



Meredith: Hi, friends. I am so excited to welcome you to the first ever Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast. My name is Meredith Brock, and I am here with my friend and co-host, Kaley Olson.

Kaley: Hi, Meredith. Well, I can hardly believe that this is real. You know, there's been talk of starting a podcast around the office for a while, and I'm glad that we finally carved out time to make it happen this year. Proverbs 31 has been around for over 25 years now, and we are so excited to try out this new adventure together.

Meredith: Twenty-five years is a really long time, but, you know, what's really amazing to me is we still have women on our staff who were a part of the first ever group of ladies who received the Proverbs 31 stapled newsletter that they mailed out, clip art and all, way back in the day, but the rest of our audience has really grown to millions of women across the globe. We have our Online Bible Studies community, the First 5 app community, readers for our devotions, people who follow us on social media. It's really remarkable to see how the Lord has grown this ministry.

Kaley: Yes. Yes. It's so true, and it's so cool to think of the broad group of women that God lets us minister to each day. I mean, we have over four million people collectively who follow us on social media.

Meredith: Wow.

Kaley: In that group, there's a ton of different kinds of women. Some who have been following along since the beginning of the ministry might be empty nesters now, and then we've got a whole group of younger women who are just starting out in life, so we really are a ministry for any season of life.

Meredith: It's really honestly, that little piece, that little sliver of our DNA is one of my very favorite things about Proverbs, that we represent kind of all walks of life, all stages. It's oftentimes so easy to look only to our peers when we're struggling with something or when we're trying to process a decision, because we feel like they get us. They know where we're at. They're at that same stage and season as us, and it's easy to say to ourselves, "How could someone older or in a different season of life

possibly relate to the stigma of being labeled a millennial?" I'm not a millennial, so I definitely don't get that, but I have lots of millennials in my life. Or, "How can a young 20-something have a proper perspective on what life looks like as a mom with kids, or a successful businesswoman, or an empty nester?"

Meredith:

It's just so easy to get stuck in your lane and in your season and only really hear from people who are in that same season of life. But, you know, one of the most essential gifts and helpful gifts in life is that we look to other people in different seasons and that we know that biblical truth is biblical truth and can be applied to any season, no matter what.

Kaley:

Yes. I love what you just said, Meredith, about truth, and it paints a picture for us of what the body of Christ should look like, that we should all look to each other to apply that truth and be able to lean on each other. That's why we started this podcast. Every episode will feature a biblically based message from one of our staff members or friends of the ministry and then a discussion on how to apply that wisdom to different seasons of life. We want to meet women where they are in the good times and the not-so-good times that we all experience and to intersect God's Word right there.

Meredith:

Yes. Our mission here at Proverbs 31 is and always will be to help women know the truth of God's Word and live that truth out, because we know that when it does, it truly will change everything. It will change the way you think, the way you react, the way you love your family, your friends, the way that you go to work. It will change every minute of every day. Today, we are going to start our podcast off with a foundational teaching. If you can get this teaching tucked deep inside your heart, I know that it will change the way that you look at life and the relationships that matter to you the very most.

Kaley:

Yes. To begin our first ever podcast message we have the president of Proverbs 31 here with us today. Welcome to the show, Lysa.

Lysa:

Thank you guys so much. I love the discussion you're talking about with seasons. You know, sometimes in nature, seasons announce themselves in a very noticeable way, but in our life, sometimes seasons aren't quite so pronounced. It's not like you wake up one day and the temperature of your life has changed, announcing, "Hey, Meredith. Hey, Kaley. You're entering into a new season." Right? I love that in nature God announces those seasons, but in our own life we've got to recognize those seasons. I think one of the most important things to do is to have a habit in your life to not only recognize changing seasons in your life, but also realize that when you change from one season to another, it's a wonderful transition time to let some things go.

Meredith:

Oh. Wow.

Lysa: What really kind of clued me in to start thinking about this is in my travels, there was a speaking engagement that I went to up in Connecticut. When I went, it was in the fall, and I remember driving down the street, and there were so many trees broken in half. There were branches everywhere. It looked like a hurricane came through, but I knew no hurricane had come through Connecticut, right? So, I was asking the lady who picked me up at the airport. I was like, "What in the world has happened to all these beautiful trees?" She said, "Well, it's very interesting that you ask that question. You see, we had a very early snow storm this year in the fall before the leaves had a chance to fall off the trees."

Lysa: You know, in the fall, during this changing season, the trees release their leaves. When they release their leaves, then they can take on the added weight of snow, but this snow came before the trees released their leaves. The trees could not handle the heavy burden of holding on their leaves from the fall season and taking on the snow in the winter season. Because they refused to release or the snow came before they had a chance to release, then a breaking happened.

Lysa: Today, I want to talk about no matter what season of life you're in, number one, recognizing that with seasons there needs to be a recognized transition. I'm encouraging that that recognized transition is, "What do I need to release?" One of the best activities of release is forgiveness. I think that there's such a multiplied impact of unforgiveness. If we hold on to unforgiveness as we step from this season into the next season, then a breaking will happen, just like the picture of those trees. When we hold on from one season into a new season, we are gonna take on too much, and there's this beautiful thing called releasing that can happen if we will intentionally recognize that forgiveness is a beautiful transition point from one season to the next.

Lysa: So, I want to go to the Bible and really illustrate the multiplied impact of unforgiveness, but also the beautiful reality of what can happen when we choose to forgive. One of my favorite verse in the Bible is Genesis chapter 50, verse 20. It says this. "You've intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." I love that verse.

Lysa: I love taking that verse sometimes and using it in a situation where someone has deeply hurt me or offended me, and I will often preach a message to myself. "Look, Lysa. That person intended to harm you," or even if I feel like the enemy is causing some attack in my life, "Look. The enemy is intending to harm you, Lysa, but God intends it for good. God can take anything and use it for good. It will not only be to help you get better in your life, but it will be for the saving of other people. It will give you an experience by which you can relate to fellow humans and help them as well."

Lysa: Love that verse, but the context of this story and what Joseph, the person that said this verse, what he had to go through to get to this revelation, well, actually it was 13 years of extreme hardship, and this extreme hardship required Joseph to get to this place, but Genesis 50 comes after many seasons and after Joseph has gone through a process of learning to forgive. "You intended to harm me," he's saying this to his brothers, "But God intended it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Lysa: Now, that's in Genesis 50. Let's go back and find the true context of this story. Genesis 37, it starts off by saying, in verse two, "This is the account of Jacob's family line." Now, first of all, I want to say something. If somebody is about to give an account of their family line, I would expect a couple of things. I would expect it to go in order. I would expect them to start off with Jacob's older son and work down to the youngest son, right? And I would expect them to highlight the good parts of Jacob's family. I would not expect them to start off the family line by highlighting one of the younger brothers, and I definitely wouldn't start out by highlighting some dysfunction in the family, and yet—

Meredith: Right. That's usually not a good opener.

Lysa: And yet this is part of the beauty of the Bible, that God allows His divinity to be mixed and intermingled with messy humanity.

Meredith: Yeah. That's right.

Lysa: That is what we see in Genesis 37, verse two. This is the account of Jacob's family line. "Joseph, a young man of 17 ..." See? This is already bothering me, because Joseph is one of the younger brothers. I don't know why we're starting with Joseph, but wait. It gets even better than that. "He was out tending some flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. He brought their father a bad report about them." So, you see, the dysfunction is already being highlighted here. Not only are we starting out with Joseph, which seems odd to me, but we're also starting out with Joseph tattletaling on his brothers.

Female: Joseph, Joseph.

Lysa: That's right. You see, Joseph was 17, and when you're 17, sometimes you don't know what you don't know.

Female: That's the truth.

Female: Right.

Lysa: Joseph, I think it's important to know too that Joseph has a major calling on his life. God is gonna use Joseph to be a leader, but sometimes leadership comes in an immature package. That immature package is what Joseph is about to put on display here. It says, "Now, Israel ..." verse three. Israel's another name for Jacob, which just to give you a little Bible history here, Jacob ... This family line that we're talking about, from Jacob, is going to come 12 sons.

Lysa: These 12 sons are going to make up the 12 tribes of Israel. So, this is the birthplace, if you will, for this entire nation of Israel, the people that were prophesied by God to Abraham that God would bring people that would outnumber the stars and the sands, right? Now, we see it coming about. Here comes this family line. Here comes the whole nation of Israel, and it's going to start out from this family line, where we already see some dysfunction. I don't know about you. That kind of gives me a little hope about my family line.

Meredith: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Lysa: Now, Israel, or Jacob, loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Hello. Dysfunctional clue number two, right? ... because he had been born to him in his old age. He made an ornate robe for him. When his brother saw that his father loved him more than any of them, how do you think that was working for the whole family dynamic? Not very good, because his brothers, it says in the scripture, they hated him. Joseph's brothers hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. So, in the middle of all of this dysfunction, Joseph has a dream, but instead of Joseph being self-aware enough, like, "Hey. Maybe I should probably keep this revelation, this dream, to myself." No. Joseph's 17. He don't know what he don't know, so here we go.

Lysa: Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had. We were out binding some sheaths of grain in the field, and then suddenly my sheaths rose, and it stood upright. Your sheaths, they gathered around my sheaths and bowed down to it." Now, y'all, I'm sorry, but Jo Jo, come on.

Meredith: I mean, Joseph, come on!

Kaley: Yeah!

Lysa: That's like going up to somebody who already doesn't like you and being so braggadocios like, "Oh. You think you don't like me now. Well, one day you're gonna bow down to me, okay?" But Joseph's 17. He don't know what he don't know. Leadership, this is a leadership revelation that God has given him, that he is going to be a man of leadership, but he is disqualifying himself from being able to lead these

brothers, because he has not properly handled this responsibility of leadership that he's been given.

Lysa: It says now that his brothers hated him. "His brothers," it says in verse eight, "His brothers said to him, 'Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?', and they hated him all the more because of this dream and what he had said." You would think at this point that Joseph would learn to tone it down. Nope. Nope, because when you're 17 ...

Kaley: Joseph. Joseph!

Lysa: ... you don't know what you don't know, right? He has another dream in verse nine, and he tells this other dream to his brothers. So, he goes to his brothers, he says, "Listen. I had another dream, and this time the sun, and the moon, the 11 stars were bowing down to me." Well, when he told his father, as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother, and I, and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Lysa: Now, Joseph's brothers, it says in verse 12, they go out to tend to their father's flocks near Shechem. The father, Jacob, or the Bible also calls him Israel, is going to send Joseph to check on the brothers. Well, when the brothers see Joseph coming from a distance, if it was modern day, they would start texting each other, "OMG. Here comes that dreamer," right? This is not gonna be a welcome reception. We find that in verse 18, but they saw him at a distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. Verse 19, "'Here comes that dreamer,' they said to each other. 'Come. Now, let's kill him, and throw him into one of these cisterns, and say a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.'"

Lysa: All right. One of the brothers says, "Well, let's just wait a minute. Maybe we shouldn't kill him." Then another brother says, "I know. Instead of killing him, let's make a profit from him." It says in verse 26, "Judah said to his brothers, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay hands on him. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood,' and his brothers agreed." Verse 28, "So, when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for 29 shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt."

Lysa: Now, I want to say at this point that what's happening here to Joseph, we cannot miss the humanity of the experience he's having. Okay. Really, let's think about this. I mean, we can laugh about the situation, but when you're in the midst of a very difficult situation, and this would be very difficult, all you can see is what's in front of you, but here's what I want to challenge everyone listening today. There's what we see, and then at the

same time, there's what God is doing. The brothers are having a discussion about what do they do. They come up with a plan to tear the robe, to dip it in animal's blood, to take it to the father, convince the father that Joseph has died, and Jacob, his father, is weeping for him.

Lysa: Verse 36. If you write in your Bible, I want you to circle this first word of verse 36, "Meanwhile," and if you happen to be taking notes today for this podcast, I'd like for you to title this message, "There's always a meanwhile." "Meanwhile," it says in verse 36 of Genesis 37, "Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard." Now, for time's sake, I want us to go all the way to Genesis 39, which is where Joseph picks back up, but while we're making this transition, I want you to really think. Think about what Joseph felt right now. Think about how Joseph would have analyzed his life, right now, in this season. All Joseph could probably see was the rejection by the brothers.

Meredith: So painful.

Lysa: But remember, there's what we see, and then there's what God is doing. Those two realities are always operating not only in Joseph's life, but in our life as well. In our life, there's always a meanwhile. What Joseph sees as a rejection God is seeing as a protection of the calling on Joseph's life. Remember, God had given Joseph a vision to be a leader. He just didn't handle that situation at 17 very well, and so his brothers rejected him, and because he could not lead there, God gets him out of a situation where he cannot fulfill his calling and puts him in a situation where he can practice leadership, because God is more interested in developing Joseph's character to match his calling than in comforting Joseph and getting him out of the situation that he's in.

Lysa: I guarantee you as Joseph is being probably bound and led by these strangers into a strange land, he is probably begging God, "Don't let this happen. Let my brothers feel bad for what they've done. Let them come and get me. Please, let my father see the truth, that I'm not really dead." But all the while, God is loving Joseph too much to answer Joseph's prayer request. Now, don't miss this, because it does not feel like a good God should allow this kind of situation, but here's one of the very complex realities of God. We serve a God who will allow hurt, but before you park on that statement, I want you to also remember, we also serve a God who will take that hurt and use it for good.

Lysa: Remember, one of the blessings of Joseph's story is we can read it with Genesis 50:20 in mind, where Joseph eventually gets to the point, "You intended to harm me, but God will use this and has used this for good, for the saving of many lives." Right? But Joseph doesn't see this now. However, one of the blessings of reading this story is that while we know Joseph can't see it, maybe by reading his story we can start to see it in

our life. I want you to think about a situation where someone's really wronged you. Could it be that what you felt was a terrible rejection, that God actually is using it or has used it as a protection of a calling that God has in your life? You may not feel it. You may not see it. You probably do not want to live through it. However, we get to see it in Joseph's story, and that gives me so much encouragement.

Lysa: Listen. I'm telling you what. Over these last couple years of my life I have experienced some very extreme rejection, some deep hurt, some deep pain. Sometimes the only thing that helped me release the pain of that season, so I could move on freely into this season without breaking, was even before I could see it, standing on the reality, what they intended to do to harm me God will use for good, and it will be for the saving of many lives. I'm telling you that one verse has saved me. That's why I think it's so important for us to look at this.

Lysa: Now, at this point, now Joseph is in Potiphar's home. Genesis 39, verse one, "Now, Joseph's been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian, who was one of the Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him there." Now, don't miss this. Despite the fact that Joseph was in pain, despite the fact that he was still wrestling with his brothers' rejection I'm sure, he still honored God right where he was. He still had to make the choice to release that situation and let God take care of it, even though his brothers weren't coming to him saying, "We're so sorry for what you did."

Lysa: However, Joseph was somehow able to set that aside and still honor the Lord right where he was at. We know that from verse two, "The Lord was with Joseph, so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of the Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favors in his eyes and became his attendant, and Potiphar put him in charge of his household." Okay. Really think about this. Now, what is Joseph doing? He's leading. He's practicing leadership. He's just been put in charge of a household, and he entrusted everything that he owed to Joseph's care. Okay.

Lysa: Things don't go great for Joseph. At this point, I want us to just pause and think. We want Joseph's story to tie up in a neat, nice bow. Okay. Just keep Joseph is there. Joseph has finally reached a good place, so let's just keep him there, but remember, God is developing Joseph's character to match his calling. Joseph is practicing leadership. Now, Potiphar's wife, it goes on to say that she takes a liking to Joseph. Actually, it kind of, loose translation, but basically she thinks he's hot. Okay?

Meredith: Oh. Potiphar's wife. What?

Lysa: I know. I know. It gets real spicy up in here. I'm just telling y'all, whoever thinks that the Old Testament is boring, nope.

Meredith: No.

Kaley: No.

Lysa: Because actually, the way that she phrases it, and I will give you a direct quote from the Bible, in Genesis 39 verse seven, "And after a while, Potiphar's wife took notice of Joseph and said, 'Come to bed with me.'"

Meredith: Whoa. Whoa. Settle down there, tiger!

Lysa: She makes advances towards Joseph several times. Joseph resists, but eventually she gets so tired of Joseph resisting, there's an encounter where he resists her one last time, she falsely accuses Joseph, and Joseph gets thrown into prison. Okay? You got to read all the details of the story.

Meredith: Wow. That's like tabloid worthy right there.

Lysa: Go back and read it on your own. It is. It is. Why do we want to watch reality TV when the Bible is this good?

Meredith: Yeah. I know, right? Huh?

Lysa: All right. Here we go. Verse 20 of Genesis 39, "Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined." Okay. Now, look. Remember? There's what Joseph sees, and then there's what God is doing. Joseph sees a problem. Joseph sees commotion. It seems like unnecessary problems and commotion that Potiphar's wife is putting him through, false accusations. That's painful, right? But what Joseph sees as a problem and as unnecessary commotion God is going to see as a promotion of Joseph's leadership, because look at the very next verse.

Lysa: We're halfway through verse 20, "But while Joseph was there in prison, the Lord was with him, and he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So, the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in prison." It's a promotion, y'all. He is getting promoted to be in charge, to lead even more. He's not just leading a household now. Now, he's leading all those in prison. He's putting together systems. He is practicing leadership on some real hard people, y'all. If you can lead the people in prison, if you can lead there, you might be able to lead anywhere, right?

Lysa: Look at how though God is entrusting more, and more, and more, because remember, the calling on Joseph's life is to be a leader, and the

calling on our life is probably not gonna take shape exactly the way we would want it to take shape, but we can look at Joseph's story and get so much encouragement from that. It says in verse 23, "The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Now, while he's in prison, he meets two people, very significant encounters, a cupbearer and a baker. Things don't go well for the baker. You can go read all about that.

Lysa: But with these two men he interprets dreams. Things go a little bit better for the cupbearer. The cupbearer eventually gets released from prison, and Joseph says ... We can see how Joseph is still not happy about his situation, even though he is honoring God, and God is giving him success. Remember, there's what Joseph sees, and then there's what God is doing. This is such a clue. Joseph doesn't really see this grand plan of God unfolding, right? Just like I often don't see that as well.

Lysa: So, look at this in verse 14 of Genesis 40, "But when all goes well with you ..." This is Joseph talking to the cupbearer, "Remember me and show me kindness. Mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in this dungeon." That does not sound like a man who's like, "That's okay. There's what I see, and then there's what God is doing," right?

Lysa: Just like when I'm in the middle of being deeply hurt by people, when people say things about me that are not true, when I feel the sting of rejection, I am not going, "That's okay. Whoa, man. It's God's protection. It's God's promotion. I'm just gonna walk in that," but maybe as I mature, maybe I can look at Joseph's story, and I can start releasing some of those things, so that I can take on the beauty of what God wants to entrust me in this next season.

Lysa: So, Joseph does not feel like he's been given a promotion here in prison, and he's probably aggravated, because the cupbearer gets out. The cupbearer does not remember Joseph. He doesn't remember him, because look at this in Genesis 41, verse one, "When two full years had passed ..." that cupbearer had left Joseph in that prison for two full years. However, I want you to think about something really important. If the cupbearer would have gotten out and mentioned Joseph to Pharaoh, Joseph may have been released from prison. However, that would not have been a blessing for the calling on Joseph's life, because Joseph had to stay there for two more years to wait for Pharaoh to have a dream, because now the cupbearer is going to remember Joseph.

Lysa: What we learn in Genesis 41, the cupbearer remembers Joseph when Pharaoh can't find anyone to interpret the dream, and he's like, "Whoa. I just had a V8 moment," right? "There's this Hebrew man. He is in the

prison. He can interpret your dream." I want you to look at Genesis 41, verse 14, "So, Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought up from the dungeon." You know, when it is God's right time, it'll be immediate. God loves us too much to answer our prayer at any other time than the right time. So, Joseph is now gonna have an audience with Pharaoh, which is crucial, because Joseph's calling on his life it to be a leader. If he would have been released from prison, he would never had an audience with Pharaoh, except right now. Two years had to pass for this moment to happen.

Lysa: So, Joseph then interprets Pharaoh's dream. What basically the dream is is that Pharaoh's dream reveals that there's gonna be seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine. When Joseph presents the interpretation of the dream, he also is presenting a system by which Pharaoh can ensure the safety of the people. Now, where would Joseph have learned to take a dream and turn it into leadership systems that will actually work to help people?

Kaley: In prison.

Lysa: Well, he learned it at Potiphar's house, when he was held in Potiphar's house. He was a slave there, but he led Potiphar's house. He learned how to develop systems. Where else did he learn? In prison, an even bigger place to practice developing systems. You see how what Joseph saw as a rejection, what Joseph saw as a problem, God actually saw as a protection of his calling and a promotion to help Joseph get where he needs to be. Pharaoh likes Joseph's plan so much that he then puts him in charge. He becomes the second most powerful man in all of the world.

Kaley: Wow.

Lysa: He goes from prison to power in an instant, because it was God's right time, but it's kind of like what people say to me about my books that have appeared on a best seller list. People often say, "How does it feel to be an overnight success?" I'm, like, "Girlfriend, that is called being an overnight success that took 25 years in the making," right? See, Joseph was not taken from prison to power in an instant actually. He had been prepared. Now, he's almost 30 years old. It took 13 years.

Kaley: Wow.

Lysa: So, what happens eventually is there are seven years of plenty. Then there are seven years of famine, and the famine extends all the way to Israel, which is where Joseph's brothers are. So, the brothers come to Egypt looking for food, having no idea that Joseph is in power. Then they go through a process of engaging with Joseph. Joseph recognizes them. They don't recognize him, and Joseph really has to work through some forgiveness, but look at where Joseph lands. He lands in Genesis

50:20. "What you intended to harm me, God intends to use for good, for the saving of many lives."

Lysa: For this week, I want to just kind of park here and park on this reality that always in our life one of the most crucial things we need to remember about forgiveness is what we see is not all that there is. There's what we see in the situation, the hurt, the betrayal, the person whispering about us or back talking about us, or the person doing us wrong, that's what we see, but I wonder if we could just take a step back, release some of that, so that we are free to take on a new revelation from the Lord, because the Lord, at the same time, is doing something good. We may not feel good, but we can stand in the truth and in the courage, after reading Joseph's story, that good is there.

Lysa: All right. Talk to me. Next week, we're gonna talk a little bit more about how do we actually forgive and some of the dangers, the multiplied impact of unforgiveness. But for this week I want to just go ahead and sit in this place. I call this a foundational teaching, because if we learn to forgive, I promise it will change the way we see our lives, and it will change the relationships that we have in our life. You know, one of the best times to forgive is before we're ever offended.

Lysa: Maybe we can read the story of Joseph's life and trust, really trust that God is gonna use what feels like an offense from somebody, that God can use it in our life, and so we have a choice to maybe not even get to the place where we're so offended that we need to forgive. Right? But for those places that we do need to forgive, like talk to me, what's good about this? What's hard about this? What feels courageous, like, "I can do this," and what feels like, "Oh, girl. I cannot even do this"?

Meredith: Yeah. Right. Well, I think one of the things ... Lysa, I wish you guys could see my paper, because I just took a whole page of notes, and my brain is just spinning on all the things. I feel like the Lord is talking to me in my heart right now, you know? One of the things that really grabbed me was thinking about those seasons that Joseph went through. I jotted down a list. He was basically a 17-year-old, naïve punk, if you will, you know? ... just didn't even know that season of life was one thing. Then he moved into the next season of Potiphar's household. Then he moved into another season of being in jail, and then he moved into another season of this palace season and this great amount of weight and authority that he had.

Meredith: You said something early in the podcast that I was like, "Whoa. What?" I don't know if you said it or I just thought it in my mind, but I wrote down, "Unforgiveness can hold you captive in a season you don't want to stay in." I just think had Joseph held onto what his brothers had done to him when he was 17 years old and a naïve punk, he would have turned into a bitter, angry man, who couldn't have served in Potiphar's house and

turned away a beautiful woman, but instead It's so hard for me, because I want Scripture to tell me how he knew to let go of that, you know? But I think there's some beauty in that the Lord's exchange with him that we'll never know.

Meredith: I know that he had to have, because he upheld his integrity and his character, and if unforgiveness is present in your life, your character slowly gets chipped away, because bitterness is just held in your heart. You know? The other thing that really stood out to me in a huge way, and I just think it's interesting looking who's sitting here at the table right here recording this podcast, and that is that Lysa's been leading for a really long time—

Lysa: I'm the old woman.

Kaley: No.

Meredith: ... and has led this ministry for over 25 years. You know? I've been with the ministry over six years now, about six years, but I've been leading for a little bit longer than that, but surely not 25 years. You know? Kaley is just cutting her teeth on leadership, you know, and just really kind of stepping into this. I think, you know, I want to ask you, how have you ... or has there been seasons in your leadership and even in your personal life where it's been easier or when it's been harder to recognize that there's more going on than what I see? You know? And how have you not gotten stuck in that place? Because it's so easy to hold onto the fear, or the unforgiveness, or whatever's happening in that season.

Meredith: I can look back at my own leadership journey. You know, I look at Joseph's leadership seasons and his journeys. He could have held onto unforgiveness. He could have held onto resentment towards Potiphar's wife for getting him thrown in jail. You know? I could look back on my own journey and have similar things, where I could be resentful or angry. What has it been like for you to let go of those things, and has it been easier sometimes than others? I don't know. Talk to me a little bit about that for you.

Lysa: Yeah. Well, I think when I was younger, I let everything be a big deal. It was like ... I don't know. It was like something would happen to me, and I would be like, "Oh. No she didn't." You know? It was just something ... It's almost like a bad smell. I couldn't walk away from it. You know? It's like, "I'm just gonna jump knee deep into this thing, and I'm gonna come out swinging, because uh-uh."

Lysa: I think the older that I've gotten and the more hurt I guess I've experienced, I think I've learned to kind of step back from some situations and say, "You know what? This is just not gonna be something I'm gonna pick up right here. This is not gonna be something that's

worth the emotional energy it will take to get all angry and twisted up in a knot about." So, I think sometimes the older that you get and the more you experience hurt, you can take a step back from the situation. Almost think about it ... and I'm using lots of nature analogies here today, so I apologize.

Meredith: Feeling rather organic today, are we?

Lysa: But it's almost like an anthill, okay? If you have an anthill in your front yard, you can acknowledge that that's a situation, right? Nobody wants an anthill in their front yard, but you have a choice. You can either go up to that anthill and think, "Oh. No they didn't. They did not build an anthill in my front yard. This is my front yard," and you can choose to kick that anthill, and stand in the middle of that anthill, and stake your claim, and fight for the fact that they shouldn't have built an anthill in your yard.

Lysa: What's gonna happen as your foot is planted deep in that anthill? You are gonna get stung over, and over, and over, and over, when in reality, you can walk by that anthill, and you can just go, "Yup. Definitely shouldn't have built an anthill on my front yard. However, I am not gonna be dumb enough to kick the anthill, and stand in the middle of it, and get stung. Instead, I'm gonna take care of this anthill a little bit of a different way, right? I'm not gonna get caught up in the emotion of immediate gratification of, 'I'm gonna stake my claim, my right to be right. I'm gonna be offended.'" Look. Just because we feel hurt, doesn't mean we have to live hurt.

Kaley: That's right. That's so good.

Lysa: Just because we feel offended, doesn't mean we need to live offended. There is a right way to take care of an anthill in the front yard, but it ain't by kicking it, and it ain't by standing in it, and it's not gonna help a darn thing if you're just standing there letting the ants sting you, and sting you, and sting you. It's just not gonna help the situation. That's kind of the way I feel. It's like, "Come on, people." You know? Next week, we're gonna talk to kind of backing up when someone else creates an offense in your life. There is a way to back up and forgive that person, not because they're justified in what they've done to you, but forgive that person, because you recognize there must be some hurt in their life.

Kaley: Wow. That's good.

Lysa: You can maybe not have compassion on the person that's hurting you, but maybe you can have the compassion that they have experienced some hurt in their life, have some compassion for their hurt, not necessarily for their actions. Maybe you can decide, "That's not an anthill I'm gonna kick today."

Meredith: That's so good. That's so good. I know I have kicked lots of anthills. I'm an anthill kicker. Lysa has helped me many times in saying, "Meredith, I'm not sure that that's an anthill that you want to kick," and it has helped me slow down in my leadership and really look at what really matters, like what really, really matters. Sometimes it's really not the anthill, like let the anthill be. You know? Kaley, I want to hear from you. I want to hear from you as our young buck.

Kaley: As the young one. Here I am. Well, I feel like I learned so much here, and I'm so grateful to be the young one, to be able to take this and actually apply it, because Lysa, I'm sure 25 years ago you would have loved to have these two pages of notes that I have right now. So, I'm glad that you have been through the process of growing up and starting this ministry 25 years ago, to now be where you are and to be able to impart that wisdom on me, because just like you learned from Lysa, Meredith, I learned from you in the same way, which I think is the cool thing about this podcast that we're doing right now.

Kaley: We're all helping each other out, but I just feel so much grace for myself. I think sometimes it's hard for me to have grace for myself, especially whenever you're on staff at a ministry and you're given these things to do. Here I am at 26 years old leading, when I've realized that the way that I handle certain situations sometimes can be a little bit different. Leaders don't kick anthills. Good leaders don't kick anthills. What are the things that I'm kicking over right now that really aren't worth my time and attention? If I can learn that now, as a 26-year-old, where am I gonna be later?

Kaley: But also, just to know that it's taken 25 years for you to be where you are, there's a whole lot of grace wrapped up in those 25 years, and I bet if you went back, like year by year, you would be able to see how the Lord changed your life through certain situations, just like we can look back at Joseph's life. I think it's so cool for me to learn that God is developing, like I-N-G. It's an active.

Meredith: Right. That's so good.

Kaley: It's an action that he's doing. He's not gonna do it overnight, but he's developing me day by day through the things that I'm going through, in order to match my calling.

Meredith: That's so good.

Lysa: Okay. Let me ask you guys a question. What bothers you about this story, or what bothers you about the principal of forgiveness?

Meredith: Oh, gosh. I mean, for me it's hard for me personally to ... when someone has violated my trust, you know? I would say his brothers violated his

trust, and it's hard for me not to harden my heart as I go into other relationships. That bothers me, where I'm like, "How did he do that? How did he do that? How did he honestly forgive his brothers? How did he honestly forgive Potiphar's wife? How did he forgive the baker, and the cupbearer, and all of those people that really violated his trust, and then continued to open himself up to the world?" You know, that's where I wrestle, but I want to believe God's goodness in his relationship to Joseph, that God led him through how to do that.

Lysa: Okay. Let me just take you one other place in Scripture. I know we probably have to watch our time here, but I want to show you one other thing, because I think it will give you a little clue of maybe how. Again, so much of this, God doesn't use these stories to be explained away. Otherwise, we would start to try to put formulas on God. God just wants to be invited in.

Kaley: That's so good.

Lysa: You know? We have to remember part of the "how" may never be answered, because this was Joseph's journey, and so—

Kaley: Yes. That's so good.

Lysa: God will, as you invite God into your situation, he will teach you the "how." But I do want to show you one other clue that I think is pretty amazing. In between the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine, we get this little almost side note in Joseph's story that I think is quite fascinating and may give you a clue about how. So, look at Genesis 41, verse 46. It says, "Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt." Now, remember, he was 17 when he started, so remember those 13 years?

Kaley: That's a long time.

Lysa: It's a long time. All right. Then I want you to look down verse 50, "Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by ..." Again, I don't know how to say her name, "Hard word, daughter of hard word, priest of hard word." Okay. Verse 51, "Joseph named his first-born Manasseh and said, 'It is because God made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.'" Verse 52 says, "The second son he named Ephraim and said, 'It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.'"

Lysa: I want you to notice a couple of things. I want you to notice it's kind of funny he would name his sons forgetful and fruitful. I just find humor when I look at these things, like, "Yo. Forgetful and Fruitful, come here." You know? Like, "Don't touch that, Fruitful. Don't cross the street, Forgetful." I don't know. I just think that's kind of funny. But I want you to

notice the phraseology here. Joseph named his first-born Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble." Then when he talks about his son, Ephraim, he said, "It is because God has made me fruitful."

Lysa: God made Joseph forgetful, and Joseph didn't forget that his father and his brothers existed. He didn't even forget what they had done, but he chose to forget. God allowed him, God enabled him, God showed him how to forget and leave behind the bitterness, the resentment.

Kaley: So good.

Lysa: Therefore, that's his first son, Forgetful, and this is in order, right, so that he could be, son number two, fruitful-

Kaley: Wow.

Lysa: Even in the midst of his suffering.

Kaley: That's so good.

Lysa: Before God fixed anything, Joseph saw that before God fixed anything, he could be fruitful right where he was, in the midst of his suffering. I don't know exactly how did God make him forget and how did God make him fruitful. I just know he did, and if God did it for Joseph, he can do it for me. Maybe my prayer needs to be, "God, help me like you helped Joseph, to be forgetful, not that I forget what people did, but I leave behind or release ..."

Lysa: "As I transition from Potiphar's house to prison, let me leave behind the bitterness that I felt towards Potiphar's wife. As I transition from my brothers to even Potiphar's house, let me leave behind some things, all those negative things that I don't need to be part of my journey from here. Help me to be forgetful, but then also, God, will you help me to be fruitful, fruitful in the midst of my suffering, so that when I get to the other side, I, like Joseph, can truly say, 'What you intended to harm me, God has used for good, for the saving of many lives?'"

Meredith: So good, Lysa. So good. The quote, the thing that you said to open up the whole podcast was, "When seasons change, it's likely it's time to let something go." What is it that the Lord is calling us to let go of today? Is it time to forgive somebody? So good. I could keep talking about this all day. Thank you so much for teaching us today and taking the time. I know there are gonna be so many women that are gonna be touched by this message. We are praying. We prayed before this podcast that the Lord would use this message in a mighty way.

Kaley: Yeah. If you've made it all the way through and haven't taken notes yet, maybe you're in the car and not taking notes while driving, which is a good thing, or maybe you're on a run, which good for you, if you're running. Keep it up. You might want to get to a spot where you can play this episode again. I know I always have my phone out ready to take notes when Lysa teaches, because it's always so, so good. If you haven't been able to take notes, go ahead and listen to this again, so that way you can write things down.

Meredith: That's right. Guys, the pause button's your best friend. Hit that pause button. Write it down. If the Lord spoke to you through Lysa's teaching and our discussion today, share it with one of your friends. Do what we're doing here. We want to walk along each side, next to each other, in all of our seasons.

Kaley: Yes. Another great thing that you can do right now is subscribe to the podcast. We don't want you to miss out on any of our teachings. I know our next couple episodes are going to be incredible, and you're gonna wanna hear them as soon as they release.

Meredith: If you'd like to hear more from Proverbs 31 Ministries, maybe this is your first-time hearing about Proverbs 31 Ministries, I encourage you to visit our website at Proverbs31.org and get connected with us through one of our free resources. Just go to the homepage and click, "Find the resource that's right for you," to get connected.

Kaley: Yes. Lysa, thank you so much for joining us for the first episode of the Proverbs 31 Podcast. I learned so much, and I just get so excited about thinking what the Lord is gonna do through the podcast and through all the people that are going to listen, so thank you so much.

Meredith: All right, everybody. We'll see you next time, right here on the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast.