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Mark & Friends

Julia Renee Holcomb: Forgiveness, Healing, and Hope
Mark & Friends Classic Conversation - Part 2 • Wednesday, July 15, 2026

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Mark & Friends Classic Conversation: Today's program continues Julia Renee Holcomb's remarkable testimony. Although the interview was originally recorded about 14 years ago, the hope found in Jesus and the power of His redeeming love never grow old.

A caring note: Today's conversation includes candid discussion of abortion, coercion, trauma, grief, and recovery. Some portions may be difficult to hear. The program's purpose is to offer truth, compassion, forgiveness, and hope in Jesus.

Welcome to today's edition of *Mark & Friends*. Listen to the broadcast, read the proofread transcript, download a printable copy, and explore today's Program Resources.

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Program Summary

In Part 2 of this *Mark & Friends Classic Conversation*, Julia Renee Holcomb continues her deeply personal testimony. She recounts surviving an apartment fire, facing pressure and coercion to undergo an abortion as a teenager, and living with the grief and trauma that followed. Yet her story does not end in darkness. Through the prayers of family, Christian fellowship, Scripture, repentance, and faith in Jesus, Julia discovered forgiveness, healing, and a transformed life. She later married, raised a large family, and began using her testimony to invite others toward life, mercy, and hope. Julia describes her story not as an accusation, but as an invitation - the same invitation Jesus extended to her to embrace life, forgiveness, and God's grace.

Key Takeaways

- God's grace is greater than our worst sin, deepest regret, or most painful chapter.
- Fear, coercion, and isolation can lead people toward decisions they would not freely choose.
- Jesus welcomes repentant hearts with mercy, forgiveness, and a pathway toward restoration.
- Christian community, Scripture memorization, prayer, and faithful discipleship helped reshape Julia's conscience and life.
- A person's past does not have to define his or her future; in Jesus, a new life is possible.
- Julia's testimony is offered as an invitation to choose life, seek help, receive forgiveness, and walk forward in grace.

Scripture References

- 1 Peter 5:7 - Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.
- Psalm 31:5 - Into Your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, Lord, my faithful God.
- Matthew 5-7 - The Sermon on the Mount, which Julia began memorizing as part of rebuilding her life.
- Matthew 5:3 - Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 1 John 1:9 - God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us when we confess our sins.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Anyone who is in Jesus is a new creation.

Quote of the Day

“God’s grace is bigger than my worst sin, and there’s always a path back to Him.”

- Julia Renee Holcomb

Broadcast Notes

- This is Part 2 of a two-part Classic Conversation with Julia Renee Holcomb.
- The interview was originally recorded about 14 years ago and is presented again because its message of forgiveness and redemption remains timely.
- Julia shares openly about abortion, coercion, trauma, repentance, healing, family, and the transforming work of Jesus.
- Listeners seeking prayer or help beginning a relationship with Jesus were invited during the broadcast to call 1-888-NEED-HIM.
- Julia also directs listeners affected by abortion toward the Silent No More Awareness Campaign at SilentNoMore.com.

Practical Applications

- Bring your guilt, grief, fear, or regret honestly to Jesus rather than hiding from Him.
- Seek a mature pastor, Christian counselor, or trusted believer who can walk with you toward healing.
- Replace condemning thoughts with the truth of Scripture about God’s mercy and forgiveness.
- Offer compassionate, practical support to a woman or family facing an unexpected pregnancy.
- Refuse to define people by the worst moment of their past; see them as people Jesus loves and can redeem.
- Memorize one passage of Scripture that will help you resist fear and remain faithful when pressure comes.

Today's Challenge

Set aside a few quiet minutes today and ask: “Lord, is there any guilt, grief, or painful memory I have been carrying alone?” Bring it honestly to Jesus. Then take one concrete step toward healing - pray with someone, contact a pastor or counselor, write down a Scripture promise, or reach out with compassion to someone who needs hope.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that Your mercy is greater than our sin and Your redeeming love reaches into our darkest places. Draw near to anyone listening who is carrying guilt, grief, trauma, or regret. Protect those who feel pressured or afraid, and surround them with wise, compassionate people who will help them choose life and hope. Give courage to confess, strength to seek help, and faith to receive Your forgiveness. Restore wounded hearts, renew families, and help each of us extend the same grace to others that You have shown to us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Program Resource Library

- [Silent No More Awareness Campaign](#)
- [Need Him - Learn more about beginning a relationship with Jesus](#)
- [Mark & Friends at Great News Radio](#)
- [Mark & Friends at WLUI](#)

Additional broadcasts, transcripts, printable PDFs, summaries, Scripture references, and program resources are available at GreatNewsRadio.org and WLUI.org under the Mark & Friends tab.

Complete Transcript

07 15 2026

**We're glad you're here, we're glad you're here,
Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.
It's so good to see you, we hope that it's clear,
Everyone loves you, we're glad you're here.**

Reading from 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 7: “Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” For many of you, welcome back to a special Mark and Friends Classic Conversation.

Yesterday we heard the beginning of Julia Holcomb's remarkable testimony. Today we'll hear how Jesus brought forgiveness, healing, and hope from one of the darkest chapters of her life. As our great news radio office manager Karen Harrison often reminds me, if it's good enough to hear once, it's good enough to hear twice.

I pray this timeless conversation encourages your heart today. Here's a portion of some of those opening remarks on today, the Wednesday edition of Mark and Friends. And I'm certain if you were tuned into the Mark and Friends, you're back to hear the rest of Julia Renee Holcomb's story.

Thank you, God, for her boldness, her commitment to being silent no more, the healing that you brought about, her transformational message, her heart for bringing hope and healing to the hurting, her commitment to her family, and just her powerful testimony. And so I'll do a little recap, and we'll start with her retelling some of where she left off yesterday. You grew up with a grandmother that knew Christ, a mother that knew Jesus and encouraged you to go to church, but there was that period of time where through divorce and some bad decisions, and we're not going to church anymore, we're not praying anymore, which led to your mom being in other relationships, you not being in this ideal situation with a loving mom and dad.

You at 16, like most 16-year-olds, get enamored by rock and roll stars, and you find yourself getting a special backstage pass with a friend, which literally put you face to face with Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, who many of our listeners will be familiar with because of the group Aerosmith or just because of his role as a judge with American Idol. You both at that point seemingly fall in love. He wants you around.

He wants you to start touring with him. You leave home, and in fact, so much so, you're like, gosh, my family doesn't even seem to love me that much. They're letting me go.

And then I guess Steven Tyler desires, because you only being 16 at the time, he became your legal guardian so you could live and travel with him. But he kind of leaves you for periods of time abandoned. You find yourself in his apartment.

I mean, you're living there. And yet, seemingly, you love each other. You get to meet his parents.

You talk about having children. You talk about getting married. And yet, as you left us yesterday after meeting with parents and his grandmother, there was uncertainty.

And like his spirit or his heart maybe began changing. You're like, wait, what's going on here? I thought we loved each other. And you're in his apartment.

You're basically without food for a time because you had left high school. You didn't graduate. You didn't have the education.

You didn't have a driver's license. So you're kind of captive in your home. You're running out of food.

But he's still calling you. He's keeping you up to date. And he said he's going to send a friend over.

And so yesterday, you kind of left us knowing that this friend was going to arrive to take you shopping. But next thing you know, there's smoke all over this apartment. You're literally starting to think you might die in this.

The front door is locked. So continue on with that story. Well, I was at that back stairway.

I was looking at that as my last hope to get out of the apartment. There was a door down in that kitchen that led outside. But the stairway was where the fire was the hottest.

There were flames coming up there. Everywhere else, it was just smoke. But this seemed to be where the fire was coming from.

And I still remember I was so panicked. I was going to try to get past the fire on those stairs. But I couldn't.

It was just too hot and burned my hand just touching the railing. So I realized that I had to take shelter somewhere in the apartment. And I remember hearing on television, seeing a commercial about Learn Not to Burn.

It said, if you're in a fire and you can't get out, look for an empty fireplace and open the flue. There was a fireplace in our bedroom that we had never used. And it was clean.

And I crawled there and I just collapsed on the floor of that fireplace. The flue was already open. It was just open and sucking the smoke up.

You could just see these churning billows of smoke going up that fireplace chimney. And I laid there, terrified. I knew that I was not going to escape.

I knew that I was about to die. And I felt frightened at death. I felt that I had committed so many grave sins that I was not prepared to die.

I thought that I deserved to go to hell. And for the first time in my life, I felt fear of God. And I remember thinking, I deserve to die.

I deserve to go to hell. I'm here because of my own choices and actions. But there was a picture of Jesus over that fireplace that had belonged to my grandmother.

It was a picture called The Light of the World. It was painted by Charles Chambers. And my grandmother had that picture hanging in her classroom when she was a first grade teacher.

And when she died, it had come to me. She had given it to me before she died. And I had taken it with me because it had always been very dear to me.

It reminded me of her and of Jesus. And even though I was living a very sinful life, I still clung to the idea of Jesus and him loving sinners. And even though I knew that I was a sinner, I still loved that picture.

And I had hung it up in the apartment. At that moment, I thought of Jesus as this little child who was merciful and forgiving. And it gave me the courage to ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.

I prayed the words of the psalm that echoed the words Christ said on the cross as he died. I prayed the words, Into thy hands, Lord, I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

And, you know, I felt so much better. I didn't feel so frightened of death. I knew that I was about to die, but I felt that somehow God had heard my prayer and that I would be all right.

And I wasn't afraid of meeting God. But I didn't go to meet the Lord that day. Instead, some firemen pulled me out of that fireplace.

They were very brave and they had to revive me. And I woke up in a hospital. In the hospital, Stephen was there.

And there were a lot of people from the band were there. Everyone was so surprised that I had lived. The doctors had told Stephen that I would probably not live.

And they had told him that if I lived, I would have brain damage because I had had so little oxygen going to the brain. They had taken the oxygen counts from my artery and my wrist. And they started asking me questions like I was just a little girl.

Do you know your name? You know, where do you live? What's your phone number? Things like that. And I was able to answer questions and they were so relieved and happy that I was alive and I wasn't brain damaged. That was just the first little victory there.

And then I was given a few days to recover. But before I could go home, the worst ordeal began. Steven came to me and he told me that I needed to have an abortion.

And I was just so struck with like a blow. I had never even dreamed of having an abortion. I knew that that was something that was just nearly legal.

It had never even been legal before. And I couldn't imagine having an abortion. I wanted my baby so much.

And I just told him no. I had never really resisted him. I'd always been very compliant and docile.

But that day, you know, we began to argue. And he gave me all the reasons why he felt that I needed to have an abortion. He had several of his attorneys there with him.

And he had a doctor there waiting to give me that abortion if I would just give consent. And I wouldn't. I told him that I wanted my baby.

And, you know, we just argued for hours. Finally, you know, we were so divided. We wouldn't even look at each other.

I remember just looking at the floor and saying no. And at that point, Steven really put the choice as a decision between him and the baby. If I wanted to keep my baby, I could hit the street.

And, you know, maybe my mom would take me back in. That was the choice. And I was just frightened.

I felt like my whole world was caving in on me. I didn't know if I could go home. I didn't know what would be waiting there for me if I did.

And I just caved in in fear. And I look back on that moment with so much regret. With all my heart, I wish I could go back and stand firm and say, no, one more time.

I know now that if I had found the courage, God would have helped me somehow. I just didn't have enough faith. I didn't have that faith in God that I needed.

And at this time, you're about 17 years old and it's in the late 70s, 1970s. Yes, that's correct. And as soon as I said yes, they moved me to another part of the hospital and they began this abortion.

It was just a nightmare. I was naked. I had not been prepared for what would happen.

I didn't understand it. The doctor stood beside me and he was holding a needle that was out of my view. I never saw that needle until it struck me.

And he told me, be very still or you could be killed or injured. And I remember hearing those words and just being in shock, thinking, what does he mean? Before I could even ask him, what do you mean? What are you going to do? He struck me from the side and hit my uterus, puncturing it with that needle. And I remember just gasping and being just shocked.

And I couldn't even speak at that point. I was just gasping. And they began injecting saline into my uterus.

And he told me, they told me that it wasn't a baby yet. They said, it's just a fetus. It's not a baby, but it will be delivered in several hours.

It's not going to hurt very much. And that was all a lie. I was taken to a part of the hospital.

I was in labor for hours and it was very painful. And right as the baby's body was to be delivered, the nurse gave me a shot and I went to sleep. The last thing I remember hearing in that hospital was the words from the nurse.

And she said, oh, she was further along than we thought. And, you know, I don't remember how I left that hospital. I remember we moved to a different apartment.

It was like a little carriage house. I was just altered. I was just so depressed.

I could hardly even sleep at night. I would wake up with nightmares, dreaming of that fire, dreaming of the abortion. And after the fire, Steven brought me my picture of Jesus.

And it was just covered with black soot. He told me that it was the only thing that had survived that fire. I took it to the kitchen and I got a little cloth wet with just water.

And it's amazing that that soot was so black, but it just wipes off with water. And I cleaned up my picture and I put it back in my room. And Steven took me to New Hampshire shortly after that, because I was having so much trouble recovering from the ordeal.

And we were in New Hampshire. We were in a Jeep and we were driving around the countryside. I remember it was a beautiful day and the sun was shining and it was chilly, but it was so pretty out there in New Hampshire.

And he began speaking to me about the abortion. And he told me that he was wracked with guilt, that he dreaded what God would do to him because of that abortion. He told me that our baby had been born alive and that the nurse had had to do something.

Before he could finish what he was saying, I was already shaking and in tears and I couldn't understand how he could even be telling me the truth. I remember thinking, how can it be true? You said the baby wasn't a baby. It was a fetus.

How could it be born alive? If it was born alive, how could they not have helped it? How could it be legal for them just to take its life? I began asking all of these questions and Steven realized that he had said too much. And he began trying to calm me down and comfort me. And he said, don't think about it anymore.

There's nothing we can do about it now. It's too late. And he told me that the baby had already died, that it was over with and that we had done the right thing.

You know, those words still haunt me today. I can't understand how anyone could say that we had done the right thing. It was a wrong action.

It had taken the life of an innocent baby and it had left Stephen with grief and guilt and remorse. And it had wounded me as well. I was personally injured by it.

And, you know, our relationship never was the same after that. We could barely look at each other without thinking of that horrific abortion. And it's hard to believe that that kind of thing goes on.

You think of that kind of thing happens in China. It doesn't happen in the United States, but it does. And of the 54 million abortions that have happened in the United States, you know, more than one in three women have had an abortion, but 60% of those abortions involve coercion.

That is just a shocking statistic that women are being coerced into abortions. But it's happening here in the United States, just like everywhere else where abortion is legal. You know, the one thing I like to tell people is that for a woman who's had an abortion is that they fear often, like I did, that they've separated themselves from God in a permanent way.

That this is such a grave sin. There's no pathway back. But my experience taught me that God's grace is bigger than my worst sin and that there's always a path back to him.

He's there with his arms wide open if we are willing to do the hard work of repenting and rebuilding our lives with him. Steven sent me home within about a year. And when I got home, I found to my surprise that things were much better than they were when I left.

My mother had married the man that she was living with. They had a child. I had a little brother who was about two years old at that time, and they had returned to church.

They wanted him to go to church. And so they had started attending a United Methodist church. And, you know, they still had a long way to go in that conversion process, but they had started, you know, they began the process.

And at that point, my mother, I believe, was praying for me because I was just a wreck. And they were going on a church retreat. It was one week family camp at the Oregon coast.

And my mother said that I should come with him. She told me that I could come along. And, you know, at that time, I wasn't really interested in going to church.

I didn't really want to go to church activities, but I loved the beach, and I wanted to go with him to the beach. So I said, okay, and I went along. And that is where God just took a hold of my heart.

And when I got there, they separated us out into, they put me in with the young adults. I had not been around anybody my own age in so long. And these young people were so different than the people I met in the rock and roll culture.

They were so wholesome. And they began each morning with Bible study and prayer, and they sang hymns together. And I remember a real turning point came for me one night.

We were down on the beach. They built this huge bonfire. We had marshmallows, and we were singing hymns and camp songs.

And I could see that these kids had something that I didn't have and that I needed. They had Jesus in their lives. They had Jesus in their hearts, and I wanted that for the first time in, you know, just years, and that God would forgive me.

And I asked Jesus to come into my heart. But when I came home, you know, I had a lot of work to do. I had to change my life.

I had a lot of the old friends that I had known before inviting me to parties, and I had to just break off those friendships. I was baptized. I began attending a little Baptist church where I went to college, Maple Lane Baptist Church.

And that was another turning point for me. The pastor at that little church had a young adult youth group, and he would tell the young adults, you need to resist temptations when they come your way. And if you're going to resist temptation, you need to meditate on the Gospels.

Think about God's Word. So if you want to have God's Word in your heart to meditate on, you need to memorize Scriptures. He said that we should start with Matthew 5, 6, and 7, the Sermon on the Mount.

And I began to do that. I started memorizing Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That was the first verse.

I started there, and over a couple of years, I memorized those Bible verses, and God used that to form my conscience and change my heart. You know, over that time, I began to pray and read my Bible. And I began to be a different person.

I embraced chastity and celibacy as a single adult, and I just became a completely new person, completely different. That is when I met my husband, and he was just the best thing that ever happened to me. He had just graduated from college as a chemical engineer.

He had played football in college. He went there on a scholarship. He had been to a fiesta bowl, and he had this great fiesta bowl ring.

And, you know, we fell in love, and I told him about my past relationship with Steven. And he was grieved for me, but he could see that I was a woman that belonged to Christ. He did not judge me or define me by my past relationship with Steven.

He looked at me as someone who belonged to Jesus. And we began our life together as man and wife. We married, and today we have a beautiful family.

God has been so generous with me. He's given me six sons and a beautiful daughter. And I just can't say enough about the goodness of the family.

I think that the family is just one of the most beautiful gifts that God can give us. To someone who's Catholic who's listening to this, if they've had an abortion or participated in one, I would encourage them to go to confession. If you're not Catholic and you've had an abortion or you've participated in one, I would say just ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Get down on your knees and pray for God's forgiveness, because He loves you and He wants to forgive you. All we need to do is humble ourselves and ask. That's the first step.

Julie, we only have like a minute or so left, so I'd like to close out the program with two things. How can we as a radio listening family pray for you and your family and the ministry and the platform that God has given you to help women, help men see the importance of life, life at all ages? And then also, could you close out our program with praying for those that might be thinking about having an abortion or going to an abortion clinic or giving up? Maybe you could pray for them to draw near to God. Okay.

Well, why don't we start with that? Lord Jesus, I want to ask that you would open the hearts of any of our listeners who might be considering having an abortion and encourage them to stop and think again and choose life. Lord, I pray that you would open their hearts to life, to embrace life, embrace life as they were embracing you as a tiny child in Bethlehem. And Lord, I pray that you would come to them with your mercy, grace, and your help.

Help them as they struggle with preparing for a new life. Help them to make a place in their home for a new baby. And in thy name we pray, Lord.

Amen. So I guess in order to close out this story of mine, I guess I want to just let people know that my story is not about an accusation. I'm not accusing myself, even though I'm a great sinner, or Steven or my mom or anyone.

My story I see as an invitation. It's the invitation that Jesus extended to me, an invitation to embrace life, to embrace forgiveness and God's grace, and walk forward in God's mercy and grace. Well, Julia, you're a hero of mine now.

I appreciate the courage of you sharing, of being transparent, of being vulnerable. And yet seeing that God loves you regardless of any past mistakes you have made and how you've embraced that and grown with that and have this family of seven and a loving husband and a church family and how you're thriving and using your gifts, your story, your background testimony to bring healing and hope for others. So kudos to you.

Great job. Thanks for being available on this edition of Mark and Friends and sharing your story. I did post an old photograph of you and Steven Tyler and then a more modern updated picture on our Facebook page, the radio station Facebook page, and at GreatNewsRadio.org. But if our listeners are tuned in and know somebody that may be contemplating an abortion or have had an abortion and could benefit by this program, encourage them to log on to GreatNewsRadio.org and you'll see Julie's name under our archive program's link.

So thanks for being available these past two days. No, it's nice to visit with you. If any of your listeners want to see more pictures of me or pictures of my paintings or information about events where I'll be speaking, they can go to my Facebook page at Julia Renee Holcomb, and I have a lot of things posted there.

What was that again? Julia Renee Holcomb. R-E-N-E? Yes. Julia Renee.

And also to anybody out there who might have had an abortion like myself and wishes to join the Silent No More campaign in expressing regret for their abortion, they can go to silentnomore.com and just anonymously, you don't have to say who you are, you can just register there that you've had an abortion, but that is something you regret. You know, the pro-choice movement likes to characterize abortion as a choice, not something that is damaging to women, but they characterize it as pro-woman. My experience is that abortion is not pro-woman.

It leaves a trail of victims, and the mother is among them. So if you're post-abortive and you'd like to acknowledge that regret for your abortion, go to silentnomore.com and you can do that there. Wow.

This concludes my 45-minute conversation with Julia Renee Holcomb, and I don't know if you were like me, but a number of times throughout this story I had to wipe tears away from my eyes. Thank you God for Julia's story and testimony and growth in you, and thank you God for your extravagant love for all of us. Don't you just want to praise the Lord for how good he is? Well, this and yesterday's program is archived, so if you want to hear it again or paste the link into an email for a friend, please do that, and if you'd like to talk to a trained counselor about having a relationship with God and learning about His love for you, call 1-888-NEED-HIM.

That's 1-888-NEED-HIM. Thank you for joining us for this special Mark and Friends Classic Conversation. Although this interview was originally recorded about 14 years ago, the hope found in Jesus and the power of His redeeming love never grows old.

We invite you to continue exploring today's conversation by visiting GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org and click on the Mark and Friends tab. There you'll find today's broadcast and additional resources to help you continue growing in your faith. Thanks for listening.

Thanks for being a part of our radio listening family. This is Mark Burns with the Ministry of Great News Media. God bless you and have a great day and night.

Thank you for listening and being part of the *Mark & Friends* radio listening family.