

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Meredith Brock: Well, hello everyone. Welcome to *The Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast* where we share biblical truth for any girl in any season. I'm your host, Meredith Brock, and I am here with my co-host and my friend, Kaley Olson.
- Kaley Olson: Hi Meredith. I love a good introduction like that. Thank you. That was very nice.
- Meredith Brock: You know? I try to make it kind of sound like you were coming on stage.
- Kaley Olson: I am.
- Meredith Brock: It work? You always-
- Kaley Olson: I just flew in the room here. Here I am.
- Meredith Brock: Yep, sure did. Sorry, Whitney. We're just gonna roll with this. All right?
- Whitney Capps: I love it, y'all. I love it. That's the real deal. I think it should stay in. That's the spice of life right there.
- Meredith Brock: All right. How about, here we go. Well, I want to go ahead and introduce our guest today on the podcast. If you've been listening for a while, you've heard her. Please welcome Whitney Capps.
- Whitney Capps: Hey you guys. Man, thanks for having me. It's so fun to be back with y'all. Of course, I hope you know, I listen even when I'm not on the podcast, and it's so, so fun. I love what y'all are doing, and it's an honor to get to be a part of it.
- Meredith Brock: Thanks, Whitney.
- Kaley Olson: Aw, thanks Whitney. Well, most of you guys might have even heard Whitney last time she was on the podcast, and she taught about the danger of making ministry all about me, which was a really great teaching. And today we have her on to actually talk a little bit about something tied in to her new book, *Sick of Me*. Whitney, will you tell us a little bit about your book?

Whitney Capps: Oh, sure, absolutely. Well, anytime I get to spend a lot of time with people who are just getting to know me, one of the really gracious compliments that I'm often given is, "Man, Whitney, you're just so real," which I take as a really high compliment. I think in the church and within kind of Christian community, we've put a really high priority on just being authentic and transparent, and we want to see people who we feel like are the same person in every circle that we might encounter them, and so I take that as a really high compliment.

Whitney Capps: But it got me thinking about what is the biblical virtue of authenticity, or as the Bible talks about it, being genuine? Because is it possible that though it's good for us to be transparent and authentic, are we placing too much value on transparency, authenticity, and forgetting that though we can talk about our brokenness, we also need to talk about how the gospel is making us better?

Whitney Capps: So I hope that the book looks at those two sides of that coin. And yes, we want to be broken, and yes, we want to be authentic, those are virtuous, but also be in a community where our community pushes us to see how the gospel wants to take that brokenness and make us better. So the short version of that is that it's really on the doctrine of sanctification, what it looks like to look more like Jesus today than I did yesterday. And I think authenticity and brokenness is a great start, but then where do we go from there?

Meredith Brock: So good, Whitney. And I've had the opportunity to hear Whitney's heart behind her book, and I really think it's a message our generation desperately needs. Our world screams at us that you should be in the relentless pursuit of your own happiness, and your healthiness, and that you should just be all about you. YOLO, right?

Kaley Olson: YOLO.

Meredith Brock: You only live once! But what it doesn't tell you is that living that way will, in the end, make you the most miserable person in the world.

Whitney Capps: That's right. Yeah. There is for sure the truth that God is more interested in our holiness than our happiness. And I think most church girls know that, but we get caught in this trap of pursuing holiness in our own self-effort, and it ends up looking a whole lot like hustle rather than holiness. And so we find ourselves in a trap of self-help rather than sanctification. And man, it's one slippery slope because I live in the self-help world a lot. But I think that's why a lot of us feel spiritually frustrated, is we don't realize that we've slipped from sanctification into self-help. So it's just kind of looking at what those hallmarks look like, and see if we can notice those symptoms before we fall down into the spiral too deep.

Meredith Brock: That's right. That's right. And I think one of the things too that we overlook is that you really need community in transformation, and not just any community. It can't just be any community. You need Christ-centered community that will

push you toward transformation. And boy, oh boy, do we have a million reasons not to engage in our church communities, right? Even though we-

Whitney Capps: For sure.

Meredith Brock: ... desperately need them to live a transformed life. Right, Kaley?

Whitney Capps: That's right.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. There's a lot that comes with being in a church community, and we don't want to downplay that at all. That is not our heart. But what we do want to do is talk openly about it, and do it here at Proverbs — see what Scripture has to say about it. And I think Whitney has a few things to help us unpack this. So Whitney, let's start with maybe what's your church story and relationship with the church?

Whitney Capps: Oh, for sure. Well, let me just say this. Sometimes when we say that we're going to talk about the church, for a lot of us, walls immediately go up because we have been hurt or wounded by the church. So I just want to share a little bit of my story, which is to say if the church and I had a relationship status, it would for sure be complicated. My dad is a pastor and I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly of the church for the whole of my life. And I think sometimes the perception is that church staff do a lot of wounding of people in the church, which let me acknowledge, is for sure true. And so if you have been wounded by the church, it may have been staff, and it may have been the people who share a pew or a row with you. And I want to acknowledge that that is real.

Whitney Capps: What a lot of people may not know though is that staff is often wounded by the church as well. And so having been raised in a home and grown up really for the majority of my life where I've been involved in church leadership, I have a lot of wounds too. And so I am deeply committed to the local church, love her like crazy, but man, she can be pretty jacked up. And so it's just acknowledging and I ... Y'all, I would love for y'all to weigh in on this. I don't think the church has done a good job of saying, "Hey, we are not perfect, and hey, we've hurt some people, and we're real sorry about that." And so I would just want to say if that's your experience, before you click out of the podcast, I want you just to listen knowing that we acknowledge that that is real. And man, it hurts.

Whitney Capps: And so our temptation is to withdraw and look for community in other places. And I just want us to go to a passage of Scripture where I think we may see that church community was God's design, and His design is perfect. We are just imperfect people living out His perfect plan. And so we have to kind of hold that tension really carefully. But I would just say for all of those who've been hurt by the church, wounded by the church, kind of give the church a side-eye, man, I get it. I just get it.

Meredith Brock: Well, I know the list is so long of friends of mine that have been really deeply hurt by the church. And I think in my experience I've seen some of them push through that wounding and refined their relationship with the church. Then I've seen some of them go to a place where they haven't gone to church in years. And it breaks my heart because those same friends who haven't gone to church in years, are those same friends who I see over and over and over tell me, "I long for community. I want to make progress in my life."

Meredith Brock: And I hate to be the one ... I have a complicated relationship with the church. We can talk long and hard about that. But I'm here to tell you, no matter what, I know that Scripture tells us that the church is God's vehicle for redemption of this world. And I want to be a part of that vehicle, even with all its scars, all its scratches and bruises, and just like I would want somebody to stay with me, with all my bruises and-

Whitney Capps: Hurts and hang-ups.

Meredith Brock: Yeah. And so it's never an easy topic. I think all of us were a tad nervous to try to breach this subject today on the podcast, but I think it's necessary, and if we avoid it, I think we do Scripture an injustice.

Whitney Capps: Yeah. I agree with you. And I will just say this. I think one of the things that makes it so sticky is we expect more for church people, because the reality is most of what I would say about being wounded in the church, I could say of lots of other relationships in my life, church or not. People hurt people. That's the nature of relationship. Where it gets sticky is I think that we expect a whole lot from the people that we do church with week in and week out. And though that expectation isn't wrong, sometimes it may be unfair because the church is really just a collection of broken people. And though, yes, we want to look and live more like Jesus, man, I'm still a work in progress, so I still have a lot of rough edges. And I think where things get sticky and complicated is that I forget everybody else that I'm doing church life with have rough edges and are still a work in progress as well.

Whitney Capps: So that's one of the things that I think can be difficult for us when we think about the church. Again, that is not to downplay or diminish the very real hurt that people have experienced, but maybe just to see if Scripture can help us reframe some of our hurts and hang-ups. And so I want to talk about that in just a minute. But before we get there, I just want to offer this disclaimer. Of course church hurts fall on a really wide scale, a lot of diversity. I think some of us would acknowledge that sometimes the church has just kind of hurt my feelings a little bit.

Whitney Capps: But then there are those of us who feel like we have sat under and experience genuine abuse. And never do I think we should, nor would Jesus ask us to, overlook abuse. And so when we are talking about church hurts, please hear me say, we're not talking about those extreme situations that for sure exist, that Jesus would not ask you to overlook church abuse, where you feel like you have

been wounded in a way that extends beyond just disregard or common selfishness that we see within the body of Christ, because we are selfish people. So that being said, I just do want to say, man, there are those really unique circumstances. Please do not hear me say, the way Scripture wants us to think about the body and the church, that Jesus would ever expect you to overlook abuse. So that disclaimer being said, is it okay?

Whitney Capps: Do y'all want to add anything to that, or do you want me to jump into the text? Okay. All right, well, if you have your Bibles, I want you to flip to Acts chapter 2. When we think about the church, Acts of course is one of the places that we go because it is kind of the birth of the church, especially after this time that we're going to look at here in just a minute called Pentecost, where we see the Holy Spirit. It's not the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, eternally existent with God the Father and God the Son. But we do see the Holy Spirit begin to interact with God's people in a new and unique way. That's what's happening at Pentecost.

Whitney Capps: And so we see now because of the Holy Spirit's unique interaction, a new designation of the people of God. And the Book of Acts is going to paint a picture of what new and authentic church life should look like, but it is not conflict-free. If you read a lot of the book of Acts, you'll see that there's a lot of conflict. But a lot of times when we talk about church, we go to this particular passage in Acts chapter 2, and I'm going to jump to the end of the story, and then we're going to back out just a little bit. So you've probably heard this before. If not, let me read it to you.

Whitney Capps: In Acts 2:42, the heading in my Bible says, "The Fellowship of Believers." And man, doesn't that sound lovely, The Fellowship of Believers? Yes, a biggie size of that, please. That's what I want. In verse 42 it says, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." This is verse 44, "And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Whitney Capps: Now, if that was all of our church experience, we probably wouldn't be having this conversation. Right? I mean, that sounds so perfect and idyllic, and just, yes, that's what community should look like. That is what the believers were experiencing here in Acts. But let me back up just a little bit to the beginning of Acts chapter 2. At the beginning of Acts chapter 2, we see a smaller group of Jesus's disciples and apostles gathered. And 2:1 says, "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house

where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit."

Whitney Capps: So this is where we get Pentecost happening, that filling with the Holy Spirit. "... and [they] began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men ..." this is important, verse 5, "... from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Are not all of these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in our own native language?'"

Whitney Capps: And if you read the rest of those verses, it talks about the unique tongues, languages and dialects that they were all hearing. And it's because of the powerful, miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And so they said they were hearing in their own tongues, the mighty works of God. This is verse 12, "And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But there were some of them who mocked and said, 'They are filled with new wine,'" or in other words, they are drunk.

Whitney Capps: So this is the beginning and the end of Acts chapter 2. These really interesting kind of pictures of what's happening in the birth of the church. At the end of Acts, they're all together, all in one place, all filled with the Holy Spirit, and sharing everything they had, caring for one another, and enjoying the beautiful Christ-filled community that we all want. But yet we find out at the beginning of Acts chapter 2, that there were people from every nation under heaven, and they began to hear the gospel in their own language.

Whitney Capps: And right after that, Peter stands up and we won't read it, but he gives a powerful gospel-saturated sermon. And in verse 40, it says, "... with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.' So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls." Okay? So beginning of Acts, people from every tribe, nation and tongue under heaven.

Whitney Capps: And let me just say that I know for sure that we have race tensions in our country that need to be addressed. But our racial diversity and tension pales in comparison to the ancient Near East. It was not uncommon for different socioeconomic backgrounds and certainly different racial groups to not only not interact, but not even touch one another, not to share common utensils, not to be in the same place. And so when we say they had different languages and different nationalities, it was extremely divisive. That's the beginning of Acts chapter 2. And by the end, the writer of Acts tells us, "... all who believed were together and had all things in common." Well, goodness. What has happened in Acts chapter 2?

Whitney Capps: I want to talk for just a minute about the one thing that has the potential to make us and the one thing that has the potential to break us as it relates to

church hurts, hang-ups, and rebuilding the community that Christ envisioned. The one thing that makes us is the one thing that they had in common, and this is so interesting. It says, "... and all who believed were together and had all things in common." But yet we know they had different races, they had different languages, they had different socioeconomic backgrounds, they had different education levels, they had different experiences with religion in general, and yet now they have everything in common. Why? Because they have the one thing in common that matters. That was a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Whitney Capps: They had encountered the gospel. And you guys, what this tells us in the church is that it doesn't matter if you're single or if you're married. It doesn't matter if you have kids or if you don't. It doesn't matter if your kids are homeschooled, private schooled, public schooled. It doesn't matter if you were raised in the church and you knew the story of Noah from the time you were three, or if you just came to faith in Jesus and your spiritual resume is, well, complicated. Those things are not what unite us. It is the gospel.

Whitney Capps: And so whether or not you can recite all the books of the Bible in your sleep, or whether or not you didn't even know Malachi was an actual book, that doesn't matter. It is not the basis for how we build church community. It is the gospel, because that one thing we share in common, it makes church community. It makes every other thing not broken, but beautiful, because what Jesus is building here, is not a bunch of vanilla people who all look alike. No, it is this beautiful, rich, diverse tapestry where the thing that they have in common is Jesus. And that is the thing that makes us. That is the thing that will make us work in community.

Whitney Capps: Now there is this thing though that will also break us, and it is holding both of these in tension because they are both legit realities. The other, and probably only, thing that all of Jesus's followers have in common is that we share the same sin nature, the same brokenness. It doesn't matter to me if you look like me, if we share the same language. I could go and sit with a believer in China. I could go and sit with a believer in the Sudan. I could go and sit with a believer from Canada. And if we talked long enough and were honest, we'd all find that we really like ourselves a lot. And left to our own devices, we want what makes us comfortable. We want what makes us happy. And we want what we want.

Whitney Capps: And so it is our sin nature that is this unifying thing that is constantly going to trip us up, because at my heart, apart from Jesus, unless I truly intentionally surrender my choices, and my words, and my thoughts and my attitudes to Him, you guys, I am so monumentally selfish. And it's not like I check that at the door when I arrive at church on Sunday. You know what I'm saying? It would be great if I did, but I don't. Yeah, that's exactly right. I know it because I sit in church and I get frustrated by the craziest things. Now again, I'm not saying that some of our frustrations aren't real. They may very well be, but the thing that we have in common, there are two things, and one will make us, one will break us. But the thing that we have in common is Jesus and our sin nature, our selfishness.

Whitney Capps: So then how do we live in church community knowing that there are two things that we have in common and one will make us and one will break us? Are we just destined to live in the jacked up in-between, just waiting on Jesus to return and make it all right? I don't think so. I don't think so. So I'm gonna flip to another passage of Scripture. If y'all want to jump in, feel free to go ahead. All right, let me take us to Philippians. It's one of my favorite passages of Scripture. Philippians chapter 2. My pages are sticking together.

Whitney Capps: Philippians chapter 2. Let me begin reading in verse 1. "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." That sounds a whole lot like Acts chapter 2, right? That end passage. It's like Paul is saying, "Hey, I want you to have what they experienced at Pentecost." And remember, the context for Philippians is to a church. Okay?

Whitney Capps: So this isn't just a group of people who are kind of hanging out in a coffee shop. This is a church. And so it means that a church is sitting under an approved leader. It means that the church is experiencing the sacrament, meaning they are sharing the Lord's supper. They are participating in baptism. They are communicating the gospel and welcoming new members. So again, it's not to say that you can't have Christian community with just the girls that you do a neighborhood Bible study. But overwhelmingly in Scripture, when we are commended to pursue community, it is within the context of an organized church. That's what Paul is talking about here to the Philippians. So he says, "I want you to have all of these same things being in full accord and of one mind."

Whitney Capps: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." You guys, I just don't wanna. I know there's a more spiritual way to say that, and somebody more spiritually mature probably wouldn't admit that, but if I'm honest with you, I don't want, I don't want to put others before myself. I don't want to forgive that girl that was so unkind to me. I don't want to forgive that family that wounded my family deeply. I want to hang onto that, and I want them to apologize first because they were wrong.

Whitney Capps: The reality is that's not what Paul calls us to here. He calls us to lay down "... selfish ambition or conceit," the idea that we are right and deserve to be right, "... but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." Verse 4, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus ..." And this is where it gets real sticky, but really specific. "... who," is talking about Jesus, "... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by being obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in

heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Whitney Capps: This is what Paul is saying. You know that concept that we are to take up our cross, and bear our cross, and follow Jesus? Well, what Paul is saying right here is that within the context of church, it is to believe that sometimes we will have to sacrifice what is fair, what is right, what we deserve, and instead serve our brothers and sisters in Christ, offer forgiveness, when if we're honest ... And let's just say it right here among ourselves because we know and believe it, they don't deserve it. But to be found in Christ's likeness is to take up our cross, to take on offense that might've been undeserved, that isn't fair, and to extend the gospel and what Paul is asking us to do.

Whitney Capps: You guys, sometimes we think, "Man, I might could do that with the world, but ask me to do it with Christians who should know better? That's so unfair." And yet that's the context of Philippians, to extend that kind of lavish grace, and let the gospel make us, and not our sinfulness break us. And now let me just say before we discuss this, because that was all I wanted to teach through Scripture. Let me just say, this is one that preaches easy and lives real hard. And if I'm honest with you, I'm kind of mad about it, because there are some people who have wounded me deeply, and I don't want to forgive them because I cannot say that what they did was right. But what Paul is saying here is that's not the point. They are not the point. Christ and community, the gospel is the point.

Whitney Capps: And never will we see our justifications and our pride kind of fall out from under us more than when we look at the cross, because Jesus had every justification. That's what Paul is saying. He did not consider his right as deity something to be held on to. He could have said, "I don't deserve this. None of this is my fault. None of these things are mine. I am in the right here. They are in the wrong." But he didn't. He didn't. He took on the form of a servant and humbled himself, humbled himself to the cross. And so when we think about ... and let me just say, legitimate hurt, you guys, I have been legitimately wounded. It hurts so bad and it was so wrong, but I can hang on to that, or I can fight for community, because when it comes to what the Bible has to say about the church, I don't want my church hurt to be the end of my church story, which is what you were talking about, Meredith.

Whitney Capps: There are people who have beautiful stories where they say, "I stuck it out, and I fought hard for it, and I have the battle wounds to show, but it was worth it. It was worth it." Maybe not today, maybe not today, and maybe not next year, but I do know it will be worth it.

Meredith Brock: Absolutely. Just like you said, Whitney, relationships in general are complicated. Your relationship with your friends, relationship ... But I think there's just another layer of complication and complexity, maybe that's a better word to use, complexity when it comes to your relationship with a body of believers who it's connected to your spirituality. And there's so much, there's so much we could discuss here, but I just really want to encourage all of our listeners today,

chew on this. We never want to downplay the hurt that maybe you have experienced, or I pray that there are some of you, a lot of you, I pray that there's more of you listening to this podcast who can say, "My relationship with my church has been beautiful." I hope that that's the case, but I never want to downplay the hurt from those of you who may be in that complicated place, and you're trying to figure it out.

Meredith Brock: And what I do want to do and what Proverbs 31 Ministries is committed to do is to point you to Scripture, and to point you to those places that are going to require you to come, to fall on your knees before your Savior, and dive into His Word, and find the answers there, because your relationship with the church is important, very important, and we never want to overlook those important conversations. So thank you so much, Whitney. For those of you who are listening and you want to discover more about what it looks like to be honest about where you are and make progress in becoming a better version of you, then you can actually order Whitney's book today. So you can go to Proverbs 31's bookstore, or ...

Kaley Olson: Really wherever books are sold, probably.

Meredith Brock: That's true. It's true.

Whitney Capps: That's exactly right.

Meredith Brock: And grab a copy of it today.

Kaley Olson: Yeah, totally. And one other practical next step that you can take is to download our free First 5 mobile app. I love that app because it does what we said that we do is point you to Scripture, and it really allows you to explore what it means with a little bit of a guided teaching on your own. And so Whitney has actually been writing for First 5 since the very beginning. And First 5 is going to help you stay rooted in God's Word so you can keep applying that truth to your life every single day.

Meredith Brock: That's right. That's right. Well, thank you guys so much for joining us today. Whitney?

Whitney Capps: Hey listen, I've loved being with y'all. Do you mind, I'm going to offer just one other quick little, maybe resource, if that's okay. If you go to whitneycapps.com, we also have a free downloadable that talks about how to walk through specific situations of church hurt, what to do with the hurt, because we don't want to minimize it. And the reality is even when we reframe it, there are things that we can do to begin to heal. And so we want to equip you because those hurts are real, and we don't want to minimize them. But it was certainly more than we could unpack in a podcast. And so if you'd like to further that discussion and maybe get some practical help on what to do with your church hurt and hang-ups, you can go to whitneycapps.com and get that downloadable for free.

Meredith Brock:

That's great. Whitney, thank you so much for that free resource. I really hope and pray that it meets some people right in the middle of their hurt, and helps them start finding the truth in God's Word. So good. So good. Well, we're so thankful for the message God has placed and is using through this ministry. And for those of you listening, thank you so much for joining us. We will see you here next time.

Kaley Olson:

Bye guys.