

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Kaley:

Hello friends! Thanks for joining us today on the *Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*, where we share biblical Truth for any girl in any season. My name is Kaley Olson and I'm here with my dear friend and guest cohost, Kendra Schwarz.

Kendra:

Hey everybody! Kaley, I'm so happy to be your cohost.

Kaley:

Well, I'm so happy that you're here too. For those of you who don't know her, Kendra is the manager of Proverbs 31 online Bible studies, which is a very significant part of what we do every day here at Proverbs 31. So Kendra, I would love for you to take a minute and tell everyone what they need to know about online Bible studies.

Kendra:

Yes. So our goal with online Bible studies is threefold, so I'm going to break each goal down. So number one, we want to engage our audience with whatever book we're studying. So we pick books that are filled with biblical Truth, but focus on a particular topic. So for example, we do books about disappointment, anxiety, marriage, comparison, and so we just read that together and really dive into what the message is speaking to us. And then the second goal is we want our ladies to be involved in community. So we think community is huge here, the online Bible studies, because it's important to study a book or talk about biblical Truth with somebody else, to get different perspectives.

Kaley:

[inaudible].

Kendra:

And so we do that and we have Facebook small groups, which is about 15 to 20 ladies per group. And then we also have a large community group which is filled with thousands of women talking about what we're studying, and so community is a huge part. And then the third goal is we want to teach ladies how to study the Bible on their own. It's really important to us that somebody comes to online Bible studies and when she's done with the study, she's able to leave and feel a little more confident opening up the Bible and God's Word and reading it for herself. So those are the three goals that we have in online Bible studies and we love doing it all the time.

Kaley:

That's awesome. Well, I know if I haven't done online Bible study before, that would surely make me want to sign up, because I love the chance to meet new friends virtually, and I love that online Bible studies connects people from around the United States and around the world together to do Bible study. And I love that. So we usually do around five online Bible studies a year, and I'm excited to tell you that right now, we're in the middle of a really incredible study called *Dangerous Prayers*, which is a book by Craig Groeschel, who is the lead pastor of Life Church.

Kaley:

Now Kendra, I'm going to be really honest here. Praying dangerously, especially in a time like today, because we all know what's going on right now, like while we're recording, the coronavirus has just made its debut in the United States, and times are scary right now. And so praying dangerously sounds a little bit more dangerous than like what's already currently happening. And so can you tell me like, why now? Why are you doing this study now, and what are you hoping that online Bible studies participants will learn through this study together?

Kendra:

Yeah. Well, it's quite interesting Kaley, because it just shows how amazing God's timing is. We picked *Dangerous Prayers* months ago and it's amazing that now, when we're doing the live study, that all of this is going on, and really what somebody is going to take away if they read this book and do the study with us is they're going to have the more boldness and more confidence to pray dangerously. The book addresses three prayers in it and it's the prayers of "search me," "break me" and "send me," which I think we're going to see each one is very prevalent to where we are, no matter what situation we find ourselves in.

Kaley:

Oh yeah, for sure. And I mean, whenever I gloss over those prayers and I hear "search me," "break me," "send me," they sound like super short prayers, but I can for sure see how they change your life because in two words, a lot can happen. And I actually got to have a sneak peek at the book a couple of months ago and I'm happy to say that like, my hesitations about praying dangerously were actually [inaudible] serious truth about living comfortably versus challenging myself to be open-handed with life just in the grand scope of eternity. And Kendra, in the midst of everything going on in our world right now, there's never been a better opportunity for us to pray boldly for God to use us as a body of believers to make an impact, right?

Kendra:

Absolutely.

Kaley:

So I'm excited to give our listeners a chance to hear a conversation that you had with Pastor Craig about the "send me" prayer.

Kendra:

Oh yes, for sure. And what you're about to hear is me actually sharing my own experience through praying a "send me" prayer, which is based on Isaiah 6:8 that says, "*Then I heard the voice of the Lord*

saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" and what I really liked about our conversation was getting to process with Pastor Craig in real time. So I hope you guys enjoy this and that the God speaks to you through what we discuss. And then after the show, Kaley and I will unpack our conversation a little more and help you think through what praying a "send me" could look like in your own life.

Craig:

Thank you, Kendra, and welcome back for another week.

Kendra:

Yes, we are very excited because we are moving in to another prayer that you cover in *Dangerous Prayers* and it is on the topic of "send me."

Craig:

Yes.

Kendra:

Now, before we get into a little bit about me and the prayer that I prayed that deals with that, a lot of people might hear "send me" and think if they pray that, it's going to take them away from their home and maybe to a third-world country or maybe go across America or wherever they may be. So what do you say about the prayer "send me" if somebody thinks like that?

Craig:

Well, I would say if you pray "send me," that God could send you to a third-world country.

Kendra:

It's true.

Craig:

Or something like that. More likely, God will give you eyes to see something right in front of you, a heart for some people around you. And one of the things, Kendra, I think is always interesting is sometimes people view their workplace or their profession as being less spiritual than maybe someone who's a pastor or a worship leader or something. And I always try to tell them: Not only is that not less spiritual, but in many ways, you've got a far bigger opportunity to impact lives all the time. And when you pray "send me," brace yourself, because chances are you might end up with a heart for something that you didn't before; you'll probably find yourself in a place where you feel a little bit uncomfortable. I mean you're like, "I'm not sure I have what it takes to get this message across or I might not feel good enough."

Craig:

And I think one of the reasons is because God is going to put you in a place where you really have to depend on Him. And you may not have to pack your bags to wherever He sends you, chances are there'll be something much closer and within reach. But whether you have to pack your bags or you don't, I would get ready to experience a new level of faith and an opportunity to be obedient to a calling you may not have realized otherwise.

Kendra:

Yeah, so we all have to gear up in case that is the case.

Craig:

Get ready, yeah.

Kendra:

Yes. So my prayer has to deal with “send me,” and as I was thinking about what I could talk with you about, it took me back to when I was 22, I was fresh out of college, and it was 2014. I had a job that I wasn't the best at, I didn't know if I belonged there per se, and every day to and from work, I would cry in the car and talk to God about — there's no way this is what you have for me. There's no way I'm supposed to be here. There's no way I am supposed to do this. This is not what I thought my life would look like. And you could say I was having what I consider a quarter-life crisis. And I want to talk to anybody right now where God can use you, wherever you are, no matter what job you have, and I realized that now, looking back at this job, I'm like, it preps me for where I am, so I'm very grateful for it.

Kendra:

But I remember just crying and I was so confused on why God had me where He did. And you wrote something in your book that really resonated with me and that is, “send me Lord, use me,” and that's exactly what I wanted; I desperately wanted that. And I think I was ready for the send. I didn't know what that looks like, but I wasn't ready for the change in which came with it. And I think, like you said, sometimes it can make you uncomfortable and you need to be ready for whatever that may look like. That prayer led me to move from Ohio, where I'm originally from, to North Carolina. It had me move without an offer letter for a job. I wasn't sure if I got the job at Proverbs yet, and not only did it ... I gained a lot from it, but there was a lot of change that came with it.

Kendra:

I lost friendships over it; I lost comfort and familiarity. It removed me from the proximity of family, but it gave me other relationships. It gave me a new comfort for the city in which I was in. It gave me a new-found purpose, but sometimes the hardest things require removal, and I think that was the hardest part of it. So in Chapter 3:2, you say, “His call usually requires you to surrender your own plans and preferences and go where He tells you, when He tells you, how He tells you, to meet who He tells you, and to do what He tells you.” And what I find so interesting about that quote that you put is you have to “surrender your own plans” that you talked to Melissa about. You can't necessarily go into it like this, eventually you have to be open palm, and that's exactly what I had to do. And so what do you say to somebody who needs to surrender their own plans, or what advice do you have for somebody on how to do that?

Craig:

Well, I think one of our biggest desires is to kind of go to God and have Him do what we want.

Kendra:

Oh, easy.

Craig:

And so here's my prayer list with the 15 things I want you to do. And I would say God does care about all the details of your life, but occasionally, rather than go into Him with your wish list, maybe go to Him with a blank piece of paper and say, "what would you like of me?" And I think that's one of the dangerous things about prayer. So often, we think it's me talking, me talking, me talking, but if I stand here and we're supposed to have a conversation and I talk the whole time and I don't ever listen to you, that's not really a conversation. And so I think we need to go before God with that posture of "I want to listen as well as I want to speak."

Craig:

And so often we tend to think we know either what He wants or we tend to attribute what we want to being as well, and so often, He has something totally and completely different. So like in your case, and it does ... You have to go to that new place and to have that new kind of impact. It does mean often letting go of everything that is comfortable to you, everything that makes you feel secure, everything that's known, because to take that step of faith is what it is. It is a step of faith, and without faith, it's impossible to please God.

Kendra:

Right. And I think the thing that has shocked me the most as I reflected on that time preparing for this is not only did I give things up right away, right as I was driving down from Ohio to North Carolina, but four years later, there's still things that I'm having to give up in order to fully step into the position at Proverbs or other relationships that I have. Like I just had to have a friendship breakup, if you will, with one of my nearest and dearest friends of all time. And I never thought that friendship would end. I felt very secure in that friendship, but I saw that it was toxic and it was part of who I used to be, and I needed to break it off.

Kendra:

But I think that's the hardest part of sending me is you can step out in faith, but it doesn't mean that God's going to stop there. There's going to be other things and little steps of obedience to get to you to where you need to go.

Craig:

Yes absolutely. And sometimes they send me, you might not actually go anywhere. Like I wish Amy, my wife, could talk to you because she's got so much wisdom. But we raised and are still raising six kids together and in the early years, I could tell she had a real "send me" heart. Like I want to go out and do something and her assignment really was these children. And so while she had a lot more to offer in her mind, that was her assignment. And so she had to step into it and really embrace it. Once they were a little bit older, suddenly she had this massive burden for marginalized women. And it was almost a burden she didn't want. It was like, it was so heavy, so strong that she couldn't not deal with it. And so it took her on a real faith journey of doing things she'd never done before.

Craig:

Starting a nonprofit, finding a team, opening up what started as one little home and has now grown to multiple homes and a full blown staff. But it was like in the early years, I wanted to be sent and I'm now raising kids and the other years later, later on I wasn't asking for this, but now I'm being sent. And it led her on this just real journey. And I think that the bottom line is that when you're obedient to where God's planting you and take that step of faith, you can, kind of like you, ending of friendships really

difficult. Redefining it. I like what you said, is “that's not who I am anymore.” It's not as part of my past and I think we can all say that in our current moment of “I'm different now because I'm being conformed to the image of Christ.”

Kendra:

Absolutely. Well, Craig, thank you so much for speaking into the prayer of “send me.” I know we have another week with all of you and then next week you're going to be back with Lysa TerKeurst and Melissa.

Craig:

Thank you for saying yes, or you wouldn't be here interviewing me — you should be back somewhere else and —

Kendra:

— You right, we would have never had this opportunity to chat, so look at that it worked out.

Craig:

And for you too. Don't be afraid. Take the step of faith. If there's a stirring, you want, might not feel equipped, you're not going to know all the details. I always say this — that if God gave you all the details, you'd probably run for the hills.

Kendra:

Absolutely.

Craig:

So you don't need the details. You just need to take the next obedient step and if you pray, “send me,” He will get ready. You may have to pack your bags, you may not, but you will have to take a step of faith.

Kendra:

That's great.

Kaley:

Well, Kendra, we're back. And I just want to say that it's so neat to have an opportunity to get to look back on what God did through praying bold prayers in your own life because it gives me perspective to kind of look at what I am praying in my own life, and what I have prayed, and see how God answered those prayers. And so in the couple of minutes that we have left, I would love for you to unpack for our listeners the conversation that you had, pastor Craig, and then we'll help them unpack and process what their next step might be in praying the “send me” prayer.

Kendra:

Yeah, absolutely. So when I was asked to have this conversation with Craig, it really made me process through when I pray the “send me” prayer. And like I mentioned in the conversation, I was totally ready to be used by God. I felt like I was in a really good position to be used by God. But what I didn't understand and grasp was that things needed to be removed, which is hard in itself. And then also change was going to happen. So no matter if you are sent to go take your neighbor some cookies or if

you are sent across the globe, like there's going to be a dramatic change that happens that just maybe puts you out of your comfort zone a little bit. And I think that was my biggest “aha” moment and what I can now encourage others with — being on the other side of it.

Kendra:

But Kaley, I think especially in our world today, with everything that's going on with the coronavirus, we have a very unique opportunity to come to God with open hands, asking how we can be sent into our neighborhoods, into our communities in a very — obviously safe — way. But whether that's going to get groceries for your neighbor who might be elderly and can't go out to the grocery store, or maybe, I don't know, assisting somebody with figuring out how to do a Zoom call if they need to connect with somebody on FaceTime or what that might look like. And so I think more than ever, right now, we as believers just have a really unique opportunity to be sent into the world and pray that prayer specifically for change.

Kaley:

Oh my gosh. Yes. That's so good, and my husband and I were talking recently about a “send me” opportunity in our lives right now. And he said to me, and I had to write it down because it's so good. He said, “Kaley, I would rather move forward even though this is scary than always wonder ‘what if.’” And I think that certainly applies to going and taking your neighbor's groceries or whatever, because that's an opportunity for you to reach out to them with encouragement that maybe there's something bigger in your life and what's on the other side of it seems scarier than what you're currently going through right now.

Kaley:

But I just, I love what he said about “I would rather move forward even though,” ... Or “even though it's scary, than always wondering what if,” because if I don't move and I don't go whenever we're told to be sent, well then I'm always going to wonder what could have happened. But if I go, and I'm obedient, but then I'll know what if, does that make sense?

Kendra:

Yeah. Absolutely.

Kaley:

Yeah, it just helped me so much because I realized that when I'm praying, I can't hold onto my will and ask God for His will in both hands. Like you said, I need to surrender my plans and my preferences. I think that you might've said that in the video, but it was just helpful because I can't hold on to what I want to happen, but then also ask God to send me. I have to, like, let go. And that's kind of part of the exchange of — what did you say — that things we're gonna have to remove, things that might be in the way for [inaudible] to be sent and a lot of times that's what we're holding on so tightly to.

Kendra:

Yeah, and I think that's a perfect transition into what pastor Craig said in his book. And so I'm going to read a little passage. It's on page 160 to 161 in case you do have the book. But it says this, it says, “Instead of being obsessed with comfort, you will live for a calling. God will stretch you out of your comfort zone, and you will lead people to know Jesus. One day perhaps, God will hear your faith-filled cries and heaven and heal someone from cancer on earth. Perhaps as you are speaking to God, He will

speak to you. Maybe He will nudge you out of your comfort zone and you will have your first serious discussion about adopting a child. Or you'll obey the voice of God and pay for someone's groceries, or He will follow the prompting of God's spirit and commit to go on your churches upcoming mission trip. No matter what, your life won't stay the same. When you pray dangerously, your life simply can't remain the same."

Kaley:

Wow. I love that. I feel like it's a mantra for the time that we're living in.

Kendra:

Oh yeah.

Kaley:

And it's the "end on." Seriously. So if you're listening and you've made it through all the way to the end right now, now it's your turn. Maybe this is when you go home and open up your journal and write out the words "send me" and ask God what this means for you. Knowing just that everything that's happening that we've been talking about, I really can't think of a better way for us to truly be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Kendra:

Yeah. One hundred percent, and before we let you go, we also want to point you to a few resources to help you as you courageously start to pray bold prayers. First, I want to personally invite you to join us for the online Bible study for free. Yes, that's right, it's free. All you need is the book, which Kaley going to tell you about in a second, but to find more information, go ahead and go to proverbs31.org/study. We'd love to have you part of our community, and if you're listening to this podcast episode way far into the future, don't even worry, you can use the same website link to find out about our upcoming studies and past studies.

Kaley:

Yes, and like Kendra said, we do want you to get the book, even if you don't join us for the online Bible study. This book is a really great resource to help just strengthen your prayer life. So you can purchase your copy of *Dangerous Prayers* at p31bookstore.com and just a reminder that when you purchase books from our bookstore, it allows us to keep doing online Bible studies for free because Proverbs is a nonprofit ministry, right? Kendra, we love to be able to offer free resources like online Bible studies in this podcast and keep doing things like putting really great content and really pretty graphics out there on social media for you to engage with. And whenever you make a purchase on our bookstore, that is helping us truly do that.

Kendra:

Yeah, absolutely.

Kaley:

Everyone, thank you so much for joining us today. Kendra, thank you so much for being my cohost today.

Kendra:

Yes Kaley that was fun.

Kaley:

Always enjoy spending time with you and we pray that today's episode helps you know the Truth of God's Word and live out that Truth because we know when you do, it changes everything. See you next time.