

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Meredith Brock: Welcome back to the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast, where we share biblical truth for any girl in any season. I'm your host, Meredith Brock, and I'm here with my co-host, Kaley Olson, and our very special guest, Lysa TerKeurst. Hey guys!

Kaley Olson: Hello. Thank you.

Lysa TerKeurst: Hi Meredith.

Meredith Brock: Well, this episode is releasing in December 2018, and it's actually our last episode of the year. I'm kind of sad about that because we've been on the roll for a while.

Kaley Olson: I can't believe it.

Meredith Brock: I know. So I think that we need to catch our listeners up to speed on all the exciting things we've done this year at Proverbs 31 Ministries because if you just listen to this podcast, then you don't know all of the amazing things that we've gotten to do. So buckle up. We've done five online Bible studies this year, completed six studies in the First 5 app, hosted our annual She Speaks Conference in July, as well as a brand-new conference called She Speaks Studio in November. Lysa released two books and *Embraced*, that was back in March, which is hard to believe that was so long ago, and as well as her new book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, that released last month, on November 13th, I believe was the day.

Kaley Olson: That's right.

Meredith Brock: And we launched this podcast.

Kaley Olson: I kind of want to take a nap just thinking about all that stuff. That is a lot. We have thousands of listeners every month, and we're so grateful for each and every one of you. So to kick off our last episode of 2018, we brought on the best of the best, Lysa TerKeurst herself. She's here with us now to share a teaching from her new book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*.

Lysa TerKeurst: Well thanks Meredith. Thank you Kaley. I'm going to jump right into teaching today because we left off back in November for that podcast, where we were unpacking some of the events that happened in Genesis chapter 2 and Genesis chapter 3. And just to finish up exactly where we left off of, the woman does engage in Genesis chapter 3 with the temptation of the serpent, or the enemy. She takes some of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that God said, "You can eat from all the trees in the garden, but don't eat from this one tree." She takes it, she eats it, she give some to her husband Adam who was with her. He eats it, the eyes of both of them are opened, now sin has entered in. Then there are consequences that get handed down, and then we come to the very end of Genesis chapter three, and that's where I want us to pick up today.

Lysa TerKeurst: But to give you a broad sense of exactly where we're going. Remember I said in November, in our podcast, the human heart was created in the context of the perfection of the Garden of Eden, but we don't live there anymore. And we're about to see the very end of Genesis chapter 3 verse 21 through 24 that Adam and Eve are ushered out of the garden. So perfection has ended. And then what's really interesting is the rest of the middle part of all of the Bible, from the end of Genesis 3, all the way to the end of Revelation, this is our journey outside of the context of the perfection of the Garden of Eden.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now to give you a little biblical orientation, let's look at the last two chapters of the Bible. Revelation 21, starting in verse 3 says this, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, look God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them, they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain for the old order of things has passed away. He who is seated on the throne said, I am making everything new." And then Revelation 22 is titled in my Bible. This is the last chapter of the Bible, and it's titled Eden Restored, verse 3 of Revelation 22 says, "No longer will there be any curse."

Lysa TerKeurst: In other words, the Bible begins in the perfection of Eden, and it ends in the perfection of Eden, but all the pages between Genesis 3 and Revelation 21 are showing us how to do this life between two gardens. And we get such a clue from Revelation 21, talking about how the old order of things will pass away and everything will be made new, but this life between two gardens will be filled, just like it says in Revelation 21:4, "It will be filled with death, and mourning, and crying, and pain." Like those words are very difficult words. In other words, this life between two gardens is hard. The human heart doing context, doing life outside the context of perfection is very, very hard.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now we find that God doesn't strip the awareness of perfection out of the human heart. When Adam and Eve leave the garden, there's nothing that indicates that their awareness of what perfection is was taken out of their heart. And at first, that may seem like such a cruel thing, but it's quite a gift that doesn't feel like a gift at all, that we do this life between two gardens, and that

there is nothing on this side of eternity that will ever be the perfect match for all of our expectations. There's nothing on this side of eternity that we will find that's perfect, except for God Himself. Because if there was anything in our life that fully met every expectation, and that wasn't disappointing, and that was absolute perfection, we would settle for lesser things. But because God Himself is the perfect match, then He's the only one that can ultimately satisfy us.

Lysa TerKeurst: I don't think disappointment is God's way to confuse us, or make us hurt, or to disillusion us in any way. I think it's His way of leading us home. Because we're never satisfied on this side of eternity. We have an anticipation for what eternity with Him will be like. But let's go here to Genesis chapter 3 verses 21 through 24 because I want to show you something important, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not be allowed to reach out his hand to take also from the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever." Verse 23 said, "The Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken." And at first, I read those words and I'm like, "Wow! God banished them from the garden that seems so harsh."

Lysa TerKeurst: But if you look at the Scriptures very specifically and carefully, you'll notice that God says, "Now that sin has entered in, now that Adam and Eve have an awareness of the difference of good and evil, now that their bodies are in a state of physical decay." Because that's what happens when sin enters in and worse yet, now that they are separated spiritually from me because of their sin-soaked reality, they must not be allowed to stay in the garden because if they do, remember there was a second tree in the garden, besides the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there was also the Tree of Life. If they would take from the Tree of Life, and eat, it would have perpetuated them in their sin-soaked state forever. And God loved them too much to be separated from them forever. So He sends them out of the garden. That's what the original meaning of that word "banished." It's actually not banished, it's God sent them out of the garden.

Lysa TerKeurst: God sends them out, not as an act of cruelty, but as an act of great mercy so that they could receive a gift that's not going to feel like a gift, the death of their physical body. So that they could experience the resurrection of a healed and whole body, that could come back in communion with God. And of course, we know that God had a plan in that moment now for His Son Jesus to also, like John 3:16, when God gave His one and only Son. If you go back into the original language there, and dig around the derivative of that word "gave" it's actually also sent. As Adam and Eve are being sent out, God already has a plan to send His Son in, that if we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, He becomes the sacrifice, the covering of our sin so that when we die, our physical bodies die, but our heavenly bodies are resurrected in perfect communion with God again.

Lysa TerKeurst: So I guess I give you that so that you can understand the grand love story of the Bible. And as you take a step back, when you realize you're just doing life

between these two gardens, and that we're not in perfection, maybe we could take a step back from everything we face. Sometimes it's just a little disagreement with a friend, and your friend goes silent for a while, and it hurts, and it's like consuming your thoughts, and keeping you up at night, but maybe you could just say, "Of course." Of course, there are relationship riffs like this because we're doing life between two gardens. Or like you know any of the other disappointments that we face, it's almost like, well of course that's happening because I'm doing life between two gardens. It's not always going to be this way, but it is this way right now. And because of that, I want us to look at one more garden in Scripture. And I like to call it the middle garden. Technically it's called the Garden of Gethsemane, and this is where we see Jesus Himself wrestle in His deepest disappointment, in His deepest sorrow in this life between two gardens.

Lysa TerKeurst: In Mark chapter 14, starting in verse 32, it says this, "They ... " meaning Jesus and some of His disciples, " ... went to a place called Gethsemane and Jesus said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. He takes then Peter, James, and John along with him and began to be deeply distressed and troubled." Verse 34, listen to these words that Jesus says here, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he said to them, stay here and keep watch." I used to think Jesus was saying to the disciples, "Stay here and watch for the soldiers that are going to come, and arrest me." And that may be part of it but since Jesus was fully divinity and fully humanity, then he knew, he already knew when the soldiers were coming. And so I wonder if maybe part of this is him saying, "Stay here, and watch what I do in my moment of deepest distress, and sorrow because you're going to need this in this life between two gardens."

Lysa TerKeurst: Verse 35, going just a little farther, "Still within eye shot of these disciples, he fell to the ground, and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him." Then listen closely to these words in verse 36, "Abba Father, he said, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me." In other words, "God you are so big, and so strong, and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do." That's a child's Sunday school song, if you're familiar with it at all.

Meredith Brock: It's in my head right now.

Lysa TerKeurst: "But everything is possible for you. God you could change this. I know you could." And isn't that where our feelings and our faith often come into conflict? When we know our God is big enough and powerful enough to change our circumstances, and then he doesn't. And worse yet, we look around and we see him changing circumstances for other people, answering the very prayers that seem to go unanswered for us. But I want you to watch what Jesus does in this minute. He does ask God to change the plan. He does ask God to fix what needs to be fixed. He says, "Let this hour pass from me. Take this cup. I don't want these to be the circumstances of my life." And then he makes this glorious statement at the end of verse 36 in Mark chapter 14, "Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Lysa TerKeurst: And this is where I want us to land today because this is what has changed a lot for me, even in the midst of circumstances that have seemed way too hard, and way too long. I had to get to the point where I exchanged my will for God's will. And the only way I could do it is because I could stand in the certainty that he will, he will work this out. And to me, I feel like that's the epic thing that Jesus wanted us to learn in watching how he wrestled through this season, this moment, where he's saying, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, yet not what I will. God, you could change the plan, I know you could, yet not what I will. God, I can make all kinds of suggestions of a better way for this to be handled, yet not what I will, but what you will."

Lysa TerKeurst: Isn't it interesting that when Jesus taught the disciples to pray, let's just look at Matthew chapter 6 for just a minute, this is daily, I think sometimes people think, "Okay in my one Garden of Gethsemane moment, I will do this. I'll trade my will to thy will." But in reality, it's a daily, sometimes hourly, sometimes moment by moment decisions to release our will in exchange for God's will, because we know he will, even if we don't know exactly how he will. Right?

Meredith Brock: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: But watch when Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew chapter 6, it says in verse 9, "This is then how you should pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done." Even at the beginning of His prayer. You see, this wasn't just a one-time decision for Jesus; this was every time He prayed. He had practiced exchanging His will for God's will, and over time, His faith muscle grew to the point where He was able to absolutely stand assured. In that moment where He said to God, "I don't like this. I don't want this. I want You to change the plan. Nothing about this feels right. Nothing seems right, and yet not what I will but what You will."

Lysa TerKeurst: The only way that I found for me to do this, obviously in my prayer time day-by-day, increasing that faith muscle, my trust in God. Exchanging my will for God's will constantly. The only way that I found to layer a perspective, or filter over what I'm facing is to stand first in the midst of whatever I'm going through, big or small, and say, "God is good. God is good to me, and God is good at being God." No human should have to carry the weight of being their own God, but so many of us try, and so many of us are completely exhausted by our circumstances. We feel like the promises of God no longer apply to us. We feel like His timing is questionable. We feel like His lack of intervention is hurtful, and we don't know what to do. This is what you can do. This is what you can pray, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. God, You're good. You are good to me. You are good at being God. Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Meredith Brock: Wow. I love that. I love one of the things you said in your teaching. Lysa, as you were saying it, I had the strangest memory pop up in my mind of remembering feeling distinctly this way in the season of my life. You said, "Sometimes you'll be receiving a gift that doesn't feel like a gift at all." And this is such a strange memory for it to even cross my mind, but I remembered, when I was in college I

was dating a guy that I was certain I was going to marry him. I was certain. We dated for multiple years. We had talked about getting married, and there were people in my life at the time who knew that he was not the right person for me. And they spoke into my life a lot of wisdom, and I was open, and I remembered praying, "Lord, I'm open to whatever it is that You have, but what I want, I want to marry this guy. I really do. I want to marry this guy, and so if that's what You have for me, like that's what I want, but I want what You want in this scenario."

Meredith Brock: And no joke, I won't even go into all the details, but I remember, there was a random day, and me and this individual looked at each other, and we knew we were supposed to break up. We hadn't had some big fight. There was no big explosion, or anything. He loved the Lord, still loves the Lord. Honestly, it was the strangest feeling of being absolutely devastated. I was completely devastated of just feeling like, "This is what I wanted. This was inapt." But now when I look back, I can see that that decision to break up really was a gift from the Lord because the man that I'm married to now is absolutely the man that I was supposed to be married to, you know.

Meredith Brock: And I just think that I want to encourage our listeners today. Whatever it is, maybe there's a disappointment that you're wrestling with right now, that you just really can't make sense of, try to look at it from that perspective, of that maybe this is a gift. It may not feel like a gift, but maybe it is. And learning to, you said it and I kind of restated it in my words here, in my own words, in my notes, is that learning to filter our circumstances through the fact that God is always working for our benefit, but sometimes, here's the hard part, the benefit is closeness to Him, not our comfort. And so sometimes that benefit hurts, and it comes in a package that may be not easy to receive.

Meredith Brock: So Kaley, what do you think about that?

Kaley Olson: Well, I was just thinking about what you said about it not always being for our benefit, that it's for His benefit. Because right now, we record these episodes before they're released, and so right now I'm reading through our *When Words Fail* study of Psalms, and there was a question in the Experience Guide, and it talked about everything being for God's glory. And that's just a hard thing to let settle in my soul because I think you have all these plans, and you hear God is going to work it out for good. Like He has you in mind, but He has me in mind because He has His glory in mind, and I'm here on this earth to be a vessel to bring Him glory.

Kaley Olson: And gosh, whenever I take a step back from whatever I'm wrestling with, or how I want Him to work things for my good, and remember that it's really hard because this life that we have is only just a blink in comparison to eternity, and eternity is going to be so much better than now, but it's just so hard to accept right now that it's not always about me. I think that's just the selfish human nature that I have and that we all have, but how do you come to peace with that? Like how did you come to peace with that, Lysa?

Lysa TerKeurst: Well, I think a couple of things. One, I had to recognize that when I look at a situation, there is the physical reality that I see, but at the same time, there's also the miraculous that God is working. There is good that He is working. And those two things are simultaneously operating, even if I can't see the miraculous, even if I can't see the good, it's still being worked out. It's kind of like if you've ever flown in a plane, and you've been on the runway, and you look up outside, and it is stormy, and the clouds are gray, and you would say, "This is a rainy day." But then you take off, and as soon as the pilot breaks through the clouds, the sun is still shining above the clouds. So then you would say, "Well, this is a sunny day." Well which is it? Is it a sunny day, or is it a cloudy day? It's both.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so that's the way I'm learning to look at circumstances in my life. Is this the bad circumstance or is it a good circumstance? It's usually both.

Kaley Olson: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: At the same time.

Meredith Brock: And knowing and believing that in all of it, God's just, exactly like you said, He's just leading us home. That's the whole story between the two gardens, is Him saying, "Come home to Me. Come home to Me. That's all you really need is to come home to Me."

Lysa TerKeurst: That's right.

Kaley Olson: So good.

Lysa TerKeurst: And before we go to Him, our home in eternity, we can find our hearts safe at home here in His midst. That's why He says, "Abide with me. Walk with me. Talk with me. Pray to me." You know, it's not because He needs all of that from us, it's because we need to receive all of that from Him. And it's really crucial. And that's why I wrote my new book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way* because I want to acknowledge to people as you look at the hard circumstances around you, you're right, it's not supposed to be this way. But let me give you a perspective to hang onto as God leads you to it, and through it, and He will absolutely lead you through it.

Kaley Olson: That's right. And what a perfect message to wrap up 2018, honestly. The book released, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, released about a month ago. And I can't think of a better way to kick your year off than doing an online Bible study with this book. I just think let's set the tone for 2019, and really dig into a community of gals that we're all just making imperfect progress together — letting Jesus lead us home, abide in Him, and I'm really excited about it.

Kaley Olson: We'll be kicking off the study in January. So make sure to grab your copy at p31bookstore.com, and head on over to the website at proverbs31.org, and sign

up for the online Bible study because we want you to join us there. It's going to be a great time.

Meredith Brock: Yes, we do. And like I mentioned before, at the beginning of this episode, all the amazing things that Proverbs is doing, gets to do all year long is free. Like our online Bible studies, the First 5 app, our devotion, even this podcast. We do it all because we believe that when a woman knows the truth of God's Word, and lives that truth out, it really does change everything.

Kaley Olson: And we have really big goals for 2019, and we need your help. I don't know if you knew that Proverbs 31 Ministries is actually a complete non-profit ministry run by donations. And if your listening to this podcast has helped you know and live out the truth of God's Word better this year, or any of our other free resources have ministered to you, would you consider giving? All you need to do is go to proverbs31.org, and click donate to make a difference.

Meredith Brock: Thank you for joining us today, and we will see you in 2019.