

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Kaley Olson: Hi everyone, and welcome to the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast. My name is Kaley Olson and I'm here with my friend and co-host Meredith Brock.
- Meredith Brock: Hi Kaley. It feels like we've been doing this podcast thing for a while now and I feel like we're kind of getting in a rhythm, right?
- Kaley Olson: I think so.
- Meredith Brock: I kind of feel a little bit like we're friends with our listeners now. It's nice.
- Kaley Olson: Yeah, I'd say that's true. You know, Meredith, it's really cool to see our listeners connect with the ministry in the podcast world because it's something new that we started and we always wonder how it's going to go. I know it's not all about the reviews but I saw one recently that I just have to share. It's a little long but I'm going to do it. This lady said, "This podcast is soul soothing, conversational, refreshing, relatable, enjoyable and I mean giggle-inducing in a 'me too' kind of way which I appreciate." She said, "It's thought- and heart-provoking in the best sense possible. To be able to relish in the Word in a 'coffee talk time with girlfriends' kind of feel, Lysa and the Proverbs 31 crew deliver and throw down some powerful, practical and relevant insight and the way they gracefully weave and bridge the Word into the themes of our lives today. All I can say is a big amen and that I look forward to listening to every episode." So again, that was from a sweet lady who left a review on iTunes. But for real, that's why we started the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast.
- Meredith Brock: Well, I just love that she said that we throw down some powerful, practical, relevant insight. I wish somebody would describe me that way every day. If you're wondering, though, do you fit in here? The answer is yes, absolutely, everyone fits in here at Proverbs 31. We're all about biblical truth, and I love how the gal who left the review was able to pick up on that. She phrased it as weaving the Word into the themes of our lives today, which is our tagline. Biblical truth for any girl at any age.

Kaley Olson: That's right. And today on the podcast, we have a very special guest giving our message. Welcome, Lysa TerKeurst, we're so excited to have you back.

Lysa TerKeurst: Thank you. I'm always so honored to join you guys. And to be in the studio today is just a lot of fun. I've looked forward to it for days now. So, thank you.

Kaley Olson: Well, we're excited to have you here. Your first two teachings on forgiveness totally rocked my world. It kicked off our podcast. We've heard tons of great feedback, and we can't wait to hear what the Lord put on your heart to share with us today, Lysa.

Lysa TerKeurst: Well, thank you. Well, I want to go back to something I referenced in the forgiveness podcast, at least I think I did. You know, sometimes I like think I taught on something and then all of a sudden I'm like I think I did say that, didn't I? But this principle of the very best time to decide to not be offended is before you're ever offended.

Kaley Olson: Yes, you did.

Lysa TerKeurst: I want to take that concept and go a little bit deeper so that we're weaving a little bit of a connecting thread from my previous teachings to this one. So today, I want to talk about expectations because I have discovered that one of the number one reasons that relationships fail and that people feel like a failure in a relationship even if the relationship itself has not failed is due to this whole idea of expectations. We all have them but very few of us are communicating about them intentionally, and we all feel the pain of them. But we often don't know what to do about the pain of expectations and the painful reality if we're not getting expectations met within a relationship dynamic. This isn't just our romantic relationships; this is any relationship, because we all bring expectations to the table every single day in every scenario and every situation that we're in. But if we're not talking about those expectations and we're not addressing them head-on, it's very easy to get offended around expectations. As a matter of fact, *Psychology Today* ran an article a couple of years ago listing the top 10 reasons that relationships fail. The number one reason was trust issues. That'll be something that we'll cover another day because I've got trust issues, you've got trust issues, we all got trust issues. We could just sing a good little sing-songy diddy about our trust issues. I'm sure there's a country song we can even throw in there, right? Or even a pop song.

Lysa TerKeurst: So first is trust issues. The very second reason that relationships fail is different expectations. So, I want to talk about expectations today. I've given this a lot of thought not just because it's an issue that affects a lot of people. I thought about it a lot because it's an issue that affects me personally. I just finished my book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, and really diving into disappointment, which is a spin-off emotion of expectations. Those two things go hand in hand.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, to kick off our discussion today, I want to help you start at the very basics. What do we do about expectations? First, we have to understand that expectations come in three potential categories. We have number one, realistic expectations. Those are expectations that are either so understood in our relationships that they naturally are met or the realistic expectations can also be ones that we've actually communicated about and planned to make happen within the relationship. So, that's realistic expectations.

Lysa TerKeurst: The second category is unrealistic expectations. These are expectations that we bring in that are shoot for the moon, kind of overly romantic or maybe just overly enthusiastic responses to something we've seen, something we believe or something that we feel we can't live without and yet they're presented in such a big way that they become unrealistic.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now, here's something tricky about unrealistic expectations. They may seem very realistic to us but what makes them unrealistic is the other person we're in relationship with. So you can see right then and there, the potential for conflict, the potential to be highly offended. Because there is no pain in a relationship quite so piercing and shocking as for you to feel like there's an expectation that's completely realistic that someone else isn't meeting because they feel like it's unrealistic. That seems to be a barrier in a lot of relationships. And if there's no communication, what will happen is you hit upon this unrealistic expectation and it causes you so much anxiety and so much emotion that the spin-off anxiety and the spin-off emotion from these unrealistic expectations are actually what does extreme damage to the relationship, and makes the other person feel like a failure.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay, so we've covered realistic expectations, unrealistic expectation. There's this third category and this is uncommunicated expectations. These are expectations that float in the air between you and this other person you're in a relationship with, but because they're uncommunicated, you don't know if they're realistic or unrealistic, right?

Meredith Brock: Sounds dangerous.

Lysa TerKeurst: And often within this third category, this has the most potential for relationship improvement or for relationship blow ups. So, I really want to jump into this third category of uncommunicated expectations. Oftentimes, we can know that there's uncommunicated expectations present in our relationship if you think back to the last time you and that person had either a disagreement or you had negative feelings around the relationship and you just didn't quite know how to put your finger on it.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, what I want us to do is to be challenged to unearth some of our uncommunicated expectations in a relationship. And I don't want this to be a podcast where you guys just listen to me and think, wow, that's really good. I should attend to that one day. I want this to be one of those podcasts where

you think, okay I'm going to pick a relationship in my life and I'm going to attend to this today. So that's my first challenge, is that this isn't just something to listen to and enjoy and then think yeah, yeah, yeah, I'll get to that one day. Now, I really want you to actually pull out your calendar, schedule some time with one of your relationships you feel like it's really important, that you feel like you've kind of hit some sort of relationship barrier there. I promise you if you will attend to some of the things that we're going to talk about today, your relationship will improve.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, what is the biblical basis for any of this? Well, I want to take you to kind of a very familiar passage in the Bible with our ministry but I want to show you something that I think is really important. It's actually Proverbs chapter 31.

Meredith Brock: What?

Lysa TerKeurst: How appropriate, right?

Kaley Olson: That's amazing.

Lysa TerKeurst: You're like, I didn't even know Proverbs 31 talked about expectations. Well, just hang with me here because the word expectations is not going to be found in the Scriptures. But, I think you're going to see how well she tended the various relationship gardens and potential relationships that she had in her life. I just pulled out some of the verbs, the action words that it explains in Proverbs chapter 31, verses 10 through 31. I just want you to listen as I read it just from just a few little phrases that have some action words to tell us what is this woman doing, this woman of noble character.

Lysa TerKeurst: She is worth, she brings, she selects, she gets up while it is still night. She considers, she sees that, she makes, she opens her arms, she speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. All of those words as I read those actions that she took with her life. First of all, I think it's very interesting, one of the very first descriptions is a statement of her worth. I have to say, because it starts off that way, that she had to have a sense of her worth. In any sense of relationship, in any kind of relationship, we have to know in a very gentle and biblical way if we're going to set expectations and be able to tackle this third category that we're talking about, these uncommunicated expectations.

Lysa TerKeurst: Step number one of these uncommunicated expectations is to actually communicate about them and decide which of these expectations that are uncommunicated between us, which ones are realistic and which ones are unrealistic. But, in order to do that, I think we have to think about some of the actions of how we're approaching, deciding which of our expectations are realistic and which ones are unrealistic. We have to start with our worth, like we are worth, there are some expectations that we have as a person in the

relationship, like it's worth us bringing these expectations up front and I'm worth some expectations that should be realistic in this relationship.

Lysa TerKeurst: There's this quote by Mark Twain, which we're just going to go all over the place today. We're in Proverbs 31, we're in *Psychology Today*, now we're going to throw in a little Mark Twain.

Meredith Brock: I'm sure Proverbs 31 says something about knowing your literature. I'm certain. It's like verse 39.

Lysa TerKeurst: Bible scholar.

Kaley Olson: It ends at verse 31 but if there was a verse 39 ...

Meredith Brock: It would talk about maybe Mark Twain or *Psychology Today*.

Lysa TerKeurst: Exactly, who knows. Be a well-read woman.

Meredith Brock: Yes, that's what it says.

Lysa TerKeurst: But here's this quote by Mark Twain. "Never allow someone to be your priority while allowing yourself to be their option."

Kaley Olson: Ooh, read that again? Do it again, do it again.

Lysa TerKeurst: I'm going to read it one more time. "Never allow someone to be your priority while allowing yourself to be their option." Now, this article that I was reading, they quoted Mark Twain as having said that. If Mark Twain isn't the one who said it, whoever said it is absolutely brilliant and I agree with it very much. So, there's two sides to this when thinking about this third category of uncommunicated expectations. And this first step, we've got to define which of these uncommunicated expectations are realistic and which are unrealistic I think there's even got to be a foundation there of bringing your sense of worth into the relationship. Think about this quote. Like it's not that you want to be the absolute priority in this person's life. We can't expect this other person to give us things that only the Lord can give us. But we can have certain expectations that are realistic within the relationship. If you're making that relationship a priority, then to have a reciprocal relationship, that other person can't make you an option and not a priority. That's basically what this quote by Mark Twain is saying and I think it's really good.

Lysa TerKeurst: But the Proverbs 31 scriptures as I'm reading it, you know, she's bringing a sense of worth. There's a sense of worth that's being discussed right up here. Now, after the worth is established, I want you to listen to the intentionality. She brings, she selects, she considers, she sees that, she speaks with wisdom faithful instruction. There's so much intentionality here, so that's really what I'm encouraging here. Considering our worth, [inaudible 00:15:01] with great

intentionality, schedule some time to say, hey, I think one thing that could improve our relationship is to have a designated conversation about communication because I have a feeling some of the things that we're bumping into in our relationship are uncommunicated expectations.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now, I almost titled this third category unmet expectations. But I decided not to call it unmet expectations because the other person, first of all, I think that sets a negative tone to the conversation you're wanting to have. Like, hey, I have some unmet expectations I'd like to discuss with you, Kaley. How would you receive that, right?

Kaley Olson: Not well.

Lysa TerKeurst: Right. Because instantly your guard's going to go up and you're going to be like, okay, great, here comes the conversation where I feel like a failure once again. Husbands all over America are saying thank you that you are not encouraging women to come to their husbands and say I want us to have a little dialogue tonight about my unmet expectations, you know. But I think a better package to say, hey, Kaley, I would love to talk about expectations in our relationship and some uncommunicated expectations that are probably bouncing around between us that we've never talked about before. So, do you see how that instantly gives you an opportunity to not be defensive but rather like, okay, yeah, let's have this proactive conversation.

Kaley Olson: It's much more welcoming.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, we're titling this discussion that we're going to have, "uncommunicated expectations," and then now it's time for us to say, hey, yes, I do have some expectations in our relationship. Now, I would encourage you to start off by saying, here are some expectations I have that you meet in a fantastic way. Go ahead and lay out some of those realistic expectations that this other person meets in an amazing way and be a noticer of the expectations they're already meeting because chances are, they are already meeting those expectations and it's a chance for you to encourage them and set the conversation up for success.

Lysa TerKeurst: Then, after you've laid out some of those realistic expectations that maybe you've never talked about before, but that that other person is meeting in a fantastic way and you've encouraged them that they're meeting them in a fantastic way, then I would say, hey, I have some other expectations in our relationship and I'd love for us to talk about which ones of these expectations are realistic and which ones are unrealistic.

Lysa TerKeurst: So go ahead and lay out. So of course, you're going to have the opportunity to bring some things that you've thought through. But I would imagine that this other person probably will be able to lend into the conversation some expectations that they're having that they would like to discuss as well.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, I'm going to hit the pause button really quick on my teaching and I'm just going to say can either of you think of a relationship, don't say who the relationship is with, you can just like pick someone in your brain and think of an uncommunicative expectation that you have had in the relationship that having this kind of intentional conversation could help with?

Meredith Brock: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Lysa TerKeurst: You want to share it with us? Maybe this could like jumpstart the conversation.

Meredith Brock: Yeah, it could. Well, I'll give some generalities because I think that they're, even just in you saying this, Lysa, I'm writing all kinds of notes over here and saying one of the things that I feel like when I walk into a situation where I know either I have had unexpressed expectations or I'm sensing they have unexpressed expectations of me, I got this thing happening in my head. I'm curious if it happens in yours and this is terrible. Oh my gosh, y'all are about to see into my dark heart. I think to myself and y'all have to, our listening friends, you have to understand, I'm a fairly unemotional, like I'm very logical. And so I tend to avoid emotional conversations because it's very draining for me.

Meredith Brock: And so, I find myself wondering, oh boy, do I really want to do this because this is going to take work. Like this is going to take work getting to, because oftentimes, I think people don't even know that they have expectations of you, you know, and then you enter into this conversation and it just becomes like the spaghetti of all you can't untangle anything for anything else. And I was just literally writing notes like, Meredith, make the choice that that relationship is worth untangling those expectations. Make the choice that it's going to be hard emotional work to even get to the place where you can explain your expectations but you're choosing the relationship over that uncertain place that you're standing in.

Meredith Brock: So, I kind of answered your question but not really because that's what I was thinking about and I couldn't stop taking notes because I have to make the choice to say this relationship is so important to me that I'm going to sit down and I'm going to have that hard conversation and say I feel like there's some things that maybe I'm not meeting your expectations here and I'm sorry. Can we talk about it? Can you tell me what I'm missing here because I can't see it and I feel like maybe you're frustrated with me.

Lysa TerKeurst: Well, and I think one thing you're saying is that if I take the time to do this, is this just like pulling a thread on a sweater and it's going to unravel and it's going to bring so much emotion into my life and I'm just not in the mood for emotion. But I want to make a different argument. I think the very best time to have these conversations is before the conflict ever arises because when conflict is present, these uncommunicated expectations, they're already bouncing between you and this other person all the time.

Lysa TerKeurst: And if you have a, if you have an appointed time where you sit down and talk about it not in the framework of a conflict, just because you are saying, "hey, I care about this relationship," I would bet for you, it's going to be a lot less emotional of a conversation and a lot more productive. And the achiever in you can walk away from the conversation actually feeling like that was a great use of time because we actually got somewhere without all the emotion.

Meredith Brock: And for me, when you tell me, like I remember a quote early on from when I first started working for you, Lysa. You're going to remember it way better than me so I'm going to butcher it and then you fix it for me, okay? But it was something along the lines of, when people, when employees know what a win is in their job, they will do better, they perform better, they're happier in their job. And so, I can't remember what it was. Do you remember that quote?

Lysa TerKeurst: I don't but it sounds like a really good quote and I'm glad that I'm the one that said it.

Meredith Brock: Well, for me, that helps me. When you tell me my expectations, like, I love it. I can run within that field all day long and I will fulfill your expectations. But if you don't tell me my expectations, I am like, I am like a crazy woman because I'm constantly trying to discover them and it puts me in limbo that I can't seem to get myself out of. And so, I think you're absolutely right. Not being in a conflict. If I can just sit down with this individual and say, tell me what it is that you need from me in this role, in our relationship. 99% of the time, I'm happy to fulfill that for the other person. It's just sometimes if I don't know it.

Lysa TerKeurst: And here's the other danger. If there's uncommunicated expectations in the relationship, you are probably holding people accountable for something they may not be able to give you. If it's never been communicated, you're going to continue to try to hold them accountable and that's where those emotional triggers happen.

Lysa TerKeurst: I've often heard people say, okay, you just need to not be so angry, you know? And it's like, okay, well, that sounds really good in theory, don't be so angry. But I would imagine there is a trigger happening, that's happening constant enough that's tripping this feeling of anger inside of you. It's not really that you're an angry person. It's that you have uncommunicated expectations that are not being met. Because you don't know how to talk about them, the more that they go unmet, it's like a little wound turning into a bigger wound, turning into a bigger wound. It just doesn't take a lot for somebody to touch that wound. And all of a sudden, you're going to have a very strong reaction.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so, I think that having these conversations in a non-emotional time and starting to open the door up to these uncommunicative expectations will give you the opportunity to do the thing that you're saying, like, I don't want so much emotion, great. This is the pathway to ensuring that this can happen. Now, could the conversation get emotional when you talk about expectations

and defining which are realistic and unrealistic? Of course. But think about how much better it will be not to have the presence and added drama of a conflict at hand that you're trying to entangle this, but rather just a neutral time where you're able to logically talk about it.

Lysa TerKeurst: Also, there's so much research done that when we have these conversations in the heat of a conflict, which is what most people do, an unmet expectation just blows up and then you're operating, when those emotions get triggered and they're so high, it kicks you into your prefrontal cortex. That's like, your emotions are driving the bus constantly when you're kicked into that mode and it's like fight, flight, freeze, freak out, you know, that kind of mode. And so, you're never really, you may eventually settle back down into your logical brain but if you never ever get to the root of these unmet expectations or uncommunicated expectations, then, you're just all the time trying to put out fires but you don't know why the fires keep reemerging.

Lysa TerKeurst: So that's a long little commentary to what I feel like was a great addition that you brought to the conversation Meredith. All right, Kaley, we're going to turn to you.

Kaley Olson: Oh boy.

Lysa TerKeurst: Do you have a relationship in your life, you don't have to say who, where there's uncommunicated expectations and you feel like yeah, I'm tripping over that?

Kaley Olson: Yeah, and I think that talking about the whole spaghetti thing where you're scared to untangle it, I think I have several in my life and they're not all like big things. Like it's small things but I think there have been times where I have done it the right way outside of the context. And then there are times where I do it the wrong way. And in the middle of being completely, entirely frustrated, we talk about what I'm frustrated about and then we have a long conversation about all the expectations that I had that I never communicated in the first place.

Kaley Olson: And you're right, like, I mean, in any kind of relationship that you have, it's way better for you to start things off in a neutral zone where you're able to have an open conversation and then I think also not bring a laundry list of all the things the other person has done wrong. I think some people, they'll bring examples and it's great to give examples of like, "here's a time where I was a little frustrated with you" but I think also communicating those in a right way that's honoring to the person also helps the conversation.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay, great. Okay, so now we're having this conversation and we're determining which of these are realistic and which ones are unrealistic, okay? Part of determining that is in every relationship where you've got two people, you've got to understand that what may be completely realistic to you is unrealistic to the other person. So, if you're taking notes, I want you to just keep in mind

some of these natural differences that will feed whether the relationships are realistic or unrealistic in that other person's eyes.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, there's differences in priorities. How this can play out is maybe, Kaley, you've always had the dream of living in a big city, but maybe Jared has this dream of going back to Mississippi and living on a farm. Well, those are completely different priorities. And so, if you are positioning your life strategically in five years to like definitely be city dwellers as you eventually have kids and raise your kids and everything, but in his brain if he's kind of secretly navigating over here this priority that he wants to move his kids to the country and he wants you to be barefoot and pregnant and the tire swing in the front yard and all this stuff. Do you see how these uncommunicated expectations can really spin out of control because you're doing this thing called di-vision. In other words, you've got two visions operating in the same household that's creating a division you don't even know because of differences in priorities.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, as you talk about which expectations are realistic and which are unrealistic, also, like open up, like, hey, what are some of the differences in priorities that we have that are creating divisions that we don't even know, that are creating things within the relationship of expectations and to some of them to be unrealistic when maybe they could shift to a realistic place if we had a very cohesive plan of priorities within our relationship. Does that make sense?

Kaley Olson: Oh my gosh, it does.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay. The second is differences in timing, differences in timing. So, maybe, let's say, we'll pick on Meredith for a minute since we've picked on Kaley.

Meredith Brock: She's currently barefoot, pregnant, with a tire swing in her front yard. So, I can only go up from here.

Lysa TerKeurst: Just for the record, that would be completely opposite in real life, but here we go, on to Meredith. Differences in timing, okay. So, what you may feel like is a very realistic expectation, Mack, your husband may feel like is a completely unrealistic expectation, but it may be because you've never had the conversation about timing.

Lysa TerKeurst: So let's say you and Mack go on vacation, okay? And on this vacation, you envision it to be very fast-paced. You want you and Mack to get up in the morning, you want to go for a run. Then you want to like have a very scheduled time where, okay, at 11 o'clock, we're going to go to this children's museum, at one o'clock we're going to go to this restaurant and then at three o'clock we're going to all take a family walk on the beach and then we're going to come back and we're going to play in the sand for a little bit. We're going to come back, we're going to be at dinner at 5:30, the kids are going to be in bed at 7:30. Like

you've got this pretty fast-paced day all planned out, right? And so you can see, like in your brain, complete realistic expectation, right?

Meredith Brock: Yes.

Lysa TerKeurst: Because this is a day at the beach, that's what you do.

Meredith Brock: We got stuff to do.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay. Now let's say, Mack, differences in timing. This is what he thinks, "I'm at the beach, cool man, and I got a whole day. It's just awesome." And so you start saying like, "hey babe, let's go for a run." That is nowhere on his radar. He looks around and he is like, run, what are you talking about run? I didn't even bring my shoes. Like I am a flip-flop dude. And you're like, okay, we've got the children's museum, we got to get our extras, we've got the children museum, we've got the lunch, we've got this. He just is probably going to look at you very starry eyed and just say no, Meredith, we're not doing all that because we're at the beach. When we're at the beach, it is time for my slow-paced nature to kick in. All I really want to do is get up, that's it. That's my plan for the day.

Lysa TerKeurst: So you can see how differences in timing and how you're running the race of this day, this season, this life, really important to talk about so that these uncommunicated expectations don't spin out of control.

Meredith Brock: Absolutely.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay, here's another one. Differences in needs. In my family, I need every single day to know that there's something to look forward to. That is a high need that I have. Like it doesn't really matter if we don't have a lot of excitement in this day, whatever is going on, but I got to have at least one thing to look forward to. That's a high need that I have. I have other family members in my immediate family that their highest need is that they want to rest. When are they going to be able to take a nap. When are they going to be able to just chill. When are they going to be able to just have moments upon moments upon moments of unscheduled nothingness, right?

Lysa TerKeurst: Well, you can see that those differences in needs can bump into each other a lot. Also, I have a high need in my life to always make my environment beautiful, which means I love to renovate. I have other family members that their greatest priority, their greatest need is for their home to be at complete peace all the time. Well, hammers, knocking down walls and complete peace all the time, those two worlds will come in conflict. So, it's a differences in needs, right? So we got to talk about that.

Lysa TerKeurst: And then the fourth, we've talked about priorities, timing needs, and then differences in approaches. You're going to have a certain way that you like to

approach situations. I'll pick on Meredith again. Meredith, you like to approach things very head-on and direct.

Meredith Brock: Yes ma'am.

Lysa TerKeurst: I tend to approach things in a much less head-on, less direct way, right?

Meredith Brock: Yes.

Lysa TerKeurst: I like the Oreos effect. Give them something sweet, put the yucky white stuff in the middle. Give them something sweet on the back. You know what I'm saying? And you're like, we ain't got time for all that. Like just get to the heart of the issue and then let's move on. Differences in approaches, and you can tell uncommunicated expectations. If you and I were going into what could potentially be a negotiation type situation here at the ministry, it would be important for us to communicate our expectations on the front end because we have differences in approaches, right?

Meredith Brock: And thankfully we have. That's right. That's been something we've learned to do together.

Lysa TerKeurst: That's right, very true. So, the reason I bring these four things up as we talk about the conversation of expectations is because this is a bigger conversation than just the simple idea of well, what are your expectations in the relationship? What are my expectations in a relationship? I say this because this probably isn't going to be a one-time conversation. This is probably going to be a conversation that unfolds over many conversations, right? And it could be everything about in five years, where do we want to live like we just talked about. That maybe you and Jared to prevent di-vision in your family, like, do you want to live in the country with a tire swing in your front yard in Mississippi? Or do you want to live in the city? That's a great expectation conversation.

Lysa TerKeurst: You're about to go on vacation. Great time to have an expectation conversation. We're about to have a business negotiation. Great time to have an expectation conversation. But all of these things take intentionality. All of these things take communication. And today, my goal in what I was teaching, I just want to give you the framework to get you thinking about expectations. The three categories we've talked about. Realistic, unrealistic, uncommunicated. When you're talking about uncommunicated, remember the differences that we've talked about and remember that it is important if you're going to have uncommunicated expectations in a relationship, that probably means you're going to have some unmet expectations and it's from those unmet expectations that relationship conflict and probably instead of relationship restoration, you're going to have conflict escalation in your relationship.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so, I just wanted to kind of bring all of this to the table and say, hey, here's what I've been thinking about and I think it's important that we open up the

dialogue with great intentionality about expectations. And remember, the very last thing I read as I talked about the framework of how intentional the Proverbs 31 woman was. The very last thing that I read in verse 26, she speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. In other words, she doesn't speak from emotion. She speaks with great intentionality and from a place of wisdom. That's really our goal here is to get us to a place where we are communicating about our expectations with wisdom.

Lysa TerKeurst: There's one more thing I want to teach but I thought that I would just now say any thoughts, any ideas, and then there's one last principle that I want us to attend to and that is, what do we do with those unrealistic expectations? Because if we just keep holding on to them, they'll keep being pain points in our relationship. So, we'll talk about that in just a second before we wrap up, but any thoughts, ideas?

Meredith Brock: Well, I had honestly, I think one of the biggest things just talking about expectations in general, I'm 37 years old. I've been married for almost, no, I've been married 12 years now, that's crazy. Two kids. Have had lots of jobs and lots of different working environments. I have found in my personal life and in my work life that this is probably, it really is the source of so much conflict and so much unnecessary tension. I would like to believe that I've gotten better at navigating expectations in the work environment, probably better over the years than I have in my home environment.

Meredith Brock: One of the things that you said Lysa that I was like, oh my goodness gracious is the Lord ever doing something in my own personal life around this right now. It was right out of the gate when you said I am worth having realistic expectations. I have been doing a little, you know, the Lord's really been teaching me something recently about my family of origin and some different things that I learned when I was young, in order to receive love I had to have no needs. I come from a family of six that was very financially strapped. The way to get attention from my parents was to have zero needs because then I was the easy child. Then I was the one that they, we don't have to worry about Meredith because Meredith will be fine.

Meredith Brock: But what I ended up doing is I took that with me into my friendships and into my marriage and even into my parenting style, that I told myself, I can't have expectations because people love me if I don't have expectations and I'm just available to them however they need me to be. And so, for you to say that was such a reaffirmation of what the Lord's been teaching me that I can give myself permission to have, I'm worth having realistic expectations in these relationships.

Meredith Brock: So, it's really good for me just to hear that again and be reaffirmed that I can, it's okay for me to say, this is what I need.

Lysa TerKeurst: And remember what Mark Twain says, "Never allow someone to be your priority while allowing yourself to be their option."

Meredith Brock: See, I love that. I love that. And really, that really spoke to me and I think that I've been very good in a work environment. It's very cut and dry and clear for me to say here's my expectations of you. I expect you here at this meeting at this time doing this thing. I expect these performance goals from you and I expect this communication from you. But when it comes into that place that's really close to your heart, you sometimes create different rules for different settings. And for me, I feel like the Lord's really teaching me some things there. So it was great for me to hear.

Kaley Olson: I've been thinking a lot about, I mean, I know we've talked about marriage and those kind of relationships. We didn't talk a whole lot about work relationships and I think for those 20-somethings listening who are like me and who are kind of starting out in the work world, I think a lot about the word candor and it's defined as the quality of being open and honest and expression and frankness. I think candor done in the right way is done where there aren't a whole lot of emotions attached to it.

Kaley Olson: I think my generation, this might just be me, but I know a lot of the people who I've talked to struggle with this as well where we just don't bring it up because we're too glued to having some kind of barrier between us and right now you can't see me but I'm pointing at my phone because we do things through media, through Instagram or Snapchat or text message or email, where we feel like we're being open and honest but we're really not. And so whenever it comes time to have those confrontational conversations, we don't know how to do it with grace without getting really emotional or without getting overly angry about something.

Kaley Olson: And so for me, just the way that you laid out the ways to approach someone and how to do it not in a setting where there's something going on right now, but to do it away from whatever might cause you to get angry or frustrated really helped me a lot. I know that I can take this into tomorrow.

Lysa TerKeurst: That's great. Practical moment for sure.

Kaley Olson: Okay, let's wrap this discussion up with this very last thing. Now that we've determined, we've had this conversation and there are some expectations that are unrealistic and we're going to have to let those go. I would say that you're going to have a moment, I think I heard a couple of years ago my pastor even preached that you're going to have to have a funeral for some of those unrealistic expectations that are in your life. I really like that because we know how to grieve when someone passes away. There's a protocol of grieving, it's very acceptable. We don't know how to grieve the smaller losses that are still losses nonetheless.

Kaley Olson: And so, I do think that, just to validate what is important to you to say, you know what, this in another kind of relationship could be a realistic expectation, but in this relationship, it's not. Therefore I've got to let it go but in letting it go, I'm going to grieve it and therefore I'm just going to have to have a moment. I'm going to have to have a funeral where I have a designated time where I can remember I let this go and cry it out with the Lord, scream it out with the Lord, process it, do whatever you have to do, write it out in a journal, take the pages, bury them, burn them, do whatever. I guess what I'm saying is acknowledge that this is a loss for you and then grieve it and then let it go.

Meredith Brock: That's so powerful. Like so, so powerful because I feel like I have seen time and time and time again, the loss was never grieved. And so they hold on to it and they can never enjoy the good parts of that relationship that are still intact because all they can see is whatever is not being met. So for instance, I'm going to give you a little example because it's so fresh on my mind. Recently I was dealing with some stuff personally and I had shared it with a friend of mine. I 100% expected her to follow up with me a week later and just say, hey Mer, checking in on you. How are you doing with what you shared with me? She never even, never acknowledged, never even, and it was like a really personal thing that I was like, that felt real heavy and significant to me.

Meredith Brock: So I was like, man, and I got real upset about it and I talked with my husband about it. And he said almost, and I was getting to the point where I could feel myself pushing, pushing, pushing that friend away. Like saying, I can't trust her, I don't want her in my life anymore. She doesn't really care about me. All this stuff. All because she didn't meet this very tiny expectation that I thought she would text me, right? Never told her that I thought she should do that for me.

Meredith Brock: And so, I was telling my husband and he said, "Babe, she doesn't know that that's what you were hoping she would do. You know what, you're losing this friendship that you have loved for so many years all because of that." I was like, oh my gosh, I just need to tell, and in that moment said, you know what, it's okay. That's not that it's going to be that friendship that I thought it was going to be. And I am just going to let that little expectation die and I'm going to enjoy all the other pieces of that friendship that I have loved and adored for so many years and not just throw the baby out with the bathwater because that one little thing wasn't expressed.

Meredith Brock: I think that is so profound and so many of us get caught up in that, in maybe one small expectation that wasn't met and you lose the whole relationship over it.

Lysa TerKeurst: That's a good point, Meredith. I just feel like to be responsible, I do have to have this caveat and say of course, if you are in an abusive relationship, the way that you determine if something is realistic or unrealistic, if there's so much fog of hurt and betrayal and all of that in the relationship, you've got to get wise people involved to speak into your life. So, I'm not saying hey, if someone's abusing you, just let it go. That's not at all what I'm saying. And sometimes we

do need help to talk to other people. So I'm glad you brought that up. You brought that to your husband and in his wisdom, he was able to say, hey, Meredith, like, maybe that's an unrealistic expectation. Maybe it's just an uncommunicated expectation. Maybe eventually you need to give your friend the heads-up, like hey, after we have a hard conversation, just make a note in your phone to text me a week later or something. Whatever.

Lysa TerKeurst: But I was glad that he was able to shed light on that. That's exactly what we have to do sometimes is go to someone else who's wise and trustworthy and just say, hey, help me determine which of these expectations are realistic or unrealistic or if I've determined it's unrealistic, then I got to let this go. Can you help me just process this. So really good stuff, you guys.

Kaley Olson: Really, really great, Lysa. Well, if there's one thing that I personally want to go back and remind myself of, it's that what you said, Lysa, don't just wait to do this one day, but do the hard work today. And I think that that is really challenging. And so for our listeners, I know that you're probably taking away lots of nuggets from all of these episodes. When you hear something good, share it.

Meredith Brock: Yeah, we mentioned earlier in the show that we love reading your reviews on iTunes and comments on social media. Please keep them coming.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. When you share, don't forget to tag @Proverbs31Ministries on social media and use the hashtag #p31podcast. And that is a way for our teams to be able to interact with you on social media and keep up with what you're sharing so that we can continue to work to share the truth of God's Word that comes out of these podcasts.

Meredith Brock: Well, that's a wrap for today's episode and we'll be back soon with more truth because at Proverbs 31, we want you to know the truth of God's Word and live that truth out. It really changes everything when you do. We'll see you next time.