

the  
**PROVERBS 31**  
MINISTRIES  
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

Copyright 2018 Proverbs 31 Ministries. All rights reserved.

Meredith: Hi, everyone. It's Meredith, and I wanted to thank Dwell for supporting the *Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*. Visit [DwellApp.io/Proverbs](https://DwellApp.io/Proverbs) to get a 20% discount and start using your ears to renew your mind. That's [DwellApp.io/Proverbs](https://DwellApp.io/Proverbs) for 20% off an annual or a lifetime subscription. Now, onto the show.

Welcome back to the *Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*, where we share biblical Truth for any girl in any season. I'm your host, Meredith Brock. And today, I am here with my cohost, Kaley Olson.

Kaley: Well, hi, Meredith. It's great to be back in the studio with you today on this lovely fall morning. Last time we recorded, you and I started to joke about how we say things because I'm from the South and you're from the Idaho. Where is Idaho?

Meredith: Oh boy. You [crosstalk].

Kaley: Does it count as the Midwest?

Meredith: You southerners [crosstalk] would ask that question. It's in the Northwest. And I'm neighbors with Washington and Oregon.

Kaley: I feel like I see that in my mind, but Idaho sounds like one of the Midwest states to me.

Meredith: No, it's really not.

Kaley: Okay.

Meredith: We love our potatoes, but we do not ... We are not in the Midwest. We are in the Northwest.

Kaley: I'm sorry. Did I just offend you when I asked that question?

Meredith: No.

Kaley: Sorry if anybody else is listening from Idaho. I respect [crosstalk].

Meredith: ... about Idaho so much. But we like it that way. It's the hidden secret of the United States because it's beautiful.

Kaley: Uh-huh.

Meredith: I loved growing up there.

Kaley: Yeah.

Meredith: Loved it.

Kaley: Well, I've been to Washington, and I like Washington a lot.

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: So I'm sure it's beautiful. But one thing that I think some people know about you is that you're from there, but you moved to not Charlotte. You moved to Columbia, right?

Meredith: Yes, the South.

Kaley: A while—

Meredith: Yes.

Kaley: A while ago.

Meredith: Yes.

Kaley: And you had to learn all the Southern lingo.

Meredith: Yes, it was very traumatic for me.

Kaley: And you joke about that all the time. But I feel like you say “ya'll.”

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: And you say things like that.

Meredith: This just happened in the last three years, guys. And I've been in the South for over 15 years now.

Kaley: That's crazy.

Meredith: I know. It's wild.

Kaley: That's crazy. So you've gotten used to “ya'll.”

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: But let's talk about a little bit more lingo, okay?

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: So I want to test your knowledge of Southern lingo.

Meredith: I've noticed.

Kaley: So I'm going [inaudible]. I feel like this is the cheesiest game we've ever done on the podcast before.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: But I'm excited about it.

Meredith: Okay. I'm ready.

Kaley: So if you're a listener, and you're listening to this, play along with us. Okay.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: So first question, the expression, "All get out," used in a sentence like, "She's as smart as all get out" means what?

Meredith: I don't know, but I'm going to guess that it means a lot.

Kaley: Yes.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: That's true.

Meredith: She's a lot smart.

Kaley: Yes. Yes. And like, "She's pretty as all get out." That just [crosstalk].

Meredith: Where did that come from?

Kaley: I really don't know.

Meredith: Somebody listening to the podcast today needs to tell us where in the world that phrase came from, because that is very interesting. I'm sure there's some history behind it that we don't know.

Kaley: I'm sure there is.

Meredith: But it really doesn't make any sense.

Kaley: No, it doesn't.

Meredith: Because what does, "All get out?"

Kaley: I don't know.

Meredith: It's bizarre.

Kaley: I really don't know.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: Next one, what does, "Hold your horses" mean?

Meredith: Keep your horses from running away.

Kaley: In a very Meredith Enneagram 8 fashion ...

Meredith: Yes.

Kaley: ... if your little girl was running off to go do something without thinking about it ...

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: ... and she was really excited and impassioned about it, you would say, "Ho, hold your horses, Cyrus."

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: That means, "Slow down."

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: "Slow your roll."

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: "Be patient. Let's figure this out."

Meredith: I'd probably start, "Hey girlfriend, slow your roll."

Kaley: Okay. So, "Slow your roll" is like, "Hold your horses." Okay, okay. This next word is funny. If something is cattywampus, what does that mean?

Meredith: The word sounds ridiculous, so I'm going to say it's ridiculous.

Kaley: It means it's off-kilter.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: Not straight.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: Like, "Hey, your line's a little cattywampus."

Meredith: Yeah. Ridiculous.

Kaley: Yeah, probably like my drawing skills. Okay.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: When my mom says, "I'm fit to be tied," what does she mean?

Meredith: You're mad.

Kaley: That's very true.

Meredith: Okay.

Kaley: That's very true. So can you imagine [crosstalk].

Meredith: Oh boy.

Kaley: ... my little mom with her hair up in a bun [crosstalk].

Meredith: Oh, yes.

Kaley: ... in the kitchen ...

Meredith: Yes.

Kaley: ... burnt chicken.

Meredith: Yeah.

Kaley: "I'm fit to be tied."

Meredith: Yeah, yeah.

Kaley: There she goes. Okay. And then lastly ...

Meredith: I'm ready.

Kaley: When I go to the store, I'm going to put my groceries in what?

Meredith: Oh, man. Don't get me started on this one, people. It's a shopping cart. If you call it a buggy, you are confused.

Kaley: But you have to admit that that's a Southern thing to do ...

Meredith: Oh, it's so Southern.

Kaley: ... is call it a buggy.

Meredith: And when I first moved to the South, I was like, "A buggy? A buggy?"

Kaley: I know.

Meredith: "What?" And then the same thing, why [crosstalk].

Kaley: Why what?

Meredith: ... you sweet Southern people call it a pocketbook?

Kaley: I don't call it a pocketbook.

Meredith: You all, that is a purse. It is a purse if I've ever seen one. A pocketbook would imply that it would fit in your pocket, and most of you fine Southern women are not carrying a purse that will fit in your pocket.

Kaley: No, it's like the higher the hair, the closer the heaven, the bigger the purse [crosstalk].

Meredith: Oh, all these things.

Kaley: All of the things [crosstalk].

Meredith: All these things.

Kaley: Thank you for playing along with me. If you're listening and you enjoyed our game or you have more feedback on all the Southern lingo that Meredith needs to know [crosstalk].

Meredith: Please, teach me your ways.

Kaley: ... teach her @MeredithBrock on Instagram, and let her know that you're listening.

Meredith: So fun. I really do love the South. After living down here for 15+ years, I have come to love this place.

Kaley: I'm glad.

Meredith: So thank you, lovely Southern people, for welcoming me and all my Northwestern ways.

Kaley: You're welcome. I'm glad you're here.

Meredith: I hope I don't offend you every day. Well, I'm excited about our teaching today.

Kaley: Yeah. Me too.

Meredith: Are you? We have a really special guest with us today. Her name is Melissa Spoelstra. She is part of our Proverbs 31 family.

Kaley: Uh-huh.

Meredith: Melissa, welcome to the show.

Melissa: Thanks. I'm so happy to be here.

Kaley: Well, Melissa, we are very excited you're here. So why don't you go ahead and tell us where you're joining us from, since we clearly are joining you guys from Charlotte in the South.

Melissa: Well, I appreciate all of your Southern talk because I grew up my whole life in Texas, but I've lived in Ohio for over 20 years now. So I think I have to claim Ohio. So I'm coming at you here from the middle of the Midwest. This actually is the Midwest, Kaley.

Meredith: Yes, I love that.

Kaley: Thank you.

Meredith: A lot of people think when I say I'm from Idaho, they're like, "Ohio." I'm like, "No, no, no. Idaho and Ohio are different places."

Melissa: There you go. There you go.

Meredith: So that's great.

Kaley: Well, one thing that I love about Melissa being able to join us from Ohio is that, at Proverbs, we are really a global ministry.

Meredith: That's right.

Kaley: And so Melissa is part of our First 5 writing team and has been for how long, Melissa?

Melissa: I was just talking to Hannah about that the other day. It was early 2018.

Kaley: Wow.

Melissa: So it's been a couple years now.

Meredith: That's great.

Kaley: That's awesome. And so what I love about what we do here at Proverbs is with First 5 or with our devotions team or the podcast, we have people joining us from all over who are able to connect through the internet and bring you God's Word, which is amazing. And so people like Melissa do that all the time.

But Melissa doesn't only do First 5 for Proverbs 31. She, on her own, is a speaker and author of seven bible studies.

Meredith: Wow.

Kaley: Which is so much. But Melissa, I'd love to know a few other fun things about yourself. So will you share some things with us?

Melissa: Sure. I said that I am a Texan, but I married a Canadian. And so I always joke that I am living in the state of compromise here in the Midwest. But we have four kids, three that are out of the house and one who is left at home. She's a senior in high school. So we are just at almost to the empty nest. We're just creeping up there.

And I would just say that I'm a Jesus girl, probably like a lot of the people on the other side of our listeners, who's just working, parenting, serving at church, and holding hope and heartache in both hands.

Meredith: I love [crosstalk] that. Well, Melissa, we're so excited to have you here today. And if our listeners have tuned in today and don't know what the First 5 app is, because we've talked about it a couple times already, we want to encourage you. It is a totally free app that will help you spend the first five minutes of every day in God's Word. Really great teachings straight from Scripture. So we would love to encourage you. Go check it out. Download it for free at any app store.

So but Melissa, without further ado, we would love for you to just jump right in.

Melissa: Sure. Well, today, we're going to talk about learning contentment in a culture of more. And I wanted to start with just giving you a tale of two houses. So when we first moved here to Columbus, my husband was a pastor and we just had our first child. He was two years old. And we started looking for our first house.

And we went through house after house after house, and we had made this list of, "Man, if we could have anything in a house, it would be three bedrooms or two bathrooms," and, "Man, if I had a fireplace or a deck." And we made this list. But as we started looking at what was available and what was on our list, we decided maybe a house is not like a spouse. There's not the one. There's just, "Do we look at all of them?"



And I remember this one particular one that we saw where we came in and there were stripes on the ceiling because the person who lived there before was a smoker and the smoke couldn't get all the way through the beams. So it was literally a black and white striped ceilings from cigarette smoke. In that same house, my husband went out on the back deck and went down the stairs, and his foot went through a stair. So he grabbed the two railings and the railings came off in his hands.

Kaley: Oh, no.

Melissa: And all of the bedrooms were really dark colors like navy blue and really dark maroon. And then we went down to the basement of that house, and there was ... the carpet was wet with cat pee and urine. And we were like, "Whoa."

And then so we just looked at all these different houses and we were like, "Okay. I guess we just pick the best one." And so we found one about 25 minutes from the church. It was a little further than we wanted it to be. But we were like, "Yeah, it doesn't have as many bathrooms as we wanted and there's no deck and no fireplace, but you just don't always get everything on your list. This is your starter home."

But three hours before we were going to put a contract on this further away house that wasn't everything on our list, our senior pastor got a call from someone who had been a missionary, and he had had a rent house that was near our church. And he said, "I would really love to sell it to someone in ministry and give them a good deal." And this was just like, "Wow. This is crazy."

And so we went and saw that house, and it had everything on our list. It had the deck, it had the three bedrooms, it had the ... But I tell you that story to say that those two houses were the same house. So the one with the crazy deck and the cat pee in the basement was the house that checked everything on our list.

And so this brings us to res that perspective is key to reaching contentment, because I don't think I would have had the eyes to see that crazy house. It just needed lipstick and rouge. It needed new carpet and we put a bunch of nails in the deck and eventually tore that one down and built a whole other one. But we lived in that house for 20 years.

Kaley: Wow.

Melissa: And raised our kids in that house, brought three more kids home from the hospital to that place. But sometimes, when we look at our lives, we see just all of the junky stuff that's hard, right? Our foot goes through the step or we don't like the smell or the look of the way things look initially. But we have to have perspective, and we need God's perspective to be able to be content sometimes and to see past.

I love how Jesus said, "*Look beneath the surface so that you'll be able to judge correctly.*" And the hard thing is that we live in this culture that's doing the dance of bigger, better, faster, more. I am a jazzercise girl. I have been for like 20 years. And we do this thing called a box step. And as we do a box step, I'm like, "This is the dance of

our culture, bigger, better, faster, more. Bigger, better, faster, more." And what that box step does is it can get your heart rate up, but you don't get anywhere.

And Jesus, He's called us to walk with Him. And I love that the Apostle Paul gives us some insight into this issue of contentment. He said in Philippians 4:11-13. He said, "*I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learnt the secret of living in every situation, whether it's with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little, for I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.*"

And I love a couple things about this passage. He says, "I learned it." It wasn't like, "I was just born content and it just came naturally to me." But he said, "*I had to learn this,*" just like my daughter — how to learn how to do a back handspring and my son had to practice the piano so he could learn the keys. When it comes to contentment, it is a skill that we could learn.

Now, when he said the secret of contentment, I was like, "Well, is God hiding this thing in His bottom dresser drawer? Is He hiding this thing out on us? Why is it a secret?" But as I look and uncover the Greek word there, it's actually something to be discovered with awe or wonder. But God wants us to discover contentment with awe or wonder.

And don't we ... We all know this last verse, "*For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me strength.*" I see people when they're running a marathon with that shirt, and you're going to need that if you're running a marathon. That's crazy talk.

But for all of those things that we say, "For I can do everything with Christ who gives me strength," yes, it applies in so many different areas of life. But if we go back to the context, it was written in the context of contentment, the ability to say, "Enough." And so we learn that contentment can be learned, but then how do we do it?

And so the first thing is just identifying how serious this issue of contentment is, because the opposite of contentment is complaining. And we can become very cavalier about complaining. I know it's like the socially acceptable sin. It's like, "Oh, well, I'm not doing the nasty nine or these other things that are really serious. I'm just maybe mumbling and grumbling a little bit about things."

But we really can learn from the story of the Israelites who wandered in the wilderness about the serious nature of complaining. And when I really dug into this for the first time is when I was doing a study on the book of Numbers. Now, I know that's the book where you've highlighted all your favorite numbers. Just love the book of Numbers.

But actually, it is a narrative, and it does ... And we can look to the New Testament, where God points to how much He wanted us to know this story. The story of the Israelites in the wilderness is the most quoted story in all of the New Testament. And in his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul said this in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 1. He said, "*I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them and*

*all of them walked through the sea on dry ground."* I'm going to skip down to verse 6. It says, *"These things happened as a warning to us so that we would not crave the evil things they did."*

And if I jump down to verse 10, it says, *"And don't grumble as some of them did and then were destroyed by the angel of death."* These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. So I think our journey to contentment begins with just realizing that we don't want to become cavalier about complaining, to realize that this was a serious issue to God.

Now, we know that the Israelites in the wilderness also were committing idolatry and rebellion. But every time this story's mentioned, they're grumbling. Their lack of contentment ... Because God was providing for them. He gave them manna to eat, and He provided shoes for their feet, and He delivered them from slavery. But instead of seeing God's care and God's blessings, they just mumbled and grumbled about the annoyances that went along with it.

And complaining is hard. And there's really two main enemies, I think, in the life of the Israelites in the Book of Numbers, but also in yours and my life when it comes to contentment. And the first enemy to contentment is comparison. And as we look as those Israelites in the wilderness, they were looking back going, "In Egypt, we had onions and we had leeks and we had all these spices. And here, all we have is this manna." Scripture described manna as the food of heaven, the food of angels, and that it tasted like honey cakes.

But I know that if I fed my kids the same meal, even if it was their favorite meal, every night for dinner, eventually they'd probably start to complain. And so the people in the wilderness just started to look back on the past. Sometimes, we compare to other people, but sometimes we compare to the good old days, back when it was different in our culture or this wasn't a problem. And as we compare, when we start looking sideways, that's when we aren't content.

And boy, is that ever an issue today as we think about social media, and we're seeing everyone else's highlight reel, and we're living our bloopers, right? We're dealing with our stuff. And nobody puts on social media about their kids' socks that are left all over the house or the petty argument they just had with their husband. Instead, it's like, "Oh, I just went on this trip, and God is so good" and all of it, the great things that happen.

And so we can't compare the inside of our life with the outside of everybody else's. But it can be tempting in this culture of bigger, better, faster, more to compare. So that's the first enemy.

And I remember when I first started talking women through this teaching of contentment on Numbers. One of them said, "I didn't think complaining was my issue. I thought it was worry." And she said, "What I realized through looking at this story of the Israelites is that worry is just complaining in advance."

Meredith: Wow.

Melissa: Worry and complaining are sisters. And they have one other sister. Her name is gossip. And I've had women say, "I didn't know my issue was complaining. I thought it was gossip." But gossip is just complaining with an audience.

Meredith: Wow.

Melissa: And so we have to be careful as we look at complaining to realize it can come out in the form of worry and gossip, and that God takes these things seriously. So comparing, comparison is an enemy that we need to be aware of when we're talking about contentment.

The other one is circumstances, and I just mean the difficulty of living life here. When we talk about contentment, the last thing we want to do is say, "Put on your plastic smile and just pretend everything's easy," when we know it's not.

I am not a camper. I do not like camping. And I look at these Israelites in the wilderness. These women, every day, camping for year after year after year; I think I would complain. I think that I would be like, "Yeah, I don't want to live outside anymore, God. I would like to have a house," or, "Hey, these ..."

This was a million people traveling together, and I'm sure it wasn't easy. And even in the midst of that, there was all the regular hard stuff of life. My husband and I did take our kids camping when they were little because kids just love to camp. And we'd come home, and I remember my husband going, "Camping is like everything you normally have to do at home, except it's harder. It's just [crosstalk]."

Meredith: Yeah.

Melissa: "... clothes that have to be washed and just all of the things that are going on." So I want to say about circumstances that being content does not mean that we don't get to lament. Biblical lament is something that we want to do. And as I think about this in my life, I think about my daughter. When she was in ... One of my twins, when she was in seventh grade, she lost all of the hair on her body due to an autoimmune disorder called alopecia. And it was really hard to be 12 years old and trying to figure out who you are. And she had identical twin sister so she could look across the room and every day say, "That's what I would look like with hair and eyelashes and eyebrows." And it was just a really difficult time in her circumstances.

And I remember one day saying, "Wow, you had a hard day. Tell me about it and let's pray about it." And she said, "Mom, I don't want to pray about it anymore." And I ... Not what any mother ever wants to hear, right? "I'm done with God." But she said ... I said, "Why would you say that, baby?" And she said, "All my life, you guys have taught me that God is good, that He loves me. And all my life, you've taught me that God is all powerful, that He can do anything. And I have begged him to give me my hair back. And so either He can't or He won't."

And that's a tough place to be. And I think as followers of Jesus, we got to be careful of not just saying, "Let the sun shine in and face it with a grin. It's all good." And in that moment, I remember just feeling like, "Lord, I have no words for my girl here. What would You have me say?" And I just said, "Baby, I have no idea why your hair has fallen out, and I have no idea why God has not seen fit to give it back to you. But this, I do know. You can sit in your misery, and you can make everyone around you miserable, or you can just dare to hope with the smallest seed of faith that somehow God is in this, that He will use this, that He will not waste."

And I will tell you that sometimes that girl sat in her misery and made everybody miserable, but sometimes she dared to believe that God would use it. And she's 20 years old now. She's studying missions because she found hope. She dared to hope in her circumstances. And it didn't mean she didn't lament a lot through the process. But you know what Abby would tell you if she was here with us today? She would sit here and she would say, "My greatest trial became my greatest triumph. It was the thing that God used to show me that I had Him and He was everything for me."

And so in this battle with complaining and with contentment, it is hard. Let's just acknowledge. Let's lament and say, "There are some things in life that just ... It isn't fair, or it doesn't seem right. And we can either sit in our misery, or we can look and hold on to hope in God."

Meredith: Hey, guys. I hope you're getting so many good notes from Melissa's teaching, and we're going to get right back to her teaching in just a moment. Before we do, I want to take a second and talk about the Dwell Bible app. In times when we're fighting for contentment, settling our heart through Scripture is the best way to start. The Dwell Bible is a great resource to add to your quiet time and features tons of listening plans to continue your daily habit of engaging with God.

I also love that the Dwell app keeps track of all my favorites, what plans I'm listening to, everything I've recently listened to, and more. That makes it easy for me to go back and revisit Scriptures where the Lord has specifically spoken something encouraging to me. I think you all are going to really love it.

So visit [DwellApp.io/Proverbs](https://DwellApp.io/Proverbs) to get a 20% discount and start using your ears to renew your mind. That's [DwellApp.io/Proverbs](https://DwellApp.io/Proverbs) for 20% off an annual or lifetime subscription. And now, back to the show.

Melissa: Moses is such a great example of that. He had so much complaining just directed right at him by these million people coming at him. But I think something that we can learn from him in our difficulties is to expect the unexpected when we want to combat complaining.

As a young mom with my little kids, no one could have ever told me that one of my greatest heartaches was going to be walking through this with hair loss. I just would have been like, "No, no. That's ... I'm sure other things will be hard, but I can't imagine that will be what will happen."

And for others who are listening, I'm sure you didn't expect the divorce that you walked through. I'm sure you didn't expect the cancer diagnosis or a global pandemic. I don't know that anyone could have ever called that thing, right?

And so to expect the unexpected, Moses in Numbers in Chapter 13 ... And I do want to read us verses 25-33 here, because this is where Moses got, I think, his most unexpected thing going on. You see, they've been in the wilderness all these years, they've been traveling around, and he's been dealing with the people's complaints. But they are just on the precipice, about to go into the promised land.

And he took his 12 best guys. I think the spies that went in were not ... There weren't slim pickings for leaders here. There's a million people. These are his guys. And he's not lacking faith to go in and spy out the land. He is believing they are going to walk in and take it. He's just sending in his guys to come back and to rally the troops. But what happened was not what he expected.

It says, "After exploring the land for 40 days, the men would turn to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and they showed them the fruit that they had taken from the land. And this was their report to Moses: *"We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country, a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. But the people living there are powerful and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak."*

It goes on to say, *"There's all these other people living. But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. 'Let's go at once and take the land,' he said. 'We can certainly conquer.' But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed, 'We can't go up against them. They are stronger than we are.' So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites, 'The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them, we felt like grasshoppers.' And that's what they thought, too."*

And so as we talk about that perspective is key to finding contentment, rather than defaulting to complaining, when it comes to our challenges, we have to decide what kind of lens. That's what perspective is about, right?

Meredith: Mm-hmm.

Melissa: The lens. And so I wish that you guys could see. I have these huge, giant glasses. You know those funny ones you get at the dollar store that are way too big for anyone's head?

Kaley: Yes.

Meredith: Right.

Melissa: They're usually orange or funny, big, bright colors. When we put those giant glasses on, it's when we focus on the problems, where we just see whatever it is that's going on in our life as bigger than God and we just go, "It's a giant," and just all we do is think about and talk about and camp out on the problem we're facing.

But we can also sometimes put on what I call the grasshopper glasses. This is where they said, "Hey, next to them, we looked like grasshoppers." This is not where we focus on the problem, but we focus on our own inadequacy. You know that negative self-talk that we do to ourselves sometimes? We can be so nice to all of our friends and all of our family, and then when we get in our own head, we just tear ourselves down. Why'd we say that? Why'd we wear that? What'd we do? We can't. And we wear the glasses of inadequacy, the grasshopper glasses.

And what Moses had to ultimately do was put on the God glasses. Caleb had them on, and so did Joshua, the only two of the 12 spies that were able to have perspective in the midst of trial, to focus on God, and to say, "Nothing is too big for him. There's no giant he can't take down. And yes, I'm inadequate, but he is more than enough in my life."

And I know I read the story of the Israelites and I'm like, "God, why couldn't they just go into a land that wasn't occupied with giants and people? Why couldn't it just be empty and prepared and ready for them?" And don't we think that in our lives sometimes? Why does it have to be so hard? Why do I feel like I have to battle for contentment and battle to get through whatever it is that's going on in my day? And for whatever, God allows us to do that and asks us to focus our eyes on him and to lean into him.

And ultimately, they won those battles. Took them some time. They had to spend 40 years in the wilderness wandering before they got to go in. And I love this, what ... In the book *Lord, Change My Attitude*, it says, "Those who choose complaining as their lifestyle will spend their lifetime in the wilderness." And the wilderness is just that picture of not the victorious Christian life. The promised land in Scripture is not a picture of heaven. It's the picture of living in victory and in hope and in contentment in the midst of our battles and our difficulties. They had to keep battling even after they got into the land and won it. They still always had enemies all around them.

And you and I are always in that place where we can either, like my daughter, say, "I'm going to sit in my misery and make everybody around me miserable and complain and be negative, or, instead, I am going to be content. I'm going to look for where God is at work. I'm going to believe that he can do the impossible, and I'm just going to not wear ... I'm going to take off my giant glasses. I'm going to take off my grasshopper glasses, and I am going to say, "God, what do you have in this?"

And what's so cool about complaining and contentment both is that they're contagious. We see in Numbers. First, the foreigners in Numbers chapter 11 are the ones who are complaining and, "Oh, I wish we could go back to Egypt, that place of slavery where we had no freedom," right? And then, you find the Israelites doing it two verses later. And then, just a few verses down, Moses is complaining. And then you see Aaron and Miriam in the next chapter complaining. And you see just this contagious.

And we get it, don't we? Our kids come home, and if they start complaining, maybe then our husband, puts him in a bad mood, and he starts complaining. And before we know it, we find ourselves. But the opposite is also true. Contentment is contagious. We can be the ones who say, "Wow. I'm going to choose to see God's hand in this." And so many times, as I've talked with women about this issue of complaining and contentment, what we realize and discover together is that, many times, we complain about the slight annoyance associated with God's greater blessing. And so we want to be the people that point out and focus on where God is at work and the enough that He has given us.

So ...

Meredith: So good, Melissa. My word. Kaley and I have both taken full pages of notes while [crosstalk].

Kaley: Lots of notes.

Meredith: ... while you've been teaching. I can't help but think one of the things that I wrote down is that, as believers, we are always living in the tension of pushing past what our earthly eyes see in order to see the reality of the Kingdom.

Kaley: Yes. So true.

Meredith: And it's so hard. It takes true discipline, and it is a discipline of redirecting our thoughts and our words. And that redirecting really is ... This is what the spies did. That is faith. The intentional redirecting of our thoughts and words without actually experiencing the promise yet is faith. And that is so hard because you don't see it, you don't experience it yet.

And I think that [crosstalk].

Melissa: Wouldn't it be so much better to walk by sight, right?

Meredith: Oh my gosh. It would be [crosstalk].

Melissa: ... to all be laid out. But God has called us to not walk by sight.

Meredith: That's right.

Melissa: But to walk by faith.

Meredith: That's right. And it really is a discipline to redirect our thoughts. I think about — I have a 5-year-old little girl who is the cutest human being you've ever seen. But she also really has a propensity to complain, very much a complaining ... I don't know. It's surprising because I have a 9-year-old little boy who's totally different.



But when Cyrus wakes up in the morning, every single morning, she literally flops out of the bed, flops her whole body out of her bed, and then she finds ... There is something that she's going to complain about. It could be that she's still tired. It could be that her feet are cold. It could be that she doesn't want to go to school. Any of those things. And it's like [crosstalk].

Melissa: It sounds like you're describing my high schooler.

Meredith: But she's five, you all. And my husband and I have had these conversations, because I was like, "We've got to nip this in the bud, because we can't let this become a habit that's developed in her life."

And so I have started ... I started doing it when she was in preschool, because even when she was little, little, she would do this. And on our drive to school, she would always find something to complain about. And I would sing these silly songs. I'm forgetting it all of sudden. But, oh, "This is the day. This is day that [crosstalk]."

Melissa: There you go.

Meredith: I would sing that when she was in preschool. I would sing it on the way to school every day, and she would get so mad at me. I was annoying to her. But I could [crosstalk].

Melissa: No, I get it. I'm a little bit older than you, so we would sing, "Count your blessings. Name them one by one [crosstalk]."

Meredith: I love it.

Melissa: Old hymn.

Meredith: I love it.

Melissa: And I could just hum it when they would start complaining, and they'd roll their eyes at me.

Meredith: That's right. Well, and what I was going to say is now that she's gotten a little bit older, we're not singing nursery rhymes. I found this song by Hezekiah Walker called "I've Got a Reason." And it is a gospel song, and you all, on the way to school, I will crank it every day. And my kids get so mad at the beginning. And if I'm honest, I don't want to listen to that song either. It's early, and I'm tired, and I have only had half a cup of coffee when I ... There's like 10 more to go.

Melissa: Right.

Meredith: But I have recognized in that moment, for me, that is a discipline to help redirect my thoughts, even towards my daughter because [crosstalk].

Melissa: And you know it's contagious.

Meredith: Exactly.

Melissa: So you can set that tone.

Meredith: Exactly. So I wanted to ask you, Melissa, that's one of the practical things that I have learned to do to help myself redirect my thoughts, but also to help my children redirect their thoughts and create that habit. Are there any practical things that you have learned or that you've [crosstalk]?

Melissa: Sure. So what I ... I put together something I call the "Contentment Project," seven days, less complaining, more contentment. And it's rooted right in the book of Numbers, and the three things that were my biggest takeaways, practical ways that we can focus on contentment.

What I love about Numbers is it's this tactile book. So many times, God's like, "Tie this tassel on the end of the white garment that's blue to help you remember to obey. Build this thing, and every time you look at it, then you'll be able to obey."

So for me, I said for seven days, get either a rubber band, a hair tie, or bracelet or something and be watching yourself. And every time you complain, whether it's coming out your mouth or whether it's just in your head, move that bracelet, just doing something tactile to the other hand, and state one blessing that associated with what you complained about.

Meredith: That's great.

Melissa: So if you're complaining like, "Oh, I have so much laundry to do today," then you move that over and you go, "My family has clothes."

Meredith: That's good.

Melissa: Or, "Ugh, I have to go to the grocery store, and I don't want go," it's like, "I'm able to go buy food for my family," right?

Meredith: That's right.

Melissa: We start to realize as we're complaining. We're complaining about work. Praise God I have a job to provide or whatever it is, or, "We have to go here. Our schedule's so hectic, because our kids are able to be in all these activities. That is such a privilege and a joy."

And so through that process of just spending seven days of really honing in and thinking about, noticing when we complain, and then having that physical response, the goal is to, by the seventh day, be changing that bracelet or that hair tie way less than you were on day one by just noticing it and doing that.

And then the second part of the Contentment Project is the focus on God, and I think that is just so key to getting rid of the giant glasses and the grasshopper glasses. And so I challenge women to say, for five minutes every day for seven days ... And try to get outside if you can. There's something about being outside in just God's green world. And for five minutes, not pray for your brother, sister, cousins, dog, not your big prayer list, just thinking about God.

Sometimes, I might listen to a worship song. I might write in my journal all the things that I love about God. My latest Bible study was on the names of God. So sometimes, I'll just go through them. I love to start with the alphabet and just go, "A, You're almighty. B, You're beautiful. C, You're the Christ." Just go through the alphabet and think about who God is and what He's like and what He's done. Z can be challenging. I like to go with zebra-maker. He is a zebra maker. But by the time you get to Z, there is something it does to your brain when you really just spend some time meditating, just five minutes.

Come on. Everybody can get up five minutes earlier or stay up five minutes later and spend that time just thinking about God, because then when you go to tackle your circumstance, or you go to get on social media and you see everybody's thing, your filter then is, "Well. Oh, but my God's a provider. He's going to provide for me," or, "Oh, my God is listening. He's present. He's here. I can get through this with Him." And it does. It just changes something in us when we focus on God.

And then the third part of the Contentment Project is to just be in God's Word. It's why I love First 5. I'm such a huge proponent of First 5. I just think to spend those first five minutes of your day in God's Word. But so I do have it on my website, [MelissaSpoelstra.com](http://MelissaSpoelstra.com). You can click on the Contentment Project, and it's completely free. You can just go stick your name and email in there, and for the next seven days while you're moving your bracelet and focusing on God's character, you'll just every day in your inbox get something from God's Word that has to do with contentment and complaining, mostly from the Book of Numbers, everybody's favorite book.

But there is so much good, godly Truth in there that we can apply to our lives. And I do think, just when we spent seven days or 10 days or do something like that, it's just a reset for us to just call our mind and attention to it and to make us aware of God in this thing. And so I do think we need practical things, tactile things, focus things. And certainly, the word of God is what renews our mind and transforms us from the inside out.

Kaley: Wow. Melissa, this was so, so helpful. And I think the way that you wrapped it up and went into your seven-day Contentment Project ... That's what it is. I wanted to go between project or challenge. But it's both.

Melissa: It's both.

Kaley: I feel like that's the perfect resource for us, especially in this season as we're in as a nation and there's so much noise going on right now. To be able to pause what we're doing for a week and just spend time working on ourselves and focusing on our own

contentment and letting the Lord give us a new perspective is just the perfect thing to take us into the holiday season [crosstalk] and the new year.

But Melissa, thank you so much for coming on the show. I really appreciate you just studying and preparing for this and giving us a great teaching. But I want to connect our listeners to First 5. Again, I know we talked about it at the top of the show. But First 5 is our free mobile app, and Melissa is on the writing team, of course. But First 5 is a resource that not only gets you into God's Word in the first five minutes of your day, but it breaks down a chapter of the Bible each day at a time. And so we're not just sending you these random Scriptures. We're getting you good teachings that are all biblically based that help you understand Scripture more on your own, which is our goal here at Proverbs 31, is to help you know the Truth and live the Truth.

But in the First 5 app, we have these really cool things called Weekend Audio Teachings that's like what we do here on the podcast. And so if you're listening to this and you love Melissa's teaching, well, she is one of the teachers on our First 5 weekend teachings, along with a lot of our other writers. And what they do there is they go deeper into the Scriptures that you studied that week prior and give you an audio teaching on that.

And so it's a great resource for you to spend a little bit of your time on a Saturday or Sunday, diving deeper into God's Word. And so you can download the First 5 mobile app for free on any app store on your phone or mobile device, whatever you use.

Melissa: Yeah. Those audio teachings sound like a great companion to some yard work.

Kaley: Yes, they do.

Meredith: I'd be outside doing some yard word. I would be [crosstalk] listening to them. I love that so much. One last favor we'd love to ask our friends here on the podcast is if this podcast ministered to you today, would you leave us a review on Apple podcasts? I promise that's not just to fluff up mine and Kaley's egos. What that does is it helps the podcast get seen by more eyes. And as you know, we really ... Our mission here is to eradicate biblical poverty. So we want more and more people listening to this podcast so that they grow closer and closer to God and His kingdom comes here on Earth, right?

Kaley: Absolutely.

Meredith: That's our goal as believers. So thank you, everyone, for tuning in today. We pray that today's episode helps you know the Truth and live the Truth, because we believe that when you do, it changes everything.