

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Meredith Brock: Well, hello friends and welcome to *The Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*, where we share biblical truths for any girl in any season. I'm your host, Meredith Brock, and I am here with two very special ladies, the Proverbs 31 Ministries President, Lysa TerKeurst, and my cohost, Kaley Olson, and man, am I excited about what we have to share with you today. Lysa is going to be bringing a great message on three of the most important things to consider before making that decision you are just about to make. So welcome, welcome to the show, Kaley, Lysa.
- Lysa TerKeurst: Thank you, Meredith. Excited to be here today.
- Kaley Olson: Yeah, me too. And today's a very special day because guess what?
- Meredith Brock: What?
- Kaley Olson: We are celebrating one whole year of *The Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*, and I like seriously can't believe it because I feel like we had this dream to start a podcast, and we just kind of went for it, and we've been recording in this room for a whole year now, and I'm just so excited about where God has brought us and how far we've come, and it's just been a really fun journey.
- Meredith Brock: It really has. What a fun year. What a fun year of bringing great biblical content to people around the world. It's been a wonderful thing.
- Lysa TerKeurst: You know, one of the most frequently asked questions I'm getting right now regarding the podcast is wait, *Therapy in Theology*, the six week series — why is it only six weeks? Well, stay tuned folks, because we've got a couple of shows between now and then. And when I say then, I mean, we're going to bring *Therapy in Theology* back.
- Meredith Brock: That's right, folks, it's coming for you.
- Lysa TerKeurst: That's right. And one thing I'd love to say, if you've not listened to all six sessions of *Therapy in Theology*, go back and listen to ones, even ones you think may not apply to you. I think you'd be surprised. And then the other thing too is if you have a friend who's going through something, *Therapy in Theology* has become a great resource for friends to pass to friends. So I'd love to challenge you today,

think of a couple of friends who may enjoy some of the different episodes and may need some free therapy mixed with theology today, and send links to them and recommend *The Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*. That's always incredibly helpful for our ministry endeavors here.

Meredith Brock: Absolutely, absolutely. Well, the beautiful thing about the podcast is that because truth is truth, what we share today on this podcast will stay true for our listeners and for us forever. It's one of the best investments you can make in yourself, in your relationships, is to get into truth and let that truth change you. So now, I'm going to be honest, sometimes when we're here in this tiny little room in Charlotte, North Carolina, it's hard for me to believe that this little, these messages we're sharing right here are actually, really reaching people and changing lives. But man, has it been so encouraging to see some of the comments on social media about what was happening through *Therapy and Theology* or some of our other incredible podcasts that have really reached people around the globe.

Meredith Brock: And so, I wanted to share just a couple of encouraging messages and reviews that we've gotten over the last couple of weeks. And this one I love, I think it's just so special. She says, "This is one of my favorite podcasts. As a 24-year-old woman who is newly married and navigating life as a young adult, I'm always encouraged by the women who share their stories. My favorite thing is that I feel there is so much wisdom from older women who've been there, done that, but are also vulnerable enough to share struggles they still face in their daily lives as women. It's as though I'm being disciplined through a podcast." Love it so much.

Meredith Brock: The next one, this one's really sweet to me because man, do we see the full spectrum of the people that we're reaching. She says, "I'm so happy that I found your podcast in 2018. I gather a lot of jewels every time I listen. I'm a senior in a different part of my life and am trying to build a small ministry for others in my season. You are all a blessing." And so, I love seeing that we're reaching the full spectrum of women in their seasons of life with biblical truth.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. Well, I'm sitting here 100% relating to the girl who's younger and feels like she's being disciplined through this podcast because that seriously happens to me every time I sit here. I feel like, I wish y'all could see the notes that I take. I know y'all see it in here but it's pages and pages of notes, and I know the Lord speaks to me and it makes me thankful that we're just doing this thing in the messy middle of our lives, and we don't have it all together, but growth happens when we're vulnerable.

Kaley Olson: And so, you know, if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, we would love a review from you. It helps us get the podcast out to other people who might be like, I don't know, is this Proverbs 31 podcast even worth it? Well, if you write a review and you're another 24-year-old girl, or you're a lady and you're like 60s or 70s and you're listening to this, your review can just help other people know that it's helping you and it could help them too.

Meredith Brock: That's right. That's right. We would love it. Take the time to review. It encourages us too and it gets more exposure for the podcast and [inaudible 00:05:07] that as well. Let's go ahead, let's get to it, Lysa. I can't wait to hear your message.

Lysa TerKeurst: Perfect. Thank you Meredith. So three important things to consider when making a decision or better yet, think about that decision you're right in the middle of making. And I would say whether it's a big decision or a small decision, these three things are crucial to consider. I want to front-load the podcast today by giving you the three things to consider and then I'm going to unpack it in a bit of a message. And then Kaley and Meredith, I'd love for you guys to jump in and share how this applies to your life right now.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, let me front-load it with these three things to consider. Number one, every decision points your life in a direction. Now, it may not feel this way because many of the decisions we make today are seemingly small, like what am I going to eat? What am I going to wear? Where am I going to buy my next thing that I want to buy? Those little decisions that we make. However, every decision, big and small, points your life in a direction. But because the daily-ness, it seems like we have such an endless supply of days and there's so many decisions that we make in a given day, we can forget the importance of every decision that we make. So hold on to that thought. Every decision points your life in a direction.

Lysa TerKeurst: The second is, what direction will this take me? So, in other words, I'm about to make a decision. I know number one, it's going to point my life in a direction. So the second thing to consider is what direction is this pointing me in? Here's an example of how to consider that. If you've identified you want to be known as a generous person, then you've got to set up your small decisions to point to a much bigger opportunity in order to be generous.

Lysa TerKeurst: It may seem like such a small decision, do I buy this shirt or do I not buy this shirt? The shirt is kind of irrelevant, right? The bigger thing is if you have made a decision in your life that you want to be a generous person and yet you're using all your extra funds to buy extra shirts or whenever that is in your life, or do I buy a new car and not buy a new car, much bigger decision. But still, if you've made the decision that you want your life to go in the direction of you becoming a generous person, then you can see every financial decision you make, you've got to weigh that out. It's not that buying a shirt is bad, it's not that buying a car is bad. It's have you given yourself enough white space in your finances to become generous, right?

Lysa TerKeurst: And the third thing is, is that the direction I really want to go? So, every decision points your life in a direction, ask yourself what direction will this take me in. And then the third thing is, is that the direction I really want to go in? And that's really important because sometimes I think for me being 49-years-old, I am living the culmination of decisions I made in my early 20s that I had no idea how important those decisions were. And every decision over time, every decision

has the propensity to become a habit and habits over time become lifestyles, and lifestyles over time become a lifetime culmination of something.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so, I really look back now and I can see the effects of both the good decisions I made in my 20s and the poor decisions I made in my 20s. I'm feeling the effects today of the good and bad decisions I made in my 30s and in my 40s. Now I'm entering into my 50s, and at some point, it's really good to step back from all the onslaught of daily decisions and ask yourself to consider these things. Consider — these decisions are pointing my life in a direction, what direction is this decision taking me and is that the direction I really want my life to go?

Lysa TerKeurst: I really saw this play out in a pretty amazing way with my daughter, Ashley. My daughter, Ashley, was a very active toddler. And so, as a mom who wanted to help my child get some of the energy out of her little energetic body. I asked myself the question, where do tiny, energetic toddlers go? And I decided to enroll her in gymnastics. I didn't have any kind of hope for her to become a major athlete because I'm not very athletic. But much to our surprise, gymnastics really fit Ashley's natural wiring and she had more of an athletic bent than her mother did. And so, she did really well in gymnastics. And by the time she was 13, she had won some state titles and she had gotten some regional and national attention. And so, it was very exciting.

Lysa TerKeurst: However, when she was 13, she suffered an injury that ended her gymnastics career. So, as she was going into high school at age 14, she wanted to find a new sport. And much to my dismay, she chose pole vaulting of all things. And pole vaulting is a very crazy sport. It's an impressive sport but it seems, it seems kind of crazy if you've never been exposed to it before. What Ashley had to learn to do is run down a track, counting her steps, and at a certain point in the track, plant her pole, allow the force of the bent-back pole that had been planted to catapult her body off the ground upside down toward a bar that was intentionally set in her path, twist her body over the bar, fall to the mat on the other side, and hopefully live to tell about it. That, my friends, is pole vault.

Kaley Olson: I hurt just thinking about it.

Meredith Brock: Don't sign me up for that.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, it's a complicated sport to learn, much more complicated than what you would even know. Ashley being naturally athletic, I think she expected to step into that sport and excel like she had in gymnastics. However, it was very, very challenging. But Ashley made a decision early in her high school sports career. She wanted to be a pole vaulter. So, she had to point her life in the direction of becoming a pole vaulter. She had to make the decision every day to do what pole vaulters do. So she would show up to the track, she would strap on her spiked cleats, she would count her steps, she would listen to her coach, she would take instruction.

Lysa TerKeurst: And you would think doing all those right things would add up to a naturally athletic child being successful in pole vaulting. But she was not her freshman year. At the end of her freshman year, she was last on the team and had struggled quite a bit, but she had made the decision she wanted to be a pole vaulter. So she showed up her sophomore year and did what pole vaulters do. She pointed her decisions in the direction of becoming a pole vaulter, and she arranged her time to accommodate that that's the direction she wanted her life to go. So she did. Every day she made decisions to show up at the track, listen to the coach, strap on her spiked cleats, run down the track, count her steps and fling her body and do all the stuff that pole vaulters do. And at the end of her sophomore year, she was still not excelling as a pole vaulter.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, at this point I'm starting to have an honest conversation with my daughter. Like, is this really worth the time? Is this worth the money? Maybe is there something else you want to do? Of course I totally support your pole vaulting dreams. But, you know, let's just see, is this really what you want to do? Ashley was very determined, I want to be a pole vaulter. So we went through this. She continued to learn more and grow more, but she never was excelling at pole vaulting until late in her high school career. Suddenly, all those good decisions clicked. And one day, it was a very important meet. She was in last place as she had been for a very long time. And this would determine who would move on to go to regionals and states. If she was going to ever qualify, this was the meet to do it.

Lysa TerKeurst: And something about that meet, all those decisions, all those days of practice, all that showing up at the track, all those determined daily sacrifices that she made, she wanted to be a pole vaulter. And on this day, by golly, she was the best on the track. I watched that girl run down, plant her pole and get over it the first height, the second height, the third height. And then she had won the tournament but she wanted to go for the record. And the coach and I were both saying, Ashley, you've already qualified to go to regionals, you don't need to set the bar any higher. You've never practiced this height, never, not one time.

Lysa TerKeurst: And Ashley looked at the bar, looked at the judges, looked at her coach, looked at me and said, "Set the bar. I want to go for the record." And I watched her run her little body down that track, plant that pole, fling her body up and over the highest height of anybody at her school, and she broke the school record.

Lysa TerKeurst: And as I think back about that story, I think, you know, that was a very epic moment in the life of my high school daughter, but it was also an epic picture that I recall to mind often when I'm making my daily decisions, that sometimes it feels like each day is small, each decision is small. But the culmination of our decisions today, they are taking us somewhere and sometimes it feels impossible to set these big life goals. One of my life goals is I want to be a woman of wisdom. To me, being a woman of wisdom is like setting that bar at the highest place.

Lysa TerKeurst: And when I was in my 20s, it didn't really seem like I was very set up to become a woman of wisdom. I wasn't necessarily raised in church. My mom was a Christian, my dad was not. We went to church sometimes but not all the time. I was very intimidated by biblical wisdom. I was very intimidated by the Bible. I'll never forget the day I discovered the table of contents. It was one of the greatest days of my life. I could actually find books of the Bible and the page numbers. I remember going to some of my first Bible studies and feeling like everybody in the room knew more than me. I remember listening to preachers and teachers and with such ease teach concepts from the Bible and I felt so far behind. I felt like Ashley stepping onto that pole vaulting track the very first time. Clumsy with her pole, not even knowing the right ways to put her cleats on. How do you even run in cleats? What do you mean I need to count my steps? All of those things.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, you know, from the day that Ashley first stepped on that track, feeling so incapable, to the day she broke the school record, there was a lot of daily decision there. From the time that I opened up the Bible and the only thing I knew is how to find my way to the table of contents to today, you know, I'm teaching books of the Bible and there's a lot of daily decisions that are between that moment and this. And so, I think as we pursue the type of people that we want to become, these things to consider, they matter. Every decision points your life in a direction. What direction will this decision I'm making today, what direction will it take me in for tomorrow and all the tomorrows to come? And is that the direction that I really want to go?

Lysa TerKeurst: Let me share a verse that I think is pretty powerful. It's from Philippians Chapter 1 starting in verse nine. *"And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more, in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and maybe pure and blameless for the day of Christ."* Knowledge is wisdom that comes from acquiring the truth. So knowledge is something that I can learn a fact today. Discernment is when the Holy Spirit reminds me of the knowledge that I've gained. And insight is wisdom that comes from living out the truths that we acquire and that we are reminded of from the Holy Spirit's discernment.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, when I think about becoming a woman of wisdom, that means growing in my knowledge, growing in my discernment and growing in my insights, all of that truth lived out on a daily basis. So, I just thought this would be a good thing for us to consider today.

Meredith Brock: So good, Lysa. So good. On a deeply spiritual level, so good. Like I know I certainly want to be a woman of wisdom. So am I acquiring that knowledge? Am I making that intentional? But I also think it's really, really such a profound teaching on a really practical, like super practical basis. Like as you were talking, I was thinking back on some of, okay, so what are some of the decisions that I made when I was younger that maybe set my life in a path that was good or maybe set my life in a path that was bad?

Meredith Brock: And I remembered vividly, I had this couple that took me in when I was younger and they were teaching me, I didn't know much about finances. So they were teaching me about finances and I was getting ready to go to college. And I remember him looking at me, the husband of this family that I had been living with. And he said, "Meredith, live right now like no one else so that you can live like no one else later." And in the moment, it didn't really sink in for me. Like I was like, I don't really get it. But now, I'm 37, about to be 38, I made the choice at 19 not to take out any student loans and I worked my tail off in order to not take out any student loans, so that when I got out of college, my dream was to go into ministry. And I knew in ministry carrying this weight of student loans was going to be hard for, you know, to have a family, to be in ministry.

Meredith Brock: And so, thinking, that little decision that I made when I was 19-years-old based upon that family's advice to me has now, at 37, I'm reaping the benefits of it.

Kaley Olson: Good example.

Meredith Brock: I don't think I even saw that. I don't even know, my 19-year-old self did not know how much wisdom that family was imparting to me and I'm so grateful I listened because it's really set up my family better to be free to live and work in ministry without the burden of financial loans.

Lysa TerKeurst: And I think that's such a good example, Meredith. And I think you're bringing up something else that's important to weave in here. Maybe you are 37 and you're drowning under the weight of debt right now. Right now is the perfect time to course-correct, because if you start course-correcting today and get out from underneath that weight of debt, it may take you five years, 10 years, 20 years. I mean, I don't know how long it will take you but what I do know is you don't want to suddenly be 47 years old and realize, because I didn't course-correct at 37, now, it's compounded, it's a compounded effect by the time you're 47 or 57. And suddenly now, you know, you had this desire to live a life of generosity or to live a life of freedom, and yet you've answered to this weight of debt that you've carried so long. So, there is a point to course-correct.

Lysa TerKeurst: And of course, correcting with these choices that you make are really important today. Every decision points your life in a direction. See, that still applies if you need to course-correct. What direction will this take me? Well, if it's not a direction I really want to keep going in, then it's time to course-correct, and is that the direction I really want to go?

Meredith Brock: That's really good.

Kaley Olson: So good. I feel like I'm still in that younger bucket categories but I love this kind of teaching. But Lysa, you and I were talking about what you were going to teach today earlier and I just told you how impactful it was in my life and I'm grateful that you're sharing it on the podcast because I think for me, as I'm like really young and I'm looking at people who are in like just a different season.

Like I look at Meredith, I look at you, Lysa, I look at other, like some of my favorite leaders at Proverbs and in the world that I'm like, wow, they're awesome. How did they get there?

Kaley Olson: And one of the things I have noticed about people who are really good leaders is that they guard their time and they know what their focus is of the day. And I noticed in my life, I would approach my day just as a day, and it'd be like, okay, what do I have coming at me? And I would just take it as I go, and then I'll get to the end of my week and be like, wow, I had no margin. How am I supposed to grow if I don't have margin?

Kaley Olson: And so, one small thing that I'm doing is making the decision every Friday at the end of my day, I write out on a piece of paper what I have to do for the next week, and I look for blocks of time and I'm like, okay, here's my time that I'm going to like listen to a podcast or I'm going to develop myself because I know if I just keep running on the hamster wheel of to-do's, I'm never going to be able to think forward and prep myself for where I want to go later.

Kaley Olson: But, like a small decision over time to protect my time and not let it get away from me and let my email or my to-do's run me, but instead, make time for them but make sure that I can still develop myself over time. That compound decision will hopefully get me to a place where, later, whenever I'm like 40 or 50 and doing whatever the Lord has me doing, I will have grown in my ability to manage my time well so that way I can learn more things to develop my personality.

Lysa TerKeurst: I think that's great, Kaley. I think what you're really doing is you're looking at what do I want the big picture of my life to be, and I'm going to make sure that the individual strokes on the canvas of my life are truly painting the big picture that I want my life to become. So good stuff, ladies.

Meredith Brock: Okay, Lysa, I have one question for you.

Lysa TerKeurst: Perfect.

Meredith Brock: Are you ready?

Lysa TerKeurst: I'm ready.

Meredith Brock: This, y'all, I want our listeners to know, I did not prep Lysa for this question, so she has no idea what's coming.

Kaley Olson: She loves getting caught off guard.

Meredith Brock: I know. [crosstalk 00:23:45] Okay, so I'm going to make this really practical to right now in your life. What are you thinking about? So you said you're 49. Like what are you thinking about right now, what are some of the areas you're

paying attention to right now that you're like, I want my life to look like this in 10 years, and you're starting to accommodate for those, like you're starting to shape your life now for that 10 years from now?

Lysa TerKeurst: I think one of the most important lessons I'm learning in my life right now is how to truly be honest with myself. And I think for a long time in my younger years, I navigated my honesty to match the expectations of other people rather than truly being honest and letting my communication adjust the expectations of other people.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, one thing that I have to be honest about in my life is I love creating beautiful spaces. That is something that, you know, instead of people expecting me to be the kind of leader that sits in meetings 24/7, I know that I need to adjust people's expectations to allow myself to have the space, to be honest that breeds life into me is not meeting. There's a purpose for meetings and there's a function behind meetings and meetings are necessary, but you're not going to get the best president of Proverbs 31 Ministries if I'm always in meetings. You're going to get the best version of me when I have reserved some hours in my week to create beautiful spaces for people.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so, it's a very unique thing to me. I don't hear a lot of leaders, it's not like, you know, I'm going to pull up in leadership podcasts, leaders should create beautiful spaces for people, right?

Meredith Brock: I don't think Craig Groeschel is talking about that today.

Lysa TerKeurst: I don't know. [crosstalk 00:25:35]

Meredith Brock: He might be but I don't know.

Lysa TerKeurst: You never know. But that's just a unique nuance to me and I have to be honest with myself. I also have to be honest, I'm learning to be much more direct with people when they are doing a good job and when they're not doing a good job. And I'm learning to be honest with my family about what I have to give and what I don't have to give. And if you're going to call me at 9:45 P.M. at night and want to have some big, grand, deep life discussion, I'm going to be honest, I don't have that to give right now. Now, you want to call me at 7:30 A.M. tomorrow, I will be fresh and I will be up for the task and we can process and have great conversations. So I think me learning in this season of my life to truly be in touch with the honest version of myself.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now, here's where I caution people with that advice is that sometimes I say, I hear people say, I just have to be true to myself. Well, if we're going to say that, then we need to be true to our most healed, healthy, whole, surrendered-to-Christ self. So there's a balance to this. But honesty is important and I kind of wish it wouldn't have taken me 49 years to get to this place. But hey, course-correcting.

Meredith Brock: That's right.

Lysa TerKeurst: Is this the direction I want to go? Is this taking me to the kind of person I want to be?

Meredith Brock: That's great. Wow, what a great message today. I love it. Thank you so much, Lysa. I have really, really enjoyed this and I feel like our listeners are really, really going to learn a lot from this. Just listeners, those of you who are hanging with us here, I want to encourage you, if you enjoyed today's podcast, hit the subscribe button. Don't miss any, we don't want you to miss any. And I also, something just popped into my mind, if you enjoyed today's message, I'm pretty sure, Lysa, will you verify this? Is this talked about in *The Best Yes*?

Lysa TerKeurst: It sure is.

Meredith Brock: I thought so. I was like, this sounds really familiar. So I remember you talking through a lot of this, how to make great decisions for yourself as you grow and learn as a person. And so pick up a copy of *The Best Yes* by Lysa TerKeurst and subscribe to the podcast because, y'all, we want you here and then share what you're learning on social media. You can tag us @Proverbs31ministries and @Lysaterkeurst so we can see what has helped you from this particular podcast. We'd love to hear from you. After all, that's our goal, folks, to help you know the Truth and live the Truth because we believe it really will change everything. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next time.