

Episode 36. "Jane's Story, Part One."

Tuesday, February 14, 2023. 45 Minutes Long.

The story of Jane Albright, the historic basketball coach. Voted "Coach of the Year" twice; USA Gold Medal team; "Heart of a Coach" and "Integrity in Coaching" awards for Christian coaching. Stricken with an aneurysm during an awards banquet and given a 5% chance of survival – God healed her instantly.

John (00:00):

John Shields opens the episode by saying:

John (00:12):

Well, "Hello," to all our friends in Podcast Land. It's great to be back with another episode for you. Can't believe it: Episode 36! And today's episode continues our series on "Telling Your Story," in this "Saving Christianity" podcast. We're the podcast for listeners who want more *peace, healing, and hope* in their lives. We're coming to you from Christian Family Online, bringing you a new episode as often as we can. I'm your host, John Shields.

John (00:46):

I'm here in the studio with our co-host, Owen Allen; our producer, Shannon Wolf; and a very special guest. We've had real success with the live guest interviews with Christians who are seeking to live the Early Christian Lifestyle that we write and talk about. And we have another such person and story today in the studio, and we are very excited. So the title today of this episode is "Jane's Story." That's right, it's "Jane's Story." And we look forward to hearing it. We think you're really going to be inspired today listening to her story. So let's bring in our co-host, Owen Allen. And after that, we'll introduce our special guest. Welcome to Episode 36, Owen!

Owen (01:34):

Thank you, John! Well, it's so good to be back. And an honest "Welcome!" to our loyal followers worldwide. And it's wonderful to be back again, and you know, John, I'm excited about continuing our little "Tell Your Story Series," with people who want to live like the Early Christians and have more miracles in their lives. And it's been so much fun to hear people talk about them, and talk about what it's meant to them. And today we've got another such person. As you said, her name is Jane. And so welcome to the show, Jane! And John, I'm going to hand back off here to you, to kick the ball off.

John (02:16):

Well Owen, I'll start by just saying, I just met Jane a couple years ago. She actually moved back to her hometown, a local town that, where my wife and I live. And it's such a small world. She graduated from the high school that my wife graduated from a few years later. And we

struck a common denominator that instantly we began to talk about. And that was an author named Dallas Willard [*an American Christian philosopher*] who I started reading many, many, years ago. And I found out one day in a conversation with Jane, that not only did she read his books, but she knew him personally! And our friendship began. So Jane, thank you so much for being here today in the studio with us. And don't leave anything out, and your story, and just of God's sovereign grace in your life has been such an inspiration to so many people. And we just want more people to hear *that* today, through this podcast.

Jane (03:24):

Well, John, thank you. I'm very honored to be here with both of you. And I guess that the things I'll tell you are just ... they're all personal to me. You know, the Lord did things for me – like introducing me to Dallas Willard. I think he knew that I needed a lot of help. (Chuckles.) And a lot of teaching. And I grew up in this small town. I've referred to it as "Mayberry" [*from "The Andy Griffith Show" on TV*]. And it was back before Title IX [*a 1972 law that prevented gender discrimination in sports*] when I was growing up. So about one in 26 girls played sports back then. It wasn't very popular. One in two guys played it. So at Graham High School (chuckles), 800 people there, you figure 400 were women. That would mean about 16 played sports. Title IX was fortunately passed. And people like me that were ... just loved sports. We didn't have many teams then. But I got to have a career in sports at the time.

Jane (04:20):

I didn't know you could do that. But I was able to coach 40 years. And I ... my teams were as good as ranked fifth in the country at a Major University, to probably the worst team in the worst conference in America. (Laughter.) Just all over the place. And the Lord used all of those teams, and all those opportunities, for me to hopefully be able to love kids well.

Jane (04:47):

You know, when it started out in Graham, I hate to say this, but my story started in kind of a few parts. But the first part would be growing up in this town in a very loving family, that was wonderful. I mean, very Godly. Sunday school, church, all of those things. And somehow my theology got really mixed up. And I started believing that if I was "good," if I was a "good girl," good things would happen to me.

Jane (05:16):

And I carried that theology for a very long time. The linear, you know, the linear of: "A plus B equals C." And it was a long time – and we'll get to that later. But when I was growing up, you know, I was not a person who really ever got in trouble. I knew that I gave my "stats sheet" [*sports statistics*] to my father, and the report card to my mother, I could get about anything I wanted. (Laughter.) So I got to go to Appalachian State and play ball there – basketball and volleyball – in my senior year. I was actually put on a scholarship for a hundred dollars.

John (05:50):

Wow. (Laughter.)

Jane (05:51):

That was big time. A hundred dollars. I called Home on the pay telephone. You know, you didn't get to talk very long back then because the rates were too high. But I got to tell them I was getting a hundred dollars. They were so excited. (Laughter.)

Jane (06:03):

After I graduated, I went and coached for four years at a high school. And really, at the time a lot of people didn't ... I didn't know much basketball, but I kind of fell in love with teams. I was also a very legalistic Christian. I had turned into a person that, you know, it wasn't by choice that I did that. But I judged people. I thought: *You know, you shouldn't do that. I don't do it. Why would you do it?* (Laughter.) It was just ... I don't think that ... well, it was real wrong in my thinking. And I don't think anybody ever really told me that. Somehow I just deducted it all.

Jane (06:37):

But professionally, I got to go work for Patricia "Pat" Summitt at the University of Tennessee. And if you know anything about women's basketball, she's the best that ever was [*1,098 wins*]. And so that's where I learned basketball. And I was on her staff. We went to the first Final Four – NCAA Final Four – and it was up in Norfolk. And so because I worked for her for a couple years, it opened the door, and I was able to be a head coach when I was 28.

Jane (07:00):

So at that time ...

Owen (07:02):

Well excuse me, Jane. You mentioned "Mayberry." As Barney Fife [*a star on the show*] would say, I don't want to be "nave." But, so your main sport was basketball, though. That was your big area.

Jane (07:16):

Yeah. And back then, you know, basketball meant you played maybe 10 games a year.

Owen (07:23):

Whoa!

Jane (07:23):

You know, our "uniforms" were our father's white T-shirts that we drew [*the numbers on*] ...

John (07:28):

Laughter.

Jane (07:28):

... and my mama called it ...

Owen (07:29):

You used a magic marker to play?

Jane (07:29):

Well, we called them "Indelible Ink." I remember we'd say, "Go get the indelible ink pin." And we would draw the numbers on it. That's how things were. So things were a lot different then. You didn't have ESPN. A lot of games were on. I got to watch the Dean Smith Show [*a University of NC coach*] every Sunday after Church. And I learned if I told my daddy I wanted to watch that with him – it came on at 12:30 – that I didn't have to cook. So I was in there watching that. So it was just ... I loved to read, and I loved to be outside playing. So not a lot of organized sports at the time. But things have definitely changed.

John (08:05):

Yeah, for sure, yeah. And so you left that assistant position with Pat [*Patricia Summitt at the Un. of Tenn.*] and then launched into being a head coach?

Jane (08:14):

When I was 28.

John (08:15):

Of Division 1, NCAAW [*women's basketball*], right?

Jane (08:18):

And I wasn't ready for it, John. No one's ever ready for it. But I certainly wasn't. And ... but the Lord, He gave me some good success there. And my teams were really good. And we were ranked. And you know, in the little town, never anything like that happened. But at the time I ... all this time I was doing what I thought was the way that Jesus would want me to. You know, it was how I'd figured you would be a Christian coach. Which is just behave, really (laughter), and don't cuss, and touch all the lines, and work hard. And you know, all the things that somehow I had developed. And ... but I did love my kids. And I ... that was something that I knew was very important.

Jane (08:58):

About that time, Kay Yow [*a NC State University coach*] who was a coach here, asked me to go work a fellowship at Christian Athlete's Camp in Marshall, Indiana. And I don't think anyone ever said "No" to Kay Yow about anything.

John (09:09):

Right, yeah!

Jane (09:09):

So I went. And while I why was there, they talked about "a personal relationship with Jesus." And I ... at the time, I hadn't prayed out loud, you know. I ... my faith was very, very personal to me. And I didn't really talk about anybody else. I had given my life to Jesus when I was in the seventh grade at a Bill Glass Crusade [*a Football player turned evangelist*]. (Inaudible comments.) Yeah, do you remember that?

Owen (09:32):

Yeah, very much!

Jane (09:32):

The Cross and the Switchblade? [*A popular book.*] Yeah. (Inaudible comments.) That was big time, wasn't it? And I actually sent in the things to the Billy Graham Association. They graded the papers and they would send me ... send them back, you know. The whole *Peace With God* thing. It was a very different time. But it grounded me in a lot of Scripture.

Jane (09:51):

But again, I didn't really ... I don't know how I got it so wrong. But anyway, I remember the speaker there was ... I know they said we had to pray before every station [*basketball player positions*] we had. And I was like, "Yeah, right. Like I'm going to pray before my offensive station? Like, what do you want me to do, pray that everybody sticks their elbows in? Right! You know, like what are you talking about? I mean, then they want us to pray about the gnats and the weather. And I'm like, this is just ... these people are so weird."

Owen (10:20):

God wouldn't care about that! (Laughter.)

Jane (10:21):

No, no. I wasn't really ... my prayer was "Our Father who wasn't in heaven," I think. So anyway, I did notice that they were kind of maybe a little smarter than I was – and maybe a little more *something*. And I was curious about that way of life, a personal relationship. And so I

asked one of the women that was speaking there, what do you read? And she said, *Knowing God*. And that was a book by Chuck Colson [*a former advisor to President Richard Nixon*]. I came home and read it right away. And it was how he had given his life to Jesus in prison, of course the whole Nixon-Watergate. I'm really dating how old I am. (Laughter.)

Jane (10:58):

But then I started learning how to have a personal relationship with Jesus. And the way I would describe that is, you know, when I got my [*driver's*] license at 16. You know, when I was having my permit, my mom would always say you know, don't drive on the highway. You know, you have to wear your shoes. You have to stop at this stop sign like six seconds. You have to ... You know, and I was like, *I just cannot wait to get my license!* I was going to do everything the way I wanted to.

Jane (11:28):

Well, then when the day I got my license, my daddy came over and gave me the keys and said, "Be home for supper at 6:15." And I was like, "All right!" And I went and got in the car, and I was ready to just go and just blow it out on I-85. And just, and I noticed that I just drove like 20 miles an hour. And I stopped at the stop sign probably 10 seconds. And I did everything to make sure that I was going to bring that car back to my father that night exactly like he wanted it.

Jane (11:59):

And that would be how I would describe a personal relationship that I started having with God. I just tried to do things that I thought he would want me to do. So he would be proud of me and that I wouldn't "wreck the car." And that again was my theology. But it was also a very dear time in my life. So after success at my first school, I got to go coach in the Big Ten [*the top ten universities*]. And that's where my story really shifts. We were very successful up there. I think I was Coach of the Year. And we were ranked really high. And we had, you know, probably six or eight thousand people at our games. And just a huge, huge following. "Badger Ball" is what we called it: The University of Wisconsin. And so, I had a ban ... had a ... something happened to me that is a little out there. But it's all true.

Jane (12:49):

We were at our banquet. We had about 400 people [*at the banquet*] after a very successful year there. And I started getting a headache. And I never get headaches. And I had one at the base of my head that felt very much like you would try to put a basketball into a golf ball. Really hurt me. And I said to my assistant, "Can you get me like an aspirin or Advil or something? I've got a headache."

Jane (13:12):

And she's like, "You don't get headaches. What's wrong?"

Jane (13:15):

I said, "I don't feel very good." Well, I had to ... she got me the medicine. And I still didn't feel good. But I had to go up and speak in front of all these people. So I went up, and I was speaking. And I had written my speech down. I'm not a person that writes speeches. I just talk. That's ... but that particular day I had written it. And I also had written down the awards. Like who got MVP, Best Defense, Best Offense, which I never do either.

Jane (13:45):

I would just go there, I would say "Best Offense," and I would know who it was, and I would just tell a story about the person. But I got through the speech. And then I said, "My assistant's going to come up now and give the awards." And she looked at me like, "What are you talking about?" She came up and nobody knew anything was wrong. I left the stage, went down, and I went back behind the wall and I just threw up. I mean, I was so sick. And just ... I thought, "Well I had food poisoning at the banquet. That's what it is. And I'll be okay." So I went back out there. And I still didn't feel very good, and finished up the banquet. And I was just going to go home and go to bed.

Jane (14:26):

And my trainer came. He said, "What is wrong with you?" And I said, "I don't know. It's the weirdest thing. I have this headache." And so anyway, he said, "We're going to the hospital!" And I said, "No, we're not. I'm going to go home and I'm going to bed. He said, "Nope, you're going to the hospital." So he took me to the hospital. And they did a spinal tap. And it was solid blood. And they came back in there and they said, "We need to do this again." And I could tell probably the mood in everybody had shifted. So they did it again: Solid blood. And they said, "Well, you've got a brain bleed." And I'm like, what? And they're like, "We need to go in and fix it. And we've got the neurologist called and she's on her way."

Jane (15:13):

"In fact, she was at the banquet. She saw how you acted and she knows the whole thing." So I was like, okay. And then they kept coming in and, you know, adding whatever. And they said, "We need to call your family back in North Carolina and ..."

Owen (15:27):

Whoa!

Jane (15:27):

... tell them to get here." And so I could tell it was a pretty serious thing. Well, then they came in and said, "We're going to cut." They told me what they were going to do. They were going to cut my scalp and then they were going to peel it back. And they would go in and go through my skull and then clip it. And it didn't really sound like a lot of fun for me. But I ...

Owen (15:50):

I would call that *thought-provoking*.

Jane (15:52):

Yeah, yeah. So all this was in probably four to five hours. And then we get to the point that they did an arteriogram. Well, they did something like a CAT scan on my brain. And they saw that there was a brain bleed. So then the last thing they had to do was an arteriogram. And they put something kind of up in your groin and it goes up. And then ... and they told me I would feel like pain ... like a shoot ... a shot of heat. And then they would be able to tell where it was. And they would ... then they would clip the skull and do all this stuff. So they put me ... I had to get in this ... I was in this room. And the guy comes in, and I say to the doctor, "If I were praying, should I pray that you can find this? Or that ... I mean, how would I pray?"

Jane (16:36):

And he, in the, probably one of the most liberal cities in the world, he just said, "Lady, you can pray any way you want to. It isn't going to matter."

Owen (16:46):

Whoa! (Laughter.)

Jane (16:46):

And he went behind the curtain. Well, all I can tell you is that I prayed like I had never prayed. I was not ready to die. I had so much, so many more games to coach. At the time, I was kind of full of myself and thought I was pretty good at it. And I got to win a National Championship, and all this. But I prayed, and I was very anxious. And all of a sudden: *The Peace That Passes All Understanding!* (Sounds of praise and agreement.) It just ... the Lord ... and people talk about, John, when God speaks to you. And I'd always wondered about that.

Jane (17:19):

It's not an audible voice. Like, I didn't hear a voice in the room. But He brought to my mind. And I know it was Him, because He brought to my mind: "Look, I wrote your speech for you. I made sure you wrote that down. I had all the awards written up. I even had Sue come by and pick you up in the car. So all these things. I took care of every detail of the day. I will take care of this." And all of a sudden, *it was complete peace*. And I was ... I surrendered. And that was a moment in my life that I surrendered. And I did make some deals with Him. And I said, "If I get out of this, I will ... you know, I'll do this for you the rest of however long I'm supposed to."

Jane (17:58):

So the guy comes back in the room and he says, "Well, this doesn't really make any sense. But we can't find it. So we have to do it again."

Jane (18:09):

And I started laughing at him. And he said, "This is weird!" So they did. He did it and they put it in again. They did the whole thing. He goes back out of the ... you know, behind the screen. And he comes in and he said, "There's no brain bleed. It's gone."

John (18:25):

Wow!

Jane (18:26):

And ... so then they took me to ... I was in ICU I think for about two weeks. I was still in critical care. My family flew up, everybody. You know, it was basically a very big deal there. Lots of people prayed for me. I had already been marked as a Christian in Madison because there's an organization up there called Freedom From Religion. And they had accused me of doing things that I didn't do. I wasn't smart enough to do. But they had ... the word was out. People were praying for me.

Jane (18:57):

Maybe seven hours is how all this took. I think I said it in probably 10 minutes. But it's probably seven hours. And so, you know, you go back and you look at the stats [*statistics*] on aneurysms, subarachnoid brain hemorrhages. And 95% of them are death. And of the five that survive, like 4% of those can't talk or walk. And they have to learn how to. I had none of that. At the end of the two weeks I went home. And so the next year was different for me: Understanding. And you know, you go through the guilt of "Why me, Lord?"

Jane (19:36):

But you ... I also ... I never thought it was that important to *win or lose* again. That really changed it. (Sounds of praise and agreement.) I knew that I had a higher purpose. And it didn't mean that I didn't want to win in the game. But I knew there was a lot more. And I knew that He had given me a special grace, and favor, and mercy. And all the things that He chose to do. And I was going to make this, you know, *life* for Him.

Jane (20:04):

You know, I looked this up. I got all these letters from people because they did ... it was a very kind of a big thing there. Again, because I was a Christian in the second most liberal city in the country. But I actually went back and looked up this letter about two weeks ago. I thought I could find it. It was in my Bible that I was using at the time, of a lady that was a nurse that was in the room praying for me that heard the whole conversation with the doctor. And she was on the other side [*of the screen*].

Jane (20:30):

And she just wrote me, and just said how hard she had been praying and that, you know, everybody. And I know the power of prayer. So I don't take it lightly when someone asks me pray. I think that prayer is a big, big thing. But you kind of skip then. And so then, again I'm trying to piece together what it looks like to be a competitive high-level Christian coach. And then my teams were really good up there. I think we were second in the Big Ten, and maybe 16th in the country.

Jane (21:00):

And they didn't roll my contract over. Which you know, it was kind of irritating to me. I wanted ... thought I was going to coach the rest of my life up there. But they decided that they didn't ... wasn't quite good enough. They wanted The Final Four Team or whatever. Who knows what. And they don't really know this. But what I know now is that I was "assigned" [*by God*] to go to Wichita, Kansas.

Jane (21:22):

I pretty much ... when they didn't roll my contract over, I left. And I was hired at Wichita State [*University*]. And I was there for five years. And while I was there, I was under the teaching of a man by the name of James Bryan Smith [*a professor at Friends University*]. And he was a Dallas Willard disciple. John Ortberg [*a local pastor*] and Jim were the two people that sat with Dallas. And you know, years and years of Dallas's stuff. And Dallas had told him to write a curriculum for "Christ Apprenticeship." And I took that class from him for three years. And I felt like I was in seminary. John, I know how (laughter), you talk about how hard you worked. But we had to read and write.

Jane (22:04):

And that's where I met Dallas. And that's where my faith life changed. And I understood the Kingdom Life then. And that there's absolutely nothing that could ever happen in this world that could hurt me. That, you know, I'm a daughter of the King and that He will provide for me and ... provision. And really, I learned about the John 10:10 "abundant life." And so that's pretty much how I coached the rest of my life: Win or lose. I still had about, I think, you know, 12 more years to coach. And those years were ... me with more joy I think than I had experienced. Even when we were, you know, we won the WNIT [*Women's National Invitational Tournament*] ... I think when I ... one year at Wisconsin National Championship. But it wasn't as much joy as it was win or lose when I was really doing it with the principles of living in His Kingdom, and understanding that there's, you know ... how ... what an honor it is to participate in growing His Kingdom.

Owen (23:03):

And you know, that's the whole point behind our book, *Saving Christianity*. Because, Jane, so many people are like you were, if we could put it that way. But they *stay* there! (Laughter.) They *live* and *die* there. And I always – we always say it this way: "They go to heaven, but they don't have any of it *here*."

Jane (23:26):

Absolutely!

Owen (23:27):

And ...

Jane (23:27):

I thought heaven was ... would be when I thought I would see my daddy in heaven. (Inaudible praise and agreement.) Oh, absolutely. (Laughter.) I had no idea until I got under that teaching.

Owen (23:36):

But you know, I want to go back to something else, Jane. Because a very, very important part of living in the Kingdom – what we call "The Early Christian Lifestyle" – we know that God spoke clearly to the Early Christians. People like Paul, Peter, and others, you know, tell about these experiences. You don't hear them much today. But it's interesting because I've tried to describe it and couldn't. When God speaks to us, we tend to say it wasn't an audible voice. And sometimes it *is*. But usually it's not. And yet you hear as clearly as if it *was* an audible voice. And you know, that's a difficult thing to explain to people. But it is one of our bags to tell Christians that you *can* have miracles today.

Jane (24:33):

Absolutely!

Owen (24:34):

They *are* for today. Jesus *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so, you know, *have* miracles. *Expect* them. And but, you really touched me talking about Him saying, "Now look, I got you to write the speech. (Laughter.) I got you a ride where you ... what more could you ask for?" (Laughter.) But sometimes He speaks and it's very firm. I've never heard him speak in an angry, bitter, bully, way – which a lot of people – that's their image of God. And I tell the story one time ... just real quick ... this is *your* day. But picking up on your point: I was sitting in my office one day many years ago. And I was praying to myself. And I reached down to pull open a drawer to get some stationary. And I had my hand on the knob. And I was saying, "Lord, show me how to lead your people." And just as clearly that voice said, "You don't lead my people. You *serve* them."

Jane (25:42):

Wow!

Owen (25:42):

And my life changed right there. I was never the same. But yet I don't ... didn't ... hear anything in the room. So how could it be that we hear him so clearly? And yet it's not somebody in the room, like an angel or somebody. And I think it's because we're indwelt, and the Spirit's in us. And He just speaks in there and we hear it.

Jane (26:06):

I think He probably speaks to me a lot more than I know, at times in my busyness and things. You know, the last third of my coaching career, after the whole Kingdom Living was "downloaded" in me. And I would put the Scripture, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ...

John (26:29):

Right!

Owen (26:29):

"And all these things."

Jane (26:29):

... and all these things will be added onto you." But what you said just then about ... if you think about a coach like Jesus. If He ... that's what Dallas [Willard] would say ... if Jesus were a coach, how would He coach? Like how would He live my life? Not like go, you know, do exactly what Jesus would do in Galilee. How would He live *my* life? *Jane's* life? Well, He wouldn't be sarcastic. He wouldn't ... He wouldn't yell ... with ... how would you coach like Jesus?

Jane (26:59):

And that's what I got to try to do. And that's what ... He would take a Sabbath. You know, He would not work on Sunday.

John (27:05):

Right.

Jane (27:05):

Those disciplines that I started incorporating, that were like what Jesus did, that I could use to ... that He would ... you know, *solitude*. That the things that ... Scripture study ... that type of stuff. It changed the abundance in my life. It didn't mean we won more games or lost more games. But it did ... I understood a lot more of "Why," because the "Why" of what I was doing. It's just – how would Jesus coach? You know, that whole *In His Steps* book, I'm sure a lot ...

Owen (27:38):

He didn't have an easy life, did He.

Jane (27:40):

No, He didn't.

Owen (27:41):

But you had it with more grace, and peace, and Fruit of the Spirit.

Jane (27:45):

But the thing that I had to get over first, John, was *my* righteousness. I thought this was all because I had earned this "Big Ten Coach of the Year" and I had done all this stuff. And I had studied basketball, and that's why we won. And then I had to just surrender all that, when He ... I mean, there was a song by Jars of Clay [*a Christian music group*] at the time that was real important. And I can remember I had that CD. Somebody brought my little boom box in and the name of that song was "Take My World Apart." And I listened to that song probably 15 times a day. Because I felt like that's what He did. *He took my world apart.* And that song is amazing because it talks about ... I mean that's what He had done. And so of course I surrendered to Him. But it was ... see I had become a Christian a long time before that. And I had no clue. And I was in church!

John (28:38):

Right!

Jane (28:38):

They didn't talk to me about the Kingdom, John! I hear y'all talk about the Kingdom. I Hear you, you know, I hear that vocabulary. But the churches I went to ... I don't know if maybe I wasn't listening or maybe they didn't talk about it. I don't know the answer.

Owen (28:53):

Or maybe they didn't know.

John (28:54):

Yeah, yeah. Jane, as I'm listening to your story, I'm just thinking about how in the sovereignty and providence of God, how He took this little Graham girl, and put her on the national stage as a ... to show forth His glory. And just that itself has its own miraculous piece to it. And I just love how you would've never imagined when you were playing basketball ...

Jane (29:28):

No, I never knew it could Happen.

John (29:29):

Right.

Jane (29:29):

But John, let me tell you one story that ... because God does have a sense of humor. We know that.

Owen (29:35):

He does. He does. (Laughter.)

Jane (29:36):

So when I went to Wichita, I was really angry and bitter and, you know: "How could You have done this to me!" Even after He had saved ... it was another, you know, nine years of trying to be the ... get a National Championship. So I go to Wichita. And it was the only place that I had in my career that my teams weren't very good. They just ... I couldn't get players there. I tried. I recruited. We just ... we lost a lot of games. *And I got fired.* And I should have been fired. My teams were not good. So then I got to go coach at the University of Nevada. But now I've got this skill set that I never had before.

Jane (30:14):

So I'm not mad. I'm not angry. I'm not bitter. I'm just – I know the Lord. I know that I was in Wichita to learn about Kingdom living. Not to win games. So my first year at Nevada I had a team, and we were playing Louisville. And Louisville went to the Final Four that year. They lost *two* games. And they had this really great player. Angel [*McCoughtry*] was her name. And we were *up by a point* at the end of the game. Now, my team had no sense in being in the gym with these people. It was a home court. (Laughter and inaudible comments.) But we ... it was one of those times we had played better than we really were.

John (30:50):

Yeah.

Jane (30:50):

We've seen that in sports. So all of a sudden they get the ball and they're dribbling. She's dribbling going towards the basket in the back court – which she was a *forward*. She doesn't usually do that. She dribbled off of her leg! The ball went out of bounds. And I just sat back in my chair. It was almost scary to me.

Jane (31:10):

I was like, "Okay, I got it. I'm not going to say anything else, Lord! I know You got this." Well, so we win the game.

John (31:17):

Wow!

Jane (31:17):

And I called Dallas [*Willard*]. And I called Jim [*Smith, at Friends Un.*] And I said, "This was like the weirdest thing. I mean, you know, like, does God really care about winning and losing?" And Dallas, this is what he said to me. He said, "Absolutely, He cares!" And he said, "Jane, when anything like that happens in our life – and it *will* happen – it is to increase the confidence you have in God. And know that He has it all covered." And this is what he told me. He said, "Now, He doesn't do a lot of things like the walls of Jericho falling down instantly. That's not how He works. He's going to let you participate, and work, and do all the things. But every now and then, He's going to do a *walls of Jericho* for you."

Jane (32:00):

And that's what He had just done. (Laughter.) The *walls of Jericho* just fell down. We won this game. But it was to, again, increase the confidence that I had in my Savior. And so things like that *do* happen in your life. And you have to see Him, and look at Him, and know that He is talking to you. And that if you – if it matters to you, it matters to Him. If it's you know in the course of Philippians 4:8, "Excellent and Worthy" ...

Owen (32:28):

Amen!

John (32:28):

Right!

Jane (32:28):

... You know it has to be, it couldn't of course be something that would be ...

Owen (32:31):

"Think on these things."

Jane (32:31):

... Yeah. So when you're coaching, or when you're delivering the mail, or when you're teaching, or whatever you're doing. If you're trying to be *excellent* that is one of His principles.

Owen (32:42):

But how about this? How about when the disasters hit? You know, how about when bad things (*happen*)? And you know, there's that famous book, *Why* – something about – *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Of course, we know "they ain't no good people."

Jane (32:57):

Right. Exactly.

Owen (32:58):

See, but the point is though, even with Spirit-filled Christians, bad things happen. There are car wrecks or whatever the case may be.

Jane (33:06):

Are you saying that you already know that I didn't win the rest of my games that year? (Laughter, sounds of praise and agreement.) Or go on to a National Championship? Because I didn't!

John and Owen (33:15):

(More laughter and sounds of agreement.)

Owen (33:16):

(Inaudible words.) But so tell us, so when bad things happen to Spirit-filled Christians – we know the answer – but go ahead and tell us what happened then, when you didn't win.

John (33:28):

So, and I would like to just insert Jane. Your teams obviously knew you were a Christian. You were walking with the Lord. And in those seasons where you had more *losses* than winnings, how did they see Christ in you ...

Owen (33:46):

That's good. That's good.

John (33:48):

... as their coach?

Jane (33:49):

Well, I hope it was in a lot of ways. Because I would read Colossians three [*in the Bible*] before I would coach. I would, you know, I memorized that. I wrote "KC" on my thumb before every game for "Kingdom Coach." But it would be that I coach with compassion, humility, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. You know, the things of humility ...

Owen (34:11):

The Fruit of the Spirit.

Jane (34:11):

... that you know that's what He values. Not the win or the loss. So when I lost, how did I treat them? Go back to another Dallas Willard story. Which I'm sorry about another one. But Dallas, I knew him for quite a while when I was coaching at Nevada. And I went to visit him the day after we played. I think it was a double. Like a Friday night, Sunday night, down in Southern Cal.

Jane (34:40):

And so I met him and his wife, Jane, for breakfast. And he never asked me how my teams were doing. Like, that was not ... Dallas never said, "Jane, how's your team doing?" That morning he said, "Jane, how's your team? How'd they do last night?" Well believe it or not, I started complaining to him. We had lost a very close game. And I started explaining how it was so close, and if we had just done this, you know. It's one of the ... just telling him, "And then we turned the ball over!" And he has the biggest grin on his face. It's like I'm giving him the numbers that he's going to win the lottery ticket or something. And I'm looking at him like, do you not understand that I'm ... this is painful for me. Like I'm trying to explain, I'm a coach. I'm supposed to win games. We lost a game. And he says, "Wonderful, Jane! Wonderful!"

John (35:32):

Laughter.

Owen (35:32):

I love it.

Jane (35:34):

And I, you know I always had my pen ready to write down anything Dallas said. And I said, "I'm not getting this one, Dallas. I'm ... what are you talking about?" And he said, "This is just so wonderful, because we live in a world that it just, it teaches those young ladies that when they lose they're *losers*. And you get to be the one that can teach them that when they lose they're *winner*s. And that you love them anyway ...

John (35:59):

Right. Yeah.

Jane (36:01):

... *you* can do that!" And I'm like, huh. I think I *can*! (Chuckles.)

Owen (36:06):

Hellooo!

Jane (36:06):

So that's what Jesus would've done. So I had a friend that went with me and that she now coaches at UCLA. But when they lose a game – if they lose one! – I'll text her sometimes and say, "Wonderful!"

John (36:17):

Yeah. My brother is a minister and both of us went to seminary. And we were discussing one day our time in school. And he said, "You know, John, I wish they had taught us how to fail ...

Jane (36:32):

Yes! Absolutely!

John (36:32):

... not talk about succeed all the time, and what that looked like."

Jane (36:36):

And how struggle builds character. And that's what is really so disturbing to me about the world now: Is that people take away *struggle*. They don't want athletes to *struggle*. Some of my greatest learnings have been during struggles.

John (36:52):

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, and that is part ... that is a – not just a little piece – but I think it's a significant piece of what it means ...

Owen (37:03):

Probably the biggest piece of it.

John (37:05):

... to be a Christ Follower.

Owen (37:05):

There used to be a TV show that had some funny lines in it. And this one episode I was watching one night, and the man's daughter was complaining about some terrible thing that had happened to her. And he looked at her and he said, "Well, that's why they call it *life* dear." (Chuckles.) Because when you stop and think about it, and this ... a lot of people don't like this part of it ... but it's become really clear to me in the past three or four years, but this earth is Satan's kingdom.

Jane (37:38):

Right!

Owen (37:38):

The word says *he* is the prince of this earth. And so stop and think about it. That "ain't a good thing." You know, that's bad news coming and going. And if you look at the Early Christians: Everything from being fed to lions, to being crucified.

Jane (37:56):

I'll tell you what I did when I was coaching at Wisconsin. After I'd had this, you know, understanding of surrendering my life to Him. And I was still being persecuted by a lot of people that, again, from this Freedom From Religion organization. I had to get a lawyer. I mean, that's a whole another podcast. But I would think I was getting persecuted. And then I would read about Paul.

John and Owen (38:21):

(Laughter and agreement.)

Jane (38:22):

And this is what I did. I actually got a picture of John the Baptist with his head on the platter ...

Owen (38:28):

Wow!

Jane (38:28):

... and I put it in my room.

Owen (38:30):

Oh my goodness.

Jane (38:31):

Cause I thought ...

John and Owen (38:34):

(Inaudible words of praise and agreement.)

Jane (38:36):

... this is nothing. I am *not* being persecuted. My Head is still *on*.

John and Owen (38:40):

(Inaudible words and comments.)

John (38:41):

That's really sobering.

Owen (38:43):

That's a great, great point.

John (38:45):

It really is. I love that. And just to kind of maybe tie a bow here a little bit is one of the things that we've been trying to say in all 36 episodes: That the Scripture's clear about, that the Holy Spirit living in us is an "inside job." It's supposed to be His work, His power, His miracles, despite our circumstances – you know, *life*. Let's be real with people. Life is hard. Life is difficult here on planet Earth. And Jesus, the famous words He said is, "Let me give you My peace, not as the world would try to give you."

Jane (39:33):

Absolutely.

John (39:34):

And so I ... if we ... I think if we can help people in some measure to understand that.

Jane (39:42):

Absolutely! "Christ in me, the hope of glory." [*Colossians 1:27.*]

Owen (39:45):

"The hope of glory."

Jane (39:46):

Yeah. And that's if Christ isn't in you now, this doesn't make any sense. (Chuckles.) So if He's not, you need to call somebody and get Him.

Owen (39:54):

If I'd been writing the Bible, I would've said, "Christ in you, the *only* hope of glory."

John (39:58):

"The *only* hope of glory."

Owen (40:00):

I want to add something to your John the Baptist picture. You know in the catacombs under Rome, there are these ancient paintings – the oldest and only surviving Early Christian paintings. And in these paintings it shows what they believed and how they thought, obviously. And in those paintings, the *Body of Christ*, Christianity, all Christians, are presented as a *fishing boat*. And this fishing boat is rocking on the sea. And different characters are in it. Some of them. Paul's in it. And Peter's in it. Different ones. But what that's telling you – what they taught with that – is that Christianity is a ship on the sea of life, just surviving like a *lifeboat* as it rocks through the sea. And in the front, there's always a man with a net. And he's pulling up "fish" as they go.

Jane (40:59):

Wow.

Owen (40:59):

And those fish are *unsaved* people, *non-Christians* ...

Jane (41:03):

Wow.

Owen (41:03):

... pulling them into the boat. And they're *surviving* too. See, as they go through this survival process. And I often think about that. People talk about "victorious living," and "glorious living." And that's true. But it's not always fun and easy.

Jane (41:21):

Well, it's not what the world calls "victory."

John (41:23):

No. Not by any stretch of the imagination.

Owen (41:26):

You would know, wouldn't you!

Jane (41:27):

You don't ... you know when you're a coach ... see you know the rules. So you sign up for a profession that if you don't win enough games you're going to get fired. (Chuckles.) I mean that's just ... it's going to happen to you. You know, it's because that's the bottom line. But that doesn't mean that you, that is *your* rule, or that's *why* you do it. And that's where in any life – any person out there – you have to have certain things that people tell you there will be *consequences* in the earth for whatever. But nothing you know ... Jesus can ... He trumps all of that. Now what's inside, and what you can carry with you, and learn, and how you can serve Him in any area that you're in, wherever you're at in the whole world.

John (42:08):

Yeah, that's right.

Jane (42:08):

You can find a way to serve him today.

John (42:10):

Right. And when you think about it, when you're living your life "in sync" with God. It's just ... there are no words, really.

Owen (42:22):

Or really, you're going through crisis-to-crisis with Him.

John (42:26):

Yes. Absolutely. Yeah. I love that. Jane, you are an inspiration. I sure hope that you can – I'm going to put you on the spot – I hope that you can come back, and I think we've got enough stories here that you can tell us some others. I know you have one other miraculous story I want to save for the next episode.

Jane (42:50):

Okay!

John (42:50):

If you would maybe come back and spend another day with us in the studio.

Jane (42:55):

I would be very honored. And you know it's ... I'm a southerner, so we like to talk and tell our stories.

John (43:02):

We do! Yes, yes. Well, that's a big piece of it, telling the stories. You know, the Bible says that. *Tell your story over and over again.* I love to tell the story, the song writer, remember?

Owen (43:15):

"The Old, Old Story."

John (43:16):

I love to tell the story. And we're loving telling your story today.

Jane (43:21):

Well, thank you for having me. I appreciate all the work that you're doing for His Kingdom.

Owen (43:27):

Well John, I guess, looking at the big clock on the wall, I guess we are coming to the end of it. And, but I'm not sorry because we're going to have Part Two ...

John (43:36):

Yeah. Absolutely.

Owen (43:37):

... with sister Jane. But I guess we better pull up stakes for this one.

John (43:43):

Yeah. I'm sorry to have to end this time as well. But we look forward to another time together. So friends, this is Episode 36, and just a reminder, the script and a recording of it is on our website at: goSCpod.com. That's: G-O-S-C-P-O-D.com. And it's important to review the recordings and transcripts of these episodes, and especially those for this particular episode.

Owen (44:14):

Oh, that's right. That's right John. And Jane, this has been especially moving and exciting for me. And we'll all be praying that Part One, if I can call it that, of "Jane's Story," that we've shared here ... that she's shared ... will inspire and encourage and uplift our friends worldwide. You know, Jane, you don't know this, but we have listeners in Kenya and Finland and all over the world. And they'll be watching for this.

Jane (44:44):

"He's Got The Whole World In His Hands!"

Owen (44:45):

Yes, glory. Don't get me singing now. And so (laughter), so again, Jane, thank you for coming.

Jane (44:52):

My pleasure.

Owen (44:53):

And we hope you will be back soon. And so until then, this is Owen Allen ...

John (44:57):

... and John Shields, along with our producer, Shannon Wolfe ...

Owen (45:01):

... and we're all praying and saying together: May the God of our fathers bless you, and keep you, and guide you, and protect you, until we meet again.

Owen and John (45:14):

Owen and John end the episode.