



The Newborn Promise Podcast: Holy and Hilarious Motherhood

Audra Haney: Thanks for tuning in to the Newborn Promise Podcast. A production of Graham Blanchard Incorporated. You are listening to an interview with Holly Mackle, called "Holy and Hilarious Motherhood". For more information about your Newborn Promise Project and to get past episodes, please visit grahamblanchard.com.

Audra Haney: Thanks for joining us for this special Mother's Day episode. Mark Twain famously said, "Humanity has unquestionably one really effective weapon, laughter. Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand." And our guest today, author and blogger Holly Mackle is helping moms everywhere wield laughter like a Jedi Knight with a light saber. In the chaos and beauty of motherhood, perspective can be everything, and Holly is helping moms laugh away the petty and look to the God who's big enough to care for us all, even in our biggest messes. Her latest book, "Same Here, Sisterfriend", is a celebration of funny mom moments and the diversity of mom friends in her life.

Audra Haney: Today, she shares about the importance of community, vulnerability and taking the right kid to the doctor. As we share this episode in celebration of Mother's Day, we are thankful for Holly's gift. For making even the weariest moms laugh. And we hope that it's a blessing to you today as you march on in the holy and hilarious calling of motherhood. Here's our interview with Holly.

Audra Haney: Holly, thank you so much for joining us today, we are so excited to talk with you and hear about your latest book, but before we get started would you mind telling us a little bit about yourself and your family?

Holly Mackle: Sure, I'd love to. Audra, thanks for having me, I'm just really honored to be with you today. I wanted to tell you that, but I am married to a super patient and very kind man named David Mackle, patience is key in being married to me, and he is a residential realtor here in Birmingham. He loves me and our girls so crazy well, and we have two young girls. Mine are a little bit older than yours, I think, but mine are seven and four and they keep us laughing, keep us on our toes.

Audra Haney: Yes, I can definitely relate to that. And that is so awesome, you have a lot of mom experience. But I'm also so impressed by your writing resume, you're a prolific writer, you edit, you're an author, a really busy blogger, tell us about

how all of this writing experience and parenting experience has lead up to your latest book.

Holly Mackle: Sure, I love it that you say I'm prolific, I think my husband would maybe choose a different word. He might go with scattered perhaps? I'm ... a word he would be looking for but ... or maybe interested in too many venues, that might be.

Audra Haney: You're just well-rounded, right.

Holly Mackle: Maybe, oh right. Sure. Let's spin it that direction. But no, I actually started as a garden writer, and so I've been just so blessed to write for a garden site that's connected with PBS and the Show Growing and Greener World. So I started there and I realized that what I really like to write is humor, and so, kind of, the humor writing is sort of spilling out into all the other areas. And that's kind of where the writing started, but as far as this specific book, I've been a part of a book club now for well over five years, and we've been together through a lot of things in life as you can imagine. You know, the getting married stages and the having children. As the years went on, the participation in actually reading the book would go down, but attendance at book club would maintain itself, you know, it's pretty typical.

Holly Mackle: But reading would go down until this one time a couple of years ago when somebody picked a humor book. Audra, everybody read, everybody in attendance read the whole thing. And that really got me thinking, "Wait a second, is this all we have capacity for right now?" And this was not a Christian humor book, this was a very secular humor book. But we all read it, we loved it, we enjoyed it and that got me thinking, "You know, there are women that are doing Christian humor with excellence."

Holly Mackle: I think of Sophie Hudson and Melanie Shankel who are just doing this with just real honor for the Lord and also a really great sense of humor, but there are just not a lot of women writing Christian humor. And why is that? We're called to redeem all parts of life, and so that's where this came from.

Audra Haney: And your book, "Same Here, Sisterfriend," which is also so much fun to say, you collaborated with some of your best friends and fellow writers that you've worked with over a long period of time. Tell me what that experience was like and what can readers expect from this book?

Holly Mackle: Sure. I hope they can expect a lot of good, clean fun. But let me tell you, it was so fun to write this book. I've discovered over time that I work best a little differently from sort of your typical writer, who would write in a very solitary way. But I really feel like God has called me specifically to be a curator even more than he's called me to be a writer. And I love to work with others, alongside others, I love to edit and figure things out together.

Holly Mackle: And I feel really specifically called to call out the giftings and talents in other women, and to encourage them to step out into their story and their voice and what God has taken them through and is taking them through so that those stories would be an encouragement to others. So I hope your audience can expect a lot of laughter in this book.

Audra Haney: Oh, absolutely. I read it and I was rolling. And it was very refreshing, when it seems like all the other moms in the world are gliding effortlessly through motherhood, it's sometimes good to have a laugh and be reminded that you're not alone and it is really funny, but also encouraging and it had a lot of deeper truth. One of those reminders was the importance of community. What do you see as the role of community as we travel through this season of motherhood?

Holly Mackle: I don't know about you, but what I experienced as a brand new mother, was that evil really wanted to have my ear, so it could have my heart and it kept whispering, over and over again, that I was completely alone, that I was the only one, that nobody was gonna understand me. Just these horrible lies that really started to seep in and take over and they affected everything. How I interacted with my newborn daughter, how I interacted with my husband, with our community and it was an intense time for me trying to combat that and now, looking back, I feel like ... I might have just needed a good giggle, like I needed to take a deep breath and be reminded, "Who has my daughter? Is it really me? Because if it's really me, guess what? I have already failed ... all is lost, if it's really me."

Holly Mackle: However, it's not. What I believe about the Gospel and about the truth of Jesus is that it's not me. That even in my sinfulness and even in my mistakes, he is in and through and working through it all and he wants to redeem it all. And so, I just want us all to take a deep breath, have a good laugh and look at each other and say, "You know what? You're not the only one. This happened to me too, I'm there with you. How can we walk through this together? How can we link arms and know that we're safe within the bonds of Gospel friendship?"

Audra Haney: That's so true and so powerful. And one thing that really struck me about you and your friends that contributed to the book is that you had to have a lot of vulnerability. What's the upside of sharing in such a truthful way?

Holly Mackle: Sure. I am a firm believer that authenticity and transparency is just gonna breathe depth to friendship. And I love all my friends, but the ones that it's really a life-on-life, the nitty-gritty, down in the trenches with them every day. Those are some special friendships, those girls that really know. Another thing that's super important to me is that those girls don't just know, but they know when to preach truth to me.

Holly Mackle: They know when to speak truth into my life and to challenge me and to say, "Hey, wait a second, it doesn't look like you're acting or living in light of the Gospel there, and how can we work through this together?" I would reciprocate that and be able to do the same for them. And that kind of community is just a

whole, special place and one that I think we're called to scripturally and one that I feel like the Lord wants to gift us with. He's such a good and generous God, and friendship is just one of those ways where he wants us to be able to taste of his goodness.

Audra Haney: Absolutely, and you know, as you're talking I'm thinking, "Some women are able to make those close friendships that you're talking about so easily." Sisterfriends, as you call them in the book. But it's harder for others, and motherhood in some ways can make that even harder. Or maybe other circumstances, like a move or a new job. So what tips do you have for these moms, and what kind of women should they look for to surround themselves with?

Holly Mackle: Sure, I would definitely agree with you Audra that it is so hard, and it's no joke that it's so hard. But I do believe that it is completely worth it. The stakes are just too high. You are worth it, I am worth it, our friendships are worth it. And you know, one thing I found is that I have to be okay with the fact that it might not click on the first try. It might take a lot of tries, actually, but it's so worth it to find your people. And you know, again back to the stakes, they're just too high to stop trying or to not be friendly or to not be inviting and to give people a chance.

Holly Mackle: And I think that for me when I find that my view is a little, as far as who God might want me to interact with, I find that my view of God is small, too, and so when I sort of open myself through authenticity and vulnerability, I find that other women reciprocate with that, and then that helps both of us to lift up our eyes and see this big, rich, beautiful world and the ginormous God who is just weaving this path through it for all of us.

Audra Haney: That's so good, and one thing about the book as we feature this podcast for Mother's Day is that it really is a celebration of all of these different kind of moms. It's like I just met every kind of mother in your book that you could think of.

Holly Mackle: I hope so.

Audra Haney: I love that. It really spoke to your intentionality with friends. So, what is a value of having mom friends who are different from us and bring all different things to the table?

Holly Mackle: This is really a selfish for me. I would be so bored. I would be so completely bored silly if I just had people in my life who are exactly like me, and I know that I would also be in a whole lot of trouble, because my personality type does not typically stop the bad ideas from flowing. I need the wisdom of age and stage of those beyond me, and the wisdom of moms with teens, and college, and grown kids, and all that. I really I love discipleship and I have been so blessed to have

women in my life who have loved on me for years, rally going on a decade now, that have loved me so very well.

Holly Mackle: But also, just peers that are just a little bit of ahead of me in age and stage, and the wisdom, and the knowledge that they bring, and also just the handy stuff like, "Hey, my daughter is seven and I having a hard time finding clean books for her to read. Can you give me some ideas."

Audra Haney: That's a really great point, and just overall this book is guaranteed to make even the weariest most discouraged mom laugh. I actually picked up after a disastrous plane flight with my toddler and our four year old, and I've really needed a good laugh, but what i found was there were deeper messages, too. Share with me a couple of the messages that you wanted to shine through even in the midst of all the humor.

Holly Mackle: I think that beyond the friendship that we've kind of talked about, there were several definite themes that arose once we put everyone's individual pieces together and looked at sort of the layout of the book, and right off the bat, a couple that jump out to me first of all, the overarching just umbrella od the sweetness of God's sovereignty, again and it's ultimately him who's responsible for the outcome of our kids and not us, but he does want to work in and through us to partner with him in raising our children, but it's ultimately the kindness of his sovereignty and it's him who's got us.

Holly Mackle: Then, also, that sort of informs my second idea, which kind of jumped out, which is, if this is true, and I believe that God is sovereign even over the ridiculous, even over the silly, and it's him who's in charge of all the pieces of raising these littles. That helps me to step back in the moment when there's permanent marker on the door or there's Gatorade on the floor or when something completely ridiculous has been asked of me, like if I can prepare my daughter a menu so that she may choose her dinner.

Audra Haney: That is amazing.

Holly Mackle: But in those moments instead of being so intense and serious and trying to like deal, deal, deal with this in the moment, that helps me to step back and go, "Okay, I can deal with this, but I can deal with it in a couple of seconds when I have just had a moment to breathe and laugh and remember that God is the creator and author of this crazy mom life, and it's okay for me to just have a moment to breathe and to laugh.

Audra Haney: I just love this theme I keep hearing from you, which is just that humor is so important for our faith, and why would you say that's especially true for these new parents who are experiencing these roles for the first time?

Holly Mackle: I think it's so great for our faith. I think it's great for relationship with our husband. I think it's great for our relationship for our kids. I think it just

influences so many different aspects of us as mothers and I can even think of just an instance a few weeks back when David and I took our girls to a basketball game at the University of Alabama and we were late, entirely due to my fault, we were late we got there.

Holly Mackle: We were throwing chicken nuggets in the back seat with threats of how many they had to eat if they wanted to get a pretzel at the basketball game, and we have to park in the way far out lot, like so far out, and we are about to get out of the car and Audra I am not kidding when I say the sky just literally opens up. I mean, it just like, build an ark kind of water. I mean it's coming down.

Holly Mackle: So, we have no choice. We can either wait it out, or we can just go to the game, because I have no rain gear. There's no rain gear in the car except for the emergency umbrella, which is like ... you know. So, David, ever the chivalrous one hands the girls the umbrella and we try to get them to walk through this parking lot. I'm sure you can picture this. They are belly/waist high to me, right? And they are not moving.

Holly Mackle: I mean, there's really no kind way to say it. They're just standing there under this polka dot black and white umbrella. We're all getting soaked and drenched, and I could feel it. I could feel the tension and the everything creeping up, and like, "You girls are going to be soaked, and cold, and wet all through this game, and your daddy and I." Nobody is prepared for this, and then I look down at them, and I thought, "What am I doing?" This is hilarious.

Holly Mackle: Like this little umbrella turtle, not moving anywhere, who's just decided to turtle up and just admire God's handiwork and sending rain in the middle of this out in the parking lot. So, I just started laughing. I started laughing, and my husband looked at me, and I still remember the look on his face and the way that he changed. He went from feeling that same intensity and the disappointment and all that and then he just like, it just dropped, and he laughed as well.

Holly Mackle: In that moment, I thought, "Okay, there is power to this, because a lot of times all of them are taking their cues off of us. So, do I have the faith to say, "Hey, it is God who sends the rain. It is him who sends the rain," and that can influence the way that I respond to the rain, and that's going to influence their faith if they see their mom laughing when the rain comes.

Audra Haney: Amen. That is so great, and holly I have just loved our time together, and as we close out. This is going to be a big vulnerability moment, like we talked about earlier.

Holly Mackle: Sure.

Audra Haney: But do you mind just sharing your biggest rookie mom move?

Holly Mackle: Definitely. Now, listen. I have a lot, but for the purposes of your format, I'll try to just limit to one, but probably the one that jumps out first and foremost to me is the time Audra, that I took the wrong kid to the doctor. When you hear that and you think, "How does that happen?" Okay, it was a well visit, first of all. I should say that, so I can just clear the path for myself a little bit, but this is not like I just grabbed a kid and went to the doctor.

Holly Mackle: I wish I could say that was the case, but there was a lot of planning, which is what makes it even worse. The babysitter for the kid should have been at the doctor. I prepared the child who should have stayed home, the pottying, the dressing, the snacking, the getting the water bottle ready, the activities for the doctor's office that don't make too many loud beeping noises, like all these things.

Holly Mackle: Then, I took the wrong kid to the doctor, and I am standing there at that sweet receptionist's desk and she looks at me and I look at her, and we sort of realized what I've done. I don't ever want to forget that look on her face.

Audra Haney: That's amazing.

Holly Mackle: Yes, yes, and I thought, "Wow, this really just happened."

Audra Haney: I love that, and it makes me feel like I have a few rookie mom moves, too. So, it makes me feel a lot better to know that I am not alone. Well, Holly, is there anything else you'd want to add just to encourage these new parents as we close out?

Holly Mackle: I think that when, I when I think about your audience and specifically brand new moms, and what I wish somebody had told me, I wish that somebody would have told me, "You have what it takes," and not out of some boot straps mentality like, "Hey, mamma, you've got this. You can do this. Pull yourself up," kind of thing, but no, you have it what it takes because God and his goodness sent Jesus for you and he is not going to leave you high and dry in these hard days of early motherhood and when you feel that you are completely empty, you probably are, and he is going to fill you. Just ask him to, and I wish someone had told me that.

Audra Haney: That's beautiful and so encouraging, well unfortunately it's time to wrap things up but we had such a fun time, Holly, and we're so grateful for your time. Would you mind just closing us out in a prayer for these new parents and blessing them on their journey.

Holly Mackle: I would love to. Lord Jesus thank you for who you are. Thank you that you are good and perfect and full of all lightness and light and hope, and father we are not, God in our flesh, we don't have it, but Lord thank you that you do, and you are willing to fill us with everything we need to parent our children. God, I pray for those listening right now that, they will see that you made them, that they

would find friendship in the most unlikely and unexpected places, and that they would boldly approach your throne through what Jesus had accomplished on your behalf and ask for where they feel that they are lacking.

Holly Mackle: I pray that they will be able to see and to feel in your arms and your gifts responding to them, and that we would depend entirely on you, father, and that we would not do anything out of our own ability or out of vacancy, but Lord that we would seek after you, and seek to return these children to you just as you have granted them to us for this time, and I ask this in Christ's name.

Audra Haney: Thank you so much for joining us for this fun and heartfelt episode with Holly Mackle. You can get Holly's bio and her book on our website, and you can also keep the laughs coming by visiting our blog where Your Newborn Promise Project Co-author Charissa Kolar shares about her own rookie mom move and her own disastrous plane flight in the post "Flying by the Seat of Your Pants."

Audra Haney: You can find all of those things, and many more resources to help your family grow in God at <http://www.grahamblanchard.com>.

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