

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Kaley Olson: Hello everyone. Welcome 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 co-host Meredith Brock.

Meredith Brock: Well, if you've been listening to the podcast a while, you've probably noticed we've released episodes for four straight weeks in a row. That's uncommon for us. We took a break from our regularly scheduled programming to bring you a six-week series called *Therapy and Theology: How Do I Get Through This?*

Kaley Olson: Yup. And our prayer is that the Lord would use this series to help you in whatever hard situation you're facing right now in your life. At Proverbs 31 Ministries, we're all about equipping women to know the Truth of God's Word and live that Truth out, because it truly changes everything.

Meredith Brock: Well, before we transition into the conversation, we do want to give you a little heads-up. This content touches on some sensitive subjects and may not be suitable for young children. Many of you listen in the car and if you've got a little one in the back seat, it might be a good idea to go ahead and hit pause right now and listen to this a little bit later. Additionally, this content could serve as a trigger for some of you do to some past hurts. So we ask that you use your own discretion in listening. But more importantly, we pray that this content helps you process whatever you're facing in a biblical way. Here's Lysa.

Lysa TerKeurst: Hi, welcome back. I'm here with my good friend Joel Muddamalle who's speaking into the theology side of things, and I'm also here with Jim Cress who's speaking into our topic at hand today from a therapeutic counseling standpoint. And I'm Lysa TerKeurst, and today I want to dive in with restoring a broken marriage. Last episode we talked about when reconciliation is not possible, but remembering that redemption with God is always possible and how redemption and reconciliation don't have to hold hands. We want them to. But if it's not possible, because of choices of someone not willing to reconcile, then we still need to learn to move forward in redemption with God.

Jim Cress: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: But today, let's dive into the other side of this. And that is seeking reconciliation, restoring a broken marriage. And I want to acknowledge we've been talking a lot about infidelity and some of the harsh realities of different dynamics that traumatize a marriage. So it could be ... it's not always the man that walks away. It could be that the woman has strayed from her marriage and has had an affair. It could be that pornography has entered in through the choice of one spouse and the other is unaware of that. And then they find out and there's trauma that happens around that. And there are very difficult dynamics. But even if there isn't a big trauma that happens in a marriage, marriage is sacred and marriage is beautiful, but marriage can also be hard.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so brokenness can happen in a marriage for many different levels of hard situations. I want to acknowledge that because this isn't just for someone who's experienced the traumatic effects of infidelity or pornography in their marriage, but just difficult relationship dynamics can also create a sense of pulling back from the oneness that we all desire and the emotional fulfillment that we crave inside the marriage union. So I want to talk about that today. What do we do to start to restore some of the brokenness in our marriage? And I want to give an acronym, ABC. So we'll just launch into this using my very ... I have just street cred of experience. So I'm not a therapist, I'm not a theologian, but I have been -

Jim Cress: I think you are both.

Joel Muddamalle: Yeah, I think you are definitely a theologian.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, I have had experience in the good, the bad and the messy of relationships. So, let me just give a little acronym. We'll use this as a launchpad.

Jim Cress: I like it.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay. "A" is admission, and that is admitting that there are things that need to be addressed in our relationship. And I would say this is true of every relationship. You don't bring two people together with different personalities, different strengths, different weaknesses, different backgrounds, different ways of being raised even. You know, different trauma that's happened at various points in their life, different capacities for energy and different reaction types in conflict. You don't bring those people together and expect there to be no issues.

Lysa TerKeurst: Now, I don't want to be Eeyore here say, "We have a relationship, there's always issues."

Jim Cress: That's good. That's a very good one.

Lysa TerKeurst: You know, I don't want to be like that, but I do want to say, admission that relationships take work. So I think that's the "A." The "B" is believe in the process. Oftentimes in therapy we'll say, "Trust the process." But I like to say, "Believe —"

Jim Cress: Right, I like that.

Lysa TerKeurst: [crosstalk 00:05:54] - "that progress is possible." I think the minute we get to a place where we feel like progress is not possible, then that's the place where the relationship really starts to get stagnant. And if a relationship gets stagnant and there's no momentum ... We know what happens to a pond that gets stagnant.

Joel Muddamalle: That's right. That's right.

Lysa TerKeurst: It doesn't get better naturally.

Jim Cress: That's right.

Lysa TerKeurst: It just gets worse and worse and worse. So believe that the hard work is worth it. Believe that it is possible to get better and believe the best in the other person.

Jim Cress: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: And even if you've had some worst experiences with them. And then the "C" is communicate and that is come together, open up those lines of communication. When Art and I were raising our kids, one of our highest priorities as a parent was to keep them talking. And you know, that can be complicated in the south because you know, some old school parenting advice is: "Don't talk back." Well I agree; kids should be respectful.

Jim Cress: Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: But we never wanted to shut the conversation down because as long as the conversation was going, connection was possible. And as long as connection was possible, then influence is possible and as long as influence is possible, then parenting them and shepherding them and helping to guide them, all of that was possible. So communication is really important for any relationship. It's not just about believing the best, but it's also about communicating the best. It's not just about believing that progress is possible, but it's about talking about how to make that progress work for us. So the ABC, I think, of bringing ... starting that road and bringing a marriage back together in the face of certain broken dynamics. So now that I've launched us off —

Jim Cress: Yes, we've got our ABC's in order.

Lysa TerKeurst: [crosstalk 00:07:56] I'll let you guys step right in to relationships. They can be fun, but they can also be really difficult.

Joel Muddamalle: This sounds a lot like David and Bathsheba ... play that you start saying all this and I start thinking about Psalm 51. I think about ... we spend, Lysa, a lot of time

studying that psalm. And I love what C.H. Spurgeon says that, "David was made to see his sin in its true light before it was forgiven." Part of admission is understanding the weight of our sin and the weight of the offense that has taken place. So I think that as we're thinking about creating something new, one of the things that, in the restoration process, is even knowing that when David says, "Create in me a new heart" the Hebrew word for create is "bara." And so what he's actually asking of the Lord is, "I don't need a renovated heart. I don't need Fixer-Upper to come in to do some really cool things inside of the chambers of my heart. Lord, I need You to do exactly what You did." The same word used in Genesis when it says, "The Lord created the heavens and the earth," that you created ex nihilo, "out of nothing" and that that is what's needed.

Joel Muddamalle: And so that's the beauty of that divine relationship that we have with the Lord. That He is the only one capable of creating something brand-new. And often in our marriages and our relationships, we're looking definitely for restoration, a type of restoration, but we need a newness that's a part of that. Otherwise we'll be tempted to look back into the negativity of the past, and we don't want to go there. We want to go into the newness of what the Lord has in store for us. So those are some things I think of.

Lysa TerKeurst: That's really good, Joel, and Jim, I want to ask you because this seems to be a conversation that I've been having with some women that have reached out to me through social media, is they say, "I want my marriage to get better." Maybe they've experienced infidelity, their husbands being unfaithful, or maybe it's just they're in a really tough spot relationally in their marriage. And they'll say, "My husband's just not willing to go to counseling. I want to go and I see the benefit of it, but my husband's not willing." That breaks my heart.

Jim Cress: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: And I don't often know what to say to them.

Jim Cress: Well, I've actually dealt with that many, many times. Doesn't make me an expert in it, but this is what I believe. And that is, and this is in the energy of being humble, not a spouse being arrogant, but to say ... the guy says ... which is quite typical: "I don't really want to go into counseling." I've never been a woman, but we guys do not like being exposed to come tell my stuff in front of a dude I don't know, or if it's a female counselor. I would say to say to a woman, I'd say, "You know, you can say: Well honey, thank you and I believe you that you don't want to go. I am, though, going to go to counseling and work on me." It's not about working ... 'Cuz you can't do marriage counseling by yourself. "I'm going to go work on me and I believe you and how dare I try to pressure you or whatever else I want to honor that you don't want to go."

Jim Cress: Even if the money thing comes up, I'm in Charlotte, North Carolina where we are, and I work with churches, so churches will come in and say, "We're going to pay for x amount of therapy." Go to your church and say, a spouse can go and

say, "Can I get support?" Or even turn to the husband and say, "Look, I know you don't want to. I need to go work on me. This isn't fake. Would you also agree financially to allow me to go and just say for six sessions or whatever else?" So part of it is to go work on oneself. I have seen it experientially that a lot of spouses will say, "But the main thing I want to get after is healing the marriage." And so the other spouse says, "But I'm not going to go to counseling to do it." Go work on yourself.

Jim Cress: There's a ... I just not mentioned his name, he wouldn't mind, he said it publicly, but there is a well known pastor who said once, he's told it publicly, that his wife came and said, "Let's do marriage counseling," not any infidelity or anything. And he just said, "I really don't want to do that." And she said, "You know what, I'm going to go work on me to get better with or without you." And then she turned and walked away. Not in a bad way and it really woke him up because there was nothing to fight with. So I think non arrogantly to say, "Honey, I believe that you're not going to want to go. I'm going to go work on me," and then go do that.

Lysa TerKeurst: You know? I believe that it's just hard.

Jim Cress: It is hard.

Lysa TerKeurst: You know, because being in a relationship that is still in the process of being healed ... And for those of you, I think a lot of you, you know my story, Art and I did reconcile our relationship, we renewed our vows, but we had been separated for two and a half years and there were seasons during that separation that ... many, many seasons when I went to counseling by myself. And I kept feeling that frustration, almost that pull toward bitterness, like, "Okay, how fair is this?" Like I went, "Here I am sitting in the counselor chair and I'm not the one that caused all this craziness," right?

Jim Cress: Common, yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: But the gentle unfolding of counseling ... I started to feel like the lucky one. I started to feel like the lucky one that I didn't want the trauma in my relationship. I didn't want the upending of my marriage, our life and all of that. But it got me to feel an urgency of emotional healing I probably needed for a very long time. And the gentle unfolding of counseling wasn't, "I walked in and you pointed out all my issues." That's not what happened at all. You know, I walked in saying, "I'm going to go work on me," but secretly thinking, "Well, if he won't do it, I'm going to work on us for us." Right? But something that you told me is, "Lysa, you can't work harder on Art than Art works on Art."

Jim Cress: You can try, but good luck.

Lysa TerKeurst: You can try, but good luck.

Jim Cress: Yeah.

Lysa TerKeurst: So, but what I started to recognize is I may have gone with the motivation of secretly thinking, "Well, I'll do the work for us," you know —

Jim Cress: Many do.

Lysa TerKeurst: But what happened is the gentle unfolding of counseling showed me, gently, not pointing out my flaws, but pointing out areas of possible growth and things that were false beliefs that I had in my head that were holding me back. Things that ... extreme frustrations that I thought were coming from Art that I actually recognized some of that frustration and anxiety was self-induced.

Jim Cress: Ok, sure.

Lysa TerKeurst: And I'd been blaming it on other people. And so the gentle unfolding of working on me, it did benefit my marriage. And, Joel, I think you can probably help me find this, I think it's in 1 Peter maybe, but it talks about if your husband is an unbeliever but he can be won over without words —

Joel Muddamalle: Yeah, through kindness.

Lysa TerKeurst: Through the, just the, the kindness and the, I think it may even say the reverent behavior or something like that, of the wife. Now that was not my situation, my husband was a believer, but I'm saying it also applied in this situation that as I worked on me and I had better reactions to conflict that would come up, it definitely got his attention.

Jim Cress: And probably, really, better responses, because I watched you move, that you started responding. See, reacting is redoing an action from my past and it's a picky kind of, you know, point. But it's like you began to respond, not react. It's a big difference.

Lysa TerKeurst: Yeah. And so as I had gentler responses, as I navigated things where I could come and in moments of non-conflict just say, "Hey, hon, I learned something about myself today. I'd love to talk about it with you. Just have some open dialogue. Not because there's a conflict or even a problem that we need to solve, but because I've had a little bit of revelation about me and I'd love to talk about it in a moment where, you know, there's not a heated topic at hand." And those became some really wonderful conversations that helped us start moving forward. And I think the more that Art saw me moving forward, the more he desired to step into that process because he could see that it wasn't like we were just going to go sit and scream at each other and have the counselor referee for an hour. That's not what it was. It became potential for victory.

Jim Cress: As a guy, I will speak to that, for a moment just being a dude here. Let me tell you what, it is attractive to me in my wife when she knows all of my sins, they

are so evident, and she looks and says, "This is" ... she won't say it this way, "This time. It's not about you. This is about me. Let me tell you about my sin, or my revelation, or what I realized." Because sometimes it's like, you know, you're going to start talking about you and counseling and you whip it right back to me. So that idea of what you were saying there — that kind of law of spiritual attraction — reconciliation was already happening there for you to say, "Let me tell you what I ..."

Jim Cress: Because often when we've gone into the foreign country as men and sinned, there's a real sense of, you know, "It's always going to come back to me. You're going to sneak it around and remind me of all I've done." I think it was quite disarming how you handled that. That may not have been your goal. You were just showing up as authentic you. But how disarming. And it sounded like your husband was able to be drawn toward that.

Lysa TerKeurst: Okay. And let me talk about some things that did not draw him in.

Jim Cress: Well, there's, I'm sure those are there.

Lysa TerKeurst: And that's when I would weaponize theology or weaponize therapy.

Jim Cress: You would do that?

Lysa TerKeurst: Look, Jim, you know that I would, so let's just don't even go there. But you know, there are times where to prove a point —

Jim Cress: Yeah, me too.

Lysa TerKeurst: Or to try to sound like the expert and convince the other person to listen to me. I know what I'm talking about. You know what I mean by weaponizing therapy is go, "Well of course you're doing that. Cause what my therapist would say is that you're projecting right now and you're projecting what's really hurt on the inside, you're projecting on the outside and you're spilling it all over me." Now, whether or not that's true, you know, that could be debated in front of a therapist, but the reality is I found weaponizing the therapy, like if you're the one going to therapy, but then coming home and using it to prove a point or to brow beat, you know, your spouse into wanting to go to counseling, that's not going to work either. Because if they feel shame outside the counseling room, they feel probably that the shame is only going to be multiplied inside the counseling room.

Jim Cress: By the way, is it any wonder that God in Romans 2 said, "It is the kindness ...", Paul writing, "It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance." [inaudible 00:19:07] going this direction, stop, go back. This, I think is an example, I've weaponized stuff. People do, I'll say "Quit ... you know, please don't quote the counselor." 'Cause it's you and the person, you bring them in. But the kindness, it doesn't mean syrupy fake kindness, but real kindness. But we weaponize

things, and usually that's when ... I know in my journey when I have weaponized theology or my own counseling is I'm feeling insecure. So I kind of get big and it's like ... there are neurochemical processes that go on. I'll feel adrenaline. I'm getting big right now, like putting on my armor, and not very effective.

Joel Muddamalle: And this is paradoxical. This is the theology of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is an upside-down kingdom for the world. Right? And so the thought that the meek would inherit. I mean, are you kidding me? I mean, shouldn't it be the strong and the powerful?

Jim Cress: That book's not going to sell on Amazon.

Joel Muddamalle: That's not gonna sell, right? Like how's that going to be a best-seller? But that's really what the Scriptures are calling us to, is to flip that thing upside-down and to show compassion, to show mercy, to show grace, unmerited favor in those moments which contradicts and fights against every part of, Enneagram Three, that wants to win the battle and take charge and show that, "Hey, I was right the entire time."

Jim Cress: That's the good old American way, isn't it?

Joel Muddamalle: Right? But I think that's also why we're seeing the importance of this theology in therapy. When those two things come together, theology is ultimately ... the sub-domain is this idea of ethics. We have to apply these things in our lives and the way that we apply them is based off the principles, not of human kingdom or the economy of humanity, but kingdom economy, the economy of what the Lord would have and what it ... that's what Jesus says, "Lord, on earth as it is in heaven." And heaven is a place of compassion, mercy and grace. And that's what we should be doing today.

Lysa TerKeurst: Jim, I want to ask you about the shame cycle because I feel like ... and again, you know, I know just enough to be dangerous with therapy and theology. So I like to just go there.

Jim Cress: Let her rip.

Lysa TerKeurst: So if I'm listening to this podcast, I would be like, "Okay, great foundation, but what do I do now?" I want to give people enough practical information today to really start helping them move forward and have a better relationship. And one thing that's really helped me is understanding the shame cycle that people can get into, and recognizing that how I verbalize things to my husband, it's really important that I'm aware of not tapping into this shame that is honestly I think underneath a lot of the protective reactions that we have.

Lysa TerKeurst: And one thing that I think was a mistake that I was making before is I would come at Art and I would tell him something that needed to get better in our relationship, but the way I would phrase it would cause him to personalize it. So

instead of seeing it as an opportunity for us to get better, he felt like it was an attack on him. And it tapped into that shame cycle that was happening that I was completely unaware of. So can you talk a little bit about that? Because I think as I went through those A, B, C, the C part, the communication part, I think that's where we get into a lot of trouble.

Jim Cress: Yeah. Well, one of the cycles in ... and I'll speak to it this way, if a person ... we sometimes call this an addiction cycle, let's just call it a sin cycle, it's the same, it really works ... is shame is ... it's what I call, shame's the runway for sin to land on. You get me in shame and all bets are off, baby. I mean sin can happen. I can go down dark paths. So the idea is if somebody does something, says something, implies something and it goes through a filter, my own filter, and I feel shame... Remember guilt is, I've done something bad, Shame is I am someone bad. "I'm a loser." Fill in the blank however you would do with shame—

Lysa TerKeurst: Or I'm a monster.

Jim Cress: Or I'm a monster. I'm this bad ... That's what you think and I think you may be going, "No." So with our language, Ephesians 4:15, "Speaking the truth in love." So to be able to say ... You don't have to be passive, but if I say things that tap right into a person's shame story or shame cycle, they'll get into shame, drop them into what we call preoccupation. That means their brain starts thinking, "I could do this, I could do that," and I'm not blaming a spouse for this. I'm just saying what can I ... Then out of that they'll move to, in this cycle, to rituals they all have a heading toward doing something destructive, something unhealthy. They do what we call the acting out. Then at the end of that they end up in despair like the back of the shampoo bottle — wash, rinse and repeat. They go around and it's very, very functional. Shame itself is, in my belief, an attempted antidote to pain. If I "shame" myself, "I'm just a dummy, a loser, I'll never get better."

Jim Cress: It does, and that's proven, it will help numb out or medicate some pain. If I take, as Brené Brown says, and move it this way, if I blame you, blame is an attempt to discharge pain and discomfort. So that's where that cycle and guys will say, "Well, are you...", and I'll say, Well, are you tempted, were you tempted to do something unhealthy?" And they'll say, "I don't know if I was." And I'll say, "Well, let's back up to what I call the pre-trigger state. Were you ... have you been in shame at any level? The boss said something, something else happened. Have you been ..." And I try to get guys, especially, to assess, "You know, I've been feeling shame here for the last 24 hours." You're not going to stay in shame long. Remember the Bible, Romans 13:14, "Make no provision for the lust of the flesh." Shame is a great way to make provision. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow. I stay in shame long enough, I'm going to go down a rabbit hole.

Lysa TerKeurst: So this is what I'm talking about being ever mindful of, this cycle, so that my words don't open up that runway of shame.

Jim Cress: That's right.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so how, how can a wife do this? You know, it's like, okay, let's say, just in theory, let's say I catch my husband watching pornography. Now, here's my reaction as a female, I'm going to personalize it. It's going to feel intensely personal.

Jim Cress: It is personal, what he's done at one level, right?

Lysa TerKeurst: Yeah. So he's doing this because there's something wrong with me.

Jim Cress: A ha, that's different.

Lysa TerKeurst: But what is the man thinking? Because there's a whole 'nother dialogue happening. So just play this out. What's he thinking? Okay, so you're the husband, I'm the wife. I've caught you and now I've come up, "What are you doing?" Okay, now what's happening in his head?

Jim Cress: Well, I'm a first in massive shock because that did happen to me in my marriage and it's like you're spinning, because guys will think, "I won't get caught." And when they go to act out any level, even looking at porn, the research shows they get out of this prefrontal cortex, they have blinders on. So when he's caught, there's a shock and awe that goes on, like, "What the?!" at that moment. The shock, to me, will precede the shame and then ... Unless he doesn't care, he's just, "So what, I got caught." But if he cares, the shame will come on, like his worst nightmare is getting caught. I'm talking about a guy that, you know really doesn't want to get caught. It's a struggle. It's sin. If a guy doesn't care, that's different. And that's a 9/11 moment. The day he got discovered. Right in the act, or she found a history trail. There's a day there, he's thinking, "Well, this is the worst day of my life."

Lysa TerKeurst: And so the wife, then, will sometimes jump into this dialogue. "How could you do this to me? What's wrong with me? What's wrong with us? This is horrible. This is, this feels like catastrophic on every level." And she's dealing with her own, just like swirling around in a hurricane force of emotion over here. And so it's natural for those words to come out. Like, "How could you, who are you, do I even know you?"

Jim Cress: Possibly even needed. OK? When 9/11 happened, everybody remembers it or watched it. People was, they began to run, when the reality, "Oh my, the buildings are falling." People weren't saying they're cool, maybe a reporter was, right? But naturally when a wife discovers what's going on ... Which is why discovery is always worse than disclosure, husband says, "Look at the past or here, accounts, I got to let you know this is what I've been doing." She discovers it. I think not only can she go to those things, she should go to ... In other words, the trauma is so big for her to be logical. "I see that you were" ... and I know you're not asking that but, "I see you're looking at porn. I'm offended and all

that." That's he's in trauma. She's in trauma. It just makes sense. And after that—

Lysa TerKeurst: Ok, so now they wake up the next day and they're both, they just feel like they've been hit by a freight train.

Jim Cress: 'Cuz they have been. Right.

Lysa TerKeurst: And so now what do they do? I mean cause now we've got kids to get ready for school and he's got a meeting at work and it's like you start to go through the motions and yet there's this feeling like there is an enormous problem here. What do we do?

Jim Cress: What do these three numbers mean if it was a medical crisis at home, they call 911. So what should they do? A), cancel work if you can, if not, after a discovery, but as soon as you, can be proactive and reach out to somebody. But see that's where your word shame is going to come in. Well then I got to break the secret, or I'll uncover his nakedness or whatever or what will people think and we stay as sick as our secrets. So I would say the first thing to do the next morning, or when you realize it is to say, "We better find, call, find someone who knows of a therapist or call a pastor." Get in as quick as you can to say, "We need to deal with this."

Jim Cress: Because the shame cycle will just continue more and more and more. "We need to stop. We need to stop the trauma from being worse than it is." To reach out and get help, to me, is the first thing to do. And that's not easy. And what about do you, can you afford a therapist and who do you find? At least get out with someone. If ... I hope you have a pastor, call and say, "We need to get in today. Here's what's happened."

Lysa TerKeurst: And I do know "Focus on the Family" has good recommended counselors that, you know, they will provide. You can call them, look it up on the website. The American Association of Christian counselors, AACC, another good ... What are some other good resources because, Jim, I know you also provide some intensive therapy. Talk a little bit about that as well.

Jim Cress: Well, things that were formed in intensity, that means our trauma, things that have happened, will need to be changed through intensity. So my office here in Charlotte, I do one, two and three-day intensives where people come even from out of town, and we have the time and space ... The container is so important to have the space to open up all of the trauma versus a 50-minute session. You can find resources that have been mentioned to find, maybe a therapist in your area. And then also I do these four-day intensives called "Integrity Redeemed" workshops where groups for women, for men and they come in and in a group-fashion, they unpack their stories like the trauma egg we talked about and they have the place to, in an appropriate way ... That intensive model will often equal six to eight months' worth of therapy. It's like, "Let's go in" —

Lysa TerKeurst: In four days.

Jim Cress: In four days ... It's very intense, and then they can find a counselor where they are. But what we do is ... I always think of Jeremiah, you know, they treat their compound wounds, in the Hebrew, they treat their compound wounds superficially saying, "Peace, peace when there is no peace." So reach out, call, get some help because ... this is ... I mean you've lived it. This is messy, to get in and open stuff up. It's hard for me. I see opening this stuff up when there's been infidelity, even with pornography, in 50-minute sessions each week, open it up, you close it down and off they go. The intensive model is where the healing is. If you can do it.

Lysa TerKeurst: Joel, I want you to comment on this too, but I'll also say back to something you said. Maybe there is brokenness in your marriage and you don't know why and you are living with this sense of something's wrong. But I don't know what's wrong. And you told me one time, Jim, if you smelled smoke there is a fire. And so if you are having those feelings, don't wait for the explosion. Go and get in front of a counselor to help you navigate that because you don't have to let the bomb explode. I have seen in counseling situations before, where the husband and wife, they go to counseling and it's almost like the people who know how to take apart a bomb so that it doesn't detonate. You know, there is a way in counseling to provide an opportunity for disclosure, which is so much better than discovery. And so if you are a wife that has gotten caught in some type of sin that is slowly eroding or possibly destroying your marriage, I encourage you go sit before counselor today and get that counselor to help you disclose appropriately to your husband what's going on.

Jim Cress: You mean to say that, right there, "If you are a wife?"

Lysa TerKeurst: Yes.

Jim Cress: I think you did, you know why? Because we know this, we've talked about the stats will be, we've discussed it on the podcast. Men often don't want to come to counseling. You know this, you know this. Imagine as I've dealt with so many times where it is the wife who has been unfaithful. And I say it with deep grace and respect. It's really hard for them because the stats are, you know, women aren't the ones that do the monkeying around and when they do it, that is a hard day for them to come in. It kind of whips it around. The husband didn't see it coming. It's almost like, "Well, we knew men can be unfaithful."

Jim Cress: I love that you went there to say, "And if you are a wife", because we have a rising stat, matter of fact, the number one rising stat in pornography use now is women. They're not as high as men, but as far as progression, it's rampant. The *50 Shades of Grey* garbage and all that. So women who are having this issue for them to come and say, "It's not my husband, it's actually" ... that's how I'll see it, often, "It's actually me that did it." I'll say bless your heart. I know we say in the south ... Very hard for a woman to come talk about that.

Lysa TerKeurst: Yeah. But also if you are a man and you are stuck in some kind of sin cycle—

Jim Cress: It ain't fun.

Lysa TerKeurst: I would say go to a counselor and let him help you disclose this, because disclosure ... And what we mean by disclosure is it's always going to help the healing process if you are the one that goes and lays out what has happened. The believability of you being honest on the backside of this is so much greater if there's a disclosure rather than a discovery. Joel, I want you to comment a little bit on some of this as well, because, you know, talking about healing a broken marriage, it's complicated.

Jim Cress: It is.

Joel Muddamalle: Yeah, it's super complicated. And I think one of the things that we've discussed and dialogued is just the importance of relationships. The importance of having trusted people alongside of you that can walk alongside of you and in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament, that institution that God establishes is the church, the ecclesia. And I just want to give an encouragement here that God has given us pastor elders, and in the Greek that's "presbyter," it literally is shepherd, an under-shepherd to walk alongside of us. And so, Jim as you talk about, if you have some and you don't know, our covenant commitment to a local church family is God's way of building in the boundaries and the protection and the ability to not just know others, but to be known by them. That's the same thing that we want with God.

Joel Muddamalle: We want to not just know God's Word, but we want God's Word to know us intimately. So that would be my encouragement and even, you know, Acts, Chapter Two, it talks about the fellowship of believers, which everybody had everything in common, in unity. And I really believe that if we can pursue authentic relationship within the context of this covenant community, we are now bucking and fighting against that instant shame thing that comes up. And it's like we're putting these deposits, equity deposits into these relationships that we will need to cash ... It's not an if, it's a when we'll need to cash out on that. And so I'll just point us back to the local church that God has graciously ... I mean, yeah, it's just super important to me.

Jim Cress: God knew what He was doing, didn't He?

Lysa TerKeurst: Yeah, absolutely.

Joel Muddamalle: I think so.

Lysa TerKeurst: And I want to offer to the resource that I wrote, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. That's not just for women. I know I am a woman and I write from the perspective of a woman, but part of my desire was that small groups could come together or even Sunday school classes or Bible study, working groups or

even therapeutic groups or book clubs, you could come together and open up the book, and it has DVDs that go with it, it has a workbook that goes with it. *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. It will open up the opportunity to dialog about difficult issues when you're not in the intensity of a conflict. And I think talking about setting an atmosphere of safety, that was one of my highest goals with this book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, and of course the DVDs and the workbook study. Thank you so much, Jim. Thank you, Joel. Thank you for joining us and make sure you tune in again for our discussions, therapy and theology and how to move forward with the hurts that are in our heart.

Meredith Brock: 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.

Kaley Olson: The first resource is Lysa TerKeurst's latest book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*. Y'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 faith and your feelings and whatever circumstance you're going through. You can purchase your copy today at P31bookstore.com.

Meredith Brock: 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, there's really ... it's a fantastic resource to have a counselor walk alongside you, so we would really encourage you to do that.

Meredith Brock: 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 request 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. 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.