

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Kaley Olson: Hello friends, welcome to the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast, biblical truth for any girl at any age. My name is Kaley Olson, and I'm here with my cohost Meredith Brock.
- Meredith Brock: Hi Kaley. I am so happy to be here today. If you're new around here, we're excited to have you join us. Maybe you had a nice friend tell you about the podcast. What a good friend you have or maybe you stumbled upon it on social media or something. Either way, why don't you go ahead and click that little subscribe button on iTunes so you never miss another episode, right?
- Kaley Olson: That was a nice shameless plug there, Meredith.
- Meredith Brock: I'm not afraid.
- Kaley Olson: I know, I know. I'm not either. Okay, I have a question for you.
- Meredith Brock: Ready.
- Kaley Olson: Have you ever tried to start something new, big or small and just felt like you couldn't push through?
- Meredith Brock: All the time. Does a basket of laundry count as this? Some days I just feel like I can't push through it.
- Kaley Olson: Do you want to know the secret? Not a secret, I have had laundry in my dryer for a week. And I just keep ...
- Meredith Brock: Well, there you have it folks. You just can't push through. I know I have felt this way about renovations though. Then he had about ... I started working here at Proverbs 31 seven years ago. I remember there's been many moments where as we built our creative team, just the, "Oh, my word, I don't know that I can push through this." God's been good. I've been able to push through every time. I'm very thankful.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. Yeah. Well, that's exactly why I'm really excited for our listeners to hear today's message and even for us to hear it. We've got Glynnis Whitwer, Executive Director of Communications at Proverbs 31 Ministries here with us today to give a teaching. Welcome, Glynnis.

Glynnis Whitwer: Hi Kaley. Hi Meredith. Thanks for having me on today.

Kaley Olson: We are so excited that you're here, Glynnis. If you guys aren't familiar with this lovely lady, you need to be. Let me tell you what, I'm going to give you a little inside scoop on Glynnis really fast. Everybody who's listening, listen really close. She's hilarious. She's got one of my favorite senses of humor. It's very dry. If you're not paying attention, you'll miss it. I just love it. I love somebody that is so clever and so smart, they can just slide jokes in here and there without people even recognizing it. I also love Glynnis because she loves her kids, she loves her husband and she loves her dogs. Glynnis, how many dogs do you have? Is it two?

Glynnis Whitwer: We have two. I'll tell you, one of them is sitting right here, so let's hope he doesn't start or she doesn't start the whining.

Kaley Olson: I believe that. She's always joining us. Glynnis joins us from ... Proverbs 31 offices are located here in Charlotte, North Carolina. Glynnis joins us all the way from Arizona, so we're very used to having her very cute dogs join us in meetings.

Meredith Brock: I love it. I love it. One other thing I really love about Glynnis is that she loves the Word of God. She handles it with care and precision as she leads our team for *Encouragement for Today* devotions and our COMPEL Writer's Training program. She also coordinates the content portion of our annual She Speaks Conference. I'm so thankful to have her as part of our team, but also to have her here today to talk about some of the things she's learned.

Kaley Olson: Yes. Well out of all the many things that you have on your plate, we're pumped that you're here, Glynnis. Thank you for taking some time for us. Meredith and I were talking earlier about your message from She Speaks and just talking about how excited we are to hear it. We think that our audience is really going to be set free and challenged by some of the things that you have to share. Glynnis, will you go ahead and give us your teaching?

Glynnis Whitwer: Yeah, I'd love to. Thank you so much. Well, what you didn't say is I've been with Proverbs for, hard to believe, going on 19 years. I've been on staff for 18. That's a long time. As you can imagine, Proverbs 31 was much different back then. I mean, we were just this handful of women. We were putting out a little black and white newsletter. We had a little, 60, I think it was two-minute radio show at that time on one station there in Charlotte. The group of us were just starting to write and speak. Most of it we learned, as you can imagine. I mean, just even imagine the technology difference between then and now. We learned through

trial and error. What I am just amazed about is God's hand of protection on us. We're still here today, because of Him and because we've learned some lessons.

Glynnis Whitwer: One of the things I've loved about Lysa TerKeurst, and I think you all know, she is President of Proverbs 31 Ministries, is she has had this heart of generosity to give back what she has been given. Any lesson that she's learned, she learns and turns around immediately to share it. That's impacted me personally as well.

Glynnis Whitwer: What I'm going to share with you today are three of the most important lessons that I've learned about being in ministry, in writing and publishing. I think we're going to keep people in this calling beyond just that little short-term rush. I'll start with a little bit about myself, but I've been writing all my professional life. I got a degree in journalism and public relations from Arizona State University. Before I came to Proverbs, I worked as a public relations writer, marketing, advertising copy. Again, imagine that was back in the '80s. I thought my career would always include writing, but I didn't have very big goals for myself. In fact, actually my personal goal was to work in a company where I would put together the employee newsletter. I thought if I could just do an employee newsletter, I'll put some tips and photos and maybe a recipe. I thought that would be my dream job. I never thought I'd write a book or even magazine articles or devotions. I didn't see myself as anything other than the editor of a little newsletter. God had some other plans.

Glynnis Whitwer: In 1998, my family moved from Phoenix to Charlotte. We were only going to go for two years. I didn't want to leave Phoenix. I was happy. I really decided that my husband was so selfish that he was going to take me out of God's will for two years. I would suffer through those two years. Then I would get back to my life when I returned to Phoenix. It wasn't long, really just like a month after we moved to Charlotte, that I saw Lysa TerKeurst give her testimony at a church we were visiting. Then I heard her on the radio. I clearly heard God tell me, "Call her and volunteer," which I had never heard God speak to me other than telling me to tell my husband yes to move. The second time He ever spoke to me and was telling me to call Lysa TerKeurst and volunteer. If you can believe it, somehow I got her phone number, which would not happen today, just let me let you know. I gave her a call. She said they'd been praying for someone with a degree in journalism. That led me to volunteer. After I completed this little volunteer project, they needed someone to take on the newsletter.

Glynnis Whitwer: Okay guys, can you even imagine how excited I was? A newsletter. I told them, I'm going back to Phoenix, so I'll help you in the short run, but we've got to find an editor. Well, long story short, we never found an editor. Here I am 18 to 19 years later. I've been able to be a part of this truly exciting movement of God. I've gotten to use some of my skills and talents. I've seen Proverbs grow into this international ministry.

Glynnis Whitwer: Well, that newsletter became a magazine. I started speaking for a season at She Speaks. I started writing devotions, overseeing the devotion ministry. We have a million subscribers, which boggles my mind. I have a staff. I overseas writing

teams. I've written 10 of my own books. I even got to edit the NIV Real Life Study Bible with Zondervan. I oversee COMPEL Training. We have close to 3,000 writers. I can't even imagine. I don't know; I would have never seen this in my future. I've gotten to learn about ministry and writing and publishing for every angle, and I've loved it. But the greatest lesson I've ever learned is how not to quit.

Glynnis Whitwer: Whether you're a writer or you're in ministry, you have some other completely different dream, I'm going to share some things that have really made a difference between whether or not you can achieve your goals or whether you set them aside and believe you misheard God. I think the only failure I've ever seen is to quit before God tells you to quit. If God ushers you into a new season ... We have a grandchild. When my son and his wife had their baby, I knew this was a new season for me. It's not going to include book writing. Book writing is over on my Proverbs time. That's a new season. Or maybe you finished your assignment and you focus on something else. That's obedience. When you set it aside your calling, because God has said to.

Glynnis Whitwer: That's not what I've seen happen. I have seen more people quit because of the wrong reason. Most of the time it's because they've got their thinking twisted. It's not surprising, because Scripture tells us we're in this battle. It's a spiritual battle. Scripture is clear that there is someone who plots and schemes against us. Ephesians 6:10 through 11 says, "*Finally be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power, put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*" That word scheme is *methodea*, which means this craftiness or deceitfulness. I don't know if you've ever experienced this deceitfulness, which is always just, "something's not what it seems." That's what Scripture is telling us. That we have this enemy who is twisting things and manipulating things and withholding truth and giving us partial truth and then all-out lies.

Glynnis Whitwer: The only way to stop being deceived is for someone else to reveal the truth. That's what Scripture does for us. Jesus says, "*When we know the truth, the truth will set us free,*" but the only truth that sets us free is the truth that we know. That's what this teaching is about. I've got three truths that I think will make a difference and will help you stand firm. These are, to me, these have just been life-changing.

Glynnis Whitwer: The first one that I think every person needs to know is that there's no such thing as competition in God's kingdom. If God has called you to do something, there is enough room and opportunity for you. That's not what Satan wants you to believe. He wants you to believe that all the good spots are already taken by people who are much more talented or assertive or hard working than you. For years I struggled thinking that what I had to offer just wasn't good enough. If you can believe it, you know I was trained in writing. Those fears and questions collided when I sensed God was calling me to write. I mean, when you're trained as a journalist, you have a certain style of writing that's not book writing or magazine writing. I thought, "There's so many talented authors out there

already and not only are they more talented than me, but honestly I'm probably the worst person at marketing myself." I mean, if you know me, I show up at She Speaks without business cards. I don't know that I've ever brought a business card to a conference. I think I'm going to do it. I show up and I'm like, "I have no business cards." I thought that all those spots, which were limited, were already taken. I wanted to quit before I even started.

Glynnis Whitwer: Then God gave me this picture of what His kingdom is like. I had this vision of a slice of pie that was reserved for people with my calling, which at that point, was to write. I was called to write. There was a sliver of opportunity and only the best got into that sliver. Then God showed me that He's not in the business of dividing a sliver of opportunity among His children. He's in the business of baking a bigger pie. When we answered God's call in our life, there is unlimited opportunity to serve Him. He's not limited by market trends or economic downturns. Nothing is too hard for Him. If He's called you, there's room for you.

Glynnis Whitwer: But the enemy, the deceiver, the manipulator wants us to believe that opportunities are scarce. Because if we believe that, then we'd have this sense of competition. If we have a sense of competition, then we never truly celebrate each other's successes, because our brothers and sisters in our same calling are a competition for us to get into that sliver. We either have to fight amongst ourselves. We're Christians, so we don't do it openly, right? Or we withhold that enthusiasm or support. I don't know. It can make you so emotionally needy, when you think that there's this sense of competition.

Glynnis Whitwer: I love what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37 through 38. It's a Scripture verse we all know. *"Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers out into his harvest field."* What Jesus is saying is to pray for more people to step up and do the exact same thing we're doing. It's our harvest field. We're walking into it, and Jesus is saying, "Pray for more people to be in the exact same thing, do the exact same thing that you're doing." I just think it's an amazing way to live. It's so countercultural. It's radical honestly. Instead of worrying if there's opportunity, I'm going to be praying for more women and men to start doing what I'm doing and doing whatever I can to help them succeed. Oh, it's such a freeing way to think. That's not dividing opportunity.

Glynnis Whitwer: The second thing I think is helpful to keep us from quitting is that failure is a part of answering God's call. Most of what we do is subjective. Someone else gets to make a decision about our worth. It's not accounting, where numbers are numbers. You never see accountants arguing whether five plus five equals 10. It just does.

Glynnis Whitwer: Let's say you want to write a book. Well, first you have to get past acquisitions editor. If that editor loves your idea, your writing, they'll bring it to the next step, maybe to the publication board. Then if the marketing department thinks your idea, your book won't sell, they can say no. All right, so you've got somebody there every step along the line, someone has a subjective opinion.

Even if you self-publish, people get to make the decision if they buy your writing or not.

Glynnis Whitwer: This subjective decision-making happens whether your dream is a job, whether it's starting a company, starting a ministry, selling your art, or maybe even finding the perfect match for yourself. When your dream feels like it's in the hands of someone else, you could easily be discouraged when they don't give you the thumbs up, especially when you've poured your heart into it. Again, countercultural way of thinking, success in God's kingdom is obedience. It's not the end result. That is up to God. Any risk we take exposes every single vulnerability, especially when you experience this failure.

Glynnis Whitwer: I see it all the time at She Speaks. I mean, you just ... These women bring their dreams of a book. It makes you feel so vulnerable. If you don't expect that you're going to feel vulnerable, then you're going to be surprised when it happens. It'll make you defensive. You just get all kinds of wonky. I think it's important to be aware of that — failure's going to reveal your insecurities. When you're insecure, you become desperate. You might not realize this, but let me just give you this example. If you've ever hiked on a mountain and slipped, like if it's wet or just you didn't get a good foothold or the rocks slide from underneath you. In that moment of falling, everybody, unless you're maybe a trained mountain climber, everybody panics and grabs for anything that feels secure. Whether that's a rock or a person.

Glynnis Whitwer: When we are insecure and our insecurity is revealed, we can become desperate and make bad decisions like the decision to quit. The only way to replace insecurity is with security. That's the opposite of insecurity. That's what we all need. We need to feel so secure in our calling that failure isn't a stop sign. An item is secure when it's attached to something immovable. If I'm camping and I secure my tent poles in solid ground, the tent's not going to fly away. That's secure. If it's not secured to something immovable, let's say if I put it in sand, then if a storm arises, I'm going to spend all my time worrying about my tent flying away. Insecurities in our life are like this.

Glynnis Whitwer: Our souls long for security, to be grounded in that which will not move. When we aren't grounded, we subconsciously know our foundation is insecure and changing, which causes us to worry and work harder in a vicious cycle. What a difference, when you are secure in your calling and you have secured that truth to the immovable truth of God, then you will not be shaken. That's security. I believe that security, when we have attached the truth to God's immovable truth, we will walk more secure and failure just won't really matter.

Glynnis Whitwer: All right, there's one last thing. The third thing to know is that Satan's going to try to disqualify you from your calling. The truth, the very thing that Satan wants to use to disqualify each one of us is what God will use as our most powerful ministry. I had this vision. It was just an amazing vision at She Speaks of Satan walking around with this rubber stamp and just stamping disqualified on women one by one by one. It's not hard to understand why Satan would use this ploy.

We all have something in our past or even in our present that needs God's saving grace. We're all in desperate need of a savior. If we forget that we're in trouble because there is no point we ever don't need Jesus, and that's part of our testimony. We need Him for some reason. We need Jesus, because in some area of our life, we believed a lie or we've chosen our own way. We've made bad choices. At that point, God met us and brought healing. We know what our lives were like before Jesus, but we are healed. We are in a place of healing. We are walking a path of victory. Satan wants us to think we're walking a path of brokenness, hence the disqualification.

Glynnis Whitwer: We remember, Satan is an accuser. He will isolate us. He will make us feel there was something wrong with us. If people knew it, it would ruin our testimony. We would bring shame to God, is what Satan wants us to think. Our pain, that place of shame that God has replaced with just His glory, His forgiveness, that place is where we experienced God's power. That's why it's so powerful to us. What qualifies us to do ministry, to write, to start a business, any of that isn't because of anything we've done right. It's we're qualified for ministry by the blood of Jesus and His calling on our lives. Our lives are proof that God is a miracle worker. Don't you know that our enemy hates that.

Glynnis Whitwer: Wrapping it up. When you feel like your opportunities are shrinking, when you think you've got that "sign" that you should quit, because someone gave you negative feedback or you think you've messed up too much for God to use you, remember this teaching and remember this trick from 1 John 4:4. *"You, dear children are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

Kaley Olson: Glynnis, that's so good. I want to talk a little bit more about what you said at the very beginning of your teaching where you said, "I thought my career would always include writing. I didn't really have big goals for myself. My biggest personal goal was to work at a company where I would be able to put together a newsletter like an employee newsletter." Then you said, "I didn't see myself as an editor and writer of anything more than that." That was your dream. That is what you were eventually hired to do. A lot of the times, like with this ministry, it could be your job somewhere in a secular office somewhere, usually whenever you're hired, you're hired for something that you want. Then you're given more responsibility. Then the dream ends up not looking like you thought it would be. Glynnis, I think I can put myself in your shoes. I think you can too, Meredith.

Meredith Brock: Absolutely.

Kaley Olson: You were hired seven years ago, Meredith. Glynnis, you were hired a long time ago. I was hired, what, almost five years ago to do something much smaller than what I'm doing right now. It's so funny how the dream keeps unfolding, but then it's a mess of a dream. You're like, "This isn't what I thought the dream would look like." It's both good and hard. The hard makes me think that it's not my

dream anymore. My dream was to do this one thing, but now it's here. I think that that right there is where God says, "No, it was my dream, because ..."

Meredith Brock: All along.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: That's right.

Kaley Olson: What I want to do is say, "God, thank You for this dream. I've got this now. Here I go. Here I go."

Meredith Brock: Watch me accomplish it, right?

Kaley Olson: Yeah, watch me. Glynnis, you walked us through all of these things, like feeling disqualified or failure. That's a huge thing for me. It makes me think ... The first time I fail, it makes me think that I can't do this anymore. That I'm not cut out for this. What you said was that if we didn't struggle, we wouldn't need Him. Our failure's the thing that disqualifies us in our eyes, but it's what qualifies us the most, because that's where it allows Him ...

Meredith Brock: He can enter in.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, yeah. I just, I love, I love this teaching. Meredith, what did you think?

Meredith Brock: Well, first of all, I just want to laugh. It's so true, how when we have a dream for ourselves in mind. When we submit that dream to the Lord, man, is He not a god of multiplication?

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meredith Brock: Just like you said, Glynnis, I love that your very first point was there is enough room and opportunity for every single one of us. Man, it's hard to believe that when you swipe through social media, right, ladies? It's hard for me to believe that there's room for me. That's where you have to do exactly like Glynnis said. You have to find that grounding. You have to find the grounding in what God has said to you and in His call on your life. I think one of the things that really stuck out for me in this, Glynnis, and I would love to hear your thoughts too, is I loved the part where you talked about insecurity in our lives can be crippling. It will make you panic, and that our souls were created. We were actually created for security, but we live in a place, this very broken world, were insecurity is very much part of our lives. When we aren't grounded in God's truth, that insecurity can begin to seep into our lives.

Meredith Brock: I'm thinking, for me personally, I am such an achiever. I like to ... A perfect day for me ... Here's Meredith Brock's perfect day. I wake up, I have my cup of coffee. I spend some time in my Bible. Then I have my to-do list. That to-do list

is 1,000% achievable. I get through all of my to-do's in one day, which means then that night, I lay down and go to bed, and I feel secure. I did everything that I was supposed to do. Everybody is taken care of. I worked through that list. The reality is these days, my list is never done.

Kaley Olson: No, never.

Meredith Brock: I never go to bed at night feeling like I did everything I was supposed to do today. I got it all done. There have been periods of my life where that feeling of I didn't get through my list would keep me up at night and would torture my feeling of security. I would feel insecure. I would feel vulnerable. I would feel like a failure. It would make me, if I couldn't find my grounding in the fact that today God saw all. He was with me the whole time. He knew that I only had 24 hours today to do everything He called me to do. He, when I laid down today and I still had 15 things on that list, He was not disappointed in me, because I worked for Him and not for anyone else. For me, I've had to really train myself. Sometimes I do that well. Sometimes I do it really, really poorly. Usually it means I slip into some pretty intense anxiety. I have to really spend some time in the Word of God, because that's the only thing that can seem to untangle me from that place of insecurity and fear. Have you experienced anything like that, Glynnis? I know you've been in this line of work for a long time.

Glynnis Whitwer: I think, the couple things I think. One of is we don't know that we're standing on insecure ground until something slips. You think it's secure. You can look at a ground ... I'm just thinking practically, physically on a hike. You look at it, and it looks secure. Then all of a sudden, it's not. Sometimes that's the hardest place, but it's the best place, because then you realize, "Wow, I had put a lot of faith in something that wasn't secure." I think high-achieving people, maybe high-achieving women, I mean, I think probably mostly women are listening, like you, Meredith, like me, like Kaley. We are used to depending on ourselves.

Kaley Olson: Absolutely.

Glynnis Whitwer: We can count on ourselves. Then all of a sudden we find out, "Uh-oh, we can't count on ourselves." That can shake you up. I mean, it really can. Boy, the first time that you realize, "Oh, I'm not invincible," you either become desperate and work harder and harder and harder. You work harder and faster and harder and faster. Then you realize, "That didn't get me where I wanted to go." Or hopefully somebody tells you the truth, like, "Hey, there's a better way to do this. That's depending on the Lord." I hope that's what we're doing for women. I hope that we're showing them, "Hey, you can work harder and faster, but it's not going to get you that security. You'll never get that security that you want until you realize you've placed what you believe in something that will move." That's [inaudible 00:28:34], identifying where have I placed what I believe in something that can shift. If I do it myself, it will always shift.

Kaley Olson: That's right.

Glynnis Whitwer: [inaudible 00:28:42]. I'm human. There's just too much humanity in me.

Meredith Brock: I think in all of us.

Kaley Olson: What a good thing for us to just end and pause on, which is you've got to place your security, you've got to place your success, everything on the fact that God is a good God, He loves you. Obedience to Him is all that matters. It's not the end result that matters. Success in God's kingdom, just like you said, Glynnis, is simply obedience. So good. What a great teaching. Thank you so much.

Meredith Brock: Thank you.

Glynnis Whitwer: You're welcome. Thanks for the invitation.

Kaley Olson: Well, I'd love to give our audience some practical next steps. I'm thinking of a couple of different types of people who might be listening. Maybe there's the gal who just wants to get plugged into God's Word and be just challenged to grow deeper in her faith and also to just feel like her life is normal. Our *Encouragement for Today* devotions, I feel like are perfect for that, because they always start off with a story. While I'm not a mom, so I can't always identify with the content there. It's just, I know that like if you read it, there's somebody telling some story that makes your life feel normal. It's okay to not have it all together. It wraps up with something great. If that is you, you can subscribe to our *Encouragement for Today* devotions on our website. Literally, you just go to Proverbs31.org. It is right there on the main page.

Kaley Olson: Or maybe you have a dream. It doesn't have to be a dream necessarily to do ministry or whatever. I want to talk about writers. Glynnis is the editor for Proverbs. She has just done so much with where we've gone in a ministry and training writers. Glynnis, tell them what they should do if they want to sign up for COMPEL.

Glynnis Whitwer: Well, thank you. Yeah, compeltraining.com is our website. That actually, I'm so excited because we've just had an overhaul of it. It's beautiful. It was always ... We had so much information. It's even easier to manage now. compeltraining.com is our website. It's about 3,000 people who are all have the same heart to write. We train you from the practical to the inspirational.

Meredith Brock: That's great.

Kaley Olson: Yes, that's right.

Meredith Brock: Love it.

Kaley Olson: Okay, and lastly. Maybe you don't have a dream to write a book or anything, but you do have one to speak or lead. Meredith, do you want to tell them what they should do about She Speaks?

Meredith Brock: Well, absolutely. You guys have heard us talk about it through this whole episode really. What is this thing we keep saying called She Speaks?

Kaley Olson: She speaks what?

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Kaley Olson: She speaks what? What does she say?

Meredith Brock: Well, every summer here in Charlotte, North Carolina at Proverbs 31 Ministries, we hosts a conference called She Speaks. We would absolutely love for you to join us. You can do that by going to SheSpeaksConference.com. Also, all of this information we've talked about is going to be found in the show notes for this episode at Proverbs31.org/listen/podcast.

Kaley Olson: Yes, because no one in reality is going to remember any of the things that we said.

Meredith Brock: They might. Maybe they're super sharp.

Kaley Olson: Maybe they are. If not, do what Meredith said, Proverbs31.org/listen/podcast.

Meredith Brock: That's right.

Kaley Olson: All right, well Glynnis, thank you so much for giving your teaching today. I just, I think it was perfect for what we need in this season ...

Glynnis Whitwer: Thank you.

Kaley Olson: ... and for what our audience needs. I just, I love our tribe.

Meredith Brock: Me too.

Kaley Olson: I love the messages that we get to hear every time on this podcast. We'll see you guys next time.