

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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[Kaley Olson:](#)

Hello everyone. 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 co-host, Meredith Brock.

[Meredith Brock:](#)

Well, we are back with the second installment of our *Therapy and Theology: How Do I Get Through This?* podcast series. And if you joined us last week, man, that was a lot of information and deep conversation, but I know it's already been so helpful in giving me a new perspective on how therapy and theology actually work hand in hand.

[Kaley Olson:](#)

Yep. And if this is your first time joining us, let us catch you up to speed. We're taking a break from our regularly scheduled programming which is airing two episodes per month, to do a special six-week series on this topic. Today, you're going to hear Lysa TerKeurst, Joel Muddamalle and Jim Cress unpack the topic of forgiveness and the difference between reconciliation and redemption.

[Meredith Brock:](#)

Wow, that sounds like an amazing subject. I can't wait to hear it. But before we transition into the conversation you're about to hear, we do want to preface with a little warning — this content touches on some really sensitive subjects and may not be suitable for young children. Many of you listening in the car, and if you've got a youngster in the backseat, it might be a good idea to pause right now and listen to this a little bit later. Additionally, this content could also serve as a trigger for some of you who have gone through similar circumstances in your past. So we ask that you use your own discretion in listening, but more importantly, we pray that this content helps you process whatever you might be facing. Here's Lysa.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

So talking today about ... Continue our conversation from our last episode, but moving forward, I feel like we identified some of the first steps to move forward. If you missed the first show, I really encourage you to go back and listen to it, but certainly don't hit the pause button today. Keep moving forward by listening to this one. Because today's topic, while it does build on the last episode, it has enough contained in it that you won't have to catch up. But I really don't want you to miss our first episode. So here we go. Moving forward,

continuing that journey, remembering that with therapy and theology, the goal is not to get over the hurts that we're facing or that we have faced, but rather, how do we get through them? And I think that "But how?" is a big question. It's one thing ... It preaches really well for us to say "Get through it," but answering the question, "How?" is crucial.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

I also love that we talked in the last episode about one thing that people fear in going to counseling or therapy is that they're going to have to regurgitate all this stuff, it's emotionally exhausting, and then what if we uncover some things about our caregivers that are hard or whatever, that's why I did scrapbooks with my kids. I'm just going to be straight up on it. So if I ever get called into a therapist office, I will have pages of proof that I did the very best I could as a parent. But I say that tongue in cheek because the reality is I have encouraged my kids to go to counseling, and I'm a big believer in making sure that they heal both emotionally and spiritually.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

But this week, we want to talk about forgiveness. We like others to forgive us, but I'll be so bold as to say I'm all about forgiveness until forgiveness feels unfair. And then there's something inside of me that just can externally say I'll do it because it's the right thing. I am a rule follower, but internally I can find myself resisting it. Resisting forgiveness, especially when it feels unfair, especially when the other person isn't at the place of repentance. And so then it just feels like, why do I always have to be the bigger person? Or if it feels like it's not going to do any good because I've determined that this is a situation where reconciliation isn't going to happen. So can we just let bygones be bygones and move on. And if anybody needs to do the hard work here, it ain't me because I'm the one that was hurt.

[Jim Cress:](#)

I got it.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

And so, there's so many things that I can find myself being internally resistant to forgiveness, but Jim, you helped me in one of our sessions so much, and of course it was one of the sessions around helping me move forward with the really hard stuff in my marriage, and part of our story, just in case you're listening today, and you don't know my story. The past three years have been really, really hard. One of the things that my family and I, we've walked through, is my husband's infidelity. And he actually prayed over us as we started this podcast. So I don't want anyone to suddenly gasp and think, "Does her husband know that she's really talking about this?" Yes. And not only does he know, but he encourages me because he knows there are a lot of people that are hurting because of marriage issues and relationship trauma. And so yes, he has given me permission to talk about this.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

But one of the most profound things Jim, that you have helped me realize is there are two parts to forgiveness.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

The first part is the decision of forgiveness. The second part is the process of forgiveness. So my decision to forgive is an event where I make the conscious

choice to acknowledge what I've gone through and to forgive for the facts of what happened in the situation. And I remember we walked through this tremendous exercise where you had me take 3-by-5 cards, and you had me write out all the facts that I could think of on separate cards, and then we'd lay them down in a line on the floor, and I would make the decision to forgive but I would seal that so that it wasn't just my words, by you gave me a little piece of red felt, and I would lay the red felt over every decision that I made to forgive and it was almost like we were symbolically covering this with the blood of Jesus. So whatever part I wasn't capable of forgiving, I could acknowledge that Jesus' blood has already covered that. And it was a beautiful experience we walked through. And I made the decision to forgive for the facts. And I felt really good about that. I thought it was wonderful.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

It was an exercise I recommend for people to do to have a marked moment for their decision for forgiveness. But then here's where it gets complicated is I made the decision to forgive but then something would happen and I would get triggered, a memory would happen and suddenly I would get anxious. And I knew that my anxiety was tied back to events that happened in my marriage that were very hurtful, and then it would cycle around to where I would be angry at Art, because I wouldn't have this anxiety if this trauma wouldn't have happened. And so then all of a sudden it messed me up and I started thinking maybe I haven't really forgiven him. So of course, I pick up my phone, dial Jim, make an appointment, go in, sit in his office, tearful, just like, "What do I do with this?"

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

And Jim, you were so helpful. You said, Lysa, you have forgiven Art for the facts of what he did. That was a marked moment, I was there for it, I was a witness. So I can testify, you had that moment of forgiveness, but the decision to forgive is the first part.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

The second part is the process of forgiveness. Because you also have to learn to forgive for the impact that those actions had on you. And forgiving for the impact is going to be a much longer process because the impact unfolds in layers of experiences. You can't predict it. You can't even hypothesize how that's going to play out in your life. It will catch you off guard. And it will happen in the middle of an ordinary day, an ordinary conversation, an ordinary event, but all of a sudden, it will kick in and bring up feelings of anxiety, fear, even bitterness, which was really hard for me. Because I thought, if I made the decision to forgive, then that's supposed to free me from bitterness, but now this situation is an impact from what happened.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

And so it started to feel very, very hard. But when you gave me language, and I could see, no, I have made progress in this, and the progress was I've made the decision to forgive; now I have to walk through the process of forgiveness. Part two of forgiveness is forgiving for the impact, and if the Lord piled all of that impact on you in one day, it would be too much. So the impact must unfold in layers because of the mercy of God, and I have learned to embrace that process.

I think in counseling, one of the statements that we often say is trust the process.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Hard as it may be.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

So hard! So comment on that. And how did you even know to tell me that, because that was really profound for me.

[Jim Cress:](#)

One of the things I do is, not to cop out here, is follow the person I'm working with. People think the therapists coming in all loaded up, and we know everything you need. That's actually I think, usually bad therapy. But it's following where you were trying to discern whether you're ready to go, and the concept of fact and impact — many years ago on my whiteboard in a counseling office, I was with a person I was working with, and I said, when you look at the facts of our life, and then impacts, fact just happen to me; impact, what did it do to me? And I said, that's where most of the counseling work I think is done and then there's a track that we all will take, addictions of track or performance or negative thinking. And so that's spells F.I.T., F.I.T. Fit.

[Jim Cress:](#)

That's where it came up with. So I've used that I don't force that on people I work with, but I always want to say it's a simple way, if you do nothing else in counseling, go in ... Or with a friend over coffee or a pastor, whoever, look at the facts, tell your story to somebody and then ponder what was the impact of it and you get to go, "I think it might have impacted me this way." You don't have to know — it's fine to be in the hypothesis, to go, I think this is what it may have done to me, not to my sister, not to somebody else. What did it do to me and what track have I taken maybe to cope with these things?

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

I really like that F.I.T. The fact, the impact and the track.

[Jim Cress:](#)

There's a track always of how I'm going to deal with the impact of what's happened.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Or not deal with.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Or not deal with it is exactly right. And that is its own track of just saying I'm going to avoid, I'm not going to deal with this as Scott Peck-

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Or I'm going to numb it.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Well but in the numbing out, Scott Peck has a great quote; he says that mental health that we all want and I believe spiritual too is what ... It's a commitment to reality at all costs. So if I don't face reality where it is, or as another way old dead psychiatry said years ago, the refusal to embrace legitimate suffering, stuff's going to happen. The Bible teaches us and he said, the refusal to embrace legitimate suffering in my life will make me neurotic. So, that part is so important. So how do I know following you where you are in realizing, trying to

see where you are to go? The first day I meet somebody, or second and third and say, well, you need to go to forgiveness. I use that's a topic I often don't even bring up. I wait till the person brings it up. It's so loaded. You're asking me to sign off on what everybody's done to pretend it didn't happen, to wave willful dust or something or no. So you are ready to go there and they go, I want to look at this and allow the process to happen.

[Jim Cress:](#)

The impact is we have ... Both you and Joel are theologians but God seemed to ... While there were the sacrificial systems and all those in the Old Testament, it took a long time before he got to Calvary, Joel. I mean there was something there that I don't see God even rushing to it. It's like letting things play out. It's a process.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

So as a Nine on the Enneagram, you're given me permission to delay, and this is really good. All of my friends are like, no, it must be addressed now.

[Jim Cress:](#)

And I'm a Seven on the Enneagram so I'm just like whatever.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

I'm a Three, so if we can all share, I'm a Three wing Two. So there we go.

[Jim Cress:](#)

There you go.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

There you go.

[Jim Cress:](#)

So that's another podcast, we'll get to the Enneagram part.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

[crosstalk 00:13:37]

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Enough of these words; now let's just achieve something. So okay, Joel, you're done.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

No.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Forgiveness.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Fire away.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

No. I think one of the first things is, Lysa, we did this as we're studying, is to look at the example of the biblical precedent of the very first act of forgiveness. And we need to look all the way back to the Garden. And before we even start there, we need to start with what I think is an important doctrine that maybe is lost, it's called the [inaudible 00:14:08], and it simply means that we were made in the image of God. And so I just want to read Genesis chapter one starting in verse 26. It says, Then God said, and we can just ... This is some trinity language, "let us," He's talking about that God had "Let us make man in our image after our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every

creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And 27, “so God created man in his own image. In the image of God He created him, male and female, he created them.”

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) I think this is so profound because if we unpack that out of all of creative things, the only thing that was created to reflect the beauty and the glory of God's image is humanity. Yet humanity is at fault to sin, and to break relationship with God. And so God has a choice. What's He going to do? How is He going to react? See, there's impact. God had given Adam and Eve responsibility in the Garden of Eden to multiply, to be fruitful, to take care of the garden. And so by their sinning, there's impact not only individually for them, it's relationship between them and God. And it's also environmentally for all of creation, because God wanted His glory to be reflected throughout all of the earth.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) So what does God do? Ultimately, the act of forgiveness had a cost and that cost was the death of an innocent animal and blood had to be shed and then there's consequence that to be sent out. But all of these points us to the, how do we forgive? Well, first of all, we have to recognize that you and I, through our ancient father and mother, Adam and Eve, we've been forgiven by God first and foremost. And because we've been forgiven, God is calling us to forgive freely. It's really interesting in the New Testament. Paul uses ... He doesn't use the Greek word forgive as you would think that he would use it; he actually coins and makes, I'm probably gonna get in trouble here, Lysa, I don't know if I should say this?

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) No. You go right ahead; I love this. I'm about to take his pen and take notes. [crosstalk 00:16:17]

[Jim Cress:](#) Come back to watch the podcast or listen [crosstalk 00:16:21]

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) I'm gonna have to tune in with you guys.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) We have the study days, right? And these study days are phenomenal study days, and I feel like I learned so much about the [inaudible 00:16:29] And so we're sitting down here the other day-

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) [crosstalk 00:16:33]

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) The other day we're sitting around and we grab some Chick-fil-A, you know Chick-fil-A?

[Jim Cress:](#) Of course.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) It's good food. And Lysa, you had talked about, we're reading about an ancient king and he had a real crazy name and then Lysa said, we're shakin.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) We're shakin.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) We're shakin. And then you said shakin. Now explain to us what shakin is.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) Okay. So-

[Jim Cress:](#) I have one version of what shakin is. Is it not the same one?

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) No. It's not the same one. Growing up in our family, we had our own unique verbiage language around certain things, and I was telling you, that's funny that it's name is shakin because in my family that's what we call chicken. Shakin, and Joel looks at me like what? And I said, hold on one second, so I dialed my sister up-

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) Literally true story.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) And I said, "Hey [inaudible 00:17:24] In our family, what is shakin?" And she said, "Chicken."

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) Chicken.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) She knew it right away.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) Instant. So here's what's interesting in the new-

[Jim Cress:](#) Tribal Language.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) I know.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) How are you going to transition from that to the New Testament?

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) [crosstalk 00:17:35]

[Jim Cress:](#) That's your job, do it.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) You think Paul would use the standard words for forgiveness in Greek but he doesn't. He uses a different Greek word it's called [inaudible 00:17:46] And it actually is rooted in a sense of grace. So what he's doing is recalling the gracious act of God all the way back in the Garden of Eden that an innocent animal would have to die, the blood would have to be shed and then he's actually calling you and I to reconciliation or to forgiveness, to forgive each other. And the scope of our forgiveness has to be rooted in this idea of grace. This is the interesting part. That word is not used anywhere else in the non-Greek language. Like, it's almost like Paul takes a shakin type of thing. And he creates a concept, taking these words and combining them together because there wasn't a phrase to capture the immensity of what's taking place when you forgive within the context of what Scripture calls us to forgive, and that it's within the scope of grace. Understanding that because we have been freely forgiven, we can now forgive.

[Jim Cress:](#)

And give us that verse reference again, because I know later when I listen to the podcast, I'm going to want to take notes. And I'm going to be like, anxious if you don't give me reference.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

You can look at 2 Corinthians 2:6-7. You can look at Ephesians 4:32. You can look at Colossians 1:14. I mean, this is just consistent. I love Colossians 1:14. Let me read this for you real quick. In Colossians 1:14, it says, "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" And the whole context, verse 13, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Okay, so let's break this down. So I'm sitting here today listening to the podcast, and I know that there is some forgiveness work that I need to do. And the very first thing though, is I have to get over this internal resistance to forgiveness. And so I called you, I guess it was a couple of weeks ago, because I've been really studying the whole principle of forgiveness. And I said, Joel, this is how my sessions, you have already unpacked a lot of what happens in sessions with Jim. This is not my sessions with Joel. I very much realize I know just enough to be dangerous, so rein me in here.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

But I said I was listening to a book, an Audible book, and it was *The Sacred Enneagram*. And as I was listening to it, there was this line that the author said, and it really stumped me and he just said it and just went right on, but I thought, this needs to be unpacked because this principle right here is what could help me get over sometimes that internal resistance to forgiveness, and it was this. He said something like, we think that people are punished because of their sin or people suffer because of their sin. But what if it's more like people are also suffering by their sin or punished by their sin? And I mean, he just said it and went on. It stopped me cold, because I thought, "When someone sins or when someone offends me, what if that sense of suffering is already built into what they did to me?" Not just suffering for me, but suffering for them.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

And so what I was wrestling through is for me ... In order for me to get to the place where I feel like I can authentically forgive, I have to have compassion. That, to me, is the very first step of forgiveness. And so because I know I have to have compassion and it's hard to have compassion for someone who's hurt you. I've always said, well, you can assume that person has been hurt in the past, and you may not be able to have compassion on the person. You may not be able to have compassion certainly for the act that has hurt you or offended you, but maybe you could have compassion for the hurt that they have obviously experienced that caused them to act that way to you where it caused hurt.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

But this took it a little bit deeper. What if their act of hurting me already had consequences built in for them? So I don't ever need to have to work through the justice resistance and the unfairness resistance that I sometimes feel in forgiveness. What if I can already know? I don't have to say the consequence, to know that when they hurt me, the consequence for them was already built in.

And so I can have compassion for the consequence that they are suffering and it may not be immediate, and I may never see it-

[Jim Cress:](#)

That's right.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

But it is there. And so as we unpack this, and I said, Joel, I think this really is true because I know when I hurt someone else, I experience a consequence of hurting someone else. And so if I have experienced that then maybe they have experienced that. And so if I can have compassion for whatever consequence they're going to suffer now because of the hurt that they have put on me. That to me is the first step toward being able to forgive and honestly forgiving people before they even offend me or hurt me or do something to me. Because for me, just giving people permission to be human, fragile, fickle, forgetful, just making peace with the fact that that is a reality in this sin-soaked world. But for me, having compassion for them is the first step to having true forgiveness for them and helps me get over the resistance that all of this seems terribly unfair. I don't have to worry about the fairness — God will take care of the fairness of all of this.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

But that bucks against ... I mean listening to you say that, I say I want to scream that's not fair and really-

[Jim Cress:](#)

Isn't that wired in all of us?

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

Yeah. And-

[Jim Cress:](#)

I mean, yeah.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

And I think what we're saying is, I don't trust God. That's really what we're saying.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Yeah. It's like, I don't want to control God until I do.

[Jim Cress:](#)

This is where I love to join you on this. Oswald Chambers said that when I sin, I have the suspicion that God is not good.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

Yes.

[Jim Cress:](#)

It's not just that clean like, well, it's like I have the suspicion that God's not good. And I'm going to tap in real quick to the word compassion because I love what you just did with that, inspired by *The Secret Enneagram*.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Compassion, if you look at the etymology of the word, very simple, *com* means "with;" *passion* means "to suffer." We know the Passion of the Christ. So compassion, literally, you gotta look at the word is "to suffer with." There's research we have from Dr. Kristin Neff and Brené Brown that I'll only really be able to be compassionate towards someone else to the degree — not perfectly

— but to the degree that I have self-compassion. That's why we get into our own story and suffer with a vision of glory, not just suffering for the sake of suffering, suffering with our own story.

[Jim Cress:](#)

So I like what you did with that, even the word compassion that I could look and say, you know what, of course I think it's a buy one get one free every time. If I sin there's a consequence, why? Vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord whatever that means whatsoever a man or woman or a person sows that shall they reap. God says there's a law. And I love how you position that, I may not see what they reap or when they reap it or whatever else but that whole idea is, I can look and say, you know what, they probably are going to at some level and I'm not vengeance, this isn't vengeance; they're going to pay a price.

[Jim Cress:](#)

You look at infidelity, my goodness, I sit all day long with people. We talk about people paying the price — men or women. Women have been unfaithful too, that's coming up I think one of our podcast to talk about that. The idea they're paying the price there because on that side, there's all kinds of things. Will she ever forgive me? Will I ever be ... Whether it's a public issue or not, Will I ever be able to beat this issue? How do I know ... There is its own torture every time I sin? That's why like compassion; I'm going to suffer. Thanks for letting me.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

That's good.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

That's so good. And let me just say from an experiential standpoint, being sensitive to the fact that you know, maybe I always want to be sensitive to the fact that I want Art to be able to share his own story when he's storytelling. However, this little part I think is so helpful because of how it's helped me but being on the other side of this issue that we walk through in our marriage and in so much deeper and deep pain I can tell you when I discovered that Art was having the affair and in my brain, what happened is I cannot believe this. I was so shocked and so stunned and it felt as if I was the only one suffering here because it appeared as if he made this choice and he was happy to make that choice, and that there was nothing but pleasure on his side of the street and nothing but suffering on my side of the street.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

In reality now as we peel back the layers in hours, and hours and hours and hours of counseling and Bible study, and sitting with people to help us peel these layers back. Yes, there was pleasure on his side of the street, but it was a tortured pleasure. And what I always tried to make sure when I talked to people who are married whose partners have had an affair, I always say please don't start where I started. It took me so long to understand that his side of the street or her side of the street, whoever's having the affair, it's not 100% pleasure. It is a tiny bit of pleasure.

[Jim Cress:](#)

Seed is enjoyable for a season.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Yes, but it is a tortured pleasure.

[Jim Cress:](#) Yeah, that's a good word. I like that.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) And it is boy, the pleasure is short-lived. And the sin, the weight of that sin is heavy. And I have said it's much easier and there's so much shame in that tortured pleasure.

[Jim Cress:](#) Of course.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) I would rather carry the weight of being betrayed. And that hurt than the weight of that tortured pleasure full of shame. That is a weight that is at times almost unbearable. So I think peeling back the layers of our story experientially and being able to have conversations now with Art — it wasn't all confetti and roses and wonder in that secret stuff that was happening. It just wasn't. But when you're the one that's betrayed, that's what it feels like: "I'm suffering. They're just having a grand old time." And that is not the case.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) So here's what's really interesting when we read through Scripture, and we look at this word forgiveness or the idea of forgiveness or forgiving in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word, [inaudible 00:29:40] Different ways you can pronounce it, but ultimately it's used over 50 times. The vast majority, 33 of those times were in the active tense only 13 or so are in the passive tense. So ultimately what that's saying — it's actually reflected the New Testament, overwhelmingly in the New Testament. Forgiveness is talking about the offender, not necessarily the offended, which again rubs against us really bad because everything we've just been saying is, well, I'm the offended party now; how am I supposed to process? But what Scripture is actually pointing us to is that there is honest responsibility on the offender and I think, Lysa, it's because of what you're saying.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) I think it's because there's also this recognition that there is this built-in punishment that is so overwhelming which is why the Lord is calling us to if we're the offenders to pursue reconciliation and forgiveness and so it's really interesting in Ephesians 4:32, Paul says this, "Be kind ..." You can also translate that into compassionate, "Be kind to one another." That phrase one another is a reciprocal pronoun; it means equality of relationship with each other, so "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you."

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) The church in Ephesus was disconnected; they were divisive. There was social issues, racial issues, ethnic issues, all the issues that you could possibly have. And what Paul is calling them to is this forgiveness to one another. Being kind, compassionate, kind-hearted-

[Jim Cress:](#) We could use that in Washington these days.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) Lightning rod right here.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) We call that a mic drop, that means I stop.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) Well thank you for bringing that up, Joel, and you mentioned the word reconciliation, which can be a really painful word, especially as we're talking about forgiveness because it can seem again, completely unfair when in some situations, reconciliation is possible, and in others, it is not. And so I want to make sure that we address this quickly and we can address it longer in a future episode here.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) But what I will often say to people is our goal in moving forward first and foremost can't be reconciliation when the other person is not willing to participate in that reconciliation. Sometimes people walk out of our lives and they are not willing to look back. They are not willing to come back. They are not willing to do the hard work that it takes for reconciliation to happen. And so then people can feel quite stuck and think I can't move forward because reconciliation isn't possible. And I just want to say from my heart that to move forward in a situation where reconciliation is not possible, make your goal redemption with God.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) Amen.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) Redemption with God is a choice that you can make to receive His forgiveness and for you to walk through the process of forgiveness for that other person, whether or not they ever receive it.

[Jim Cress:](#) Really good. I love what you've said to reconcile myself vertically.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) That's right.

[Jim Cress:](#) There's some work to do for while in counseling or discipleship or whatever, before I really even put a lot of energy toward the horizontal.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) That's right.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#) That's the mandate. It is a prerequisite. Divine reconciliation.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) And I think a lot of people may assume the book I just wrote, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, they may assume because now Art and I have reconciled our relationship but when I was writing my book *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, I wrote that book from the vantage point of needing to be a woman who moved forward, not knowing when I was writing that book that it was even going to be possible for Art not to reconcile.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) So the big question, but how?

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#) How do I move forward if reconciliation is impossible? That's why I wrote, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. Also I want to mention that we did a previous

Proverbs 31 podcasts; we will link it below, called "Six Practical Steps to Forgive."

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

It was excellent.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

So I think, again, recording that podcast, I made the point there's a big difference between redemption and reconciliation, sometimes the two hold hands and sometimes they don't. But to move forward, redemption is always possible with God and it's not dependent on another person's willingness to reconcile. So I think that's really crucial. As we wrap up today, any last thoughts, Jim, and also Joel?

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

I do. As a theologian, I feel like this sense of responsibility here just to bring maybe a little bit of clarity and this is sometimes hard, but I really do believe that the Scriptures point us to the reality that forgiveness is mandatory. This is not an "if-then" clause statement, forgive because if we don't forgive — release — we're holding ourselves in bondage and in captivity. And so this is where ... I just think that it's important as we're creating these distinctions we may go into this more detail in different podcasts or different episodes but to show the difference between forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation. The forgiveness for the believer is absolutely a responsibility and mandatory.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

That's really good. Thank you for just taking that stake, putting it in the ground and saying it that definitively because the Scripture makes it clear. Any last thoughts, Jim?

[Jim Cress:](#)

The handshake with Joel on that and really with you too, Lysa, would be one of the words, Joel, I've talked about this of [inaudible 00:35:29] To cancel the debt to look at it's not just so that we can lay a bunch in your exercise I did with you a bunch of 3-by-5 cards or wallow in it. I want to get, like a credit card ledger; if someone cancels, you get \$10,000 in debt and they said we're canceling that much debt, we'll know this is what I spend it on to look at the impact for the reason of being able to help me be reconciled to God and to myself to say, here's what it did to me for the reason, faithfulness, lying, betraying whatever it maybe.

[Jim Cress:](#)

The reason I want to look at the impact of that is to say, "What did it do?" And then that helps me understand more. This is what not just the fact that but the impact I want to also give to you and Joel alluded to it. You know the old line is that forgiveness set the prisoner free only to realize the prisoner was me. It is so important unilaterally. Thank God He didn't make it a command to go. God says, Do you understand, son or daughter? It's about you, you will be trapped, as C. S. Lewis said in one of his letters, in the prison of yourself.

[Joel Muddamalle:](#)

That's right.

[Jim Cress:](#)

So I want to forgive that God knew really what was best for me to forgive that other person. No more rent-free space in my mind, and may God bless you if you go in your life, however you're dealing with your sinner stuff, I'm going to no longer just be in prison with the pain of what you caused me. That's why I think it's so important.

[Lysa TerKeurst:](#)

Well, as we wrap up today, I just want to say your heart is much too beautiful a place for bitterness, unforgiveness and resentment to take root. And if you feel like some of those things have taken root and you want to know what do I do about this? I would encourage you to do two things. Number one, listen to the podcast. "Six Practical Steps to Forgive Again," we'll link it below and maybe re-listen to this podcast, take notes, take it seriously. Look up some of the verses that Joel has given and consider connecting with a Christian counselor in your area. Sometimes it really is difficult to walk this road alone. So I want to make sure that you know that. Thank you for tuning in today. Thank you, Jim. Thank you, Joel. Great discussion.

[Kaley Olson:](#)

Thanks for listening to this episode of the *Therapy and Theology: How Do I Get Through This?* podcast series. Before we let you go, we wanted to point you to a few resources that could be helpful if you want to dig deeper into this subject.

[Meredith Brock:](#)

The first resource is Lysa TerKuerst latest book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. You all, this book has been on the *New York Times'* best-selling list for weeks and for a very good reason. Lysa is so real and raw with her struggle over the past three years, and helps you learn to wrestle well between your fate and your feelings in whatever circumstance you're going through. You can purchase your copy today at p31bookstore.com.

[Kaley Olson:](#)

Now, before we let you go, we want to tell you about two other resources that we think might be helpful after listening to this episode. The first is the American Association of Christian Counselors. You can go to aacc.net if you're considering engaging with a counselor and we really highly recommend it if you're wrestling through some of these really, really hard subjects as you heard today; it's a fantastic resource to have a counselor walk alongside you, so we would really encourage you to do that.

[Kaley Olson:](#)

The second is our Prayer Wall at proverbs31.org. We'd love to encourage you to go there, scroll to the bottom of the page of proverbs31.org and you'll see prayer requests. You can click that, you can add in your prayer requests there and we really would, our staff really does pray for you on a daily basis. So go there — we would be honored to pray for you.

[Kaley Olson:](#)

Well thanks again for listening to today's episode! We pray it helps you know the Truth of God's Word and live that Truth out because I promise that when you do it really will change everything. We'll see you next week.