

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Kaley Olson: Welcome back to the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast where we share biblical truth for any girl and any season. I'm your host, Kaley Olson, and I'm here with my cohost, Meredith Brock.
- Meredith Brock: Well hey, Kaley. I'm so glad to be with you today because we have a very, very special podcast in store today.
- Kaley Olson: Yes we do.
- Meredith Brock: Do you know why that is?
- Kaley Olson: Why?
- Meredith Brock: Because today, we are celebrating the release of Lysa TerKeurst's most recent title, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*.
- Kaley Olson: So exciting.
- Meredith Brock: I'm thrilled. Honestly, we've been working toward this date for how long? I mean it's been like two years in the making or longer.
- Kaley Olson: Yes, years.
- Meredith Brock: I'm thrilled. I'm really, really excited to hear the message today and hear what Lysa has to say. Welcome to the podcast, Lysa.
- Lysa TerKeurst: Thank you. It's a joy to be with you and thank you for being so excited about the new book.
- Meredith Brock: Well, I'm thrilled. I can't wait to hear your message today.
- Kaley Olson: Yeah, me too and like we said, this book has been a long time coming, so this is a special episode for us to record because it's not often that we get to release an episode the same time something new is released to the world. So Lysa, I

know those of us who get to work with you at Proverbs 31 know what the writing and publishing process is like for you but for our listeners, I think they could find it really cool to hear you explain the process a little, so will you share with us?

Lysa TerKeurst: Sure. Well, first of all, before I write a message, I have to live a message. The living of this message started several years ago, but the writing of this message was different and probably more complicated than any other book I've done, because most of the time, the living happens, all the lessons are learned. I know how every story in the book ends up and I write it from a been there, done that kind of place. Very vulnerable, very honest, very real, very raw. That's the way all of my books are but I'm often reflecting back.

For this message, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, I was writing this one in real time. I was in the middle of the hurt, I was in the middle of the life lessons. Certainly, God had been teaching me so much, but a lot of the message He was teaching me in real time, and so this message has a different feel. This message not only does the reader not know how every story will turn out but as I was writing it, I didn't either. That's why you'll find in the back of the book, there's an epilogue, then there's an update from Lysa. Oh yeah, and then Paul Harvey says, and then here's the rest of the story, you know?

Kaley Olson: Right.

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: Probably we won't even know the rest of the story until my next book comes out after this one, but I acknowledged that throughout the book, and there's a point of why I wrote it that way. Because I think often, most of us feel like we're in the middle of something very difficult, and writing from that middle place gave me an opportunity to hold my reader's hand in the pit. I'm not standing outside of the pit calling down saying, "You can do this, you can climb out, here's step one, step two, step three," I'm in the pit with the reader and I'm acknowledging the goodness that can be found right there. I'm acknowledging that we can't always tie our hope to the outcome of how we think things will turn out. We must tie our hope to the Lord and if the Lord is right there and we know that He is, He's very close to the brokenhearted, then that gave me an opportunity to speak from a different vantage point and help people know that when we have a right understanding of God, we can have a much better understanding of our circumstances even before the situation changes.

Meredith Brock: That's good.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

Meredith Brock: So good, so good. One of the illustrations you use in the book about this period of your life that you're in that I think is just so fitting, is it's like you're walking on a tightrope.

Lysa TerKeurst: Yes.

Meredith Brock: You know, and you're at that point where you're like halfway between and you can't go back because it's just as tragic and scary as going back as it is, is going forward so you're just out there swaying and you know, I know I've been there, absolutely in my life where I'm like, "I can't go back but I'm so scared to move forward too." I just think it's such a beautiful illustration and I honestly, I can't tell you how many times I have just said, "It's just not supposed to be this way. This is not what I expected, this is not what I wanted."

I know this message very intimately myself because I've walked alongside you as we've gone through this process of writing the book and this is a tremendous tool that will help anybody who is in that position of wrestling with those feelings of disappointment, of wondering. "This is not what I wanted my life to be so now what? What do I do? How do I get through this? How do I move forward? How do I not go backwards?"

I'm really excited about the message you have for us today on your release day.

Lysa TerKeurst: Thank you.

Meredith Brock: Lysa, take it away.

Lysa TerKeurst: Thanks Meredith, and actually, for those of you who already have the book and you've started to read the book, you'll see in chapter one that there's a friend that I'm calling at 5:30 in the morning and Meredith, you were that friend that I called and so when you say you walked this message through with me, it's been from the very first second.

Meredith Brock: It's true.

Lysa TerKeurst: I know that today's teaching will be personal to you as it is to me. Today, I want to talk about the birthplace of disappointment. Where does it come from and how do we better deal with it? The reason I think it's so crucial for us to talk about disappointment is because the enemy uses our disappointments in the most vicious way and if we aren't aware of it, then it's so easy for us to fall prey to it. How the enemy uses our disappointment is in our life, most of us will have an expectation that's way up here. Then our actual experience is several notches, if not way down below our expectation.

We have an expectation and then we have an experience, and the fertile ground between those two, the distance between those two is where disappointment grows wild and free and if we don't know what to do with our disappointment,

then it often sits there and depending on how we fertilize it with our continued regrets and anxiety and frustrations over our disappointment. The enemy cannot read our mind but he can certainly watch our expressions, he can see what we post on social media, on Facebook. He can hear the words that come out of our mouth and we are very expressive people about our disappointments.

You can see it on a child's face when they open up a birthday gift at their birthday party, it's no secret if they like the gift or if they're disappointed in the gift. We are much the same with many of the things that happen to our life, so we're disappointed and here's how the enemy likes to move in, in those moments. He will locate one of our disappointments and then he will handcraft a temptation that's the perfect relief for that disappointment, or so he says.

Now remember, our God speaks in a language of freedom, we're going to see that in a minute in the Scriptures we turn to, but I want you to note something about the enemy — the enemy speaks to us in a way that twists God's Word and makes us feel as if God is a god of restriction. If we feel like God has restricted from us what could possibly ease our ache of disappointment, and this temptation is sitting there and it's the perfect solution to make us feel comforted or to make us feel more connected or to make us feel that it's going to ease the ache of the pain of our disappointment, then we start paying attention to the temptation.

Here's the other thing the enemy does. The enemy doesn't show up on our front door, knock on our front door and say, "Here's a temptation that I am going to present to you and here are all the consequences that come along with that temptation." No, the enemy does everything he can to make the consequences of that temptation hidden so that he can get us to phase number two of what the enemy wants to do.

The first is temptation, the second is deception. How the enemy likes to deceive us is a couple of different ways. Number one, in this deception, the enemy wants us to feel like we are the exception. This is wrong for everyone else, but we can handle it. Number two, it's not going to hurt anyone else. It just involves us, this is a personal, private matter and it's not going to hurt anyone else therefore, it's okay to do this in secret. The other way that I think the deception comes in is the enemy speaks to us and sometimes we even think it's our own voice justifying this but it says, "Based on everything we've been through, this is perfectly acceptable to you."

All this deception is handcrafted to make that temptation seem completely justifiable. After all, the temptation seems like it will ease the ache or make the pain of our circumstances go away and we are not into being in pain at all.

Meredith Brock: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst:

Then as soon as we grab ahold of that temptation, make it ours, and decide to partake in the sin, then the third phase of Satan's plan kicks in and that's accusation. It's temptation, deception, and accusation. Accusation was his plan all along. Make no mistake, the enemy never meant to coddle you or comfort you; the enemy means to crush you. In Revelation chapter 12 verses 10 and 11, it makes it very clear the enemy is called the accuser of the brethren. He accuses us day and night.

It's also very clear why he wants to accuse us — it's to keep our mouth shut so that we will not share our good testimony about the Lord. It says that the enemy is defeated by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. Jesus has already brought the blood, we are supposed to bring the word of our testimony, but if the enemy can accuse us to the point where he makes us feel like we are wrapped in shame and condemnation and guilt and anxiety and if he can take us deeper and deeper to keep us tied to that sin, we will not open up our mouth with a good testimony of how the Lord can deliver. We may not even experience the Lord's deliverance because we won't grab ahold of it getting out of the sin that we're in.

All of that paints a very important backdrop. Where do we find, where is this birthplace of disappointment? Where did all this come from? How did the enemy first come into play? In Genesis chapter two, the enemy is not present in this story. As a matter of fact, sin is not present here. In Genesis chapter two, we find Adam and Eve being formed in the garden of Eden and it's important to note if you're taking notes, the human heart was created in the context of perfection.

What makes things so complicated is we're going to get to Genesis chapter three and we're going to learn that perfection no longer exists because of some events that happen in Genesis chapter three. Wrapped up in Genesis two and Genesis three, we know that perfection exists but because we don't live in perfection anymore, that's why there is disappointment but God even has a good plan with that but before we get ahead of ourselves, let's go back to Genesis chapter two.

Starting in verse five, it says this, "Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent the rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden in the east in Eden and there he put the man he formed and the Lord God formed all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground. Trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food."

If you're taking notes, just make note all the trees in the garden were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden though, there were

the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Skip down to verse 15, the Lord God took the man, take note, the woman was not present here, she had not even been formed yet so the Lord God took the man and commanded the man and listen to the first three words that are recorded that the Lord spoke to the man, "You are free," because our God does speak in a language of freedom with some restriction, for our protection, which we're going to see.

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but," and here comes the restriction for his protection, "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat from it, you will certainly die." I'm convinced at this point, the man did not write the one rule down because the very next sentence that we find in Scripture verse 18, the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable to him."

At this point, we have the man, we have the Lord, the Lord speaking in a language freedom, who gives Adam a restriction for his protection and what was this protection? You see, not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we know now because we can put it in context with the rest of Scripture that the knowledge of good and evil, the only way to know the difference between good and evil is to not just experience the good but to experience evil. Evil was a weight that God never intended for the human heart to have to wrestle through, to have to deal with, to have to be aware of.

God never wanted us to know about things like a cancer diagnosis. God never wanted us to know about things like the devastation of a murder or a rape or even natural disasters where innocent people get killed. None of that was part of God's original design. That's the weight of the knowledge of evil and God said, "Don't eat from that. That's not a knowledge that I want you to have to wrestle through." Yet oftentimes, the very thing that the Lord says, "Don't," my friend Levi Lusko says, "We should every time God says do not, we should really interpret it, do not hurt yourself." Boy does this make it more apparent why God told Adam, "Don't eat from that tree," because what it will unleash is a kind of death that honestly, the Lord will spend the rest of the Bible having to deal with.

Then starting in verse 19, all the animals are brought before Adam, he names them but no suitable helper was found so the Lord God makes a woman and I love verse 25 of Genesis chapter two, "Adam and his wife are both naked and they felt no shame." The reason why they could stand there and feel no shame is because they had no other opinion to contend with but the absolute love of God Himself. That was perfection.

Then Genesis three happens. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say,'" now listen to the first three words that the enemy says that God said. We

know the first three words, what were the first three words that God said? "You are free."

Meredith Brock: "You are free."

Kaley Olson: "You are free."

Lysa TerKeurst: But now look what the enemy does, he twists it and the first three words that the enemy quotes God as having said, "You must not," because the enemy always wants us to believe that we serve a God of restriction and he wants to make us question God's word. Did God really say, because the enemy would love for us to believe that God's word is too hard to understand and too difficult to live out. That's exactly what's happening here. "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" I wish at this point, the woman would've said, "If you're so interested in what God said, go ask Him yourself," but the woman did not. The woman entertains a conversation with evil.

Before I shake my finger at the woman, I have to say, I'm guilty of this too. The woman says to the serpent, "We may eat from the trees that are in the garden but God did say you must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden," and then she adds something very interesting to it. She says, "You must not even touch it or you will die." This is not at all what God said and this is where I'm going to park our teaching, there's so much more to unpack and we will do that next month in our next podcast but I want to park right here about the woman adding an assumption of her own to God's word.

She is assuming if God said not to eat from it then surely, God means they must not even touch it. This is an assumption by the woman, this is not an instruction by God. I get myself in trouble a lot with assumptions, and here's how it works into my disappointments.

I will feel disappointed in something and then because we Christians love to pep rally around our situations and say, "Well, God will surely work good from this," and it is true, God will work eventual good from everything that we go through, He will. However, we must not assume that we know the good that our God is working because if we don't, if we start doing this, if we start adding and writing our own story, we can get our story so far down the path and we become very attached to the outcomes of our own making, so we like to assume that we know the good that our good God will surely do.

Or like Eve, we want to add restrictions to God's protective instruction that God never intended. By us adding to our own assumptions and our own opinions to God's word, we can start assuming and even holding God accountable to the outcome we expect. When in reality, God has a good plan in mind but it's probably not going to look anything like the one of our own design. It's just not. The minute we start becoming attached to the outcome of our own assumption

or our own opinion, that's the minute we start becoming epically disappointed in even God Himself.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

Lysa TerKeurst: I know this message because I've lived this message. For those of you who have followed along with my story, you know that about three years ago, my marriage absolutely blew apart. In the midst of all the hurt and all the heartbreak and all the disappointment, I started to do this. I started to assume that I knew what a good God should do and in my prayer time, I would even go to God and make all kinds of assumptions and suggestions and strategies. I could list out all the things that He should do and here I sit three years later, and God has absolutely taken me through quite a journey full of ups and downs and full of long seasons where it seemed like the outcome that I very much wanted would never come to pass.

I will say God is writing a very redemptive story in my life and in my marriage but I have to tell you, it's not of my own making. Nothing I ever suggested to God ever worked, nothing I ever strategized that could work ever did. The unfolding of my story looked nothing at all like my suggestion and praise God for that.

When you're sitting here in the middle of your own disappointment, maybe your own disillusionment, maybe your own devastation, I just want you to know I understand where you're at and that's why I wrote my book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. Because not only do I understand but I think God has shown me something pretty miraculous that every Christian needs to understand and that is if we have a wrong understanding of God, we will always have a misunderstanding of our circumstances.

I wrote my book so that in the middle of people's disappointments and devastations and disillusionments, that they would have something to grasp onto that's full of God's truth and that will help us trust God. Trusting God is no joke. It's the hardest lesson we'll ever have to learn but trusting God is the most crucial lesson of all.

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meredith Brock: So good, Lysa, so good. I have literally written right here in my notes because I have walked alongside you in the season, I literally wrote, "This is a hard-earned teaching. Not something that Lysa learned from just sitting down and absorbing a book," but this is one you learned boots on the ground. Sometimes head buried in a pillow with tears rolling down your cheeks trying to figure out what was next or like begging God for what, like this is not supposed to be, what's happening, God? This is not what I thought was going to happen in my family.

It's been a privilege to watch you walk through that. One of the things that you said is that, that really sticks out to me and that I've watched you live is we can't assume what the good is that God is going to do for us. I know along this journey that we've taken together, there were moments I was certain I knew what was going to happen. I was like, "Okay, this is how this is all gonna end?" You know, and have just seen you walk with such faithfulness to an obedience and patience as God has led you down this road.

I want to ask you for our listeners today, who are stuck right in that place, where they're crying out to God and saying, "This is not what I thought my life was going to look like. This is not, it's not supposed to be this way," whether it be from a disappointment in a job, maybe they've been let go from a job, or maybe their marriage is going through a similar season that yours has gone through, or maybe they have a child that has strayed away. It could be a number of different things. What is the one piece of advice that you would give them in this season right now?

Lysa TerKeurst: Yeah, and I would add to your list too, or maybe things seem so final.

Meredith Brock: Oh yes.

Lysa TerKeurst: Like the divorce happened.

Meredith Brock: Yeah, absolutely.

Lysa TerKeurst: The diagnosis did lead to the death of that loved one.

Meredith Brock: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: You know, and things seem so final, you know?

Meredith Brock: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lysa TerKeurst: Where it's like no matter what, life will never look the same, right?

Meredith Brock: Yep.

Lysa TerKeurst: First of all, I would say one of the hardest parts of this to me, I kept finding myself resisting and saying, "I don't want this to be my story."

Meredith Brock: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: Like I just don't want this to be my story but what I would have to say is along the way, I've had to have many little funerals for the way I thought my life would look.

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: I had to detach myself from the expectation of what my life should be, could be, would have been if these circumstances wouldn't have unfolded and had to acknowledge reality. I had to say, "This is my reality. This is my story. I may not like it. I may not want it. I may not see any possibility of good coming from it but this is it." Then I offered that up as a gift to the Lord and I just said, sometimes our gifts to the Lord, they're found in obedience and sometimes it's just a prayer of sacrifice.

I just had to say, "Lord, I offer you this prayer of sacrifice, of my life doesn't look the way I thought it would and it's never going to look exactly like I thought it would," but here's the hope. In Hebrews chapter 12 starting in verse two, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer or the author and perfecter of faith," you see, we don't have to stress about grabbing the pen and trying to write our own story, God is not only the author of our story, and as we fix our eyes on Jesus, He will show us an even more glorious story that can be written. It's a story of faith, not of perfect feelings.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: He is the author and the perfecter of our faith story. Then it says, "For the joy set before him," there is joy before us, there is joy there, "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Consider Him, just fix your thoughts there. Consider what He did, how He suffered, how He died, how He found the joy on the other side of His horrific circumstances, consider Him who endured such oppositions from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. There is a joy set before you and it's not dependent on that person changing, those circumstances changing, the rights being wronged, the insecurities being filled up. It's not dependent on, there is a joy set before you because God put it there. In His right time and in His right way, as you keep your eyes on Him, you'll see it.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

Meredith Brock: Wow, so good.

Kaley Olson: That's so good.

Meredith Brock: I love the thought, I don't actually love it but it's a true thought, is that what funeral — I'm asking myself right now — what funeral do I need to have today?

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meredith Brock: Of some expectation, of some picture that maybe I've painted in my head of what I thought my life was going to be, or maybe not even my life, not that big

grand scale, but maybe I just have a picture of what I thought a particular relationship was supposed to be like.

Kaley Olson: Right.

Meredith Brock: I want to challenge our listeners today, what funeral do you need to have today in order to allow the Lord to bring in the joy that Lysa is talking about?

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: That's a hard thing to do to have those funerals [crosstalk 00:28:31].

Lysa TerKeurst: Yes it is, and it can be over small things too but I will say this, letting go of an expectation that is no longer realistic in your life, it is not an end. It's often what must be present for the brand-new to begin.

Meredith Brock: So good.

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative), that's right.

Lysa TerKeurst: Sometimes we've got to let go in order of what isn't so that we can grab ahold of what can be.

Meredith Brock: Right, and you're here today, I've seen you. The joy has returned.

Lysa TerKeurst: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meredith Brock: It is back and it's good to be in a place where the Lord renews our strength and joy and hope. It's really good.

Kaley Olson: That's right.

Meredith Brock: So glad to have you here today, Lysa.

Lysa TerKeurst: Thank you.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, and if you're listening to this and you are in a situation that is hard right now, *It's Not Supposed to be This Way* is out for real. You don't have to wait any longer to get the truths that are in this book and I've read an early reader's copy myself and have been in lots of groups and I know that the message in this book isn't just something that reads well, it's something that lives well, and Lysa, you do such a good job at the end of every chapter, you help give people a next right to take. It's not like they close the book and then have to do something, they know what to do through each chapter.

You can purchase your copy at P31bookstore.com or any of the other retailers out there.

Meredith Brock: Yeah, we know you have plenty of options when it comes to purchasing Lysa's book but when you purchase from Proverbs 31 bookstore, it helps us keep doing what we do here at Proverbs 31, for completely free, right?

Kaley Olson: That's right.

Meredith Brock: While you're on the website looking around there, we encourage you, take a look at some of the exclusive resources we've paired with Lysa's book. We've got this fantastic journal that you can use alongside reading the book. We have some really cute, I love them, T-shirts and even a sweatshirt. We've got a great bracelet. Things that will help you remember the message of the book and make you look kind of adorable at the same time.

Kaley Olson: That's right.

Meredith Brock: I don't know about you, but I like to look adorable.

Kaley Olson: Yes.

Meredith Brock: Make sure you take a look around on the website at some of the other things we have to offer.

Kaley Olson: That's right. Well, that about wraps us up for today's episode. Thanks so much for listening, guys and thank you, Lysa for your message today. We're so excited for your book to finally be out for the world to read. We'll see you next time.