

Announcer 00:01 Well. Hello, tired one. Are you feeling a bit frazzled and worn out? Welcome to the Sweet Selah Moments Podcast. We hope lessons from God's word and encouragement from us will lead you to soul rest. Sweet Selah Moments podcast is brought to you by Word radio and Sweet Selah Ministries.

Nicole 00:22 Well, hello there friend. I'm Nicole Olstad of Sweet Selah Ministries and it's my joy to welcome you to the first ever podcast of Sweet Selah Moments. Our goal is to encourage you to invest in what we call Sweet Selah Moments each and every day. And for that you are going to need some definitions, aren't you? Exactly. What is a Sweet Selah Moment anyway? Well hang on because we're going to unpack that for you in just a few minutes. First though, introductions are in order, so hi, I'm Nicole. My husband Josh and I have been married for 12 years and have been blessed with four beautiful and adventurous girls, ages three, five, seven and nine. I am a full time mom and a very part time dental assistant working about once a month per diem. I have two girls in school and I am homeschooling my first grader all while attempting to answer all 238 questions my three year old asks me every hour.

Nicole 01:13 And now I'd like to introduce you to the director of our ministry and the lady who literally wrote the book on Sweet Selah Moments. Sharon Gamble.

Sharon Well hi and welcome to this podcast. I'm Sharon. I've been married to Ray, my high school sweetheart for 40 years. We have an incredibly cute and incredibly annoying dog named Bella Grace, who is 13 pounds of spunk and cuddly. I'm mom to two daughters and their husbands and Nina to six beautiful grandchildren, none of whom live near us unfortunately. I started Sweet Selah Ministries in 2017. It was born out of my yearning over the years to be less hurried and more intentional about rest, specifically rest with God. So that's me. Nicole, I am so glad you're sitting here with me. It would not be nearly so much fun alone and it's wonderful to have two different perspectives on life.

Sharon 02:14 You the young mom with the 357 questions a day and me with the too quiet household sometimes after all the noise that my children generated, so well, I think it's time for definitions. What is a Sweet Selah Moment? Selah is the key word here. It's a Hebrew word found in the Old Testament. You see it often in the Psalms and also in the book of Habakkuk, but no one actually knows for certain what it means or how it's pronounced. However, most scholars think it represents a pause or a stop in the Psalm or song being sung. So for our purposes, a Selah is a stop and we pronounce it Selah because it sounds nicest with sweet and it seemed more intuitive, but people pronounce it lots of different ways. But because it's a biblical word, what I wanted to incorporate into the meaning of it for Sweet Selah Moments is that it is a stop with God.

Sharon 03:14 It's not just a stop to check your phone or to do your nails or stare at the sky. It's a God stop with the purpose of intentionally focusing on him. And that's a hard stop in a busy world, no matter what your age is. It doesn't actually get better, Nicole, when the kids are gone, you're still busy and you can still kind of put off God because other things crowd in. So we're going to talk about a God stop. A Selah stop. So Nicole, when did you first hear the name of this ministry? And did you know what Selah meant?

Nicole No, I had heard about it from my friend Jenny, who is also on the ministry team. Um, she had encouraged me to take a Sweet Selah day and I wasn't quite sure what that was. But after seeing the material you would put out to do it, I had gone and done a day and it was just lovely.

Nicole 04:08 I'd seen the word in Psalms but not really known what it meant, and I definitely was not pronouncing it the same way you did.

Sharon It's pronounced so many different ways and it doesn't really matter because the Hebrew doesn't have vowels in it. So Saylah is correct. Sila is correct. You could go Salaah. So, but for our purposes it's Selah and if you say Saylah, it's whatever. It's really, okay. So, okay, well what's the sweet then? Well, what makes this stop sweet is when you spend it with God. When you intentionally turn your eyes away from all the stuff that can make you crazy and you go to the one that gives peace. So that's why we call it sweet. And you know, even this morning, Nicole, right before getting here to do the podcast, I was a little bit unsettled about why are we doing this?

Sharon 05:00 What's its purpose, Lord, is this what you want for us? And so I had my Selah time, I had my Bible open and I read in Luke 4, where Jesus announced himself and said, I've come to set captives free. I've come to open the eyes of the blind. I've come to share the gospel. And in my little commentary I read it said, that's what Jesus came to do. That was his mission and now it's our mission. And there it was. And all my achiness went away because I had focused on the Word and God said to me, this is what we're doing here. We're sharing who he is and we're breaking free from the busy-ness and the scariness and the anxiety and worry that can absolutely kill us because we're stopping to have a Sweet Selah moment. So that's that. So now we're going to talk about the moment's part.

Sharon 06:00 Tell you what, let's have a Sweet Selah moment. Right now. What we're going to do every single podcast is have an episode Bible passage, because I don't want it to all be just talking. I want the Word to be spoken because really that's where the power is. So I'm going to read today from Psalm 46 and the New King James version, because it still has our beautiful word Selah in it. Some of the other versions say interlude, and it's rather annoying to me because our ministry is called Selah, so we need that word. So wherever you are, podcast listener, would you just settle back in your chair or the driver's seat of the car in the pickup line or lean against the counter and stop washing those dishes just for a moment and listen to this beautiful Psalm? Psalm 46 to the chief musician, a Psalm of the Sons of Korah, a song for Alamo. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Sharon 07:04 Therefore we will not fear. Even though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the Holy place of the tabernacle of the most high. God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God shall help her just at the break of Dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice. The earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord who has made desolations in the earth. He makes Wars cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two. He burns the chariot in the fire.

Sharon 08:05 Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. I love this Psalm. We're actually going to take another episode and go through the whole Psalm because it's just too good. But today because we're going to be talking about moments, I just want to read those last two verses again where it says, be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. And then that Selah. So there's kind of a command. He says, be still. Yikes. It's a hard command to follow, no matter how old you are. We get so I think, wrapped up, especially as Americans in productivity, defining our successfulness as who we

are, you know? And if we're busy and we can say we're busy, somehow that sounds more important. And so taking time to be still is really, really hard and it can even be viewed as sort of self-indulgence and laziness, you know? And you're like, wait a second, I should be doing something productive. So, um, why don't you share a little bit first about your journey to stillness in your life and then I'll share mine.

Nicole 09:39 All right. So after having our fourth kiddo and trying to juggle work and childcare and home life, it was just too much. So Josh and I decided that I needed to be home with the littles and we adjusted our lifestyle to accomplish this decision. I started homeschooling and thought that I was on this path to become a more calm mom and enjoy, be able to enjoy life and have more time with my family and have more peace in our home. The problem was I was saying yes to too many things and ultimately saying no to my family. I had assumed that now that I was a stay at home mom, that I had to say yes and I didn't really have a good excuse to say no because I was home and able to do all the good things I wasn't able to do before.

Nicole 10:24 Well my days had become a series of good things that kept me running and in survival mode trying to keep up and still, I was not still at all. It took me a while to realize that multitasking is a lie. I can't truly give my full attention to more than one thing. And I just ended up giving a small scattered part that really isn't all that helpful. And sadly, my family always got my tired leftovers. So I sat with God, I really sat with him and did the hard work of, of evaluating my time and how I spent it and learned to start to say no to all the busy and stop saying no to God and my family and even myself. Busyness is exhausting. And my health and eating habits showed that I think I was afraid of not being busy. That's such a normal cry.

Nicole 11:09 It's almost a badge of honor. And I didn't know what life would look like without it. And it's kind of scary. So there I sat saying no. Quiet(er). I still had four kids! Finding stillness, practicing Selah moments. Reading your book and any book "..., practicing Selah moments. I'm reading your book and any book on stillness I could find and wondering how long I was going to have to be still like, God, can I move yet? What do I do now? And then I got a message from you asking me kind of out of the blue to join your team for a ministry on rest. I was like, God, is this a test? I'm always so struck by his sense of humor, but I prayed about it and didn't say yes right away, even though I was pretty sure that this was a solid yes, this was God's way of showing me. I can say yes, just not to everything.

Nicole 11:55 And now he brought me to you and to a whole team of people who treasure rest and daily time with God, who have a God that really does just want to be with me and it's just so amazing. So God had shown me that when I say no to the crazy, just because busy, I'm free to say yes to the meaningful and he brings yeses that give back. I mean a ministry that helps me to rest and spend time with God. I may have also joined selfishly for the accountability factor, but here I am and I'm still learning how to truly be still with him. But he's so gracious with me.

Sharon 12:26 Oh well I remember that same thing when I had my two daughters and the church needed something. Of course I can do it. If somebody needs a casserole, well I should bring a casserole. My husband was in the military, so there was all these military functions to go to and I wanted to represent him. So I went to way too many little wives gatherings, things like that. And the same thing my children were there watching me on the phone, you know, and the time wasn't completely given to them. And my, I had quiet times, but they were pretty rushed because they were almost like on my to do list. Right. I need to do this and get it done instead of I'm savoring it. And I, I think, I think that's one

of the keys to a Sweet Selah. It's not stopping because you have to, because if you are a good Christian, you would stop and be with God.

Sharon 13:24 It's stopping because you get to, because actually God wants you quiet because actually he wants to sit with you and tell you he loves you. So when it's seen as I, I get to talk to the King of Kings instead of I need to check this off my checklist, it has a whole different flavor to it. So, so I have a couple of sort of big triggers on my way to stillness. One was when I turned 40, I just stopped sleeping. It was really awful. I mean, I didn't plan on stopping sleeping. It just sort of happened. I, um, I would go to bed and I called it the little Chihuahua in my brain and would lie down and it would go, yip, yip, yip, yip, yip. And everything that I had to do, would run through my brain and I would try to still it. I tried to pray and I tried all these things and I could not rest.

Sharon 14:19 And it was like two or three hours sleep a night for a couple of weeks until Ray brought me to the hospital. I was like crazy with lack of sleep. And until then I had sort of been able to run all the time. I kind of prided myself on being able to run on my high energy level. So that shut me right down. And so I went on a little Ambien for two weeks and reset my clock. I didn't even have any sense of days and nights at that point. and started new rhythms and realized that what I had done was planned my day and squish in God. And what I needed to do was plan my God times and trust that everything else would fit. So there was like a change in perspective and how I did it. And then I also didn't just take that time in that morning, I took a time at night and away from electronics. I know most people don't like this Nicole, but I happen to love warm milk. I know weird, so weird.

Sharon 15:31 My little mug of milk at night and I read a real book like with pages and I have an afghan over my knee if it's, you know, nighttime and I find another time of stillness and I found I needed that. And so then, I added a quiet day a week from sundown, Saturday to sundown Sunday and just refused to work. My family was a little offended by that at first, but I kind of prepared them for it. I would say, now I'm resting starting at sundown tonight, so if you guys need me to help you with your homework or if Ray needed me to wash the car, we needed to do it Saturday afternoon, not, Sunday afternoon. And so there was a, like a reversal in priority. The priorities were, well, I'm not working from sundown Saturday to sundown on Sunday and I'm not working for that first little bit of the day cause it's my quiet time and I'm quitting at night to have my warm milk and then let's see what I can fit in with what's left.

Sharon 16:33 I love that it's super changed everything. And the amazing thing is that the stopping on those times meant that the other times were more productive, which is kind of funny that I'd be amazed by it because God did set that up right. I mean he said work for six days and stop on the seventh, you know, that is in there. And I have found it proven to be true over and over again, that when I sit and really sit and just get to be with God, sit, the rest of the day just goes better because I've had a chance to listen and hear and it's, it's sweet. So now I can do my morning time first thing. But can you, you've got like that three-year-old that's probably asking questions first thing when she wakes up. So how do you fit in yours?

Nicole Well, I've been trying for years to do it first thing in the morning, but I am not an early riser.

Nicole 17:32 So that's been my, my sacrifice and that God helped me get up in the morning to spend time with him. So the days I don't get up before my children, I tried to do it first thing. You've talked about that before too. Giving him your first free moment, even if it's not the first few hours of the day.

So my husband and children go off to school. I get the little ones playing with something and I sit down and I do those first five free moments. But you want you to said earlier was so good about being intentional about your time. So not just saying like, Oh, I'm going to sit and have this wonderful sweet moment with God, but setting it up ahead of time. Finding your favorite chair, finding your favorite blanket, getting your book and your pen and your favorite hot beverage ready.

Nicole 18:15 You take away all the excuses and it's almost like something you look forward to like a, like a date with a friend that you're going to talk to and it's not like, Oh, I forgot to do my quiet time. Oh, I didn't do it. I'm a bad Christian today. Right? So I love the joy that comes from the expectation of a meeting with God now as opposed to, Oh, I got to get this, then I gotta do this deep Bible study. It's like, no, he wants to sit with me and he wants to fill me with love and encouragement for the day and not just, oh, okay, you did your duty. Good job. You read your Bible today. Right? So that has really changed how I view my quiet time with him. I think it does make a difference.

Sharon And sometimes we set ourselves up for failure because we think we have to not have a moment, but like five hours with God to be truly holy.

Sharon 18:57 You know? And one reason this is called Sweet Selah Moments is because sometimes they're brief, but there's even the difference in how you do a brief time with God, whether it's a settle down and, oh, teach me Jesus time, or if it's a read fast and put it aside time. You know what, there's just a huge difference between the two. And it all comes, it stems from attitude. Uh, and, and also motive I think. I think you and I both grew up in Christian homes, so we know our duty to read the Bible. That's a duty. And if I see it that way as a duty, it's different than remembering I'm talking to the King and the Shepherd and the Lord and Father, you know, just saying his names helps me kind of sit in awe that I get to talk to him.

Sharon 19:51 Wow. You know, so, my first thing was I'm getting slammed so hard with insomnia that I had to make changes. I have a thick head I guess. God really had to do that to me. Well, about the same time, this all kind of coalesced together. I don't remember how old I was, but I was working for Moms in Prayer and it was time for me to go out to California to the annual state coordinator getaway. I was state coordinator for New Hampshire. I took my position seriously. I knew that people had donated money to put me on a plane so that I could learn marvelous things in California. So off I go feeling very sort of important. Sadly, that's the truth though. I did. And I get to the conference and we're fine Sunday night, until about three in the morning, Monday when I woke up with the worst case of the flu ever, like the kind you're like, I know why people die from the flu kind of flu.

Sharon 20:55 It was awful. And they took me to the hospital so everybody else was learning all these truths and I'm, you know, sick. And so I stayed in a sort of a segregated room where people brought me food, gingerly passing it to me from a distance and then turning their heads away. Pretty isolating. You know, I've been stuck in this room, Nicole and the windows are open cause it's California. It's warm in February and California, amazingly not here in New Hampshire. And I'm hearing them sing worship songs. I love singing worship songs. I couldn't even talk. I was croaking because my voice was gone. And so I was pretty sad about it, but I figured I'm with prayer warriors, right? They're praying for my healing. I will pray for my healing and within a day LA LA, I will have conquered the flu and I will be back there learning lessons and, I, I almost felt like God had to do it, which is always a dangerous thing to think because God doesn't have to do anything that I think he does.

Sharon 22:00 But in my mind, all this money had been donated. Right. And it's not fair for me to be sick and not learning all these wonderful things. Well. I did not get better. I did not get better Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and we were leaving on Friday. So Thursday afternoon I kind of shuffled out of bed because you can only stay in bed so long. And I sat on this like porch overlooking a mountain. It was beautiful with sun shining on my face, but I was kind of, no, no, I was definitely crabby. I was just mad. I mean, what a waste of a week. And so I kind of randomly flipped open my Bible and I came to the passage where some teacher of the law says to Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? And Jesus answers the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.

Sharon 22:59 That's the greatest thing you can ever do. And honestly, Nicole, he whispered to me and he said, Sharon, do you love me? And I said, yes, I do. He said, that's all I want from you this week. And I spent the whole afternoon. I had never spent an afternoon telling God I loved him ever. And that's the greatest commandment; I just never had. I'd never even thought of doing it all those years. I just sorta did for God. And went to church and read my Bible and, and taught Bible studies, but I never sat and just said, I love you. And it was, absolutely one of the most life changing moments of my life— just sitting there telling him I loved him. And that actually back then was formed the seeds for Sweet Selah Ministries and Sweet Selah Moments because all of a sudden all this doing, you know, I have to do, I have to do, got stripped away from me.

Sharon 24:06 I couldn't do anything except sit there and cough and tell God I loved him. And suddenly I realized that's the greatest thing I can do. I mean that's the greatest. And so it changed my perspective there too. So first I got stopped physically and have the insomnia or maybe I can't remember the order, but anyways, and then I got stopped spiritually and God just woke me up and said, stop and man, did I stop! So that's sort of the genesis for what we're doing here in this podcast is helping women stop and not to stop with the guilt that comes with it. And the, the feeling that you're being self-indulgent. Cause if it's a Selah stop the way we're defining it, it's a stop with God. It's a stop to get to know the One that loves us. It's a declaring of our love for him.

Sharon 25:08 So for those of you that have joined us today, I'm just so glad you are here. And I hope that every podcast is a little moment in your life where you learn a tiny bit more with us. Cause Nicole and I are still learning and we shall confess our sins to you as we go along when we fail. But we so want you to stop and be with the God who loves you. So important. So let me pray and close us out. And then Nicole will have the last word. Oh Father God, how I thank you that what you want most is something that we can do from a sick bed that we don't have to be the strongest or the prettiest or the most efficient at all. We just have to stop and love the One that loved us so much. He died for us. Oh, Father, forgive me for every time I make other things more important than loving and knowing you and help us in this podcast every single time to look to you, acknowledge you and adore you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Nicole Amen. Oh friend, there's a lot to talk about, isn't there? We would love to hear your unique journey to stillness and knowing God too in the days and months ahead. Make sure you check out our show notes and feel free to share comments they can be found@sweetselah.org

Nicole 26:44 and@wordradio.net search for podcasts to find them on our tabs and please would you follow us on your favorite podcast app? We are brand new as you know and we want others to find out about us. Share us with your friends and tune in next time for our next episode, finding the time for the

quiet time. Until then, may you find rest in Jesus who tells us to come to him when we are weary and heavy laden. God bless you.

Speaker 0 27:11 We are so glad you stopped for a while with us. Sweet Selah Moments is a cooperative production of Word radio and Sweet Selah Ministries. More information about this podcast, including show notes, can be found@sweetselah.org and@wordradio.net. Thank you for joining us.