this tremendous opportunity to do this journey together. Thank you for the way you have used the worst of circumstances to help me see you more clearly. I pray the same for my brothers and sisters, God, that no matter what they're facing right now you would show them yourself, that you would open their eyes, open their ears, their hearts, their minds, and their memories to see evidences of you in places they never imagined they would see you.

I pray you would help them to get a vision of your presence with them long before this moment, and at the same time, give them renewed confidence, assurance, and belief in your presence with them no matter what may come. In the name of Jesus, amen.

*Are you aching for a love that will never leave, a presence that will push back the dark? If so, I have good news for you. God's love is relentless even when your faith isn't, and the circumstances you fear might drown your faith could become the stones giving testimony to it. Join me, and let's find evidence of him together.*