

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Meredith Brock:

Hello friends! 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 friend and co-host, Kaley Olson.

Kaley Olson:

Well, hey Meredith, it's great to be back with you today.

Meredith Brock:

What a weird time right now, right?

Kaley Olson:

Yes, so weird.

Meredith Brock:

So weird. I mean, I'm guessing most of you, most of our listening audience, are living life very different than you were just a few weeks ago, right? I mean, we're even doing this podcast differently. Kaley and I are used to being in a studio, face-to-face, goofing off like we always do. We're both very expressive people.

Kaley Olson:

[inaudible].

Meredith Brock:

Seriously. And this is weird because right now, we're separated and Kaley's at her house, and I'm at my house, so it's just a strange time in life.

Kaley Olson:

Yes. And we know that you're probably like us, craving a bit of normalcy right now. Right now, the only normal thing that I'm doing is continuing to reheat my coffee whenever I get through it in the morning. For some reason I can't just drink a cup of coffee without getting up a million times to reheat it, so that's normal.

Meredith Brock:

Right. So you mean it's not most moms that do that? I thought that was a mom thing, but it's —

Kaley Olson:

No. I just get really focused. I get so focused that I let my coffee get cold and right now I'm currently sitting on my desk and I'm like, "Oh yeah. I got focused and I still didn't finish it."

Meredith Brock:

[inaudible].

Kaley Olson:

But as a ministry, we wanted to record this podcast and address just the weird time that we're in right now and how we're all feeling because we want to be sure that what we're sharing isn't just fluffy content and just giving you information that you've already heard before that sounds good in theory, but not good in reality. But we want to share truth that's helpful to you right now because some people's normal isn't a good normal right now.

Meredith Brock:

That's right, Kaley. It's true. I mean I look at the world, what's happening in the world and truth be told, all of our normals have just been snatched up and taken away, and we certainly don't want to make light of anyone's situation at all. We acknowledge that your circumstances, our listeners' circumstances, are very personal and we're all trying to process this new reality in a healthy way.

Meredith Brock:

I have lots of friends that are in the service industry that work at restaurants, and right now, their future seems very uncertain and scary, and I feel certain that some of our listeners are right there as well. And some of you might even be facing the fact that you're separated from your family and maybe they need medical care, and they can't the medical care that they need.

Meredith Brock:

That is scary. And I just want to say to our listeners, I am so sorry. I'm sorry you're having to face this. I'm sorry that you're going through what you're going through. Some of you might even be like me. I'm not really separated from my family, but instead I'm having to face the reality of being a full-time employee and a full-time school teacher because my kids' school is closed. And so trying to balance it all has created just a lot of stress for me and tension that I'm constantly trying to manage and it's just hard. This is a hard season, right Kaley?

Kaley Olson:

Oh yes. So difficult. And Meredith, I think one of the hardest parts of all of this is that we're experiencing collective whiplash because I think I was reading something online and I can't exactly point to this source but I heard that the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is just being compared to World War II. That was the last time that the world literally went through something together.

Kaley Olson:

And it's nuts because in the course of a few days, everything changed for everyone all around the world, and we're now living new realities and we didn't have a chance to get adjusted or even have a say in what our reality was going to be — we're just here. And [inaudible], I don't think we understood the full impact.

Kaley Olson:

I remember at Proverbs we were just thinking, "Okay, let's address this right now," and we tackled the very first shockwave of it, but still we're four weeks into this now of being at home and I can just say that navigating my disappointment personally with this new reality, combined with just seeing this go on and on and see the climbing numbers of what's happening to others, like the mortality rate or the unemployment rate or the economy, whatever it is, it's a lot to take in because if this were just personal, it would be different, but it's not just personal. Everybody is dealing with this at the same time.

Kaley Olson:

And what's so scary about it is that we don't know how long it's going to last. And I think whatever your current reality looks like right now, whether you're listening to this in real time and COVID-19 is very real. Or maybe it's two years from now, and all this is over and you're going through something completely different. Maybe you're in a season like we are right now and you're waiting for an answer to the question. How long will this last? I ask that question a lot in regards to this, but in the other things in my life too, because I think if we knew how long this would last, then we could push ourselves to get through it.

Kaley Olson:

I'm a details person, Meredith, part of my job is finding what I like to say it in this phrase, I like to find the corner pieces of the puzzle and then I work my way in and figure it out. But the corner pieces feel like boundaries. So I'm like, "Okay, I can work within my limitations." Or maybe, I don't know, think about whenever you go for a run, you run, right Meredith?

Meredith Brock:

Yes. [inaudible].

Kaley Olson:

You can run a couple of miles. Like if you say, "Okay, I'm going to run two or three miles," then you know how to pace yourself. You know what you need to eat beforehand. You know how much water you need to drink. But what if somebody just told you to run and never told you when they were going to tell you to stop? That's kind of a very loose description of what I think we're all feeling right now. And we're in the middle of something that we don't know how long it's going to last.

Kaley Olson:

And so today, as I go into my teaching, I want to think about the two choices that we have right now. We can spiral up in this situation or we can spiral down. And so I was thinking about just the visual of a spiral and how it represents something that doesn't end. And I don't want to say that this will never end because I do believe it will. I do believe that God is going to come through for us. I do believe that we'll get through it. And we'll be better on the other side. But right now, we don't know when that's going to happen. And so we have to address the fear and overwhelm that we might be consumed by or maybe

have been consumed by and we're in this downward spiral that can lead to a really bad place if we're not careful and we don't catch it and reorient our thoughts.

Kaley Olson:

So today I just want to take a few minutes to talk about three things to consider when we're in the middle so that we can build our faith together in this. And I'm going to go ahead and give these to you ahead of time, because I like to know things ahead of time. I already said that. And so, here are my points.

Kaley Olson:

First we're going to consider who God is, then we're going to consider God's faithfulness throughout Scripture, and then we're going to consider God's faithfulness to us and share that with others. And so as we start off with considering who God is, it sounds simple and maybe you're thinking, well of course Kaley, don't you think I know how to do this? And you're also probably thinking: Kaley, you work at Proverbs 31 Ministries, why are you telling us that we should consider who God is? Because isn't that something you already do all the time?

Kaley Olson:

And I'm going to be the first to admit I skip to control mode whenever I'm in a situation where I don't know how things are going to work out. I don't do this all the time. My first inclination as a human is to think about me first, not God first. And in my own life and I'm sure your life too Meredith, I've gone through something that I didn't know how long it would last. And on top of this coronavirus, COVID-19 situation, I'm there with another situation in my personal life that I've been walking through for almost 15 months now. And if I let myself, I'll end up spiraling down because when I don't have all the details, the first thing that I want to do is what I said, is control it and fix it.

Kaley Olson:

And so I think we need to be really honest with ourselves in times when we're in the middle, who we turn to first? Do we consider who we are and our abilities or do we consider who God is and let him work through us? And I might sing about who God is at church and raise my hands and experience a Holy moment there. But at times in situations when I feel stuck, I don't sink. I don't pause and remind myself of who God is because I think I can do a better job. But the truth is, I can't.

Kaley Olson:

And if I ever want to get to a place where I am more hopeful and less fearful, I have to stop trying to take control and just trust that God is already in control. Being human means that we sometimes have this faulty understanding that we can take the reigns from God, but that's not possible because of who God is, because God is Holy and I'm not.

Kaley Olson:

And so as we consider who God is today, I want to take a second and read Isaiah Chapter 40 verses 25 through 31. It says, *"To whom will you compare me or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens, who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls for each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you complain Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord. My cause disregarded by my God. Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the*

creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and his understanding, no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like Eagles. They will run and not grow weary and will walk and not be thanked."

Kaley Olson:

And there's a lot that we could take from this passage of Scripture and unpack. But what I want to do is just park and consider who God is by focusing on how Holy God is. And we can look at Isaiah 40:25 through 31 and see him compared to us like we see the verse that says, "*My way is hidden from the Lord.*" Why do you say that God disregards you? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is everlasting. He's the creator. He's not growing tired or weary. And so this right here tells me He is so much better to be in control than I am.

Kaley Olson:

And took a little bit of time to just research holiness because I just wanted to make sure that I had a right understanding and it sent me on a good bit of a journey. Just looking through a lot of different verses and looking up what other people had to say about holiness and how to define holiness. And I don't know if you're like me, Meredith, but when I think about sounding smart, sometimes I look at what John Piper says.

Kaley Olson:

So I'm going to quote him. John Piper said this, "When we say that God is Holy, we mean that along with the immeasurableness of his greatness, his character is unimpeachable. He cannot be charged with any wrong." And I love that because he's basically saying that God's Holiness is his credibility. His Holiness is who He is. It's not something He has to strive to be. And so like John Piper said, His holiness means He can't do anything wrong.

Kaley Olson:

And I'm not sure about you, but I would rather trust a God who can do no wrong. It means that I don't understand what He's doing then in my sinful nature, try to control or manipulate my situation because I'm going to mess that up. I'm going to mess it up. And it seems like an oxymoron, right? Because it's hard to have hope and trust when I don't have all the details.

Kaley Olson:

Or like Isaiah 40 says, there's a line in that passage that I read that says, "*His understanding, no one can fathom.*" I'm like, "Well, but then if I don't understand it, then how can I trust it?" But that's the reason I can trust Him is because He's holy and He knows I don't have to know everything.

Kaley Olson:

And so as I consider who God is and that His Holiness means He can't mess up, I'm able to have hope. And not that my temporary circumstances will get better because that's very short-lived, but just living in hope in an eternal God and His plans. And so when I ask the question how long will this last, I must remember who God is and let that lead me to trust Him and not control my circumstances.

Kaley Olson:

And one of my favorite quotes from Lysa TerKeurst, our president here at Proverbs 31, it's just so fitting for this. And I've been using it to remind myself of who God is in this season. And it's, "God is good. God is good to me and God is good at being God."

Meredith Brock:

Amen. That's so good. I love it.

Kaley Olson:

Yeah. And a great way to really see who God is after we've parked our mind on His holiness and we've defined that and we've aligned our hearts with that truth, we can see His Holiness lived out in Scripture through His faithfulness. And so that leads me to the second thing that we're going to do is we're going to consider His faithfulness throughout Scripture. And the Bible is full of examples of how God came through for others who were likely asking the question, how long will this last? And if we want hope in the midst of the middle, we go to God's Word.

Kaley Olson:

We look at what He's done for others and we see that and we let that feed our faith. And so for our example today, I want to park on Noah's story in Genesis Chapter 6-9. We're not going to read the whole thing, so don't worry guys. But if you're like me and you grew up in church, then you might remember Noah's story as if it were told from a Sunday school, felt board or a story book where maybe the little boat pops up and the animal draft next pop up out of the Ark and things like that. And so here's the CliffsNotes version. I'm going to do the stubble's feed; are you ready, Meredith?

Meredith Brock:

I'm ready. Give it to me.

Kaley Olson:

Okay. All right. God tells Noah He's going to wipe out mankind and tells Noah to build a big boat. Then God brings a male and a female of each kind of animal to Noah. Noah gets on the boat. God shuts the door. His family is essentially quarantined with the animals for a long time, which for some of us it's a little too close to home. Then Noah sends out a dove three times to see if there's any dry land and the third time, the dove doesn't come back, and after that, God tells him to come out at the arc and then promises to never flood the earth again. He puts a rainbow in the sky and they're able to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth again. The end.

Kaley Olson:

Okay. There's your storybook version, the Sunday school version, and when we summarize stories like this, we include the key facts and focus on the end, and if you're like me, sometimes these types of stories are something that you know the major points and the highlights, and then you fold it up and you put it on a shelf and you're like, "Okay, I know about Noah, I know what happened. I know that God was faithful in the end and He promised to never do that again."

Kaley Olson:

But often what we don't do is park in the middle, somewhere between Chapter 6 and Chapter 9. Noah had to feel stuck in the circumstances. And really think about what he must've felt right there. While our

stories certainly aren't the same, like as far as I know, no one is building an arc and God did promise that He wouldn't flood the entire earth again. But we do know that Noah was on the boat for a long time. And we notice because in Genesis Chapter 7 verse 6, it says that Noah was 600 years old when the flood waters came on the earth. And Genesis Chapter 8 verse 13 tells us in Noah's 601st year, the water dried up from the earth.

Kaley Olson:

And so let's not park on the fact that Noah was 600 years old. That's something that I need my friend Joel Muddamalle. If you're listening, Joel, at some point, I want to talk to you about how Noah was 600 years old. But what these verses do tell us is that he was in the boat for a good long while, with zero control about the outcome.

Kaley Olson:

And what might be easy to miss in these short chapters is God's faithfulness during the time on the boat. Not just at the end, but how God was faithful in the middle. And so do you remember whenever I was giving the CliffsNotes super speed version about Noah sending out a dove? Do you remember that?

Meredith Brock:

Yes.

Kaley Olson:

Okay. So in Genesis Chapter 8, we see that Noah sent out a dove three times and the second time that Noah sent the dove out, the dove came back with an olive leaf. So Noah is stuck on the boat. Think about him being stuck on the boat. He's rocking on the waves and there's water. When you're on a boat, you can't go anywhere. Some of us can go for a walk; Noah couldn't do that. He was on there with animals. He was in there with his family for a really long time which also gets [crosstalk].

Kaley Olson:

Yeah. Yes. I'm sure they were doing homeschool in the boat too at some point.

Meredith Brock:

[inaudible] bless that mama.

Kaley Olson:

Oh gosh. But while Noah was stuck on the boat floating on the water, probably wondering, "How long is this going to last? God, when are you going to dry up the waters? When are we going to get to start over?" God brought to Noah through the dove a tangible reminder that creation was doing its thing. And I don't want to draw a sharp line here with what we have going on today, but in the middle of our crisis and not knowing when this will end, it's spring and the meaning of that and the fact that creation is still doing what it's supposed to do as God instructed, is a reminder that even though my circumstances might feel overwhelming, this is hard and for a lot of people this is hard, but we can look at our [inaudible]. We can see blooms or maybe at nighttime, we can go look at the stars, and we can think about Isaiah 40 and think who created all these.

Kaley Olson:

God did. He's giving you reminders right now. Just like He gave a reminder to Noah that He is here. He is working and this won't last forever. And one of my favorite sticky statements we share on social media at Proverbs 31 is this: God is working while you're waiting. And that's a promise I need to cling to in times like this in the middle.

Kaley Olson:

And if we pay attention to it, if we really look for it, we'll be able to see signs that God, He hasn't left us. Just like He didn't leave Noah. He's waiting to be seen by us. He wants us to pay attention to the things that are outside of this current situation that we're in because He's bigger than just this pandemic. And this looking at God's Word and studying His Word and looking for His faithfulness in the middle. That's the substance that builds our faith. This is what we can meditate on. And this is what we can grow in.

Kaley Olson:

And so the last thing that I want to share today is my third point, which is to consider His faithfulness in our own life and share that with others. And so we've been asking this question a lot: How long will this last? But we can look back on God's faithfulness and remember how He's come through for us. And that sounds really easy to say, but it's not so easy when our circumstances seem overwhelming or make us fearful. I [inaudible] imagine in the middle of ... Maybe you're a mom and you're not getting a break right now because your kids are home, and you're homeschooling, and you're doing a lot. That's hard. It's hard to not stay overwhelmed or if you've lost your job, it's hard to not stay overwhelmed. We're not glossing over circumstances while we're fearful.

Kaley Olson:

But the Bible makes it very clear that He's with us right here in the middle of our fear, personally. Just like we can look back and we can see His evidence in the Bible that He was there with others in the middle of that; He's there with us. And so my first point, I mentioned doing a lot of research on God's holiness and while I was studying, I came across another verse in Isaiah that just really spoke to me and it says this in Isaiah 57:15, "*For this is what the high and exalted one says, he who lives forever, whose name is Holy. I live in a high and Holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit to revive the spirit of the lowly. And to revive the heart of the contrite.*"

Kaley Olson:

And what we see here is just this juxtaposition that He lives in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit. And so I had my friend, Joel, help me with this a little bit. And so I'm not going to take credit for digging up the Hebrew in this specific instance, but He told me that the word "contrite" from Isaiah 57:15 in Hebrew is the same word for "crushed" in Psalm 34:18 that says, "*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*"

Kaley Olson:

And what I love about seeing these verses come together is the promise that God in His infinite holiness, is with us. He doesn't have to be; He could be in His high and holy place, but He is also with us. And what makes this so real is that in the middle of this pandemic, I dare you to name one person who isn't experiencing brokenness right now. Everybody is, whether it's on a small level or something just awful that you never would have wanted to walk through. Everybody is experiencing brokenness.

Kaley Olson:

But what I can promise you is that God is with us right now. He could be far off then and be watching all this happen, but He's not. He's with us and somebody needs to hear that today. God is with you. He's with you. He doesn't not see you. He sees everything that's happening right now, and He wants you to invite him in and just be aware that His presence can bring peace.

Kaley Olson:

And in our brokenness, it's important to remember what God has done for us and how He's been with us. Like I said, it's hard to do that because when things are so wrong, it's easy for me to forget that He's been there for me before, like He's there for me today, and just like we look back at Noah's stories, we considered God's faithfulness in Scripture. I have to do this in my own life. And so I want to challenge you guys; write these things down to encourage yourself.

Kaley Olson:

One of the things that I like to do is just bullet journal. And so instead of like writing down all the details, because you know, Meredith, I can be a really wordy person, whenever I want to, and sometimes instead of doing that, I just bullet journal out what God has done for me. Little things, big things, big blessings, like a name or an event or whatever it is. Those things build my faith.

Kaley Olson:

But then we need to take how we're encouraged and encourage someone else with that because that's our job. That's our testimony. The world needs to hear how God has been good to us because sharing our testimony as believers is a powerful way for God to move in the hearts of those who desperately need Him. And we know this because in 2 Corinthians 1 verses 3-4, it says, "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*"

Meredith Brock:

That's good.

Kaley Olson:

And so right now, in the spirit of sharing just encouragement, Meredith, I would love for you to just take a little second or a minute or two and just encourage those who are listening with how God has been good to you or how He has met you in your brokenness.

Meredith Brock:

Oh, Kaley, you're turning the tables on me.

Kaley Olson:

[inaudible].

Meredith Brock:

Well, I think one of the first things that comes to my mind, and this was a really long season for me, is my little girl, Cyrus. She's 5 years old now. And the story of Cyrus coming to be, if you will, she's my second child and it was hard. It was super hard. It took us a long time to get pregnant with her. It

actually took me a long time. It took me almost a year and a half to convince my husband to have a second child. And then when we finally did decide, "okay, we're going to have a second child," it took me a really long time to get pregnant. And it was just hard. I lived in this space of like, "What's going to happen?" I was really sad about the thought of my first child, my son, being an only child and really had to wrestle a lot with the Lord during that season and just wait on Him. Wait on Him to change my husband's heart, wait on him for me to be able to get pregnant.

Meredith Brock:

And then, I got pregnant and I was so excited. And then when I finally was pregnant, that pregnancy was so hard.

Kaley Olson:

I remember that.

Meredith Brock:

I was throwing up and was exhausted and it was just really, really hard. And so I was trying to be positive and keep my eyes set on the fact that the Lord was giving me this gift of a little girl. And I was so excited about it. I knew this would be probably my last child because I just knew that that was what me and my husband had decided.

Meredith Brock:

And then when I had her, there were ... Well I should say right towards the end of my pregnancy, during my whole pregnancy, there were lots of complications. At one point, they thought that she had Down syndrome and we had to go to all these different doctors and have all these different tests done.

Meredith Brock:

And then after we got over that hump, shortly thereafter, they started getting really afraid that she wasn't growing in utero. And so then I started having to go to the high-risk pregnancy doctor, literally for a season, it was every day. [Inaudible] they thought that she wasn't growing.

Meredith Brock:

And then they finally decided, okay, you're having this baby. But they were going to make me have her early and I was so scared, Kaley. I can't even explain. They kept telling me she's probably only four pounds. We're not sure what's going on. But as soon as she's born, we're going to probably have to whisk her off to the NICU. It just felt like this gift that God had given me of this little girl, of this pregnancy, was full of so much turmoil at the same time.

Meredith Brock:

And praise the Lord, when I had her, they had told us, if she is five pounds, you can keep her with you in your hospital room. And my husband and I just prayed and prayed and prayed and I had her. The first thing out of my mouth was how much does she weigh and they [inaudible] she weighed five pounds on the dot, you guys.

Meredith Brock:

And I literally burst into tears. My husband was sobbing. We were both like, "She's okay, she's not..." And they handed her to us and you all, she was perfectly fine. There was nothing wrong with her other than the fact that she was teeny tiny, and I was just so thankful and saw God's goodness and kindness. Even though it [inaudible] in a very different package, I will say we went on to have probably two of the hardest years ever with her after that.

Meredith Brock:

She was sick a lot. There's still no reason. Nobody knows why, but she just had lots of complications. She's a complicated little girl. But if I were to tell you right now, she is the greatest joy in our life. She makes us laugh every day. She is so sweet. But I even remember the first two years of her life, I sat on the phone and cried with multiples of my friends because I was like, "I can't handle this little girl."

Meredith Brock:

She [inaudible] slept. She was sick all the time. I honestly felt like she didn't like me. I would hug her, and she would push me away, and it was hard, and so I tell you all of that to say, it was a really long season. When I look back on that from when we were trying to get ... When I was trying to convince my husband to let us have a second child, all the way to now where she's 5 years old. That was seven years, you guys. Seven years of wrestling, wrestling, wrestling, wrestling with the Lord, wrestling with my own preconceived ideas of what I thought my life was going to look like — what I thought God should do in my circumstance.

Meredith Brock:

And now I would say I'm on the other side of it, but Cyrus still keeps me on my toes and [inaudible] my life. I can see that God's plan was so much better than mine, and He was so ... I couldn't even have thought up this beautiful little child that is now my daughter. And I see His goodness in that, in the midst of my struggle and in the midst of [inaudible].

Meredith Brock:

And so it's so good. Kaley, thank you for challenging me to think about that because I don't know that I would have really thought back on how good God was to me during that period, because there was so much hard in the midst of it, but now I'm like, "Wow, He was so good to me the whole time. I just didn't see it." So good.

Kaley Olson:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and then I'm just going to say that on a personal level, this specific story, you being on the other side of it, you're now able to encourage people like me who are in the middle of it because there are times where you have specifically helped me with that. So it doesn't always have to be stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but God allows us to go through what we go through so that we can then take that experience and encourage someone else who was in the middle.

Meredith Brock:

That's right.

Kaley Olson:

And so you're through it or through the thick of most of it, I would say because —

Meredith Brock:

I'm still part of it.

Kaley Olson:

[Inaudible]. But it's helpful to me and it's ministered to me and it's encouraged me. But I'm going to get real here about the current circumstances of our world and just seeing how people are desperate. And we have hope because we are born again believers, and we believe in a God who is holy and who is in control, but those who are spiritually lost, they don't have that hope. And that makes me so sad for what's going on, seeing the mortality. Now I'm just like, "Oh my gosh. Did someone encourage them? Did someone tell them?"

Kaley Olson:

And right now, I have a friend who's a nurse and as we speak, she's in New York City in Central Park at a mobile hospital unit caring for people who are ... I think they're in the respiratory care mobile unit with COVID-19. So these are people who are really struggling. And in the midst of caring for their physical needs, my friend is also caring for their spiritual needs because the organization that she's with is a Christian organization. And so they're using their ... gifting and hospitalization, caring for people and taking care of their health, but also she's using her relationship with the Lord to care for them spiritually.

Kaley Olson:

This is what just makes me get all teary is just because at Proverbs 31, we might not be doctors, and nurses, or first responders or those on the front lines who are battling with this current COVID-19 situation, but we are on the front line spiritually. And we are positioned for such a time as this, and it's so humbling. It really is, because we can see that God is using the free resources on our website to point people to Jesus in the midst of fear and uncertainty.

Kaley Olson:

And I'll say this because the first meeting we had whenever we were all working from home, it was the very first day and our web developer popped on our meeting and was like, "Guys, the top two things people are searching for on our website right now are fear and overwhelm." And it's just cool that they can search that and see resources that we have that they can access that, address those specific needs right now. Because every day, we point women to the Truth of God's Word and we believe when you know the Truth and live the Truth, it changes everything. But we're getting to see that play out in real time.

Kaley Olson:

Guys, it gets better, because we all have a part to play in sharing our story and being a catalyst for hope in the midst of this or being a catalyst for hope in the midst of whatever your circumstances look like. Because it could later, [inaudible] listening to this, and you could be going through something else very personal. And it's not just the churches that are positioned to share hope through Facebook lives. It's not just ministries like Proverbs 31; it's people who are on the ground. It's you and me. It's [inaudible 00:34:23]. Meredith, it's you listening, whoever you are, wherever you are, you never know how your story might impact someone and be the encouragement they need to keep going.

Kaley Olson:

And so Meredith, do you remember the spiral example that I was talking about at the beginning and how we can spiral up or we can inspire down?

Meredith Brock:

Yes.

Kaley Olson:

This is where we bring it back full circle. We just repeat this. And over time, we build our hope and our faith on the firm foundation and the truth of who God is. And I know the truth for me might not change my circumstances. It's not this magic pill that I take and I believe the truth. And all of a sudden, poof, everything is better. That's not what happens.

Kaley Olson:

But the truth does change my perspective. It gives me hope when my circumstances make me fearful. So when we don't know what to do, we can have hope in who God is. And the evidence of His faithfulness that's written in His Word and the evidence of His faithful in our own lives. And I hope that one day when this over, we'll be able to look back and see more than headlines that tell of the numerical impact of the virus. I don't want to just see the negativity. I want to see the positive. I want to see the lives that were changed, and I want to look back and see how God changed me, but also use me to maybe change somebody else's life in the middle of this.

Meredith Brock:

It's good.

Kaley Olson:

And if you're listening to this in real time, this is not the last time you'll need this message. There will be another time. Hopefully it won't be another worldwide pandemic because that would be terrible, but there's going to be something very personal that happens to you. That's a very real reality because we live in a fallen world and you're going to be stuck in the middle again. You're going to be asking the question, how long will this last? So lean into this cycle, spiral up and not down, and build your hope in the middle and trust that God is with you through it all.

Meredith Brock:

It's so good, Kaley, and just like you said, there will always be middles in our life, whether it's in the middle of trying to conceive a child, or in the middle of your senior year in college, or in the middle of a hard season in your marriage, or the middle of a hard season of singleness. Middle is part of life and one of the things that I love about Proverbs 31 is that we have been consistently meeting people in the middle for over 25 years now and pointing them back to Jesus.

Meredith Brock:

And just like you said earlier, in the last couple of weeks while the world has been facing this wild pandemic, we've seen a huge surge of people needing the hope of Jesus and we have been able to do just that. We have been able to serve up that hope in practical real ways by giving away free resources on our website, by continuing to put out this podcast, by leading people in free online Bible studies and studying the word in our First 5 mobile app.

Meredith Brock:

All of those things are free resources that we've been able to make available to the world and I'm not sure if our listeners know this or not, but we are a nonprofit ministry that is funded by the generosity of our listeners and of our friends online. And so if, in this season, you find yourself in a position that you are able to be generous financially, I know our ministry would be so thankful if you would consider us as a place to extend that financial generosity, because we want to continue meeting people in the middle for the next 25 years and beyond so that, our King Jesus will be glorified more and more here on this side of heaven. And I just want to say thank you all so much for joining us today. We pray that this message helps you know the Truth of God's Word and live that Truth out, because when you do, it really will change everything. God bless.