

the  
**PROVERBS 31**  
MINISTRIES  
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Meredith: Hello, friends. 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 am here with Kaley Olson. Kaley, tell us what in the world do we have in store for the podcast friends today?
- Kaley: Yes. Well, I am super excited, Meredith, because really the next four episodes of the podcast are on *Therapy and Theology*, which is really, really exciting. It's back.
- Meredith: Yes, we brought it back folks.
- Kaley: Yes. And the last few episodes, we were with Lysa's counselor Michael Cusick, but today we have Lysa TerKeurst, our president, her personal licensed professional counselor, Jim Cress, and Proverbs 31 Ministries director of theology, Joel Muddamalle.
- Meredith: That is a trio if I've ever heard of one. I loved the last series that we did with the three of them, so I am so excited to be bringing it back. We've heard from several of you how helpful it was for you, and so here we are doing it again. Super excited about it.
- Today's episode will cover trust issues, and in fact it really ties in with Lysa's latest Bible study called, you guessed it, *Trustworthy*, friends. It is all about overcoming our greatest struggles to trust God.
- Kaley: I can't wait for that study. It actually releases on November 12, and let me just tell you, you're going to want to get your hands on a copy. So depending on when you're listening to it right now, today, the live date is October 29. So you're going to need to preorder it and we'll tell you more about that afterwards. So just in case you're looking for it, it's not out quite yet, but you can find out more information on Proverbs 31 Ministries bookstore at [p31bookstore.com](http://p31bookstore.com) and we'll tell you more about that after this episode is over. So, let's let Lysa, Joel and Jim have at it. Take it away, guys.
- Lysa: Hi, I'm Lysa TerKeurst and I'm here with director of theology at Proverbs 31 Ministries, Joel Muddamalle, and the amazing counselor, my personal counselor, Jim Cress. Thank you guys so much for joining us. And we're back, *Therapy and Theology*. And today we're talking about trust issues. Something that I think most of us have, maybe all of us

have, some of us are more aware that we have it, but let's talk today about trust issues. Where do they come from? So maybe, Jim, from a counseling perspective, when it becomes apparent that someone has trust issues, how do you know and where does it come from? And then Joel, I'd love to hear your thoughts from a biblical perspective.

Jim: Yeah, I could throw the ball right back to you and not try to steal your thunder. But when you talked about your grandson, [Ryser 00:02:55], I don't know that as a counselor, I would come up with a better metaphor than that. Would you share that? That's a great foundation.

Lysa: So the past three and a half years, I think you guys know if you've ever watched *Therapy and Theology* on YouTube or listened to the podcast, then you know, my family has been through a lot. Lots of downs, but some ups too. One of those ups is my daughter Ashley got married to David, and then after only having been married for a couple of years, they found out that they were having a baby. And so Ashley gave birth to our first grandson, Ryser. And I was smitten from the moment I laid eyes on this precious little boy.

So the nurse came in right before Ashley was to take Ryser home and I was in the room with her and she started talking about when a baby cries that there are several different things that that means. Maybe they need a diaper change, maybe they're hungry, maybe they're cold. And she said it's very important that right from the beginning that Ryser knows that he can trust you. And one way you build trust with your baby is by recognizing they have a need and then meeting that need, especially when they're small babies and they can't provide for themselves at all. And then she said this, "Trust is the emotional oxygen of the human relationship."

And I think that helped me not just understand what Ashley could do to bond with her baby, but I think it helped me understand why when trust issues emerge in human relationships, how it really can feel like you're suffocating if you feel like you're not sure if you can trust that person or not, or worse yet, you know you can't trust them. So for me, I didn't grow up having too many trust issues, although I think we all do to some extent. But I very much started to recognize them pretty profoundly in my world when Art and I started to come back together and try to rebuild trust. And trust is very hard to rebuild.

So, my trust issues came because I had experienced a pretty significant trauma in my marriage relationship and I wasn't sure if rebuilding trust was even possible. But, Jim, what would you say that the case is for most people that are having trust issues? Where do they come from?

Jim: Well, following the story with Ryser, your grandson, we're wired for trust and safety. We're wired for bonding, we're wired for attachment, and the whole field of studying counseling on attachment. So the idea of like if you look at some babies who were born for example in Romania and put in an orphanage and there was no face to face, eye to eye contact, babies are scanning. I mean my world, we have iPads now that scans my face and says, yeah, that's you and safety. I can get into my iPad. Right? Some babies are wired and in utero obviously they're bonded, attached to a placenta, attached to an

umbilical cord, and very, very, very safe. And then to be thrust into this world and to not have moments, where there's some... And I do this with people in my intensives and counseling, say, "What were you born into? What was the MOU?"

Someone says, I was born with jaundice and I was in an incubator for the first several days, maybe in the NICU. And they were not able to have human touch or much interaction with mom. They weren't able to nurse with mom. So early, early on, they go from significant attachment in the womb, safety typically, to coming out and that attachment is not built. And then as they grow older through all the developmental stages, as we get to this famous topic of narcissism, we'll talk about it, at one level being a developmental disorder, that there were needs that weren't met in childhood. So the idea of the safety that is there, the building of attachment, in my case, in my personal story, fifth of six kids, mom and dad wanted two, what does that say to kid number five who was me and my mom would say, "Your sisters are your real mom, let them raise you."

So I wasn't raised by wolves, but I was raised for a part of it. Thankfully for an older brother, my brother Eddie, who really helped me and was a father figure from birth to about age five, and then my three older sisters basically raised me. So there was attachment there, but notice it wasn't to the parent. So I was wired for what's called an insecure attachment. Jim was. And to be kind of going through life like, who is safe? Do you really like me? Are you really safe? That comes out of my childhood where there was not a lot of parental, over nurturing and bonding and caretaking other than a shelter, a roof over my head and food. There was a lot of bonding. It was quite vacant in my growing up years.

Lysa: And I know that the question, am I safe? I think that's so hardwired into the DNA of every human. And I don't know that we naturally revert to that question when we're talking about trust issues, but it seems so logical that that's really what we're saying. It's like, can I trust you? Is really, am I safe with you?

Jim: And most people, as we get to this thing on narcissism later, it's not the beginning. It's not the first few dates or the first few times having coffee with friends. Most people will appear safe. Most people are putting that best foot forward during that time. It's kind of like a faux, F-A-U-X, a faux safety that this seems okay, right? Until you go further in and a person cannot, they're kind of the seductive piece or putting on the window dressing of that. So it's not that, I think people, most people, if they see an overtly unsafe person and they're into fight, flight and freeze, something in their mind, as you say, freak out. They're going to have a tendency to back away, but it's till they get deeper into relationship and all of a sudden, wait a minute, this is incongruent. You say this, but you're not doing this. And that's where the safety, it's not usually the beginning of the relationship in my experience. It takes a few times interacting with a person.

Lysa: All right. Joel, I want to get to you in just a minute, but let me ask Jim one more question. What do we need for trust to be there?

Jim: We have said before, or haven't we? That trust is built over time, which always moves on. You have to worry about time plus this provable behavior. It's Reagan Gorbachev's

whole thing of trust, but verify. So what I think we need for one is time. We don't want to judge any relational fruit before its time. So as time moves on and then I need an awareness for one. Maya Angelou, the great poet said, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them." So as I begin to see something inside just almost a twitch in my body that says, "That didn't feel cool, that feels unsafe or just simply I don't like that, I want to pay attention to that." When often what I'll do is, "That's probably just me, or I am just being obsessive." And I'm doubting watch, I am not trusting myself first in that moment. How am I going to trust someone else? Then how am I going to go vertical and trust God?

Lysa: Right. So I want to get back to you in just a minute and say, what are we supposed to do in relationships where those things hit us? Like, "Oh, that didn't sit with me. Right?" Or, "Wait, they said this, but they previously told me that." Or, "Is this person really being honest?" So when we have those little cautions in our mind, sometimes it's past trauma speaking, and sometimes it's a present day alert or maybe even an alarm. So I want to come back to you in just a minute, Jim and say, how do we know the difference? How do we know if it's our past trauma speaking or a very valid present reality in this relationship? Because I think we transfer trust issues from past experiences into present day. And this is where I get tripped up. How do I really know what is what here? So, I'll come back to you in just a minute.

Joel, from a biblical standpoint, while humans seem to be almost hard wired for trust because of the way that God made us, He made us in His image. And so, there's this principle that Jim referred to a little bit ago that even when a baby is born, mirroring to that baby is so very important. And so I think about, wow, God even hardwired that into us, like we are a reflection of who He is. But that can get so complicated when we feel like we've been hurt by another person. And so trust isn't broken here. But then trust can really almost get broken there because it's kind of like, God, "You say You love me, You've numbered the hairs on my head, You know me most deeply. So why in the world would You put me in a situation with a person that has hurt me so bad? So now I don't even trust this person, but now I'm wondering if I can even trust You." And I think that's where so many of us live.

Joel: Yeah. No, absolutely. And I think you both have hit on it about this idea of hard wiring and Lysa, you're talking Genesis 1, right? Genesis 1:26 and 27 and I just think it's so interesting. Repetition typically results in revelation, right? And so multiple times God says, He looks and He says, "We're going to make Adam and Eve both man and woman in His likeness and in His image." And as we talk about trust, the reality of Eden is that God gives Adam and Eve both dignity and destiny. So the dignity that they have is that they're made in the likeness and image of God. And the destiny, the tell us, the end goal that they're pointing toward is to actually not stay in Eden, build up fortifications and walls and just hunkered down. It's actually to spread the glory of God out to the ends of the earth.

And so there's almost a sense that God has this relationship with Adam and Eve of saying, hey, not only have I given you everything that you need and I'm going to give you a sense of trust. This is reciprocal. I'm going to give you a sense of trust that I need you to now go out and to do the things that I've destined for you to do. And what the enemy

does is actually present doubt, to both Adam and Eve. I always want to comment on that. Eve's not just by herself, the Hebrew that's right there is this, actually Adam is with her. Could have at any time stepped in, intervened-

Jim: He gaslight — doesn't the enemy gaslight her there?

Joel: Oh yeah.

Jim: Narcissist. I love that you position that doubt versus coming in and just overtly t-boning her with craziness. It's like just a little doubt like, "No, not really."

Joel: And if we got into that, I mean that is the conversation. Sometimes we read Scripture and we just read it kind of cold, but if we're having a conversation right here, that's how I anticipate that the conversation is going, "Well, did God really?" Right?

Lysa: Yeah. And the very first thing that is recorded, at least when I read the NIV, Joel and I have a running joke because he thinks that the real Bible is the ESV, right?

Jim: He calls that the non-inspired version, the NIV?

Lysa: I don't know what it is.

Jim: Is that what you're doing?

Joel: [inaudible 00:14:33], I like standard version, it's all good. It's all God's Word. We'll just stick with that.

Lysa: Yeah. We won't invite you into this trust issue that Joel and I have.

Jim: They're fighting out mine [inaudible 00:14:41].

Joel: What Bible do you have over there?

Jim: It happens to be the SV, but I do like the NIV.

Joel: [inaudible 00:14:46].

Lysa: See, I am outvoted. I don't even know what to say right now. But isn't it fascinating, the very thing that Eve had the most of, and that is confidence in God and no shame. Genesis 2:25 says, Adam and Eve were already naked and they felt no shame. That meant naked, emotionally, physically, spiritually, because they had no other opinion to contend with, but the absolute assurance of God's love. And then the enemy comes in and says, "Did God really say?" So making her not only question God's Word, but even more than that, question, can you really trust God?

Joel: Yeah, and we're going to get into this. You mentioned narcissism, but I just want to just set up the appeal that's taking place for both Adam and Eve is an idea of self-exaltation

and self-glorification. And this is going to prove to be disastrous, not just for Adam and Eve, but for all of humanity. Genesis 3 happens, 4 happens, and now we get into our hardwired conversation. We are living in the result of a fallen humanity. But it's so interesting that God does not send them out and then say, forget it. I'm just going to restart all over again. In fact, and this is the idea of covenant, right? Biblically covenant, we think about it in marriage, in terms of marriage, the way that God's covenant relationship with his people is so different is that while the people are typically faithless, and we include all of ourselves in that, God's character and attribute is always faithful.

And so there is a journey through Scripture that we have to identify, how does God continually, and I would dare somebody to find me where He was faithless. How does God continually prove Himself faithful? And I was just doing some study in the languages. In the old Testament, there are two primary words for trust. There's *batach* and there's *aman*. *Batach* deals with security that comes through reliance on someone or something. So keep reliance in mind. *Aman* is the second most often used word and it deals with trust because of a confidence of that person's thing or reliability. So at the core there's security and security comes through reliance and reliability.

What happens at the fall is that the serpent questions security through, "Is God actually reliant? Can we actually rely on God and is God actually reliable?" And humanity from that point on are asking these very specific questions about God. Is He truly reliant? Is He truly reliable because our human experiences kind of point to, well, how could God be faithful when all of these other experiences that we have in human relationships are faithless? But that is actually not a fair way to consider the way the relationships go. We should never consider things horizontally and then go vertically. Actually, our vertical relationship with God and His proven track record of faithfulness actually should give us hope and anticipation for how He's going to renew all things horizontally.

Lysa: Well, I like that you added that word *renew* in, because you said, show me a place in the Bible where God is not faithful. And I would imagine we could go to snapshots of instances where taken out of context, it feels-

Jim: It sure does.

Lysa: ... like how could this be a demonstration of God's faithfulness, right? But even the equation that you gave us, time plus, believable behavior in the instance of a human, but time plus the assurance of who God is will give us a bigger picture to hold in context what we're walking through. And so I think for me, where I get in trouble is I look at individual circumstances out of context and then I try to say, well, how in the world, is this situation proof that God is reliable, that God is being faithful, that God has been good. Because this doesn't feel good. This doesn't seem good. I can't even imagine the good that will come from it.

And so if we pull a circumstance out of context in the Bible, or a circumstance out of context in our life, and we don't add time to it, then I think that's where we can get in trouble.

Joel: The story of Scripture is time. I mean that's what you're saying, right? We've got creation to consummation at the very end with revelation, and it's an interesting thing because I was again studying in this, I'm like, okay, where does trust show up in the New Testament? Right? Because we have to think about this holistically. We actually don't see the actual Greek word for trust show up often in the New Testament, but what we see everywhere is faith. What we see everywhere in the New Testament is this, the Greek word *pistis*, it's faith and we're like, well, how do we define faith?

Hebrews 11, I think gives the standard for ... and you actually said the word, Lysa. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And so now the writer of Hebrews is pointing back to actually our reliability and the reliance of Jesus, His faithfulness on the cross is actually how we maintain a sense of faith. And so in the Old Testament, trust is almost like a seed. It's planted and it's there. And all throughout the narrative of Scripture, that seed is being watered. And actually trust is just the beginning, and the fruition of trust is faith. And faith looks back on not just the trustworthy nature of God, but also that He actually acts in so many different ways.

Lysa: And I think for me it is important when I think about faith to remember that me having faith is an established trust with God that looks back and pulls from previous experiences with God, the trustworthy nature of God that I eventually saw in this situation. I pull that into my current situation so it can be a reminder. But then I also, as I look forward to the future, or even as I dread the future, so uncertain in my circumstances, I say to myself, God does His best work in the unseen. So that I pull from His faithfulness in the past and as I look forward, I can say to myself, I don't have to see how He's being faithful to declare He is faithful and I can trust Him. And that I can pull into my current circumstance.

All right, Jim, so back to the question I asked you, because even though I have great assurance with God, sometimes I have a hard time connecting that trust that I have in God, that God is eventually going to work. Even all of these relationship issues that I have with people, that God is going to work good from them. But when I'm in a moment where I'm having that thought, can I really trust you? Or what you just said seems suspicious. Or I'm skeptical because of previous things that you've done. In my human relationships, I often find this struggle of trying to figure out, is this a present day alarm with this person that I need to pay attention to, or is this my past trauma speaking that I'm now transferring a trust issue under this person? And it's hard.

Jim: It is very hard. That's why time is important to borrow to for me from Genesis 1, 2 and 3, I'm going to say it this way, that God did it there. He gave Adam and Eve the Holy boot out of ... Kicked them out of Eden, but with God, for every Holy boot, he has a Holy reboot. He has a way to come back and say, I will bring you back. And I think that is a template we could borrow. Also, if there's a Holy boot, like I'm setting myself back and boundaries from this relationship, I see this is not safe. Then I need to have a Holy reboot there in the relationship. I want to go back to ground zero. Doesn't mean all the past was fake and phony, but I go back and say, I'm going to have eyes wide open and like that, no one can see right now, but us three on this video, there's a whole team of people, assistants, all the people who are doing all the videography, sound. There's a whole team of people back there they can't see.

We're wounded in relationship, shall I say, we're wounded in community. We act out, do unhealthy things in community. We need to be healed in community. So to start with is, to look at, that's why God set us in families and even in the body of Christ. To look and say, when I cannot trust myself, all three of us have people in our lives that we could go to and say, "Hey ..." Kind of a new day. Remember trust but verify. So I know I've got some of my own trauma stuff so I don't hide it. It could be post-traumatic stress. We say, if it's hysterical in any relationship I'm wondering what's real. If it's hysterical, it's historical. Of course my story comes into play. I can get a team of people like is in this room right now, unseen but they're here. And to say, this is what's going on. He said this, she said that. Promise this, this feels like old past behavior. Is that just something that's a momentary slip for the person I look forward to? Is this person come back? Do they make amends?

And say, look, no excuses. They want to inform, not explain and say, here's what I've done and I don't want to, Jim Cress in his own trauma story, I don't want to walk it alone. I want to verify it and I have a team that I walk with of good close friends and say, "This person said this or this got stirred up in me. What do you hear me saying?" They mirror it back and says, it sounds like I'm crazy. And the answer is a good person's going to find out what is going on in me.

Note, if I'm counseling a person, I try to go, what's going on inside of you versus me telling you, no, that's not crazy. I start with, "Lysa, if you feel this, what are you feeling?" "Yeah, it seems like something's up." Well, let's just not be obsessive, but let's walk down the breadcrumb trail there and say, yeah, and they promised this. They only nuanced and varied in one little bit of way, breaking their word. It wasn't the big epic thing to go, it doesn't matter. When trust is broken, the little things can have just as much impact as the big things. I want a community around me to say, "You're not crazy. It makes sense that you would be concerned about this." So community for me is huge.

Joel: And that is like such a seriously, deeply theological principle from, it wasn't good for Adam to be by himself. God creates Adam and Eve. They go out and then you see the story of a family. A family of God, the Israelites. It's not just ethnic Israel; it's actually people from outside, other ethnicities, other people that come into God's family. And I love in the Pauline epistles, all of Paul's writings, it's lost a little bit, but his favorite word usage is the second person, plural. And we read it as you. And we live in such a highly individualistic culture that is easy for me to read that and say, "Oh, when he's talking about sanctification, becoming more like Jesus or discipleship, which is a part of sanctification even that it's a singular." No, he's actually saying, you all. He's saying, y'all.

Jim: Y'all good Southern cracker barrel, y'all-

Joel: I think Paul is from the South. Absolutely. You know. And isn't that interesting that it is actually intentional to what your point of the family that God actually created the church to be a family. Because the only way for us to see our own blind spots is when we have loving people who love Jesus even more so there than calling out these aspects of our lives that we're desperately in need of.

- Lysa: Well, let me wrap it up. So this is what I think I hear both of you saying, trust issues cannot be fixed in isolation.
- Jim: That's well-put.
- Lysa: And so we are going to have to step out and have relationships, if trust issues were created by relationships, then I know in my life I need to wisely choose relationships where then I can re-establish trust. And I think one of the best ways to start re-establishing trust is in conversations. And maybe even just directly with the person. And here's some questions that I found really helpful.
- A lot of times if I ask something because I'm triggered by a trust issue, I will say, "Wait, you just said this, but before you said this and now I'm wondering this, that's not helpful."
- Jim: That's often a reaction. What we're learning in healing is to respond, not react. There's a difference.
- Lysa: Right. Because what you're almost forcing the other person to do is to get defensive and then defensiveness erodes trust even more. So I've found, just give myself a minute, take a few deep breaths, like recollect all my chaos that may be happening up here and some more helpful questions that don't come across so personal are, "Help me understand. Can you help me understand like when you said this, but I'm remembering this, can you help me understand the difference between those two?" Or to say, "Can we pause for just a second? I need you to better define this."
- Jim: Brilliant.
- Lysa: Or, "Hey, maybe you could help me consider what you really meant when you said this because I really care about what you say and I want to understand it on an even deeper level." So some of those clarifying questions that helped me, show me, define for me, those don't feel so accusatory and so personal and could open up the exact conversation that builds trust rather than erodes it.
- Joel: And I would just add, Lysa, that those are all the same questions that you absolutely can and should ask of God in your prayer life. You can, and God invites us. We see this everywhere in Scripture. God does not dislike us. He loves us and He's inviting us to ask those questions. We just have to be open to the way in which He decides to reveal Himself.
- Lysa: That's amazing. Thank you, guys, so much. I hope you have enjoyed the session of *Therapy and Theology*, trust issues. I think we all have them. What do we do about it? I think we've tackled that question today, and how can we move forward? Really good discussion. Thanks so much.
- Meredith: Thank you so much for listening to today's episode of *Therapy and Theology* on trust issues. Before we let you go, we do want to point you to a couple of resources. The first

is something we mentioned at the top of this episode, Lysa's latest Bible study called *Trustworthy: Overcoming Our Greatest Struggles to Trust God*. And y'all, this 6-week study was filmed in Israel, which is amazing. I was there at the filming. It's remarkable. And it dives deep into the books of 1 and 2 Kings. It's incredible and I promise you're going to want to make this your next Bible study. If the topic of trust issue has resonated with you today in our podcast, go out, pick yourself up a copy. You can go to [p31bookstore.com](http://p31bookstore.com) to order from Proverbs 31 which will also help support the ministry itself.

Kaley: Yes, absolutely. And we also want to point you to a Christian counselor. If you need to process trust issues with someone in your life, maybe with someone you can trust and see what I did there, Meredith.

Meredith: Yeah, trust issues. I'm personally a huge fan of talking things out with the help of a counselor, and at Proverbs, we always point people to the American Association of Christian Counseling as a resource. So you can visit [aacc.org](http://aacc.org) for more information.

Kaley: Thank you all so much for listening today. We pray that whatever you heard helps you know the Truth of God's Word and live that out. Because we know when you do, it changes everything. We'll see you next week.