

5.15 No to White Feminism and Yes to Intersectionality with ...

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SPEAKERS

Elise, Channing, Jasmine Bradshaw

- J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Five, Episode 15: "Saying 'No' to White Feminism and 'Yes' to Intersectionality."
- J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:16
Teaching our children to be inclusive and anti-racist starts with us within the sacred walls of our home. First Name Basis is designed to empower you with the confidence you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together, we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want: a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.
- J** Jasmine Bradshaw 00:52
Hello, First Name Basis fam. I am so glad you are here, because today we are celebrating Women's History Month with a really fantastic conversation about feminism and intersectionality. Now, if you are not quite sure what those terms mean, you are in the right place, because we start out really at the root of what feminism is and then explore the branches of how dangerous white feminism can be and how important it is that we embrace intersectionality and anti-racist feminism. So my guests today are actually two of my dearest friends—Channing and Elise from The Faithful Feminist podcast. Now their podcast focuses specifically on unpacking sacred texts and how they intersect with feminism. And they focus specifically on the study guide called "Come Follow Me" from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Now I want to assure you that we are not talking church today. We're not talking religion. Today, we are talking about feminism and anti-racism. Even though church is one of the places that you can definitely use the strategies and tools that Elise and Channing

are going to share with us, I think it's really important to explicitly say that this is not a church podcast; I want everyone to feel comfortable and welcome and know that I support and embrace your religious affiliation or lack thereof—whatever that looks like in your life.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:21

So I will let Channing and Elise share a little bit more about themselves at the start of the interview. But I just have one thing that I want to tell you before we dive in. We are officially one week away from Ally Elementary and Ally Elementary Jr. So enrollment for both programs will be opening on March 29. And if you're not sure, Ally Elementary is your key to really helping your children become the anti racist allies that our communities need. And along with that, I heard you loud and clear: last time I shared Ally Elementary with you, I let you know that it's really aimed towards third graders and up. And after that I got so much feedback that y'all have young kids and you want to do this work with your younger kiddos as well. So we created Ally Elementary Jr. that is specifically geared towards preschool through second graders. It's much more condensed, and it really helps introduce this concept of allyship into their lives, and gives you practical tips and activities that you can do together. There are educational videos that you watch, and then there are hands on activities that include painting, and trying new foods, and exploring a culture bag. It's so much fun. I can't wait to share it with you! So that will be available in one week on March 29. You can just go to firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary and get on the waitlist if you're not on the waitlist already. Or if you're listening to this after the fact and it is March 29, you can use the same link firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary will take you to the enrollment. So I'm super excited to share this with you. I think it's going to be so fun, so amazing. And of course I will leave that link in the show notes. We have so much important work to do together. So I hope you'll join me for either Ally Elementary, Ally Elementary Jr., or both.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:13

Alright, here we go with The Faithful Feminists, Channing and Elise.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:19

Alright, Channing and Elise, two of my favorite people in the whole entire world. Welcome to First Name Basis!

E Elise 04:25

Hello, thanks for having us.

C Channing 04:27

We're so excited.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:29

Okay, we have so much to unpack today. Let's start with, just tell us, like, what do you do? Tell us about yourselves.

C Channing 04:37

Yeah, hi! My name is Channing. My pronouns are she/her, and Elise and I are the co-hosts of The Faithful Feminist podcast. Our podcast mostly focuses on feminist interpretation of sacred texts, especially in the LDS canon. But we really enjoy just having conversations about spirituality and feminism in general. So we're we're very, very excited to be here. Just to give a little bit of background about me, I am a white bisexual woman who enjoys witchcraft, and paganism, and animist and earth-based spirituality. I like to think of myself, like, if I had to pick a character from any movie that best describes me, I always like to say that I am the fire lizard from Frozen 2. I'm very, like, spicy and lively and like, a very much a go-getter. And, yeah, I also just love to be in the company of others. So that's a little bit about me.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:36

That really is the perfect character for you. I love that choice. Elise, what about you?

E Elise 05:44

Yeah, my name is Elise. My pronouns are she/her. I really like to read and research, I like to paint and draw, and spend some time outside. And I teach full time at the university here in Arizona. And I know that maybe some of your listeners are thinking, "Wow, how ironic that we have this episode about saying 'no' to white feminism," and yet Channing and I are both white. So. So we just want to call out our own bias and our privilege, right? We hold white privilege, and we are trying our best to work against and divest from and dismantle white supremacy alongside all of our wonderful friends, especially just like Jasmine,

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:19

Thank you for adding that. And I want people who are listening to know that that is one of the reasons I asked you to come and share about white feminism. Even though you do benefit from white privilege, I think it's so important because I want other people to see the journey, themselves on this journey, white women especially to be able to see like what that might look like to unpack that. And also my women of color who identify like I do, feeling like they might be able to send this off to somebody who maybe needs a transformation of their own. So thank you, that's really important.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:51

Um, okay, so we have a lot to unpack today. But I want to start with the basics just so that we're all on the same page. Our First Name Basis community knows that I'm really serious about vocabulary and making sure that we all kind of understand what we're talking about

about vocabulary and making sure that we all kind of understand what we're talking about when we're talking about it. So do you to have like a go-to definition of feminism that you lean on when you're having discussions, whether it be with each other, or you know, with the big wide world?

E Elise 07:18

Yeah, actually, we really love the definition from bell hooks, who was a cultural critic and feminist scholar. She writes that feminism is the movement to end sexism, sexist, exploitation and oppression. We like this definition because it addresses sexism as the heart of the problem, as opposed to like women being against men, or just different complications and maybe different assumptions that people might have about feminism. And then to unpack that one step further, sexism here in this definition would be the discrimination or prejudice based on sex or gender. So it's this movement to end sexism to end exploitation and oppression. And like we'll talk about a little bit later in the episode, sexism intersects with lots of other systems of oppression.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:03

Yeah.

C Channing 08:04

And just to maybe clarify or emphasize that even further, sexism most often means prejudice, or bias or oppression toward women and gender non-conforming individuals, by cis men.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:22

Yes, thank you for calling that out. Sometimes it needs to be said. Elise one of the things you mentioned was people having this misconception that feminism means that women hate men. So do either of you have some common myths about feminism that you just wish we could do away with? I feel like there are so many things when you try to bring up the topic, people are instantly coming at you like "Oh, so you don't want my little boys to succeed? What about the boys?" And I'm just wondering, what are those myths? Do you have any ideas about how we can respond when we hear them?

C Channing 08:56

Yeah, so we have a whole entire list of things that we can talk about with myths about feminism. And definitely speaking of, speaking to that idea that women hate men, or women just want to be men, or want to rule over them, and think like, "Oh, okay, well, women must just want to switch the power dynamics," but really, at its heart at its very best, feminism is about transformation, equity, and justice for everyone. And this includes men. Feminism is all about dissolving hierarchies. So it doesn't mean that we want a different flavor of hierarchy, like we talked about earlier, where women are at the top, where they are centered and they

dominate over men. Feminists don't want to be men. We're not ashamed of our sex. We're not ashamed of our gender. And we're not looking to tap into hierarchy and patriarchal power by being more like men or by playing by the rules and rewards of men and especially within patriarchal values. Yeah, hopefully that kind of addresses like that first, that's a really popular myth. One that we come across a lot, too. And I even remember like, early, early, early in my feminist journey, I was talking with a friend who said, "Well, I've been doing a lot of research about how boys seem to be disadvantaged in educational spheres, and girls seem to be more successful, especially in reading." And so she said, "So how are feminists working toward making sure that men can also succeed?" And I had to take a big deep breath and really think about that. And I said, "Well, at the end of the day, just like bell hooks says, feminism is for everyone." Ultimately, when we take down the power systems that play, especially in patriarchy, what we find is liberation and freedom, not only for women, but men also benefit from it as well. When everyone has equal opportunities and equal access to resources and education, then the gender disparity in education can hopefully disappear.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 10:56

Yeah, thank you for pointing out that the patriarchy hurts men too. I don't think they realize that as much as it is really present.

E

Elise 11:04

Another myth that we hear often when speaking about feminism is that feminism excludes mothers or, like, excludes stay-at-home moms. And we understand that because early waves of feminism, they focused really heavily on careers outside of the home for white women, and also things like reproductive rights and access to abortion. And there has been a little bit of cultural judgment placed on stay-at-home moms or women who work full-time in the home because of this. However, I think in its best, like, most ideal form, or best light, feminism is about women critically reflecting on and evaluating their personal lives, their social roles, their cultural expectations, and the larger systems that shape their lives. And then after reflecting on all of those things, then being able to make informed decisions about how to move forward with the ethics of care, equity and freedom for everyone. In its best light, feminism is about women and everyone being able to make decisions for themselves grounded in an ethic of care. We also think that feminism recognizes and celebrates the need for safe homes and communities in which to raise children. And again, in the best versions of feminism, women's labor is valued wherever it takes place, inside or outside of the home.

C

Channing 12:21

This is a conversation that Elyse and I have a lot in the background, this idea that women's unpaid labor is the backbone of society. They're what...we did a podcast episode, I think it was last year, where I had read an article that in Iceland, women collectively decided that they were just not going to do anything for one day. They were just going to do anything they were going to show up to work, they weren't going to do childcare, they weren't going to do housework, they weren't going to make dinner, they weren't going to do anything. And what ended up happening was the entire city came to a grinding halt. Like no one could go get food at restaurants, the men had to stay home from work because there was no one to take care of the

kids. And so I, I really love using that example, because it just goes to show all of this unrecognized and unpaid and unvalued labor really underpins a lot of what happens. Like, it makes our lives possible. And I think part of feminism, rather than disparaging that or thinking, "Oh, we'll stay at home moms are doing nothing to contribute to society." Rather than taking that approach it's looking at and valuing all the ways that we show up to the collective to try and make it better and safer for everyone.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 13:38

I really liked that you pointed out the the importance of evaluating your life and kind of taking an inventory on what am I choosing and kind of what is influencing those choices too. Because I mean, I feel like I've totally been there as someone who has worked and stayed home. But it made me think of my own family. My dad when I wasâ€”So I was born in California. And when we moved here to Arizona when I was five, my dad actually stayed home with us for a year while my mom worked. And it was such a transformational year for our family, I think probably because we saw my dad in a new light, but I think it was probably so good for my parents' relationship so that they could both see kind ofâ€”well my mom never stayed home, not like through the other person's eyes type of thingâ€”but just being able to really like hit hit the reset button on what that work load dynamic looks like in the home and then deciding from there what's best for our family.

C Channing 14:37

Right? I love that. Another myth that is really closely linked with white feminism. So we want to name it explicitly, is kind of this movement within feminism that's called "power feminism." And this is the idea that if women were to just work harder, try more, and stop complaining, that they wouldn't be oppressed. And this is kind of language that happens inside of feminism to other women. Like women are simply saying, "Okay, well if you just get to work, stop complaining about your own oppression, then you could be a powerful feminist just like me." And we also think that this really showcases feminism's really slippery slope into, and connection with, capitalism. And so when feminism only focuses on empowerment, we miss that there is also a key point in transforming communities and systems. Empowerment focuses on taking back power within the current system, and then using the power to stand up for yourself. Things like "speak up and raise hell," if we flip to the other side of the coin, we'll see that power feminism is mostly focused on individual experiences, and on the other side is an entire community that's awaiting our transformation and participation in it. It's waiting for radical change on all levels of society, not just for each individual woman on her own.

C Channing 16:01

I also think that there's conversations that we've heard happening recently, but probably have been happening all along, is this claim that feminism is no longer necessary or relevant. And we see this in arguments that some people make when they say, "Oh, well, we have a woman vice president, women can be CEOs, women have the right to vote now. And what else can you possibly need, ladies?" Like, "You have everything." Why aren't we happy? Why aren't we satisfied? And why, ultimately, can't we be quiet? But the problem with this is recognizing that one woman's experience in one part of the world in one identity is not a universal experience.

Women in other parts of the world have different experiences, which are often more violent, more frequently occurring, and way more intense. We remember in feminism that those women are our sisters, too, and feminism has to fight for everyone. And yet, even in the United States, we still have a long way to go if we're truly dreaming of transformation and equity for everyone. Additionally, this can be a good time to ask ourselves, when people say "Women already have it's so good. They already have so much," we can ask the next question. "What groups of women are we speaking of?" Are they thinking of a white, straight, cisgendered able-bodied, middle-class Christian woman? Well, then they're probably right. This group of women really does hold a lot of privilege in our current society. But feminism isn't and shouldn't only be concerned with catering to and satisfying the needs of white women. And we can even ask one question further: can a system of patriarchy that continually centers men, and is concerned with domination and control, can this system truly ever offer anyone full liberation and flourishing? We don't think that it can.

E

Elise 17:55

And finally, the last myth that we wanted to highlight here is what's called "lifestyle feminism." And this is the misguided belief that anyone can be a feminist no matter what they do, or what they believe. If you like women, or if you have sisters, or if you know a woman, or if you're a woman CEO, or if you came from a woman, then like, bam! That's all it takes: you're now a feminist. And certainly, this is not the case. And again, we're not here to try and like be gatekeepers or restrict access to feminism because honestly, the feminist movement needs more people. But when we think anyone and everyone can be a feminist simply because they want to be nice or be seen as a good person or because they know a woman, this really strips the movement of its radical political roots, and it waters it down. It waters it down oftentimes to like merchandise, right? You see t-shirts that say things like "Empowered women empower women," or just this kind of watering down of feminism to just be basic appreciation and general niceness toward and for women in general. But with both of these examples, especially the t-shirt example, feminism isn't something you can buy. Just because you have a t-shirt that says "Empowered women empower women," doesn't equal true literacy or ideals and action behind the feminist movement. So in this way, buying feminist artifacts, yeah, that's a quick and often classist way that really lets us off the hook for having to examine our own bias and values and privilege. In this way, lifestyle feminism requires no commitment to politics, to transformation, to education, or to ethics.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 19:35

Okay, when you were talking about the shirts, I had a thought, because I was at Disneyland, which we don't even need to get into the issues right now. But when I was there, there was a little, well, it was, you know, a dad, and he was wearing a shirt that said "Princess security" on it. And it was, like, funny, but it also made me think, "Why do you think she needs security? Is it because you understand that the patriarchy is a real thing? And like, if the patriarchy didn't exist, she probably wouldn't be in danger, and you want to need to be wearing that shirt?"

E

Elise 20:10

Right, that's a really generous reading. I'm hopeful that the person wearing that shirt actually spent the time to ask all of those same questions before buying it.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 20:21

Probably not. But you know, now that we have the kind of that foundation set for all of us in this conversation of the myths and the common definition that we're using, I want you to talk a little bit about the difference between white feminism and intersectional feminism. Will you tell us what white feminism looks like, and then why we should be saying "no" to it.

C

Channing 20:41

Absolutely. So white feminism, we understand, works for the well-being protection needs, and concerns of white women primarily, but also a very specific group of white women within that identity. Along with being white, this group of women is also cisgender—this means that you identify as the gender you were assigned at birth; heterosexual—this means that you're attracted to the opposite gender; middle-class; and able-bodied. White feminism fails to address systems other than patriarchy, and fails to address identities other than womanhood. White feminism is absolutely tied up in white supremacy and privilege. It has a stake in keeping the status quo of white supremacy because it affords white women power and privilege over other women. Everything we know about white supremacy, culture, and racism also shows up in white feminism. Additionally, we know that white feminism is narrow in focus and inclusion. It has a narrow definition of feminists and focuses only on individual empowerment and gaining the same power and recognition as men.

E

Elise 21:48

We also think that white feminism focuses on oppression based only on gender. Like Channing said, as cisgender, as a cisgender woman, and doesn't recognize all other areas of privilege or oppression. Author Rachel Cargle describes it this way: "Feminism is white supremacy in heels." Some of the characteristics or actions you might see within white feminism look like tone policing, spiritual bypassing, having a white savior complex, and also white women centering themselves over and at the expense of women of color. And also white feminism is concerned with performative allyship for other women, right? So when things get tough, as white women, we often tap out of other fights. We want other people to show up for us, but we don't show up for them. We want to make sure we get our needs and our concerns met first and then tell other people that it's best that they just wait their turn.

C

Channing 22:44

Mm hmm. So if we look at the other side, and really start to understand and look at intersectional feminism, we always say we can't talk about intersectionality without talking about the work of Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw, who's a scholar and a writer, and coined the term "intersectionality." This focuses on intersections of our identities, specifically our privileged and oppressed identities. Intersectionality teaches us the ways that people can hold both privilege, while also experiencing oppression. Intersectionality teaches us that one's oppression does not negate or erase our privilege in another identity. Both can exist at the same time, and they intersect with one another. We really like Crenshaw's example of roads and intersections. If we

think about it, like, a road that we actually drive on in our car, one road is for feminism. And one road is for race. And there are many other roads like LGBTQ issues, homelessness, poverty, class, so many different ways. But for today's purpose, we'll do feminism and race. And so what do we do when we're driving down the road and we meet someone in the intersection of feminism and race? Which is to say, what about women of color? Or what do we know when we meet a queer woman or trans woman? Do we know how to meet their needs, and like Crenshaw says, not leave anybody lying in the intersection that is hit by sexism, racism, homophobia, etc. We also like the definition from author Mikki Kendall of "Hood Feminism." They write, quote, "The sad reality is that while white women are an oppressed group, they still wield more power than any other group of women, including the power to oppress both men and women of color." End quote.

E

Elise 24:35

So intersectional feminism recognizes many different ways of experiencing womanhood. It expands the needs, concerns, and fights of feminism to include women of color, transwomen, disabled women, queer women, and more than just including those women, it really centers their voices and their experiences. This also means intersectional feminism sees systems of oppression as in interlocking, which is to say patriarchy is not an isolated system of oppression. No. Instead, patriarchy is upheld by and upholds white supremacy, which is upheld by and upholds heterosexism and homophobia. In this way, our freedom and our oppression are tied up with one another. So fighting sexism and patriarchy should also mean fighting racism and white supremacy, capitalism, homophobia, and ableism. Intersectional feminism calls white women to task and says, "Hey, look at your privilege. You're not only oppressed women, but you also benefit from other systems in our culture, you have a lot of work to do. So spend your privilege and fight against oppression." Intersectional feminism is explicit in its commitment to dismantling all systems of oppression, domination and hierarchy. And kind of one final note, intersectional feminism recognizes that the trickle-down effect never actually trickles all the way down. Right? So that line of thinking where white women say, "Hey, we need everyone to help us right fight for our liberation and our freedom first. And because we're at the top, once we get ours, then little by little, it will trickle down until we meet the very, very marginalized folks at the very bottom." That's the trickle down effect. But intersectional feminism says that doesn't happen. It has to be deconstruction and destruction from the ground up. It has to center the voices not just of women, meaning not just of white, cis, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class women, but it has to center the voices and needs of the most marginalized women in our societies and our communities.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 26:42

Wow, thank you for breaking all of that down. Because I feel like having a really clear idea of the differences is so important. I'm wondering if you have any examples that you can share of like things that you've seen how white feminism shows up in your life or in our lives, or what that might even look like?

C

Channing 27:05

Yes. Okay, the first way that I like to explain intersectionality is to kind of use an example from history that I feel like, I, that this is how I understand it. I feel like in white feminist circles,

there's a lot of love and appreciation for the suffragist movement. And that is the type of feminism that I was taught even growing up in my history classes. And so when I, when I first started out and moving into a feminist ethic, that that was my whole picture. And once I started digging a little bit more and discovering that my white feminist ancestors relied on Black women, women of color and indigenous women to support the suffragist efforts while making promises that the vote would also be applied to them, and then it didn't happen until 50, or 60, or 100, or never years later, that they failed in keeping their promise. And so when I think about white feminism only focusing on the needs of white women, that is one of the examples that I continually come back to because it literally already happened. And it's not like that pattern, just like it's not like we can turn around and say like, "Oh, well, we know better now. So that's never gonna happen again." It literally still only happens. And I think another example, even if we look at it today is if we're talking about empowering women, going back to that t-shirt example that you used earlier, Elyse, I think, in the United States, which is, you know, a white supremacist culture and a white supremacist country, feminism really does focus on white women, and it's all about power feminism and showing up and saying, "Look at me, I'm so empowered! I can wear this t-shirt that says, 'Empowered women empower women,' without remembering that these companies are paying women in overexploited countries eight cents an hour to create t-shirts that say, 'empowered women empower women.'" And so what about them? What about our feminism is working toward liberation, freedom, safety, bare minimum human rights for women who are all across the globe in all kinds of many cultures, and not only to feel good about our identity as a woman in the United States?

E

Elise 29:34

I like that example. And another one that comes to mind for me is that just this really basic misunderstanding and kind of privileged experience of thinking that because we're all women, then that must mean that we experience oppression in the exact same way every single time. Right? So simply saying like, "Well, because you're a woman. I know exactly what you think, what you experience, and what you face every single day, so like, why can't we just get on the same page?" And I think women of color show up and say, "Are you...kidding me?" Like, "You're not recognizing the areas of your own privilege that intersect with our oppression. But you're also not recognizing all of these other experiences of oppression that I have that you don't have."

C

Channing 30:21

There was one time where we were at an activity and we were talking about our, like women's lives as if they were a plate, and how we could choose to examine what's on our plate and decide for ourselves what we want to be there and what we want to take off. And for white women, that's a really easy conversation to have, right? Because we do have a lot of choices. And we do have a lot of power to say, "Oh, well, I'm going to take, you know, cleaning my house off the plate, and hire a house cleaner. I'm going to take, you know, cooking meals off my plate," or whatever it is, right? But um, Elyse and I were talking about it later. And we were saying, "Well, that's an easy conversation for us to have. But what about Black women?" I'm sure Black women would love to take racism off their plate, but they don't get the choice in that. So, um, yeah, again, just talking about like, in what ways do we have bias and privilege that maybe we don't even see and recognize and think, "Oh, because I have the power to make

the choices in my life than everybody else must, too." And, you know, womanhood is not a universal experience. Not everyone experiences womanhood in the same way. And so we have to recognize, in what ways are my experiences different from other people's?

J Jasmine Bradshaw 31:39

Hmm, wow, those examples are so powerful. And it made me think of I had a friend, my friend who is a woman of color, she was doing something in this building, where only people who were members of this, like, cohort could go into the building, right? So she's there, and she thought she was by herself, she wasn't sure if there was anyone else there. And she heard a knock at the door. And she went, and it was this white man knocking on the door wanting to come in. And she was like, "Well, I'm not sure if you're a member of you know, this coalition. And so I don't necessarily feel comfortable letting you in, you know, let me call somebody." And so she called and there was a white woman who came up who was in the building as well. And she's like, "What's going on?" Because this man was really belligerently saying, "Just let me come in! Are you kidding me?" type of things. And she's like, "I'm sorry. I just don't feel safe." This white woman comes up, and she's like, "What's going on?" And so she explains it. And then he says, "Well, she called me a white man." Cuz she had said, "Well, I don't know who you are. You're just this white man that I don't know. I don't feel comfortable letting you in," you know? And it's not like an apartment complex, where he would have lived there or something, it was like this art studio. And so the white woman comes up and she's explaining the story. The man says to the white woman, the white man says the white woman, "Well, she said that I'm a white man." And that woman, that was that. Like that was the end of her intersectional feminism of supporting my friend. She couldn't believe how quote unquote "racist" my friend was being by pointing out that he was white. And that that made her uncomfortable. And it was just an absolute disaster, the whole thing. And when we were talking about it, the two of us were just commenting on how clear it is that white women will be feminists to a point. And unless they've done this anti racist work, it really is hurtful to women of color.

E Elise 33:38

Yeah, that's a really good example.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:40

So speaking of men, what role do men play in the feminist movement?

E Elise 33:49

I think we, well, when Channing and I were preparing for the episode, we kind of broke it up into two categories. There are helpful roles that men can play in the feminist movement, and there are unhelpful roles. Some of the helpful roles that men might take on is to listen and believe women, and a lot of these examples are like bare minimum, right? So listening to and believing women, redirecting their platform or the spotlight to women, which is to say, to center women's voices and their experiences.

C Channing 34:20

A good example of this is sometimes when I am in a church setting, which is like, you know, both men and women and other people have other genders as well, where a lot of times, I will make a comment, and then immediately after my comment, a man will comment and say the exact opposite thing. And it really seems to feel like oh, well, because in that general community, like in that general setting, people are like, "Oh, yeah," nodding their heads, totally agreeing with this guy who just made a comment opposite of me, because he's a guy. And all of a sudden it like derails the conversation. But I remember in my ward that there used to be a person there who every time the conversation would move around, he would raise his hand and he would say, "Oh, I really liked what Sister Parker was saying," and would either like, reiterate what I had said, or backup what I had said, or even like, give me an opportunity to share more. And that's a good example of using, of men using their privilege and recenter women in the conversation.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 35:26

I really liked that you shared that because it shows that a could go one of two ways. He could have said, "I think..." and then taken what you said and repeated as if it was his own idea, because we've all been through that experience, too. But instead, he directly pointed to the source of the information which was you and then recentered you in the conversation? That's so cool.

C Channing 35:46

Yeah, it was a beautiful

E Elise 35:48

Another example that is similarly situated as this is to for men to spend their privilege. And actually in one of your episodes, Jasmine, I think it was your episode titled "What is privilege and what do I do with it?" You share the the story of Bree Newsome and James Tyson. And maybe your listeners will remember or if they haven't, they should go back and listen to that episode. But it's the story of when Bree Newsome was going to take down the Confederate flag and James Tyson went with her. And when the police showed up to electrocute the pole to try and get her down and ultimately kill her, James put his hand on the pole, and the police didn't electrocute the pole. And I think that story really also shows this intersection. Because James in this story was spending his white privilege but also tapping into some of his male privilege, too.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:32

That story always brings tears to my eyes and goosebumps. Reframing it in the way of what does it look like for you to put your hand on the pole as a white woman who was practicing feminism or, you know, a man who was trying to be in solidarity with women too

C Channing 36:48
Absolutely.

E Elise 36:49
Another few examples would be men spending time educating themselves and looking at your bookshelf. Like who who is seen as an expert in your field, and where are women's voices? And one step further, where women of colors' voices? And then finally explore how patriarchy and other systems of oppression have harmed you and taken away from you without centering yourself. So in the feminist movement, men are not the center, but we need men, because we want to arrive at a system and a society that has been transformed where everyone can experience freedom and equity, and that includes men.

C Channing 37:23
Yeah, I think this conversation around examining how patriarchy hurts men, too, is a conversation that absolutely needs to be had. I do think that it's also an intersectional issue. But looking at how patriarchy limits men and says "There's only one way to be a man. There's only one type of man that we'll accept," it looks like somebody who makes a lot of money and is super macho and masculine, kind of like this alpha male, like the alpha conference that we saw in Utah a couple of months ago. That's a great example. And recognize all of the ways that men miss out on a full and lively and vibrant experience when they participate in patriarchy as well. Patriarchy splits men off from their true authentic selves, just like it does for women. And it can be really powerful for men to reclaim their full identities within the system. And that is a really healthy way to participate in a feminist movement by exploring and finding your own power again.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:28
I really like that you pointed out men reflecting on their position in the system. I was thinking about how I've always been in more female-dominated fields. I first worked in nonprofit management, and then I worked as a teacher, and so obviously, I've always worked with a lot of women. But even so, in those fields, where there are so many women making up the base of the people who are doing the work, the leaders are oftentimes men, and it's so frustrating to me. I'm like, I wish these men would take a minute and reflect on "Should I take this job? Should I take this position?" Even though you know, you might want to and it's something you're really excited about, look at an opportunity that you're taking away from someone else.

C Channing 39:16
Absolutely. So looking at kind of the flip side, now that we've covered some healthy ways to participate in this, we can also look at unhelpful roles that men might play in a feminist movement. One I think we covered really well before is this idea of speaking for women. Sometimes that can look like yeah, taking a woman's idea or comments in a meeting and just taking them as your own and saying, "Well, I think..." and not giving credit to who originally

came up with the idea or who originally shared that idea. But also again, kind of this over-identification with women because you have a relationship with women. So yeah, like because you have a daughter, now you are all a sudden super informed about women's issues. Or now that you have a wife, you are super informed about women's issues. To those men, I would ask how much do you know about menstruation? How much do you know about women's reproductive rights? How much do you know about the pink tax? How much do you know about women's true everyday lived experience? And it doesn't just happen just because you live with them. Like, sure, you might have a little bit more context, but it doesn't automatically grant you awareness, just to live with women in your household. And finally, another unhelpful approach is just ignoring women's issues all together. Sometimes men think, "Well, I'm not a woman, so what do I possibly know about women's issues?" without recognizing that, one: you can talk to the women in your life; two, there are infinite resources out there. Read a book. Read a blog post. Follow women on Instagram. Like, literally, as I'm saying, it seems so simple. But to just recognize that women's issues are your issues, too. And the problem isn't with women, the problem is with patriarchy, and we all participate in it. And so recognizing that you can be informed and you can participate in helpful ways. And just like Elise said, we need you. We need men to participate in feminist spaces. We want you to spend your privilege, and we want you to be involved in a helpful and healthy way.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 41:31

Okay, so now that we have talked about what it is what it looks like, and what it doesn't look like, do you have any examples of what feminism can look like in someone's everyday life?

C

Channing 41:41

Oh, yes, we really do. So if we're taking an intersectional approach to feminism, one of the most basic things that we can do when we're talking about feminism in our everyday life, is to listen to women of color and center their experiences. For me one of my favorite ways to do this, because I spend a lot of time on Instagram, I look at who am I following? How many white women versus how many Black women and women of color and indigenous women am I following on Instagram? Because that's where I get a lot of my information and social interaction. And because it's in a space where I'm already participating, and I know that I'm already active, and I know that I'm already invested in, it's a really natural process to just say, "You know what, I'm going to open my audience to more perspectives. And I know that I'm going to participate. And I know that I'm going to be here because I'm interested." And the nice thing is, I just get to scroll my Instagram feed, and get all this free education in Instagram. It's incredible. It's such, it's such a cool resource when we, when we use it to expand our thinking and connect with others. Another one can be making friends. This is such an underestimated way to participate in feminism: valuing our female friendships. Broadening our friendships with other people. This can mean making friends with women of color, with Black women, and actually being real life friends, not tokenizing. But being real life friends with real life relationships. Being friends with trans women, and queer women and women all across the spectrum of every single system that we can possibly think of, because it's those personal relationships, and those personal connections that transform white feminism into perspectives that are truly effective and inclusive. Another way and this is coming like straight from our own personal experiences as white women is connecting with our own ancestry and our own ancestral traditions. There are a lot of white women, especially women who grew up in

Christian traditions that feel like patriarchy goes so far back in their family line and in their history that they feel like they have to explore and appropriate BIPOC spiritual traditions. And this isn't the case. In fact, I found so much joy and connection and peace in going back to pre-Christian times in my own ancestral line, to look at the way that women operated and acted and were valued and revered in my own ancestral and family tradition lines. And I say that also recognizing that that's a huge privilege. We know in white spaces that family history lines have been greatly preserved much better than Black women's ancestries and indigenous and women of color ancestries have been, but having an ancestral connection that you can rely on and get to know and reconnect with, can really fuel and provide all kinds of support that white women need and order to go through and do the necessary work of anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-ableism, all of these things that need our attention.

E

Elise 45:10

Another super easy way that you might try practicing feminism in your everyday life is to notice and change everyday sexist language. This can be things like looking at your sacred text and see, when does the pronoun "he" show up and try and address a group of people, even though there are women included, right? That's exclusive language when we say things like "he" to refer to all humankind, or when we address a group of people as "you guys" when there are more than just guys in the audience. Another good example might be trying to find pleasure in your body and in your state of being women. Reclaiming connection with their bodies is a radical feminist act. So looking for moments of joy, rest, and pleasure can be a really powerful feminist practice.

C

Channing 45:55

Another powerful way is to resist gender roles and the gender binary. For example, the other day, I was at the store with my son, and he said to me, "Mom, that's a pink color. and that's a girl's color, and I only want blue, which is a boys' color." And I said to him, "Well, colors are just colors, and boys can like pink, and girls can like blue." And I said, "Actually did you know like 100 years ago, pink used to be a boy's color and blue used to be a girl's color." And he was like, "No," and I, you know, have these conversations a lot, because pink and blue come up a lot. And I think it's so fascinating how even in my parenting where I try to focus on making sure my kids have all opportunities equal across the board, I have both a daughter and a son, and how this deeply ingrained cultural idea that colors are somehow gendered still shows up. But yeah, just actively dismantling assumptions around what boys can like and do and be and what girls can like and do and be.

C

Channing 46:59

And a good way to do this also is to talk about gender roles that show up in media, especially media that our kids consume. So for example, I love this story. It's so cute. So my daughter's writing a book, she's in second grade. And I told her that if she wrote a book, I would publish it for her. So once a week, we sit down together and she she writes, she works on her book. And a couple weeks ago, she comes to me and she says, "Mom, I'm done, I finished." and I'm like looking at her book, and it has like 15 pages, like done. And I was like, "Oh, okay, let me read it." So I'm going through and at first, like the story is like really picking up and getting

interested in all the sudden I'm like, "What?" the characters are like at chapel, and now all of a sudden, like, they're getting married, and she has a baby. And then the story just ends. And I'm like, um, I told my daughter, I'm like, "I'm not publishing a 15-page book that ends with you, like, with the characters getting married and having a baby." Not that those things are wrong, but that the story doesn't end there. And I was like, "Okay, you're gonna have to finish the rest of the book. There's a whole storyline that happens after you get married and after you have a baby." And that was a real moment of learning for me too, to recognize all of the shows and movies that my kids are probably consuming, that really do end with, Okay, well, the main character gets married, and she has a baby and that's it. That's the end of the story. And so I wonder if a really powerful way to look at feminism and work with feminism, especially in our parenting and educational experiences with our kids is to say, after a movie, perhaps where the female character gets married, and has a baby say, "What do you think happened after that?" or to consciously choose media and books that feature and portray women from history or fictional women to who do defy gender roles and act in ways that maybe are unbecoming of their gender, whatever that means, and really examine how the story could have or might have been different.

E

Elise 49:09

Along similar lines would be to look at your parenting and your partner relationship and talk with your partner about the mental and emotional load that women often carry. And it's far heavier than our partners carry, especially if our partners are husbands. And I know Jasmine, you actually just shared a story with us about the same thing last week, would you do you want to share it here?

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 49:31

Oh, yeah, totally. So the thing is, and it's the same with anti-racism, right? Like my husband, he is white. He benefits from white privilege, and he's male. And so he benefits a lot in our society. And he's a Christian. It's like all the things right? He has all the privileges and he recognizes that and he thinks that it's something that he needs to work on and figure out how he can leverage his privilege and all that. So a few weeks ago, we had a really deep conversation about our roles in our home, because the reality is when I had my first daughter, Violet, she's four now, I stayed home. And I loved it. It was one of the things that I felt like I chose for myself. And it was really good for our family and all of that. And then I started First Name Basis, not even imagining what it would turn into. I thought I'll make an episode a week and whatever. But now it is like a full-fledged company, and I'm a CEO, but we never went back and re-examined the roles that we play in our house and in our marriage, and all of those things, because we had already set it up. And so we didn't go back and kind of reflect on how do we need to pivot based on what's changed, aka pandemic, and First Name Basis, and all those things. So we were having a really long conversation about how my husband can be more, you know, pro-feminist in our home, and how that would include him taking on a lot more of the emotional and mental load that I carry as the mom. And so I kind of explained it to him that he has like four different steps like to, you know, a project or whatever we're doing together, it could be that I do it myself; it could be that I do it and I asked him to get me things while I'm doing it, like I'm making a grocery list, and I'm like, can you check if we have eggs can we can have, you know, tortillas? The third step is me giving him a list of how to do it or steps for how he can do it; and the fourth step is him taking it upon himself to do it without me having to ask

him or tell him, right? So we talked about that, you know, that pathway and how the goal is step number four. And I understand that, like, we were both raised in this patriarchal society where you aren't there yet. But you guys my husbandâ€”oh, I just did it. See? Do you hear it?

C

Channing 51:44

We do all the time, too. All the time.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 51:47

Y'all. My husband, he's brilliant. He's a freaking attorney. Like he does not need me to tell him what to put into the diaper bag. It's that he has recognized that he just has never had to think about that before. So after having all that conversation, it was about a week later, we were going on a trip. And I was working late and trying to get some stuff done. And I kept thinking to myself, "Oh my gosh, when I get home, I'm gonna have to pack my daughters' suitcase." I have two daughters at this point, I'm gonna have to pack both of their suitcases and pack mine and and pack the car and pack the food and all of that. And we were trying to go on this long road trip at like 7pm so that everybody would sleep. And when I got home, the whole van was packed. Like, like, I could not believe my eyes. I'm like "You have everything?! Are you sure?" Like it took everything in me not to go in and like rifle through the suitcases and make sure he packed all the right stuff. I just kept telling myself if there's anything that we're missing, we could just go to the store and grab it. And the other thing is, how many times have we gone on a trip and I've been the person forgetting something? So I think that it was it was both/and that he like took the initiative I did not ask him to he did it. And he did an amazing job. I didn't have to go to the store. But even so like understanding that he's a human being who makes mistakes. And if he forgot something, it's okay. And I think it's it's a, you know, on his side, obviously taking on that responsibility, and on my side letting go. Because I have had it before, right, you know, he has taken something on himself, and I thought I need to go behind him and make sure. I realize that is not on me right now, we are working together to get our kids out of the house and to go on this great trip. And so I felt really, really grateful. And I told him I like was very explicitly telling him that I was grateful for that. And he said "I thought to myself, 'What would Jasmine put in these?'" Like, you know, if that's the way you have to do it, that is totally fine with me because it really took a huge mental load off of me.

C

Channing 53:50

Yeah, I love that story. Like that's literally such a good example. It's Oh, it's so cool. That's so cool. One of the other things that we also feel like is really easy, but also requires a little bit of effort, but can be done in little bits every single day is to have everyday conversations about consent and start really, really early with our kids to talking about bodily autonomy, bodily safety. No means no. And modeling that for our kids. I'll never I will never forget this experience that I had when I was probably like 12 or 13. I was watching a movie with my uncle, and one of the scenes that we were watching included a man not honoring a woman's consent, and I will never forget my uncle saying as we're watching this just out loud to everyone who's saying like, "He should have stopped this is not okay." And named that that what was happening in the scene was sexual assault. And for a 12-year-old to have a man in her life to be able to point out and say like "This is wrong. That should never happen," gave me language and perspective

around those experiences for my own self. And so as parents, and even just as people in spaces where children are, we can model and give language around consent and bodily safety for all of the children in our lives.

E

Elise 55:21

I love that. I'm glad that you shared that here. And I think finally, we want to encourage people to remember that all issues that affect women are feminist issues. So things like gun violence, food insecurity, homelessness, those are also feminist issues that need our time and attention.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 55:37

Yeah, you're so right. And I mean, it goes right along with the intersectionality piece, understanding that all of these things are so interconnected. Okay, this last question. I'm so excited to hear what you have to say. I want you to tell us like if you could talk to your younger self, what advice would you give her about her upcoming feminist journey?

E

Elise 55:58

I think one, a couple of things I would share with myself, with my younger self, would be to say that women are not my enemies. I think that growing up in middle school and high school, there's cliques, and there's cattiness, and I think sometimes women think that it's really difficult to be friends with other women. But I would remind myself that that's not the case. And that making friends with women and non-binary folks is an act of resistance, because systems of oppression want to keep us silent and separate from one another. Those systems are invested in making sure that we don't build strong friendships, because when we do build strong friendships and relationships, women are really, really powerful. Other things I would say to myself is "Get ready to develop confidence in really difficult conversations." And finally, I like this passage from Mikki Kendall, who writes, "Sometimes being a good ally is about opening the door for someone instead of insisting that your voice is the only one that matters." And I try and keep that with me, even in my everyday practice of feminism.

C

Channing 57:00

For me, this question was really emotional for me as well. And I think there are a couple of things that I would say to my younger self. The first one would be, "You can trust your body, and you can trust your intuition. And if something inside of you says 'This is wrong,' you can listen to that. And it's telling you something that is worth paying attention to." Another thing that I would say is, "Read." I was a reader growing up and I am a reader even now. And I would go back and I would tell myself, "Keep reading. Keep asking the next question. Make your bookshelf more diverse. More is always better in this case. More education, more voices, love your poetry, love your fiction, love your nonfiction read from everyone that you possibly can. Because the greater inclusion that you have on your bookshelf, the more perspectives that you'll be able to have and recognize that your, the way you see the world is not the only way to see it." And finally, the last thing that I would go back and tell my younger self is, "There are women in your ancestral heritage line who are loving you and cheering you on and wanting you

to do this incredibly sacred work not only of knowing your body, trusting your intuition and finding your power as a woman, but also in recognizing that you have both privilege and responsibility to make sure that everyone in all of your circles, all of your friends make it whatever that means, right? Make it and they're there, and they're cheering you on. And it's something that you can rely on and tap into, and that in this feminist journey, if you're doing it alone, you're doing it wrong. You need friends, you need family. You need everyone."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 58:49

Oh, I knew I was gonna cry. Now I've cried on your podcast and on mine. Oh my gosh, thank you both so much. I mean, even though this is something that I have consciously been working on, I still have learned so much from you. And I learned so much from you each week when I listen to your podcast. Thank you so much. Will you just tell people as we wrap up, where can they find you? And how can they follow along?

E Elise 59:13

Sure, you can follow us on Instagram @ thefaithfulfeminists. And we also have a podcast that you could listen to on iTunes or Spotify or really anywhere you listen to podcasts.

C Channing 59:24

You can also find us online at www.thefaithfulfeminists.com where you can find transcripts and all of our episodes and a reading list if anyone is looking to become informed about feminism.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 59:38

Oh, fantastic. And I will link that reading list in the show notes for anyone listening. Just go to the show notes of this episode and it will be right there waiting for you.

E Elise 59:46

Thank you so much, Jasmine. And to all of your listeners, we're super grateful for this opportunity to be in conversation with you. We love you very much.

E Elise 59:53

Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you always so much love for the work that you do here. So much appreciation and we're really just honored to be a part of the conversation. We love you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 1:00:03

Oh, I love you both, too.

 J

Jasmine Bradshaw 1:00:05

I know I say this every single time, but aren't they amazing? I just learned so much from them. I'm so grateful that they broke down those terms for us. And I will be listening again and again, as I better acquaint myself with what it means to be an intersectional feminist. You might have heard some terms that you either weren't sure of or you've heard them before, and you're not quite understanding just yet. Maybe something like spiritual bypassing, tone policing, white saviorism, I actually have episodes for all of those things. So I will link each episode in the show notes. And I will also link that reading list that Channing mentioned, and your opportunity to go listen to their podcast as well. So definitely head to the show notes and check out those links. And make sure that you sign up for the waitlist for Ally Elementary or Ally Elementary Jr. at firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary. Just a reminder, the doors to enroll will be opening on March 29. And if you're hearing this after March 29, go check that link because the doors are probably open.

 J

Jasmine Bradshaw 1:01:14

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how deeply I know that when we work together, we can make real change in our communities. Any of the books, podcasts, or articles that I reference will be linked in the show notes. If you are looking for more detailed notes, be sure to head over to our Patreon community. On our Patreon site. I provide all of the outlines that I use to make the episodes and everything is linked there. So you don't have to take furious notes while you are listening. And don't forget to join us over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](https://www.instagram.com/firstname.basis). If you're interested in partnering with First Name Basis or doing some kind of collaboration, please email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org. All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.