

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Meredith Brock: Thanks for joining us for another episode of the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast. Biblical truth for any girl at any age. My name is Meredith Brock, and I am here with my cohost, Kaley Olson.

Kaley Olson: Hi Meredith. I'm so excited to be here today. You know, it's funny that I wrote this in the script earlier but I wish that our listeners could see us recording right now and how goofy we look.

Meredith Brock: Why is that?

Kaley Olson: Yeah. Meredith, why don't you tell them what you're doing. All of us are sitting around the table right now. What are you doing?

Meredith Brock: Well, I decided that I would start a new tradition today and that I would record all of the podcasts standing up just because I feel like I'm better standing.

Kaley Olson: I know.

Meredith Brock: I don't know why.

Kaley Olson: And you talk with your hands.

Meredith Brock: I do. This is dangerous.

Kaley Olson: I feel like there are going to be hands flying all around the room right now. I think that people maybe have this mental image in their mind of us recording in some kind of glamorous studio.

Meredith Brock: I know, right. That there's like rainbows and butterflies.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. There's not and it doesn't look anything like what we post on social media. I'm going to do a quick video right now and post it on my social account with the hashtag #P31Podcast. There's Meredith on the video. There's our producer, Eric. Nicki, who is joining us later, is on this computer right here.

Meredith Brock: Glamorous, right?

Kaley Olson: I'm going to post that. Yeah.

Meredith Brock: Super glamorous.

Kaley Olson: So people can see that we are actually really as down-to-earth as we sound.

Meredith Brock: That's right. Really as down-to-earth, for real.

Kaley Olson: Yes.

Meredith Brock: Today we are so excited to be bringing a really special gal here on the show. Some of you might know her from Online Bible Studies or from the First 5 app. Others might know her because she's a speaker, has written two books and two Bible studies published by LifeWay and not only that, but folks, she lives on The Fixer Upper Farm and is one of our dear friends at Proverbs 31. Please welcome Nicki Koziarz.

Nicki Koziarz: Hey guys. Just to add to your glamorous little setup situation, I'm currently sitting in my closet with dirty clothes next to me.

Meredith Brock: My kind of gal, Nicki.

Kaley Olson: I know. But you sound amazing and that's what creates really good sound quality over here.

Meredith Brock: That's right.

Nicki Koziarz: That's right. Dirty clothes does the trick.

Kaley Olson: Awesome. We're so happy to have you with us today, Nicki. Today you're going to be giving a teaching that's tied to your recent release titled *Why Her?* But before you dive into your teaching, will you tell us why you wrote the book so that our listeners can know?

Nicki Koziarz: Absolutely. After my first book, *Five Habits of a Woman Who Doesn't Quit*, came out, I thought I had conquered my biggest God struggle, which I thought was quitting. That was one of the reasons why I wrote that book, but after the book was released I very quickly began to pick up on the fact that I had another pretty big God struggle, which is just a really nice way of saying sin struggle, and it was the struggle of comparison, because as an author, when you release a book, you are immediately thrown into comparison, whether you want to be there or not.

I began to understand that this was something that was actually compromising my soul; it was making my soul not well. I began to kind of sniff this struggle out in my own life and there's actually one verse in the book of Ruth which is what

Five Habits is based on that says that Ruth was going to become like the house of Rachel and Leah and I was like, hmm weren't Rachel and Leah pretty messed up sisters? I didn't really think there was anything super amazing that came from their generational line.

But I went back and I read their story and I realized that these women did have amazing things happen but they have what I consider one of the most messed up stories in all of Scripture.

Kaley Olson: Wow. Yeah.

Nicki Koziarz: I'm just going to confess right off the bat. I know y'all have had Lysa TerKeurst on here and [crosstalk 00:04:14] on here and all these great Bible scholars, but one of the things that I do when I'm struggling with a God-struggle is I go to God's Word and I try to find someone who is more messed up than me.

Meredith Brock: That's [crosstalk 00:04:25]

Nicki Koziarz: That's what I do. Rachel and Leah, they were more messed up than me and so there was a lot of things that they were able to teach me and I'm going to share a little bit with that with you guys in a minute. But that was really the reason why; it just came from a place inside of me that was really hurting that I needed to sort through with God and also with others.

Meredith Brock: Yeah. Well I am here to tell you right now, Nicki, this message is so relevant, so needed. I don't know a woman on the planet, honestly I don't know a person on the planet who has not either struggled with comparison in the past or is just currently struggling with it because there are so many places where I feel like people just feel inadequate and the natural go-to is to compare yourself to someone else and to really magnify those things.

Nicki Koziarz: Oh, for sure. Yeah.

Meredith Brock: I know for me it has really spoken to me personally as I've read the book and realized I really was, in some areas very personal to me, doing exactly what you said, which was compromising my soul and really had to bring myself back to a new place of honesty with the Lord and have His Word speak to me. I am really excited for you to speak that same kind of message into our audience today. Why don't you go ahead and kick off your teaching and let our ladies know what you've learned about comparison in *Why Her*.

Nicki Koziarz: Absolutely. Thank you, Meredith. To kind of start off things today, I have a pretty shocking statistic for you guys. I don't know if you know this, but did you guys know that every day, around 151,000 people die.

Meredith Brock: Wow.

Kaley Olson: Wow.

Nicki Koziarz: That's a lot of people.

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Nicki Koziarz: Now, there's also a lot of people being born but that's a lot of people who are dying every single day. If we were to take that statistic and break it down even more, it ends up being several hundred people every minute are dying. The reality is that death is something that is going to come to all of us — it is inevitable. We don't get a pass on that; we don't get to decide when it's going to happen.

Ultimately the hardest thing in all of this is understanding that we are the ones who are in charge of our souls. It's great to be in church, it's great to be in Bible studies, it's great to do the First 5 app, it's great to listen to this podcast. These are all things that can help make your soul well for sure, but at the end of the day, the bottom of the line, when you take your last breath here on this earth, a question that we're all going to have to wrestle through is: Is my soul well?

As kind of the guardian or the shepherd of your soul, there are some things that can really compromise your soul. Like I was sharing in the beginning is that one of the things I do is I do go to God's Word and I try to find someone who can help me through my God-struggle. I realized this reality when I was reading Genesis chapter 35 verses 16 through 18. This is actually the ending of Rachel and Leah's ... Well, it's the ending of the main part of the story; there's other things that continue to happen.

But I want to read these verses and then we're going to just kind of unpack this journey and I want to leave you with something really practical that you can do to make sure that when you get to that last point, that final moment here on this earth, that you've done everything possible to be able to take that last breath and say, "It is well with my soul."

Genesis 35:16-18 says this, "Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor and she had hard labor. When her labor was at its hardest the midwife said to her, 'Do not fear, for you have another son.' And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-Oni, which meant son of my sorrow, but his father called him Benjamin."

Here we are at the end of Rachel's life and she is leaving us with the last words that she would ever leave here on this earth that we know of and it's a name, a name for a baby, which she calls him Ben-Oni, which means son of my sorrow. Now you guys, you do not name a baby "son of my sorrow" from having a bad hair day or getting in a fight with your husband or somebody making you mad

on Facebook. There had to be something really deep inside of her to get to that place.

Kaley, I know you haven't had babies yet, but Meredith, I know you put a lot of thought into your kids' names, right?

Meredith Brock: Yeah. Absolutely. It's not a small thing.

Nicki Koziarz: No. I don't know about you, but as a mom I wouldn't want my child's name to have something negative attached to it. I think it's just a really good perspective for us to see this last part of the story that there really was something not well in her soul. In order for us to understand how she got to this point, we're actually going to need to back up and kind of fast-forward really quickly through this story. I'm not going to be able to unpack everything with you but I do want us to get a little bit of an understanding of what made her get to this point in her life.

Rachel's story actually begins with a man named Jacob. Maybe you're familiar with Jacob because he had a twin brother named Esau; they're kind of the most famous twins in the Bible. They had a huge falling out and their mother Rebekah said, not just a little time-out — you in this corner, you in this corner — it was you in this country and you in this country. She sent Jacob off to find her brother Laban. It was about a 500-mile journey that Jacob was going to have to take.

But the thing that we have to know and understand about where Jacob's at at this point in the story is that this was a heart-breaking situation for him to have to leave his family. Okay you guys, I just sent my oldest daughter to college, right? All of my mom friends were like, "Nicki, are you like so upset right now?" I'm like, "No! This is great! She is gone! She stopped taking my clothes, my make-up is still there. It's fabulous, you guys. Okay?"

But that's like our modern culture, that's what we do is we grow our kids up to send them off. But in this day and time a family stayed together, like really together, like things that make our head spin. Sister wives and polygamy, all of these kind of ...

Meredith Brock: Yeah. Whoa. Yeah, whoa!

Nicki Koziarz: All that kind of stuff, that was the norm. For Jacob to have to leave, this was so painful for him to be on this journey. Fast-forward. Jacob finally arrives in Haran and he ends up at this well one day where he starts having this conversation with a few of the guys that are hanging out there. It's this really fun story that I encourage you to go back and read in Genesis 29. But then all of a sudden things changed because this woman comes walking up to the well and her name is Rachel.

Moses, the author of this story, he describes her as beautiful in form and in appearance. Jacob immediately falls head over heels in love with Rachel. Y'all, he is like kissing and crying in one verse of this story, he is so in love with her. Jacob goes to Laban and he says, "Okay, listen. I really want to marry this woman so what do we need to do? What can we work out?" Laban ... You guys, he kind of reminds me of a sneaky used car salesman.

Meredith Brock: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kaley Olson: Yeah, totally. That's a great description.

Nicki Koziarz: Oh, let's make a deal, right?

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Nicki Koziarz: He says to Jacob, "Okay. All right. You can have Rachel but you have to work for me for seven years." Seven years. That's a long time to wait for a woman. Finally his seven years are up and the Bible tells us that it seems like only a few days to Jacob because of his love that he had for her. This is one of those stories that either makes you want to gag or you're like, "Where's my Jacob?" You're ...

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:13:04]

Nicki Koziarz: ... or you're like, "Where's my Jacob?" You're on one of those sides. Meredith, I would suspect you're on the gag side.

Meredith Brock: That's a pretty accurate-

Kaley Olson: I don't know. I think Meredith might have a sensitive side.

Meredith Brock: You think I might have it?

Kaley Olson: I think you do.

Meredith Brock: I don't know.

Kaley Olson: I think you do, hidden somewhere.

Nicki Koziarz: Okay. So he serves his seven years, and then Laban is like, "Okay, all right. Let's do this," and he plans this big wedding, and apparently he was serving many adult beverages at this wedding and probably gave a few strong ones to Jacob ...

Kaley Olson: Oh, boy.

Nicki Koziarz: ... because all of the sudden, there's another woman who is marrying Jacob and her name is actually Leah, and it's Laban's oldest daughter.

Kaley Olson: What?

Nicki Koziarz: The way that, Moses, the author of this story ... the way that he describes Leah is slightly different than the way that he describes Rachel. In verse 17 of chapter 29, it says, "Leah's eyes were weak but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance." Now, you guys, there's all kinds of jokes and suspicions about what exactly is being said by this point of saying that she has weak eyes. And I don't know if you guys ever saw that 1985 *Wildcats* movie where those girls would walk around singing that chant, (singing).

Meredith Brock: Oh, gosh. Yes, oh man. I forgot all about that.

Nicki Koziarz: Do you remember that?

Meredith Brock: Yes.

Nicki Koziarz: Okay. Okay. It's not like Moses is doing that, okay. That would be really extreme for him to say something like that, but he is definitely not describing her as beautiful in form and appearance. So it is safe for us to probably make some assumptions about the way that Leah looked. There was something about her that made her unattractive. And you guys, this is actually the very first point in the story where comparison starts to become unfolded, and it's with appearances, and as women, oh, my goodness. In our culture today, we are constantly being compared with the way that we look. And Meredith, you were talking in the beginning about how this is a very current struggle for you. I think you and I are the same age. I'm 38. How old are you?

Meredith Brock: 37, right there with you, girl.

Nicki Koziarz: And Kaley, how old are you?

Kaley Olson: 27.

Nicki Koziarz: Okay, so from 38 to 27, and we can keep going down these generations and going up these generations. Things have changed in our culture, so Meredith, when you and I were growing up, our moms, we lived on a street. We went to a school. We went to a church, so our moms had some friends but it was really just face-to-face people, maybe 10 or 15 people that they saw on a regular basis, not a huge amount. But now, as a woman, all I have to do is pop open Instagram and I can instantly compare myself with hundreds of women, perfect women, people who look amazing, and so yeah. This is not a new struggle because even here, in the Bible, these two sisters are being compared in their appearances, and today in our generation, we're going to compare appearances. We're going to compare jobs. We're going to compare kids. We're going to compare marriages. Who's not married? Who's single? What school are you going to? All of these things, we find these comparison zones, and I think

that's really important for us to remember that every woman has a comparison zone.

Meredith, you'll laugh at this, but sometimes people will walk past my book table and they don't know that I'm actually the author, so I'll be standing there, and they'll pick up one of the books, and they'll go, "*Why Her?*" And they see that it's on comparison, and they go, "Oh, this would be a great book for my teenage daughter." And they think, "But not for me." And so there for sure has to come a point inside all of us where we're willing to get honest about this struggle because it's not going to go away. It doesn't matter if you're 16 or if you're 65. You will find yourself somehow comparing yourself with one another, and so the question is, "What are you going to do about it?" So as Rachel and Leah find themselves in this very unlikely, unfair situation, and Jacob is also suddenly in this very unfair situation, we see that there is some hidden truths being involved in this. There are some things that are not like what they really seem to be, and so Jacob asks Laban, he says, "Why did you do this to me?" And so this is what Laban actually said to him in verse 26.

He said, "Oh, it is not so done in our country to give the younger before the first born. Complete the week of this one and we will give you the other also in return for serving me, oh, for another seven years." Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. So Jacob went into Rachel also and he loved Rachel more than Leah and served Laban for another seven years. And that's where we see the second form of comparison come out in this story that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. And when I was reading that part of the story, I began to really become super aware of just how unfair life can be to us sometimes, because just as I was talking about how sometimes I open social media and I compare myself to other wives, and moms, and people who do what I do, sometimes, I invite comparison in, and other times comparison invites me in. And there's nothing that I can do about it, and so what, though, I think we can see from the next part of this story is that there is something that we can do inside of our souls to make sure that comparison doesn't compromise what God is trying to do in and through us because every single woman, I don't care how old you are today, listening to this podcast has an assignment from God.

There's something that God has gifted her, has created her to do just her. I love that one of my strengths, you guys, is individualization because it lets me look at the world in such a way that I see how we're all so different. Please don't ever make me try to act like somebody else or be like somebody else, or compare me to somebody else because I want to be seen as an individual. And so because God has gifted us in this way, you better believe that we have an enemy chasing right behind Him trying to do whatever he can do to compromise. Let's go back to the very beginning of time when Eve was standing in the garden and she was standing next to that beautiful tree, and God had given her one command. "Do not eat this fruit." And that serpent slid right in after God gave her that command and he said, "Did God really say don't eat that fruit?" and that is really the moment we see the first ever comparison start to unfold, because what

comparison really is, is it's a battle to see whose truth we're going to align our lives with, ours or God's.

Now, my truth is swayed by the world. It's swayed by the enemy. It's got all these different things flowing in it, but one of the things that we believe at Proverbs 31 Ministries is that truth does not change, and so if God's Word says it, then it is what it is. It doesn't change. It doesn't matter how the culture shifts, or how the world views things, or what our friends think. And I love how Lysa TerKeurst talks about our opinions really don't matter because truth is truth. And so the thing is, though, is that we all have a, "Did God really say" kind of moment inside of us. Sometimes I wake up and I look in the mirror, and I'm like, "Did God really say that I am fearfully and wonderfully made? Because it's looking a little more fearfully than wonderfully today." Or I look at the world and I'm like, "Did God really say that I am part of a royal priesthood, a chosen generation? That I am called to proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Did God really say those things to me?" And see, if we were to sit down with everyone listening right now and ask them, "What's your, 'Did God really say,'" you would see how comparison is trying to compromise something inside of your soul.

Okay, but here's the good news in this story. There's not a lot of good news in this story, but this is one of the nuggets I was able to see. In the next part of Genesis, chapter 29, I want to just read these verses because it's just really powerful the way it says it. Verse 31 says, "When the Lord saw that Leah was hated," ... Let that sink in for just a second, hated ... "he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren, and Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, 'Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction for now, my husband will love me.' She conceived again and bore a son, and said, 'Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has also given me this son,' and she called his name Simeon. Again, she conceived and bore a son, and said, 'Now, this time my husband will be attached for me because I have born him three sons.'" So Leah is clearly not the favorite wife in this situation. It says that she was hated. That's a strong word. And so Leah begins what I call a "maybe now" journey. Baby one, maybe now Jacob's going to love me. Baby two, maybe now Jacob's going to love me. Baby three, maybe now Jacob is going to love me. And all those babies, and still no love for Leah.

And I think if we were going to get really honest today, you and I could sit down and we could all kind of describe what our, "Maybe now," is. We all have one. It's that thing that we're trying. Maybe now, if I just get those pair of shoes. That's for Lisa Allen. If I just get those shoes, this will happen. Or maybe now, if I just get this couch, I'll invite people over and I'll have friends. Or maybe now if my husband would just look at me. All these years that we've struggled, it would just be better. Maybe now. Every woman has something inside of her that she desires and it's so easy to chase a maybe now. And here's the thing. Desiring things is not what's bad. It was not bad that Leah desired the love of her husband. That's actually a really good thing that she desired, but it's when our desires become greater than the One who gives us desires is when things

become compromised, and that's exactly what has happened at this point in the story. She has believed that these babies would bring her this, and none of that did. But I want to show you something incredibly powerful.

In the next verse, it says in verse 35, "And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said, 'This time, I will praise the Lord.' Therefore, she called his name Judah. Then she ceased baring." And when I read that, "This time I will praise the Lord," I realized that there's something powerful that happens when a woman decides that she's going to stop settling and pouting about her circumstances. And I'm not trying to make light of any hardship that anyone is going through who's listening to this. That's not my goal, but there are times, for sure when we settle and pout, like "It's not fair. It's never going to change. I'm just hopeless. The situation is over." There is something huge that happens inside of us when we decide that we're going to shift and praise. And so that's exactly what Leah has done, and it allows her soul to get to a place where she becomes settled. Now, the thing is, that you have to understand about this, is Leah is just like any other woman where she lays a battle down and she picks it right back up.

On Friday, those Oreos tasted amazing, but Monday they will be gone again. We all have our battles that we're constantly laying down, and picking up, and laying down, and picking up. And Rachel would actually come in right after these verses and pick this battle up too, and the two of them had ... oh, my goodness, you guys. This story, it made my head spin when I was studying it. It was like this baby, this baby, no, this baby, no, this baby. And they're manipulating things, and they're controlling things, and they're shaking their fist at God, and they're doing all of these things ...

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:26:04]

Nicki Koziarz:

-things and they're shaking their fist at God and they're doing all of these things that don't represent the character of God well.

And then we arrive at that last verse in the story, the one that we started off with when I began with you. And we see through the story that Jacob actually ends up making peace with his brother, Esau — it's powerful. Laban and Jacob, they end up having a little battle and they make peace.

We see this point in the story where Leah did make some type of peace in her life, I mean she continued to battle through it, but we did see this moment. But we never see Rachel and Leah making peace with each other. And so as I thought about them at this point in the story where, I mean, chances are Leah was right there, okay. Like she was having a baby, Leah was the other wife, she knew what was going on.

And I began to think like what was going through Leah's head in that moment. I don't know if you guys have ever sat beside someone when they are dying, but I can promise you that you're not thinking of all the things that they ever said to

you that made you mad or all the things that you were just, like you're thinking of all the things, you're like, "Can I just have one more minute with you, just one more second with you. Will you just give me one more thing?"

And you guys, I painfully experienced this last year when my mom passed away. I was by her side for six months as she had this slow painful death, and I can tell you that, like my mom and I had a lot of hard stuff between us. My mom had some really unhealthy things in her life and in that moment, all I wanted was my mom to know that I was there and that it was going to be okay, no matter what was going to come from this. And I think, I can't say 100% that's what Leah was feeling, but there had to be some compassion in that moment. There had to be something inside of her that just made her feel a little bit like, "Ouch, this really stings right now."

And so as Rachel is naming this baby, I'm wondering like, what's Leah thinking as she's standing right there and she's hearing this name? But you guys, the best part of this story is this, so Rachel ends up naming this baby Ben-Oni, son of my sorrow, and that's all she leaves us with. But the next part of the verse says, "But his father called him Benjamin." Jacob stepped into this story and he said, "Oh, no. Absolutely not. No son of mine will be called son of my sorrow. He's going to have a new name and his name is going to be Benjamin."

And do you guys know what the name Benjamin means? It means highly favored, son of my right hand.

Meredith Brock: Wow.

Nicki Koziarz: And do you know who else in the Bible is described as being seated at the right of the Father? Jesus Christ. And see, that's what happens when Jesus enters into the story. He changes the name. And so it goes from this son of my sorrow to son of my favor. And that's what Jesus does for us, is He steps in and He changes our name. Because as we become child of God, He steps into the story and He says that, "Yeah, you're walking in darkness right now, but I am the way, the truth and the life, and by coming to me, you come to the Father."

And Jesus looks at our story and He says, "Yeah, your soul is not well right now, but I am the one who makes it well again." And so whatever the sorrow in your soul is today, whatever the enemy has tried to compromise through comparison, Jesus steps into the story right here, right now, today and He says, "This is where it changes. I have the power and the authority and the might to change this right now."

And so, I think that as we look at this idea of what Leah left with us and what Rachel left with us, we can hold on to what both of them really left for us because there's things that we can learn from each of them. Leah is leaving us with this idea that we got to shift things. That there comes a point where we've got to decide that we're going to praise Him. And Rachel is leaving us with this

idea of that the days don't go on forever. We don't have endless days to make ourselves well, that the end will come and it's up to us to do whatever we have to do to make ourselves well.

So, I hope that this encourages you guys today, I hope it challenges you more than anything. And I hope that this gives you permission to do whatever you need to do to make your soul well because we're not promised tomorrow and I know that if you're listening to this today that you're a woman who wants to have a soul that is well.

Meredith Brock: Wow, Nicki, that's so powerful. So powerful. I love what you said right at the very beginning and then right there at the end of your message is that no one is the guardian of your soul but you.

Kaley Olson: Yep.

Meredith Brock: You have the ability to guard your soul and determine at the end of your life, will it be well?

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Meredith Brock: Or will it be sick. Man, what a powerful, powerful message. For me, I know this message and the rest of your book really challenged me. I would not put myself in a category necessarily, I can fly through social media and not too badly struggle with comparison because I think somehow in my mind I put it in this like fantasy land. And I tell myself, "Well, I can't be like that. That's like a pretend world."

Kaley Olson: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Meredith Brock: But I had to, just like you said, Nicki, I had to get to a place where I was really honest with myself. And say, there are areas where I am comparing myself to other people and they were much more covert. They were much more, which is honestly to me, is a little scarier. So, maybe some of our listeners are not really engaged on social media; it feels like the whole world is on social media these days. Or maybe you're like me where you can, I can look on social media and for the most part still feel pretty secure.

The places that would sneak in for me personally, and it really sounds so cliché, but I'm bringing my kid to school, you know, I have a seven-year-old little boy, I'm dropping him off at school and it is so easy for me to compare myself to the other moms because I drop my son off at school and then I rush off to work. And I don't get to go home and make them cookies or have some kind of special time with them during the day. It's rare that I get to pop in and go have lunch with my son at school.

And I found that I was really, really comparing myself to other moms and not in a way that was, like, I wasn't comparing the way that I looked even or, I don't know, it was this really subtle thing that when I started really listening to my inner dialogue, when I was at my son's school or at one of his events, all of a sudden I realized, "Oh, my gosh, I'm totally doing it."

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: Like I'm totally comparing myself to these other moms and letting it eat away at what I know is my calling which is both to be a mom to my little boy, Harvey, but to also to be in full-time ministry.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: And so, it was really good for me, that point that you said of be honest with yourself.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: And sometimes that's really, really hard.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: That's really hard for me.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, it is really hard. And Meredith, I loved what Nicki said about we're the ones in charge of our souls. And she talked about how every woman has an assignment and that's where the enemy creeps in. And he's the one who compares our calling to what God says and makes us question, "Is this what God said?"

Meredith Brock: Yeah, absolutely.

Kaley Olson: And then that leads us to be distracted from what our assignment is. And one thing that I know we have most control over, like most all of control over, I guess, is how we spend our time.

Meredith Brock: Right.

Kaley Olson: And so with my assignment, am I going to choose to spend my time focused on what I know I'm supposed to do and put my blinders on and keep going? Or am I going to choose to take a pit stop at comparison and do that? Because I don't think that you can do both at all.

Meredith Brock: Yeah. It kills you.

Kaley Olson: And so I think that's one really powerful thing that, Nicki, you didn't outright say it, but to me that just stuck out, was like, wow, comparison is a way that I can spend my time, but I can't fulfill my assignment and compare myself to someone else at the same time.

Nicki Koziarz: It's going to keep you, it's going to stop your progress.

Meredith Brock: Well so, Nicki, I want to leave you with one last question for you to talk to our listeners about, and that is, if you find yourself in the battle of comparison and you realize, you have that moment like I had that was, "Oh, my gosh, I really am comparing myself to these other moms even though I try to pretend like I'm not, I really am and it's stealing my joy, it's stealing my purpose." Can you give them one practical pointer that they can do, one practical tip that they can do to help stop that comparison trap that they're in?

Nicki Koziarz: Absolutely, so it goes back to what Leah did and in the book I actually write about something called, "this time affirmations." And what you do is you take a promise and you guys, there's so many promises in the Bible that God has given us as followers of Him, there's, I mean we could go on and on and on. But find a promise that you really feel like God is giving you and then you move it from the settling and pouting to this shifting and praising.

And so, the "this time affirmations," all it really is is it's taking whatever you're feeling, your problems, so Leah was feeling that, "Maybe now, maybe if I just have this baby, Jacob's going to love me." And she shifted it to, "He's not going to love me, but this time I'm going to praise the Lord."

Meredith Brock: Wow, love that.

Nicki Koziarz: And so find a Bible verse, do a Google search of God's promises for my life, I mean tons of stuff will come up. Probably something from Proverbs 31 Ministries.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, probably.

Nicki Koziarz: Guarantee you there's something. And you know, just take those and then when you have that moment, just grab it and say, "Nope, this time I'm going to praise the Lord."

Meredith Brock: That is so good, Nicki. I want you to say it one more time, 'cause I want to make sure our listeners hear it. Where can they get these "this time affirmations," where are those at?

Nicki Koziarz: Yes, it's in the book, "*Why Her? Six Truths You Need to Hear When Measuring Up Leaves You Falling Behind.*" And you can get that book through Proverbs 31 Ministries or anywhere books are sold.

Meredith Brock: I love it, I love it. Such a helpful tool that I think will help people really make some progress in their personal journey with comparison. And y'all, let me tell you something, Nicki lives a crazy life and you need to follow along.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, you do.

Meredith Brock: She lives out in the boonies at the Fixer-Upper Farm. I follow her on social media and I laugh on a daily basis because, it wasn't that long ago someone was chasing some farm animal trying to get it into the barn.

Nicki Koziarz: Yeah, that was me.

Meredith Brock: It was hilarious! So make sure you go check her out on social media. Nicki Koziarz, she will encourage you, she will not be a stumbling block in your battle of comparison.

Nicki Koziarz: That's right.

Meredith Brock: So, all right folks, well if you like what you heard, maybe it's speaking to you today, we would love to hear from you. So head to your social accounts and use the hashtag #p31podcast and tell us, tell us what's speaking to you. Maybe take a picture of your notes, maybe take a picture of where you're listening to this.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, that'd be fun.

Meredith Brock: And we would love to follow along with you and get to know our listeners a little bit better.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, that's right, and lastly, shameless plug here. Will you guys leave us a review on iTunes? We love creating this podcast content just for you and knowing that we're doing our job well as a ministry is huge for us. So leaving reviews on iTunes will help others see our podcast which helps us get more truth into the lives of women who desperately need it.

Meredith Brock: That's right. Thank you, Kaley. And thanks so much for joining us, everyone. We'll see you here next time.

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [00:38:38]