



Kaley: Well, 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, Kaley Olson, and I'm here with my friend and cohost Meredith Brock.

Meredith: Hey friends.

Kaley: Hello. Last time we recorded, we did this fun intro where Meredith tried to give this drum roll verbally or something. I would do the same, but I can't.

Meredith: It was like WWF wrestling up in here. Just trying to, just try to keep it lively folks.

Kaley: Yes, absolutely. Well, before we jump into the teaching, I wanted to remind our listeners, if you're new around here, that Proverbs 31 is a nonprofit organization, and if you're familiar with nonprofits, the end of every year is really important for us because it's our last chance to raise the funds we need to keep doing what we do every day for the year. And you all, this is the most humbling thing to talk about because Meredith and I are sitting right here knowing full well that it's because of the generosity of our donors that we get to produce this podcast and just do our jobs and join our coworkers every day to bring God's Word to women who desperately need it around the world.

Kaley: And I'll promise I'll stop talking about this in just a second because I know you all are here for the podcast content, and we'll get to that. But before we go any further, I do want to ask you to consider giving back to the ministry. When you give, you're not only helping fund the part of the ministry that you enjoy, you're also helping us connect with other women around the world and helping them know and live the truth of God's Word every single day. You can make a donation today by visiting proverbs31.org and clicking the donate button. Okay, Meredith onto the good stuff.

Meredith: Well, I have the privilege today to introduce our teacher, and you guys know who he is. You've heard him before. It's my friend with the impossible last name who often is featured on our therapy and theology series, Joel Muddamalle.

Joel: You nailed it Meredith.

Kaley: That was great.

Meredith: I know. I practiced beforehand.

Joel: Oh my goodness.

Meredith: I worked really hard at that.

Joel: That's literally the best you've ever done it.

Meredith: Thank you.

Joel: Killed it.

Meredith: I feel really accomplished right now. It was worth all the hard work.

Kaley: That was great.

Meredith: It really was.

Kaley: I'm very proud of you today.

Meredith: Thanks guys.

Kaley: We're excited to have Joel on, and we're going to talk about Advent, and we're technically in the Advent season already as this episode releases, but we wanted to dedicate a podcast episode just to talk about what Advent is, what it isn't, and how it can be beneficial for us as believers. And Joel and I were talking about this and texting the other day while you were preparing for this, and he said, "What would be the most beneficial? What do people want to hear?" And I had to think about myself because I grew up in a Southern Baptist church. We didn't do Advent. And I just want to know, this is for me just as much as it is for somebody listening.

Meredith: And certainly for me who didn't grow up in the church. It sounds so stuffy and formal to me, and I just really don't understand a lot around it so I'm excited. I'm really excited to hear the teaching today.

Kaley: We're excited. Well Joel, your turn.

Joel: Well that's awesome. I'm excited about this as well because I grew up in, I would say sometimes I felt like I grew up in a bit of two cities. In the walls of my home, those of you, if you could see me, I'm Indian. You all knew that, right?

Meredith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was suspicious, but thank you for confirming that.

Joel: From India. There you go. Very important because in my household we grew up very culturally Indian. Yet when we walked outside of those kinds of doors, everything was obviously very American, western. And so I got used to, in a sense living in the tension of these two cultural realities. And I think sometimes when we come across a topic like Advent, we've taught about Lent before, we've talked about these different things that are traditions. It can feel so disconnected from our everyday life. What is this? Why should I do this?

Joel: And then I think there's some misnomers, particularly, wait a minute, I don't know that I saw the word Advent show up in Scripture anywhere, and some of you all might be Googling right now or doing a word search and saying, "Joel."

Kaley: Is Advent in the Bible?

Joel: Right, right. We're going to get to that. Don't worry. I want to talk about a couple things, but the first thing, just to start off with, I just want to assure everyone that Advent is not per se a biblical command. This isn't something that we're mandated to do. However, there are things that we do not because they're mandated on us, but because they're just good for us. They have intentionality and purpose for us. But before we get into Advent, Meredith, we had an interesting experience a while back and I put her, I'm putting her on the spot. She does not know.

Kaley: Uh oh, here we go folks.

Joel: And Meredith and I typically when, if we're in team environments, and we're playing games, Meredith is a very competitive person.

Meredith: I like to win.

Joel: I am very competitive as well. And so the other day we walked into a mutual friend's house, and at the time of the recording, we were well before Thanksgiving. I just want to go ahead and put that out there for everybody. And we walked in, and I was just taken back by the Christmas trees and the lights.

Meredith: It was lovely. It was lovely.

Joel: Some people call it lovely, other people call it, mmm, I'm not quite sure. This seems a little much. And so our mutual friend happens to come around and say, "Isn't this so amazing?" And I just was like, no.

Meredith: What a Scrooge people are. Am I right? Ladies back me up on this.

Kaley: Would now be a bad time to let everyone know that my Christmas tree is up too? Does that ruin it?

Meredith: No, it's a great time.

Joel: I am outnumbered again. Once again in this ministry always outnumbered.

Meredith: Joel is unwell friends.

Joel: Now, my kids have almost every year gotten me pajamas that are the Scrooge or the Grinch. And so that is, this is could be a thing I need help with.

Meredith: They say pay attention to your patterns Joel.

Joel: Sound like our friend Jim Cruss. Okay. Listen, but here's something that I was just thinking about, and I love to drink coffee, and the coffee cups are already Christmas oriented.

Meredith: It's great. Love it.

Joel: And it made me think, you all, what happened to Thanksgiving?

Meredith: Hey, Thanksgiving is still happening. Do you remember what I said in our conversation?

Joel: Please let everybody know, Meredith, what you said.

Meredith: Joel's response was, it's not Christmas yet. And I said, "That's why we call it the holidays, Joel. It's the holidays. It's the combination of Thanksgiving and Christmas. You can enjoy Christmas at the same time you're enjoying Thanksgiving."

Kaley: And Thanksgiving.

Meredith: Why do you have to isolate like that? Why are you isolating?

Joel: Yeah, well I just think that our friend Thanksgiving just got bypassed completely.

Meredith: No, you enjoy alongside. Thanksgiving and Christmas they can happen at the same time. It's lovely.

Kaley: Thanksmas. Yeah, there you have it.

Meredith: Thanksmas.

Joel: That is so good.

Kaley: Thank you. I'll be here all day.

Joel: This is good. Well, I began to think, what is this an indication of in terms of our culture? If we were to just all serious now, take a step back and say, "Huh, why is it that we have decided to, for lack of better terms, market Christmas, get onto the shelves as fast as we can. What is that telling us about our culture?" This is what it's telling me, and it's actually three little boys under the age of eight that are desperate for a Christmas tree to go up because they know when the Christmas tree goes up, the presents go underneath the Christmas tree, and then it is this anticipation, a longing. We just need to get to Christmas Day. We need to open up these presents.

Joel: And I began to think about this culture of immediacy, and we live absolutely in an unprecedented age and time when literally we can find answers to anything that we might want within a snap. I can wake up in the morning and go to our friend Alexa and say, "Alexa, what's the weather like today?" And Alexa will be like, "Well Joel, it's partly cloudy with a chance of rain, and you might want to grab a rain jacket." That's unbelievable. And then seven day forecast or I can open up my phone and go to Siri and

say, "Siri, who is the greatest basketball player of all time?" And Siri would say, "Michael Jordan." Absolutely. Yeah. Your husband Mack is going to have a fit.

Meredith: Oh my husband would have a serious opinion about that Joel. Fail.

Joel: I know, but it's okay. But the point is, and then we can get the stats, we can find out all the things that we would need, and it is instant. But here's my fear, and here's my concern that I just want to maybe present to all this as we talk about Advent. What is that doing to our souls? What is that doing to our hearts? How is this forming us as people? And I want to suggest that we are all being formed by something either actively or passively. And the question is what are we being formed to? What are our hearts being formed to? What types of people are we becoming? And when we turn to and look at something like Advent, we find something that isn't necessarily described in Scripture. It's not a command for us to do in Scripture. In fact, when we look at the tradition of Advent, it's a little bit debated. Probably somewhere around the fourth or the fifth century is where we have the first instance of Advent show up in Spain and in Europe.

Joel: The first written evidence came at this thing called the Council of Saragossa in AD380, and it is ancient. Advent is celebrated across four Sundays that lead to Christmas. The bottom line is the tradition is tremendously old. But why was it present? What's the intentionality around Advent? Let's just dig in a little bit around Advent and then see how Advent seems to be a juxtaposition or a contrast to an immediacy culture. And then ask the question, well, if we were to partake in something like Advent, what is that doing for us? What is the benefit for us as people who love Jesus that it is causing?

Joel: Advent comes from a Latin word called *adventus*, which literally means coming. Now this is where we go, "Well wait, why was the Bible written in Latin?" Because my Bible scholars out there are like, "Joel, I don't think the Bible was."

Meredith: You're off point here friends.

Joel: You're off point. No, the Bible was written in Hebrew, a little bit of Aramaic, and definitely Koine Greek. The Greek word for that translates into the Latin *adventus* is *parousia*, and *parousia* refers to the first coming of Jesus and also the exact same word that's used to describe the second coming of Jesus. And so when Latin became the world language, and the translation process began to kind of take place in church history, this was the word *adventus* was used to describe the first coming of Jesus and the second coming of Jesus. And so now we have this idea that Advent was a practice, a tradition that the church began to institute because they wanted to capture the tremendous moment of what is called the first Advent or the incarnation. Jesus' arrival into humanity. And if we think about that for a minute, that's pretty spectacular. That the invisible Father, God the Father, became visible a 100% in the Son. And that's the miracle of the incarnation, that Jesus enters into humanity.

Joel: And yet throughout the Gospels, Jesus is alluding to, especially when He leaves, He says, "Wait, I'm coming back in the exact same way that I left." There's the sense of a second coming, a second Advent. And so this is so important for us because I think when we think about immediacy culture or the idea of we-just-need-to-get-to-the-next-best-

thing, I think about the people in the New Testament, particularly the disciples that watch Jesus as He leaves and says, "Hey, I promise I'm going to come back in the exact same way." Well, they're left in a period of longing and waiting. They're left in a period of preparation, and they're given a very specific task to go and make disciples of all nations. And yet in the back of their minds, actually probably think it's in the forefront of their minds, they're also in a midst of eager expectation, anticipation for the risen Jesus to come back.

Joel: And so at this point, some of my skeptical friends will say, "Well, Joel, what's the purpose of Advent? Why should we even care about why the church celebrated it? Why did the church decide to take four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day and the Christmas Sunday and then say, 'Okay, this is what we're going to do?'" Well, because the church wanted to put in place a practice of waiting. And if I were to just summarize what is Advent, I would say, "Well, it's a practice of waiting." And again, I don't know about you guys. Kaley, Meredith, when was the last time you all just practiced waiting and were like, "Yeah, I'm excited about practicing waiting?"

Meredith: I'm terrible at waiting. Yeah, I really am. I'm a really, really bad waiter, so this is really challenging for me. Can I ask you just a super practical question before we jump into this?

Joel: Please.

Meredith: Because I'm not church, like I didn't grow up in a church background, I genuinely don't know what is the practice of Advent? You're saying, this is the first time I've heard this. It's embarrassing. I went to Bible college, and I still didn't know what Advent was because it kind of felt like this stoic practice. I just stayed away from it. You're telling me it was the four Sundays before Christmas, and what would happen? What would you do? And you're saying it's the practice of waiting, but practically speaking, what would they do in the church on those four Sundays?

Joel: It's so vast and so different. In the western church it's typically four Sundays. In the eastern church, they would do six Sundays.

Meredith: Right, okay wow. It even varies in that place.

Joel: Absolutely. Based off of tradition. Some of you all that come from a church tradition remember every Sunday leading up to Advent, lighting a candle and maybe your candles were different colors. I think there's purple and white candles.

Meredith: I know nothing of this. This is very interesting.

Joel: Exactly. There's also Scripture reading. And so traditionally what's happening on these four Sundays, and we've talked about this idea of the first Advent and the second Advent, what is happening is an anticipation, a longing in our hearts where we look back at the first Advent where Jesus comes, but then we're also being prepared for the promise of the second coming as well. This could look different based off of your church tradition. Some churches will take the promise of the second coming, and the first two

Sundays focus on the scriptural evidence for the promise of the second coming. You're attuning your hearts in a sense to this promise that Jesus is coming back.

Joel: But then Sundays three and four, the last two Sundays, you'll switch to the first Advent, and now you're actually literally preparing yourselves for ...

Meredith: The celebration.

Joel: Of the birth of Jesus. The first Advent, the incarnation.

Meredith: Wow, okay.

Joel: Some churches will flip that script. They'll say, "Well, let's start with the first coming, and then we'll go to the second." The point is it looks so different, but there's always the sense of these four Sundays typically in the western context, and there's always some type of preparation, Scripture readings. There might be some type of symbolic activity done. I actually know of some places where they eat candy, which is interesting.

Meredith: Okay, I like candy.

Joel: Yeah.

Kaley: I've gotten chocolate Advent calendar before.

Joel: You got the chocolate Advent calendar.

Kaley: Someone gifted it to me one time.

Joel: If you're really into liturgy, if your church comes into a background of liturgy and kind of practice, they'll have Scripture readings for every day of Advent.

Meredith: Everyday meaning in between the four Sundays?

Joel: In between the four Sundays. Those days, you mentioned the Advent calendar, so you'll have Scripture reading that you can do individually or as a family, and that prepares your heart as a family or as individually to then walk into a church experience corporately.

Meredith: On a Sunday.

Joel: On a Sunday and then celebrate. You're seeing that Advent can look a lot of different ways, and it has looked a lot of different ways over the course of church history, but it always has this common theme of an anticipation and a longing for Jesus.

Meredith: That's, because I didn't grow up in the church, this is all brand new to me, and I don't have, and I'm not deeply rooted in much tradition in my life in general just because my family wasn't a traditional family. And so for me, just stepping back because I don't have the kind of perception of what Advent could be connected to because I know for some people it's like it's super connected to this type of church, and so I can't do it because

I'm not part of that type of church. It feels really good to me. This feels like a good thing to do, to look at, to take some time set apart to say I'm going to focus on celebrating that God came incarnate in flesh, and that He's coming again.

Joel: And that He's coming again. And so let me to maybe take that a step further. Let me suggest three primary purposes or reasons behind why celebrating Advent or observing Advent is another phrase that people might use is important. And these three are because Advent produces adoration, anticipation, and it aims our longings. I'll just unpack that. Adoration: Our adoration is formed through the practice of patience, hoping with expectation and internal contemplation.

Meredith: Whoa. Read that again. It was too good.

Joel: Our adoration is formed through the practice of patience, hoping with expectation and internal contemplation.

Meredith: Wow.

Joel: And here's where the rub really gets us because like you, Meredith, I don't like waiting for anything.

Meredith: No, I want it right now.

Joel: The practice of patience sounds miserable to me right now.

Meredith: Amazon Prime one day please.

Joel: Can we just pause and talk about, the mention of Amazon Prime next day or same day delivery? Are we kidding right now?

Meredith: I know.

Joel: But again, I want to go back to that introduction. What is this forming inside of us? What is it creating? And here's what's taking place. Our formation, the way that we're being formed into or whom we're being formed into, it has direct consequences to how we view and read and interpret Scripture.

Meredith: Wow.

Joel: And if we're not paying attention to these, big word, presuppositions, if we're not being attuned to what is happening in our brains and in our hearts, we're liable to make some misreads in Scripture that we just don't realize is, oh my gosh, my culture has influenced me in this way.

Meredith: Wow.

Joel: But as people who are citizens of Heaven, residing on Earth temporarily, actually what Jesus reminds us of in His high priestly prayer on Earth as it is in Heaven, is that we're actually supposed to bring in a sense the culture of Heaven here. And so now we've got

this tension. And so the purpose of, one of the purposes of Advent, is the sense of adoration. And we adore all kinds of things. We're an adoring people. We just saw a, my wife and I are expecting our fourth, and we saw the sonogram, and we just like, there's just the oohs and aahs and just an adoration. An anticipation of this child who's going to be with us in a few months. It's exciting. We adore, even when you're getting ready for Christmas and you open up, my wife's got this box of these ornaments that her grandmother gave her, and there's adoration for that because it brings back these memories, and we probably all have different experiences or different things that we adore. Our children or our families. And adoration should also be primarily an adoration for Jesus.

Joel: And yet I think sadly I don't think about that often. I don't think about my adoration of Jesus. I think it's assumed, but I don't know that it's actually enacted often because there's so many other things that are competing for my adoration. And so how can we, I don't know, practice adoration? And so that's that second part here. That an opportunity for adoration can be found through contemplation. Again, contemplation is also one of those things that just feels like, whoa, what do you all think when I say contemplation?

Meredith: I'm just thinking monks, man. That's what goes through my head. I'm not kidding. I'm thinking monks, and I don't know, chanting. That's what I'm thinking of.

Kaley: Yeah. I think about meditation, how long am I supposed to contemplate? Will you give me a deadline please? Five minutes? What does this accomplish? What are we going to accomplish with this contemplation thing?

Joel: Right, right. Because we're kind of achievers. And we've got tasks.

Meredith: Gosh.

Joel: We don't got enough time. We don't got enough time. I've got to hit Amazon Prime. But when we look at the story of Israel, and we look at the people of God, we see a contemplative people.

Meredith: It's true. It's true.

Joel: We see a people who, while they didn't have the Scriptures like we have them now, and so the way that they would tell the story of their origin, of their people was, I imagine around campfires. That's probably kind of what happened is they're walking around the wilderness, and the older grandmas and grandpas are sitting around with the kids and they're saying, "Hey, let me tell you the story about this place called Egypt where our people were terrorized. We were enslaved, but God in His goodness, He parted the sea." And there's a story. And these children are listening to who is this God that would love us so deeply that He would free us from Pharaoh? That He would save us from the chariots?

Joel: And so there's the sense of contemplation, of considering, "Who is this God? What is He doing in the course of human history? What is He doing for His people that He made in His likeness and in His image?" And they're going all the way back to Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15 is the very first promise of the gospel. We know Genesis 3 is the fall, or maybe we don't know. In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates everything, and He creates Adam and Eve in His likeness and in His image. And then in Genesis 3, the fall takes place. Adam and Eve together sin. And when they sin together, humanity falls together.

Joel: And God says, "I'm not going to leave you in a state of desperation." Genesis 3:15, it's a Latin, another Latin phrase, *prodo yon gelion*. It simply means the first Gospel and Gospel simply means good news. Back in Genesis 3:15 God says, "By the way, I'm going to promise that the enemy is going to be defeated and it's going to happen at the first Advent," aka, the incarnation, aka Jesus, the God man entering into human history. I love Derek Kidner, he says that, "Genesis 3:15 is the first glimmer of the gospel. It's the fulfillment of that promise in the Gospels through the incarnation."

Meredith: Wow.

Joel: The second point or purpose is anticipation. We have to remember that we're living with expectation for something that has not yet been achieved or realized in its fullness. But we've actually tasted the first fruits of that object of our anticipation.

Joel: For example, I shared already, I'm Indian. We eat Indian food at holidays. Indian cooking takes all day. It is all day, and I get hungry all day, and it's a struggle.

Meredith: It's a commitment.

Joel: It's a commitment. And so I used to get into the practice. My mom makes this amazing — it's a dish called biryani. It's this deep-baked rice with meat at the bottom. It's just unbelievable. You all will have to try it some time. But I would go, and she would just kind of sneak out a couple of morsels of the meat.

Meredith: Good job mama, good job.

Joel: She knew, and I'd play bat and come in, and I'd be like, but here's what happened. I was even more hungry because I knew that even though I had a little taste of that, that it was going to take a while before the actual plate was going to be set. And so we have this anticipation, and that's what happens with Jesus. The incarnation is the first taste. That what Jesus does in humanity, conquering sin and death. It's a first taste of a final fruit. And the finalness of this comes in the second Advent or the second time that He'll come, and He'll make all the things that are wrong, right.

Joel: And so we live in this anticipation, and sometimes we have to remember that what we're living in right now is not the end goal. Because if we think that this is as good as good as it gets, oh that can be hard. But we have to remember that we're a people who are living in anticipation of something so much greater, so much better, and that thing will take place when Jesus comes back.

Joel: The last one is it aims our longings. In the same way, when I take that by the food and I'm like, "Oh man, I want that so bad. I want that so bad." In the same way during Advent, it reminds us that in fact, we are to be a people who have hearts that long for Jesus. And if our hearts long for Jesus, it's pretty amazing because our thoughts orient

along the lines of Jesus. Our actions begin to reflect the actions of Jesus. Our relationships have a way of transforming into the types of relationships that Jesus would want us to have. And it all comes from this place of longing. I love Augustine. He's a Bishop of Hippo. Back in the day, one of the early church fathers, and he said this, "You have made us for Yourself O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."

Joel: We're a people who are restless.

Meredith: Gracious yes.

Joel: We are running around. And if you think about it, we get all the things that we want at an instant, in a dime, but we're still restless. Well, why? Because I think we haven't found our rest, ultimately in the person of Jesus. Or we have to be reminded of that rest. And it is absolutely a tension to be managed. This kind of brings us to maybe a suggestion that I would give us: Our longings are forming us into a type of people. And we often think of ourselves as being thinkers. We think something, and because we think it, we do it. But this is a crazy idea. I'm going to suggest that the human person isn't primarily a thinker, but we're actually primarily a lover. We're formed for desires. Yet those desires are knocked off kilter at the fall.

Joel: When we look at the story of Scripture, we actually see a lot about the heart. We see a lot about a story of desires and longings, and what is that doing for us? And so the story of Scripture seems to be in the Old Testament. The way that the Jews sort of thought about the heart is the heart is not just a place of emotion, but it's the seat of the will, of the intellect. These two things aren't separate. They're actually one and the same. And so from the heart flows up to the mind, and in the mind the thinking and action is produced. What is happening with our hearts? What are our hearts adoring? What are our hearts anticipating? What are our hearts longing for? And I think what happens at the fall is that our hearts, again, this comes from Augustine, our hearts are pumps that produce love.

Joel: At the fall, the pump doesn't turn off. It's actually knocked off kilter. And we begin to adore things that are not Jesus. We begin to anticipate things or long for things that are not Jesus. And those things always leave us dissatisfied. And so what happens in Advent is this incredible opportunity to reorient our hearts, to cultivate our hearts, to form our hearts into a type of people that can live on the side of eternity with the reality that Jesus did come back. Jesus came in the first Advent. And He is absolutely coming back to right all the wrongs and rescue the broken and battered to Himself under His banner, establishing His kingdom finally and fully.

Joel: And so what defines us? What is it that we love? And the thing that we love will either produce true satisfaction or utter destruction. And Advent is a time that if we choose to partake in it, it's a time to reorient our hearts to our object of affection that can provide true satisfaction. And it's a time to practice patience. It's a time to consider and contemplate the work of God, the work of Jesus in our lives, and to long for the day that He will come back to right all the wrongs. And so I think Advent is a special time that can be a great blessing for the people of God.

Kaley: That's so good.

Meredith: So good. Kaley, do you have any questions, thoughts? I'd love to hear from you.

Kaley: Well I feel like I absorbed so much that I'm like, I don't have a question necessarily, but just this overarching thought in my mind is that I've realized in the last 30 minutes how selfish I am because as a believer, I compartmentalize the special seasons that sometimes can kind of feel like seasons, especially if you grew up in the church. There's Easter, and there's Christmas, and so often I only think about Christmas at Christmas, or I think about Easter at Easter. But this challenges me so much to not do that just then, but stretch Advent beyond four to six weeks. Make it all year. And you said, "Let's contemplate." Contemplating who Jesus is and what He's done for us, and that He's coming again. Contemplating on that makes me remember the bigger picture to help me not remember that it's all about me, which I think is just the point of this. But for me, I want to make this a daily practice, not just something that I do once a year leading up to Christmas. I think that's really what is challenging me the most out of this.

Meredith: Well, and I think that's the bottom line folks. If you're listening, and you're trying to determine, "Should I do Advent? Should I not do Advent? Or is Advent for me?" The bottom line is, is that whatever method works to point your adoration back toward Jesus, use it. And if Advent is a marked moment in your life that you can say, "This points my heart back to Jesus to adore Him, to live in expectation for Him," then you should absolutely do Advent. But if it's not something that ushers in that sense of adoration and that sense of expectation, then fine, you need to find another channel to do it because it's that important.

Meredith: Because from that sense of adoration and expectation is where the wellspring of life comes, which is your heart. And we want your heart to be aligned with Jesus and His Word. Thank you so much for your teaching. Joel, I think a lot of people are going to walk away from this challenged in a really, really good way, but also educated. I feel a lot more educated after listening to this because I really just didn't, I didn't understand what Advent was, where it came from, what does it look like? All that kind of stuff. Thank you for spending a little bit of time with us today. Really appreciate it.

Joel: So much fun.

Meredith: Absolutely.

Kaley: Well, I think like you said, Meredith, this is, this helps us make sense of something that we might have a question about, which is what I love about what we do here. We have people like Joel and others on staff who are theological experts, and they know God's Word through and through and help us make sure what we're presenting is accurate and that we can have confidence behind what we do. And so thank you. Thank you again. Meredith, do you want to start off our announcements as we wrap up?

Meredith: Of course. Of course. Well since we're talking about traditions, and I am learning how to create some traditions for my family, I wanted to introduce you guys to two things that Proverbs 31 is offering this year. It's exclusive to Proverbs 31. You can't find it anywhere else and that is, we have an olive wood nativity set that is so cute you guys.

Kaley: So cute.

Meredith: I love it so much. It's just neutral tones. It's a beautiful piece that if you don't have a nativity set in your home at Christmas time, and you're looking for something like that to really recognize and to decorate your home, I'd encourage you go check it out.

Meredith: The other thing is this really cool, I'm excited about this because I just moved into a new neighborhood this year for Christmas. It's the Sweetest Story Cookie Baking Kit. And it is a product that was developed by Lisa TerKeurst, something that she used to do with her children where it talks you through really the Gospel by making cookies, and you're able to do it with your kids. And then it comes with these sweet, cute little gift tags that you can make the cookies. It has the directions for making the cookies and all the ingredients and stuff like that. And then these little gift tags that you can take a plate of them to your neighbors and kind of have the opportunity to tell them the Gospel, and it teaches your kids the Gospel, how to actually tell the gospel story. Go to proverbs31.org, to our little shop button, and you can find both of these products because they're really great tradition starters if you're anything like me and looking for those.

Kaley: Absolutely. Well, I know at the very beginning we mentioned giving to Proverbs 31 at the top of the show, but another way that you can support us financially is doing exactly what Meredith just said and shopping on p31bookstore.com, and every purchase you make supports the ministry and helps us continue to get free content like this podcast out to the world. If you would rather shop and know that you are shopping and helping us.

Meredith: That's right.

Kaley: Get Jesus out to more people at the same time. Well, that's about all we have time for today. Thank you everyone for listening. We pray that this helps you know the truth of God's Word and live that truth out, because when you do, it changes everything. See you next time.