

*the*  
**PROVERBS 31**  
**MINISTRIES**  
*podcast*

**Biblical truth for any girl in any season.**

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Kaley:

Well, hello, friends, and welcome back to the Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast, where we share biblical truth for any girl in any season. I'm your host, Kaley Olson, and I'm here with my dear friend and cohost Meredith Brock.

Meredith:

Well, hi Kaley. Hi listeners. We are so happy to be back here today. And you know what? I have a quick favor to ask you guys. We feel like we know you pretty well, but we would really like to get to know you better. So if you have a minute after the show today, we'd love for you to fill out our podcast audience survey. There's a link available in the podcast show notes on [proverbs31.org/listen](https://proverbs31.org/listen). It would just help us serve you better, get to know you better, so we can give you the things that you need, right?

Kaley:

Yes, absolutely. We want to get to know you guys better. And speaking of our podcast listening audience, Meredith, if there's one thing we know to be true, we know that these ladies are from all walks of life. I mean, we've got 20-somethings, we've got moms, we've got career women. We've got a combination of all three. We've got some grandmas who listen on here. And I feel like every time we record an episode and release it to the world, we're talking to one big happy family when we come on the show, right?

Meredith:

Yeah. I love it.

Kaley:

Yeah, because, the one common factor in all of our listeners is how much you love practically applying God's Word to your lives.

Meredith:

Absolutely. It's the thing I love the most. I love having this community of people here to support and encourage each other to really take God's Word and apply it to their lives. So at the top of the show, we wanted to serve you up some great upcoming opportunities at Proverbs 31 for you to join in. So, many have heard us talk about our First 5 mobile app. And I'm excited to tell you that we are about to head into the book of Galatians. We are going to be studying that for the next couple of weeks.

Meredith:

And I really wanted to invite you into that experience, because I think that you will learn so much. So if you have ever struggled with maybe shame or comparison or self-doubt, we're really going to dive into how to set ... How to be set free in this study of Galatians. So, we really wanted to invite you. We started on June 15. So if you don't have the free app, go grab it. You can download it and then join us as we study the book of Galatians.

Kaley:

Yes. And if you like doing Bible study in a community format, I'm excited to let you guys know that our friends at Proverbs 31 Online Bible Studies have a treat for you. We've got an incredible study coming up that starts on June 22 on a book called *Hidden Potential*. And if you've ever wondered, "Do I have to overcome all my weaknesses before God can use me?" Hello, I've wondered that. You don't want to miss out on this study. It's going to be great. Registration for all of our online Bible studies is absolutely free. You can buy the book if you want to, to help you dig deeper into the study. But you can find out more by visiting [proverbs31.org/study](http://proverbs31.org/study).

Meredith:

Well, clearly we're excited about a lot of things right now, but I am excited about our podcast guest today. He, and yes, you heard me say it right, he is a ministry friend and serves on the Proverbs 31 Board of Directors. And let me tell y'all, he has got a fantastic message today. So get your notepad out if you're not out on a jog or driving, because our friend Derwin Gray, the lead pastor from Transformation Church here in Charlotte, North Carolina, is here with us today. And we are so excited to have him on the show. Welcome, Derwin.

Derwin:

Thank you so much. It's so good to be with you guys and your community. Thanks for having me.

Kaley:

We're so glad you're here. It's always fun to have a man on the show, right Meredith? Cause I feel like they don't get enough credit here at Proverbs. So I'm excited about this opportunity for you Derwin; you are a brave man coming on here with me and Meredith. But I want our listeners to get to know you a little bit better. So will you take just a minute and let us know a little bit about yourself?

Derwin:

Yep. I am the husband to Vicki Gray. She is a — no disrespect to anyone — the greatest woman walking on the planet and the love of my life. I'm absolutely smitten by her. We met January 15, 1990, which was the second semester of my freshman year. So we've been together for 30 years, and we've been married — come May 23rd, it will be 28 years of marriage. We've got two children. Presley's 23, Jeremiah is 19. They're awesome. I grew up in San Antonio, Texas. I grew up in the hood, grew up poor, grew up as an unbeliever. And for me, football was my salvation.

Derwin:

I worked hard, I worshiped well, made it to the NFL. And by my third year in the NFL, I had everything that I thought I needed to be happy. I was successful, I was famous, I had money. But those external things could not fix my wounded heart. I couldn't forgive my dad for abandoning me. I couldn't love my

wife the way she deserved to be loved because I didn't love myself. I lived with a lot of guilt and shame about things that I had done. And my body began to break down. And as a football player, when your body breaks down, then you know your career's coming to an end.

Derwin:

And that gave me a lot of fear because I grew up as a stutterer. I wasn't very good in school. So I thought, who would I be when I retired, other than a dumb ex-football player. And so all of that hit me, and simultaneously, I had a teammate who, for five years, we'd share the gospel with. His name was Steve Grant. But his nickname was "the naked preacher" because he would take a shower, dry off, wrap a towel around his waist, and get his Bible and share with guys in the locker room. And so for five years, he shared the love of Christ.

Derwin:

And on August 2nd, 1997, my fifth year in the NFL, we were in what's called training camp. And after the lunchtime, I walked back to my dorm room and I called Vicki, my wife, on the phone and I said, "I want to be more committed to you. And I want to be committed to Jesus." And literally, I felt a bodily change when I was born again. And I cried for three days that there's somebody that loves me. Not because of my performance, not because I could help them, not because I was good enough. That there was someone who loved me, despite every dark ugly thing that I'd ever done. And I was just captivated by His love. And that love relationship continues to grow to this day.

Kaley:

Wow. Derwin. I mean, we could stop the podcast right there. I'm already inspired. I mean, what an amazing thing. I think it always just grabs my heart to see what an intentional and pursuing God we serve. Right? Like, to think that he placed that football player in your life at that time, and he was just coming after you. Man, that's beautiful. I love it. I'm already so encouraged. But here's the one thing that Derwin didn't say, and that is, he's got a book that's out now called *The Good Life*. It's available everywhere books are sold. But he's going to tell us a little bit about what he's learned on this community. Because it sounds like he kind of did have the good life, at least from this world's perspective. So I can't wait to hear more, Derwin. Why don't you take it away?

Derwin:

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much. And kind of what I want to do is, I want to ... If I was preaching a message, I would say this is called "three ways to find happiness" because we all want to be happy, and finding happiness is kind of like chasing your shadows. Growing up in San Antonio, back in the late '70s, early '80s, we didn't have video games at home. If we wanted to play video games, we had to walk to the arcade, like the kids on *Stranger Things* do. So when I was 5 or 6, the way I would entertain myself, cause you know, if I told my grandmother I was bored, she'd said, "well go outside and play."

Derwin:

And so I would chase my shadows, and what started out as fun ended in frustration, failure, and disappointment. And so when I open up the book, that's the way I kind of describe us chasing happiness and the good life. Even for followers of Jesus, and I know not everybody listening is yet, but I hope that they will be. But even for followers of Jesus, we like chasing happiness. And then we hit like our 20s, 30s, and 40s. And then it's like, "So I guess this is just ..." It is like failure, frustration, and disappointment. And then what we do is we pretend.

Derwin:

And in reality, we're disappointed, we're frustrated. And disappointment and frustration always leads to a dehumanization of our souls. And then that's where marriages break up, that's where dysfunctions and toxic-ness comes from because we want to be happy. It's like, written into our DNA to pursue this good life. Unfortunately, we're pursuing it the wrong way. For me, I was convinced if I got money, I would be happy; if I got the girl, I would be happy; if I had the car, the house, everything that I was supposed to be happy I had.

Derwin:

But those creative things could not fill the void that only the uncreated creator could fill. So what I tried to do here in *The Good Life* is really walk through ... Well, first of all, what is the good life? Second of all, what is happiness? So, how do we find happiness? First, it's by sitting at Jesus's feet and listening and learning from Him afresh. Jesus started the greatest sermon ever preached called the Sermon on the Mount, or what's called the Beatitudes. Several years ago, while working on my doctorate, my last class was to go to Israel.

Derwin:

And so I'm standing right where Jesus would have stood, and you could see the sea of Galilee and it's on a hill. And I could imagine, all these Jewish people sitting at His feet, some gentiles as well. And that's the common posture of a disciple. Men and women. So let me say this to the ladies, and I think this is really important. When Mary sat down at Jesus's feet to learn, and Martha was like, "Get up and help me." And Jesus was like, "No, she chose what's best." When Mary sat down at Jesus's feet as a woman, that was a statement that men and women are equal, because in the first-century Jewish world, a woman would have never been able to sit at a rabbi's feet.

Derwin:

And Jesus was like, "No, no, no. She sits here. Men and women in my kingdom are equally valuable. They are co-heirs in Christ." And my life, my children and Transformation Church would not be who she is without the beautiful and powerful and Jesus-centered leadership of my wife. I'm not sure if there's sports fans listening, but if they are, there were two great basketball players called Jordan and Pippen for the Chicago Bulls. And Jordan was like the greatest player ever. Right? Well, in our relationship, I'm Pippen; my wife is Jordan.

Derwin:

That's the real deal. So, Jesus is overlooking the sea of Galilee. And still today, he's inviting us to come and sit down and listen to him and learn from Him afresh. So let me pause here. And this is what's so important. God's grace says, "Come and listen, as you are." Don't try to perform your way. Don't try to impress Him. Let me just say this. Jesus is your "enough." Jesus is your "measuring up." Everything that we would ever hope to be or become is found in Jesus. That's what grace is. Grace is God saying, "I am what you could never be. So come as you are. And I love you, I cherish you, I desire to be with you. Not because you have it together, but it's because my son came in and got you so we can be together."

Derwin:

And I think for a lot of Christianity, we're hyperactive. Like, we don't have time to sit at Jesus's feet. It's kind of like, we want to use Jesus to fix our problems. And Jesus is saying, "The problem isn't the problem. The problem is that you won't sit at my feet and gaze into my eyes. The problem is you won't

spend time with me." I am on a quest for Christians to understand God does not need our help for anything. God wants us more than anything. So number one, we sit at Jesus's feet and we listen and learn from him afresh.

Derwin:

And so I'm going to read here through what's called the Beatitudes, which my book is based on. It reads this way, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.*"

Derwin:

Verse 10, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. You will be blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice because your reward is great in heaven, for this how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*" So number two, in embracing true happiness, it's important to understand in the New Testament, the word "blessed" is the Greek word *makarios* and the Greek word *makarios* literally means "happy." So Jesus just said, "Happy are the poor in spirit. Happy are those who mourn. Happy are those who are humble."

Derwin:

Jesus gives eight characteristics of the good life, of a happy life. And it's vastly different than what we typically think of as the good life. When we think of a good life or a happy life, we're thinking about perpetual happiness and everything going our way. But Jesus is inviting us into a happiness that's rooted in something deeper, better, and more beautiful than what happens to us. Jesus is inviting us into a happiness and a good life that goes beyond the surface of our circumstances to the depths of our soul. So check this out. And this was the big "aha" moment for me that revolutionized my life.

Derwin:

People say, "Derwin, why did you write this book?" And I was like, "If I didn't write this book, it would be theft. It would be robbery to withhold how people's lives can be blessed and transformed." And so what I've learned as we look at what Jesus described as the good life or the happy life, a life of happiness is this. It's not about good things always happening to us. It's about God actually making us good. So happiness is more about becoming who you were created to be. So according to Jesus, the blessed or happy life are those whose lives are supernaturally interwoven into Jesus's life.

Derwin:

And we begin to participate in His kingdom by the Holy Spirit's power. So watch this. When Jesus invites us to sit at His feet, He's inviting us into intimacy. Intimacy is into me you see. And when we look at the Beatitudes, they are a reflection of Jesus and Jesus is saying, "I'm the one who is your enough. I lived a perfect sinless life because you couldn't. I took your place on the cross because I love you." Think about like this: at our worst, God gives us His best. At our worst, God gives us His best. We give God our worst and God gives us His best. His best is Jesus on the cross. His best is Jesus raising from the dead, who says, "I now want to live in you and make you into the person I've created you to be."

Derwin:

And so when you look at these beatitudes, think about this, who would not want to be ... Ladies, who would not want to be married to a man that's humble. Who humbles in thirst for righteousness. Who is merciful. Who is pure in heart. Who's a peacemaker. Who, when they're persecuted, they respond not with vengeance, but grace; not with anger but prayer? Who wouldn't want their children to live and be like this? Who themselves would not want to be like this. And so happiness is more about what Jesus does in us and through us, by His grace, to make us a people that reflect His goodness.

Derwin:

The good life is a good God living innocent through us. And happiness is not about what we accomplish, but about what God is accomplishing in us to make our hearts like his. Psalm 16 verse 11 says this, "*You reveal the path of life to me and your presence is abundant joy.*" So notice what Solomon's says here. And of course, Jesus in His humanity is Jewish. As God, he wrote the Psalms through the Solomons and notice what he says to us, "*In your presence is abundant joy.*" Not in all the good things that happens to me. Not in my kids are going to be perfect. Not in my marriage is going to be perfect. Not in everything's going to go the way I want it to go.

Derwin:

It says, "*In your presence is abundant joy.*" The good life is allowing the presence of God to mold us and to shape us, to heal our hurts, to bandage our wounds. But then send us into the world, as the fragrance of His abundant joy because of His presence. So anybody that knows me and Transformation Church, knows this about me. That, when I'm in the lobby, in pre-Corona, I'm hugging people, I'm giving high fives, and shaking heads. People know that when they get about two feet within Derwin Gray, they're going to smell this, vanilla. They are going to smell vanilla.

Derwin:

And here's why: because I go to Bath and Body Works, and I got vanilla shower gel. I got vanilla lotion. And I've got vanilla spray. You know why? Because that fragrance emanates off of me because it's present in me. So when we sit at Jesus's feet and we soak in the Beatitudes, we are soaking in His presence, and joy or happiness is the fragrance of us simply being with Him. Please understand this: God wants our being much more than our doing. Our precious beloved sisters, please hear a brother, because women have almost an impossible task in today's culture.

Derwin:

One, you have to be like beautiful, like an airbrush magazine cover. Two, you've got to be the perfect mom and your kids have got to speak German and French by the time they're 18 years. You've got to homeschool, plus you got to have a job and ... Like, you can never ever get all these ... It's simply impossible. And so God is going ... "I'm not asking the impossible of you. I want you to relish in the one who is the impossible, and His name is Jesus." Let His presence transform you. And it says, "*At your right hand are eternal pleasures.*" And so happiness and the good life is more about God's presence and how His presence among us begins to shape us into people that are merciful.

Derwin:

And then number three, embracing that happiness and holiness are two sides of the same coin. Lysa TerKeurst, the guru herself, [inaudible] and I were working with her with the COMPEL Training, and she read in my book where it said, "happiness and holiness are two sides of the same coin." And she said,

"Derwin, you have got to let people understand this." Because oftentimes as Christians, depending upon the tradition we come from, we think holiness is, "I don't go to the movies. If I'm a woman, I don't wear make-up or pants." It is absolutely ridiculous. Holiness means this: first, God sets us apart as His.

Derwin:

So, when Jesus dies for us, when Jesus bleeds on us, when Jesus raises up, when Jesus extends His nail-pierced hands to us, we are adopted into God's family. So holiness means, "I am now set apart for God's purposes and not my own." Secondly, it means that we are clean, that we are without blemish, that the blood of Jesus has presented us as perfect and blameless. Oh my gosh, that is such good news. And then thirdly, it means this: that now my character begins to develop as a whole person. A whole person grows in loving God, grows in loving themselves, and grows in loving their neighbor.

Derwin:

And your neighbor includes your enemy, it includes your haters, it includes people who have hurt you, it includes learning to forgive. And here's what's beautiful: when you and I learn to forgive, someone gets set free from prison. And that someone is us. When Jesus says in Matthew 5:44-45. When he says, "*Love your enemies.*" When we love our enemies, we are the one that's healed, because our hearts were not created for hate. And so happiness and holiness ... So when Jesus goes through these eight characteristics of the good life, He's saying, "Not only will you be happy, but you'll be holy."

Derwin:

And when you're happy and you're holy, that's the good life. And it becomes attractive to those who need to know Jesus, starting in your homes, starting in your relationships. The best discipleship that we can do with our children is not what's taught, it's what's caught. So often we think we're given lessons when we sit down, but when we live, we're giving the greatest lesson. And so what I've tried to do in *The Good Life* is just walk people through these characteristics of the good life. And I have written my book in such a way that I want women to connect with the good life.

Derwin:

And here's why, because women read books and women get men to read books. When my wife told me to read a book, guess what Derwin did? I read a book. You know why? Because I trust her and I love her. And so I wrote this book in such a way that women can connect. And also, I have a heart for women to walk in their destiny, to walk in their callings. And when you look at the New Testament, the first woman that Jesus told that He was the Jewish Messiah was a woman who... Was the Samaritan. So He wasn't supposed to do that, because Jews and Samaritans had this racial conflict.

Derwin:

Two, she had been married five times and was living with a man. Yet Jesus took her life and used her throughout history to be the first person that He told was the Jewish Messiah. Secondly, when all the Jewish disciples were scared and running after Jesus was crucified, the first person who sees His resurrection was Mary. A woman. The first person to herald that Jesus is Lord, and that He rose from the dead was not a man. It was a woman. And so I wanted to write this book where women of all ages could connect, because I want them to get their men to read it.

Derwin:

Here's the big idea. And here's what I want us to marinate on as we transition to some Q and A. I want you to marinate on this. The happiness that you long for is found in becoming the person you were created to be. When we embrace that truth, Jesus will use the good life. He will use how I wrote the book to begin to transform us from the inside out. At the end of every chapter, I have some exercises called "Marinate on This." It opens with a prayer. I have some reflection questions. Then I have some big ideas to remember.

Derwin:

And then at the end of the book, which I'm super excited about, is I have the Happiness Manifesto, where every day you get up and you recite this incredible manifesto that you're choosing happiness on God's terms in God's way, in God's grace. And then I have A 30-Day Happiness Challenge, where for 30 days, I challenged the reader to read the Beatitudes for 30 straight days, so that we can soak in its goodness and be transformed by it. I believe this book is going to transform the world.

Kaley:

Hmm. That's great. Derwin, I'd love... I'm going to say this, really slow for everyone to hear, because it's such a paradigm for us. And that is, the happiness you long for is found in becoming the person you were created to be. And that is just a powerful statement because that is not at all what the world tells us, right? The world has... It's just like you opened up: the world told you, you got to get the money and the ladies, and the place of prominence and importance. And it's got to start with the example of what you've taught here today. Exactly what you talk about in your book is this change in our hearts and in our minds. And so Derwin, I have a question for you.

Derwin:

Yes.

Kaley:

And that is, what does that look like on a daily basis? Like, once you're shifting the paradigm in your heart and in your mind, what are some of those practical things that you do to kind of make the change?

Derwin:

Yeah, yeah. So what I learned through my football career is this: the scene of the crime is your mind. The scene of the crime is your mind. Whatever you give your attention to is where your energy goes. And Romans 12:2, "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" We begin with a simple prayer, "God help me see what you see, help me be what you've called me to be, live your life through me." And we have to start with understanding that Jesus is not our divine butler. I think a lot of times it's kind of like, "Jesus, I'm inviting you into my story and I want you to bless it." That's not the way of Jesus.

Derwin:

Jesus is a King. He's the King of glory. He is loving and He is kind, and He is gracious, and Jesus has a kingdom that He wants to build. So He's inviting us into His story. So the first thing practically is, ask the Holy Spirit to move you from being self-centered to Jesus-centered. And so being Jesus-centered means, "I want His will. I want His way. And I want His power to be able to accomplish it." So that's the first thing practically. And then the second thing is we have to move from doing to being. We automatically start with, "Well, what do I do? What do I do? What do I do?"

Derwin:

And what I want to say is let's pause with what do I do and reflect more on what Jesus has done. One of my core convictions, and I've been in ministry now for two decades, is I'm overly concerned when I hear Christians talking about what they need to do, what they don't do, how they're going to be blessed, and God's going to do this for me, but they don't talk very much about the cross. They don't talk very much about the resurrection. They don't talk very much about Jesus' redemptive work.

Derwin:

And when you read the Bible, that's all the apostles talked about. And so we need people who are intoxicated and captivated by the redemptive work of Jesus. Like, think about this. Many of us suffer from being perfectionist. And the reality is this: we know we can't, but yet we still try. Jesus comes, and for 33 years, He lived the perfect life we could never live. Hebrews 10:14 says this, "*By one offering, Jesus made forever perfect, all those who are being made holy.*" Jesus is my enough. Jesus is my perfection.

Derwin:

So think about this. Here's a very practical thing. Let's say, ladies, your husband makes you feel unloved. And you're very tempted to show him disrespect because he made you feel unloved. Because husbands and wives need love and respect. That's Ephesians 5:33, right? So you want to just zap him back. But instead of doing that, you remember this, "But God is rich in mercy. While God was merciful to me, maybe I can be merciful to my husband."

Kaley:

Hmm, that's good.

Derwin:

... you know?

Kaley:

Yeah —

Derwin:

And so the practicality of it is walking by faith. But you can't walk by faith in something you're not giving your best energy to your mind, to the scene of the crime — is your mind. That's why it's important that we must be transformed with the renewing of our mind. I am utterly captivated with the person of Jesus Christ. Derwin Gray is not a big deal; Jesus Christ is the big deal. Everything that I do flows from by God's grace. Anything that's good for me and out of me comes out of the one who bled for me.

Meredith:

So good.

Kaley:

So good, Derwin. My word, there is so much to chew on from this episode. I think I'm going to go back and listen to it multiple times. And can I say thank you for ... I feel so affirmed as a woman in ministry. After hearing you preach and open my eyes. I went to Bible college and I have never heard that story of

when Mary sat at Jesus's feet. I had never heard that. And that really blessed me a lot, honestly. I know that this message, written by a man Derwin Gray, it's going to my heart in a really powerful way. And I've seen the way that you affirm and encourage your wife.

Kaley:

And it just means a lot to me. And I know our listeners ... many of them have not experienced that, from a man in authority and a man in ministry. And so thank you for modeling that and letting that out. And being such a humble man of integrity, 'cause I have seen it with our Proverbs 31 Board, and I've seen it here in Charlotte with your family and your community. And it has really spoken a lot to me. So thanks for being on the show today —

Derwin:

— Thank you!

Kaley:

... and I think it's really going to bless a lot of people. It has certainly blessed my heart this morning and I just want to encourage all of our listeners: go out and get the book, because this is a big deal. It's going to change a lot of lives and a lot of hearts by changing a lot of minds as we focus more on Jesus and spend more time with him. You can get that book anywhere books are sold: Amazon, Barnes and Noble. Any of those places, go check it out.

Meredith:

Yes, absolutely. And you guys, don't forget about the study options we gave you at the top of the show about First 5 and online Bible studies. You can find out more information about how to join both for free at [proverbs31.org/study](http://proverbs31.org/study).

Kaley:

And I think that's a wrap folks. [Inaudible] message helps you know the Truth of God's Word and live out that Truth, because we know that when you do, it really will change everything. Thanks for being with us.