

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Meredith: Hi everyone! Thanks for tuning in to *The Proverbs 31 Ministries Podcast*, where we share biblical Truth for any girl in any season. My name is Meredith Brock, and I am here with my co-host, Kaley Olsen.

Kaley: Hi, Meredith. Well friends, based on the title of this episode, you already know you're in for a treat over the next couple of weeks because "Therapy and Theology" is back. I know — so exciting. If you're not sure what the series is about, our president Lysa TerKeurst, along with our director of theological research, Joel Muddamalle, and Lysa's licensed professional counselor, Jim Cress, talk through the hard realities of life through the lens of therapy and theology.

Meredith: Now this new series is based on topics and themes from Lysa's latest book available right now called *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*. And in the writing process, Lysa and Joel worked together for over 1,000 hours of theological study because she wanted to really and truly understand and wrestle through the process of forgiveness. So you'll hear a lot more about that in today's episode.

Kaley: Yes, that's right. But before we get into our conversation, we want to remind you that if you're a parent, some of the content in the series might be too much for young ears. So if you're in the car with the kiddos, we suggest waiting to listen and process on your own. All right, friends, here is Lysa, Jim and Joel.

Lysa: Hi! Welcome to "Therapy and Theology," and we're so excited you're joining us today. This is a brand-new series for us. It's part of the material that I've written in my new book, *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*. And I've got two incredible guests with me that really aren't guests. They're my partners in "Therapy and Theology." So, of course, Joel Muddamalle, he's the director of theological research at Proverbs 31 Ministries. I have spent, how many hours would you guess studying forgiveness, just that one topic alone in the Bible seated at the table with a few other of our ministry partners, how many hours have we studied forgiveness, Joel?

Joel: Now, this is a heated debate.

Lysa: It is a heated debate.

Joel: This is actually, we don't debate much but the amount of hours of research and study in the text is definitely one of them. I think it's a safe bet to say easily 1,000 hours of research just on this.

Lysa: Absolutely. Joel actually thinks it's more, but I made him scale it back and say only 1,000.

Joel: Yeah, we're staying on the safe side.

Lysa: We're staying on the safe side and in addition to Joel Muddamalle, we have my friend and my personal counselor, Jim Cress. And I'm so excited to have you, Jim, and we won't guess how many hours of therapy —

Jim: That's confidential.

Lysa: And counseling that you and I have done together so we'll skip that part. Okay?

Jim: Sure, that's right.

Lysa: But today's topic is an important one. We're covering: What does the Bible say about forgiveness, and what does it *not* say about forgiveness? And I think, Joel, one of the reasons why we have invested the number of hours that we have in just studying the biblical text around forgiveness is because it can almost seem like there are parts of the texts that address forgiveness that can, I don't even want to say contradict one another, but provide less clarity rather than more clarity. And so we really wanted to follow the text, keep everything in the context that it was written, and seek to understand a lot of biblical principles but also seek to address some very misunderstood concepts when it comes to forgiveness according to the Bible.

And Jim, I love that you'll be able to interject into this conversation how important it is to address forgiveness appropriately, not just because we want to honor the text of the Bible but also we want to honor that when we're dealing with a topic like forgiveness we're often attaching that to instances that have caused people incredible trauma, great pain. And because healing is such a process, I want to acknowledge that we may be stepping into your life having this conversation in a time where the healing hasn't even happened yet, where the wound is so fresh that even just hearing the word "forgiveness," you may have had a response to it, a feeling like "too soon — I can't do this." And let me just say I understand. I want to encourage you to listen to this podcast today, and if you're watching it on YouTube, watch this video today just with the desire to walk toward forgiveness.

And if you're not even at the place where you're even willing to stick your toes in that direction, just lean in toward forgiveness and listen. And I do want to say right off the bat before we get into some of the deeper teaching that I understand how hard forgiveness can be. I've been through a lot of very traumatic things in the past five years that this has been such a journey for me. But the other thing that I think is important to say about forgiveness is I think it's pretty rare in my life with all the relationships that I

have that I'm not in some kind of relational pain at any given moment. And maybe that's true for all of us, relationships can be complicated; they can be delightful, but they can also be hurtful. And right now, my immediate family is good, but I've got some situations in my extended family that are hard and so painful that I'm wrestling right now, even through this, and I think each of us could say that.

So if that's where you are today, you are safe here; your questions are safe; your resistance is safe. We will tenderly hold your heart even in the midst of teaching what the Bible does and doesn't say about forgiveness. So Joel, let me read a couple of things before — I know you're going to take the lead on this discussion, but I think it's important to provide some framework around this. So I want to read seven things that I wrote in my book that we pulled out just seven sentences to provide some framework around what the Bible does and doesn't say about what forgiveness is; what forgiveness is and what it is not. Number one: Forgiveness doesn't always fix relationships, but it does help mend the hurting heart. Number two: Forgiveness is both a decision and a process, and healing is a long journey.

Forgiveness — number three: Forgiveness doesn't let the other person off the hook; it actually places them in God's hands. Number four: Forgiveness does not justify or excuse abuse ever. Number five: Forgiveness is required by God, but reconciliation is quite conditional. Number six: Forgiveness isn't an act of our determination. Forgiveness is only made possible by our cooperation with what Jesus has already done. And number seven: Forgiveness is not adding on top of our pain and misery too great to bear. It's exchanging a bound of resentment for a life-giving freedom, thus making the mystery of the workings of God too great to deny.

Joel: That's so good.

Jim: It is.

Joel: I think one of the important aspects of those principles that you laid out, and often we do this way so when we're studying the Bible, is we want to take a step back and we want to say "Okay, there are these verses that are so specific, and each verse has a context." There's a history, there's something that's going on, but one of the questions I'm often asking, that we're often asking in our study is what is the larger story? What is actually — what's God up to? And the opening pages of Scripture will always go back to Genesis 1 and 2, it's kind of right there.

Lysa: Always.

Joel: Always. And what we find is the very first act mention image, experience of forgiveness is actually the context of humanity and divinity. So we have humanity that fails to live up to the expectation standard of God. And then you have the divine God, the creator God who created man Adam and Eve, men and women in His likeness and in His image. And where they deserved consequence for their sin they were met with mercy and forgiveness. And for me, this is the lens by which the rest of the scriptures are actually

taking place. And I love what N.T. Wright says about forgiveness; here is what he says. He says forgiveness is not simply a private transaction between me and God.

Forgiveness involves being part of a community formed by forgiveness that know themselves to be people who have been rescued from Egypt, the people who have come out of the land of sin and slavery and are now in this new creation; hence, we have to forgive one another. What N.T. Wright is saying is that the story of forgiveness, when you and I participate in the act of forgiveness, is actually a participation in God's story. And I don't know about you, but that gives me such hope, and that gives me such assurance that this is not something isolated to my own experience, but we have brothers and sisters in the faith, from centuries, ages past, that have been doing this very thing because it is in view in light of what God has done.

So if you've got your Bibles, you can turn to one of the verses, and there's so many, but for the sake of time, I just want us to look at two verses; one is Colossians 3:13. And this is what the Apostle Paul says. He says in Colossians 3:13: *"bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive."* I think it's really interesting that first word, "bearing," and a coma is actually a similar word that's being used in 1 Peter 2:24. And this is what 1 Peter 2:24 says of Jesus, *"he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."* You see, there's the connection of forgiveness of our experiences and what Christ has actually done on the cross.

And so in the same way that Jesus bore the weight of sin, the weight of the transgressions of humanity, past, present, and future, in this mysterious way, Paul is saying, actually, because we're wrapped up in clothes Jesus Himself, we're equipped through the Spirit of God to bear with one another. That's a reciprocal pronoun, "one another." It means that there's an emphasis of relationship, the way that I care for you, you are actually expected to care back for me. And then we're supposed to forgive. And so here, it seems very clear that forgiveness is a command, because Jesus Himself, God in Christ has forgiven us. And at this point, there can be a bit of confusion because it feels like: Well, if forgiveness is a command, what if the other person is unrepentant?

Lysa: And what if the other person isn't sorry at all? What if they won't even acknowledge that they've hurt me — or worse yet, what if their behavior is an ongoing situation that I can draw appropriate boundaries — and not to shove them away but to hold myself together — however, they're present in my life still? And even with boundaries, the limited access they have to my heart, they continue to hurt me? And that's when forgiveness starts to feel very hard, very complicated. But I think, Jim, this is where I would love for your voice to step in too. Because I remember when I was in the throes of still a lot of uncertainty in my relationship with Art, there was just a lot of trauma.

I didn't know if I would ever have that conversation with Art, where he said he was sorry, or that he asked for my forgiveness. I had no idea that reconciliation would ever even be possible because at that point, it felt quite impossible. And I remember I walked into your office, and I don't know if you remember this or not, but you asked me a very profound question. You did not ask me, "Lysa, are you ready to forgive?" And I think it

was so appropriate that you didn't ask me that question because I think at that point my desire to be obedient to God would have made me feel like I have to say the right answer — that I'm ready to forgive when the trauma side of me just wasn't at that place. And I'm so glad that that's not the question you asked me. The question you asked me is “Lysa, do you want to heal?” And I thought it was so profound that you asked me that question. At first, it kind of confused me, because I was like, “Yes, I do want to heal.”

Jim: Who wouldn't?

Lysa: But then you said, “Today's a great day to start the conversation about forgiveness. And I remember thinking, if you are going to address with me today that today is a great day to talk about my personal hygiene, I can't remember the last time it was that I even brushed my hair or washed my hair at that point. I have a messy bun on top of my head, I look like a rag, so if you would have said like, “Hey, let's address the thought — you might want to consider washing your hair.” Then I would have said, “Yes, let's talk about that because that is very true. We do need to talk about that.” But when you attach healing and forgiveness, but you were so patient, not requiring anything from me, but helping me to see where you eventually got me is “Lysa, this doesn't rise and fall on anyone else's actions. You don't have to wait for someone to say that they're sorry. You don't even have to wait for someone else to acknowledge that what they did to you was wrong. Otherwise, you are attaching your healing to someone else's actions that you may never be able to control, and that is holding you hostage by not being able, by you thinking ‘I can't heal because I can't forgive, because the other person hasn't done what they need to do.’” And so, I want you to speak into that because I know you've done a lot of research, and then we'll get back to continuing the conversation on the Bible. But I think we've got to marry the therapy and the theology here.

Jim: The first place my mind goes, Lysa and Joel, is when Jesus is talking to the woman at the well. In my office, you've seen there's a marble statue of the scene. And He knows everything, and He is waiting deep into the dialogue talking about thirst really drawing her heart out, kind of going to her red dot, the red dots as you are here, going where she was. And then, before He asked the question, “Oh, by the way, like tell me about your husband?” Well, and then we know how that plays out. I thought: How wonderful that He didn't jump right in and say “it's this, and it's this, and you need to do that.” Really drawing the person's heart out, and when someone's in trauma and you've been betrayed, especially what we call betrayal trauma, the limbic brain, this lower part of the brain, really doesn't understand words that much in language. If someone's in that harder place, and maybe they really haven't with personal hygiene, done much self-care.

I mean, they're in this very difficult place to go directly into, it's almost, it's counterintuitive — it may be even impossible for them to even engage you in here. So to go with not forgiveness right away, but go into the wound because of forgiveness as we've talked about it with *aphiemi* at least in Greek, is to cancel the debt. To begin, to say “Let's go in to talk about the debt, but also cast a vision do you want to be healed.” And as Jesus said to the man at the pool of Bethesda, when He's there and He's laying

there, the legend was the angel troubles the water. First one in gets healed. And it's like walking into an oncology ward and say, "Anybody here want to be healed?" Of course we do.

And Jesus says, "Do you want to be well?" I've always heard that as, "Do you really, really want to be well?" And so that part is, I think to me, where you were and said you want to heal and as Joel alluded to, we'll probably get in more the tie end of forgiveness and reconciliation. Or my husband or this other person needs to do this and this and this before I can forgive them, and forgiveness is really unilateral isn't it? it's not bilateral, dependent on the other person.

Lysa: Yeah, when you say unilateral, it's between us and God. And we have to understand, and that was really my mind shift. Because when I was a little girl, what I was taught about forgiveness is the other person hurt you, then mom, the great judge, would come, and she was the referee that would say, "This person's wrong; this person's right; now, you say you're sorry and they say you forgive. Hug, make up, and go play." And that was appropriate in my little girl world, but —

Jim: Suddenly you wake up and mommy's not here between you and your spouse; there's no judge, so to speak.

Lysa: And I think I kept waiting subconsciously — in my situation, I kept waiting for someone to appear to say "This person was wrong." "This person was right." "You need to say you're sorry." "You need to say you forgive." And that's how the script of forgiveness would play out. But Joel, as we got into studying what the Scripture said, what helped me so much was understanding the Bible does not commingle the ideas of forgiveness and reconciliation. It actually untangles those because while forgiveness is a command by God, that we are to forgive, the way that the forgiveness works is we receive God's forgiveness, and we let it flow to us, and then pass through us. So we give from the forgiveness that we have already been given, it's not like we have to muster up this impossible forgiveness on our own. We are just letting God's forgiveness pass, come to us and pass through us. But while forgiveness is unconditional, reconciliation is very conditional, and it should be.

And the Bible makes provision that according to how safe you are or according to certain parameters that are abusive or even ongoing hurt that someone is unleashing on you, that they are refusing to acknowledge you don't have to keep yourself subject to that. And I make — one of my favorite verses that used to feel like one of the hardest verses was when the disciples were asking Jesus, "How many times do we have to forgive?" Isn't that such a human question? I want to carry a little scorecard around, Jim you've hurt me six times, you've got one more shot. If you hurt me seven times, we're done." But Jesus' replied that used to feel kind of harsh to me, where it says, now Jesus says "No, you forgive them 70 times seven." But the reason that used to feel harsh is because I used to think that Jesus was implying we keep ourselves in that situation, and we just keep being the bigger person.

It's like, "Oh you hurt me again; I forgive you. You hurt me again; I forgive you. Hurt me again; I forgive you." And that is not at all when I put it in the bigger picture of Scripture what I think Jesus meant. I think Jesus was encouraging us to place ourselves in as much proximity as we can or as much distance as we need with that person so that we can remain safe enough to have a harder forgiveness, even when the other person continues to hurt us over and over and over. And if that person makes that choice to hurt us over and over and over, it is okay for us to draw bigger and bigger boundaries. Again, boundaries do not shut the other person down or away or shove them away in any way. Boundaries are meant to hold me together. So, I need to put myself in a place and a proximity where I am not getting wounded to the point where forgiveness feels impossible.

And I know there's some complicated dynamics, because sometimes it takes maybe a small child has to grow up before they can put enough distance between them and a parent that's hurting them. I realize there's complications here. But I also know Jesus spoke those words out of tenderness, not all to perpetuate that someone not treating you appropriately is okay. Jesus wasn't saying that He was saying, "forgiveness is about position of your heart, keeping your heart soft." Keeping your heart in a place of being swept clean of bitterness, resentment, holding grudges because it's too heavy of weight for your tender heart to carry.

Joel: That's so good I think. Jim and Lysa, what you both have said, the Apostle Paul is getting at, in such a unique way. There is a very specific word typically used in the New Testament for "forgive." You mentioned it already, it means "to cancel the debt." And every expectation that you and I would have the Apostle Paul would use that word to describe forgiveness. And yet in Colossians 3:13, when he uses forgiving, he uses an unusual word called "charisma" and "charisma" built into that word — it's a compound Greek word built into that word, Jim, you probably know where I'm going. There's a word called *charis*, which means to extend grace. It is the word for grace. So think about this, and I think this is actually that theological fruit and soil that we have that says what is forgiveness supposed to look like, but what is grace? Grace I think in the simplest definition is unmerited favor.

It's something that you and I did not earn. And this is what Paul is saying. Forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven you. That is the picture of grace, and yet this forgiveness is about this release; it's about not allowing ourselves to be enslaved by the actions of other people. And yet there are boundaries, and so I want us to just take a look at Romans. This is still Paul, and this is Romans 12:18. And this is what Paul says: "If possible" — I love this — "*if possible, so far as it depends on where you live peaceably with all.*" Now it's important for us to know in Romans 12, Paul starts off in [Chapter] 12 verse 1 talking about the covenant community faith, the believers, the church in Rome. But as he gets towards the end here, he's working himself from the inside out and now he's talking to all people. How do Christians, how do we respond to non-believers, and this is what Paul is getting at. He says, if possible, which seems to indicate —

Lysa: That sometimes it's not possible.

Joel: Right, and then he gives a condition, *“if possible, so far as it depends on you.”* Now where's that responsibility? On me as far as it demands on me to live peaceably with all. What does that also imply? That also implies that I have responsibility, but there's also responsibility outside of me that I can't control, and I can't own. And this is where we have that *“if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”* And so while you and I are commanded to forgive, this is how I like to think about it. We have a requirement that is given from God that we are to forgive, and that requirement comes with the responsibility, and that responsibility is to pursue reconciliation if possible, so far as it depends on us to live at peace with all people.

And I think this is so important and instructive for us, because it safeguards us from putting ourselves in positions and Jim, I know you have so much more to say about this, where I think historically, traditionally, I just want you all to know there's never a situation where you're forgiving of somebody else is the opportunity or the reason that you keep yourself in a dangerous position, emotionally, spiritually, or physically, that is not in Scripture. We're called to forgive and to reconcile if at all possible.

Lysa: And I think sometimes, where it says, *“as far as it depends on you to live at peace.”* I think we have to emphasize that word *“peace,”* and the responsibility is, as far as it depends on you. So I can decide, and this is very empowering. I can decide what can I contribute here without any expectation of the other person. Because, Jim, we've talked about before: Expectations can sometimes be premeditated resentments. So I have to say: What can I do to contribute to the peace, but be free from fully expecting the other person to contribute to the peace on the same level? Just this week, I had to send a text message to someone, and I very much — and I shouldn't even say I had to — I had the opportunity to contribute to some peace this week. And it took a hot minute for my feelings to catch up, obviously, because I did not feel like I had done anything wrong.

But I wanted to give an opportunity for peace in seeking to understand before being understood myself. And so my contribution to peace was if what I said hurt you, please forgive [me]. That absolutely was not my intention at all, but I want to recognize I've thought about what you might be going through. I thought how hard this might be, and how hard this might be, and how hard this might be. And I want to fully acknowledge that. And I want to say if I've contributed in any way to the hurt that you've been experiencing, please forgive me. But I had to send it knowing I have to do this with no expectation at all other than the satisfaction to know I've contributed to the peace of this situation. And what they do is their choice and their journey. I cannot work harder on someone else than they're willing to work on themselves. I can only work on me. Thank you very much, that came after spending many hours with you, Jim, right?

Jim: And we're going to cover that in our codependency *“Therapy and Theology”* about some people absolutely try to work harder on another person. So, and I want to speak to that too, the idea what I call often, and I have these in my office. I have an arrow, and then I have a boomerang, is to deliver this as an arrow, that means it's shot straight. And I think that's implied even in *luo* in Greek, the idea of *“to lose; to let go of”* even as part of forgiveness. And some will do this as a one-way, shoot-as-an-arrow straight, and a boomerang is, *“are you going to receive this or you ... I might long for that person to*

respond but I want to, in essence, as we've said, clean up my side of the street, and they really honor them that they get to decide what they do."

I want this nuance to around forgiveness that a person will often say, I get this a lot when there's been betrayal trauma — will say, you know what, I see this — it's like Psalm 51, I do have this much of a broken and contrite heart. The other person though, who was offended, feels like, "yeah, but it feels like really there should be more." There's just a little more nuanced gravitas to what you ought to own what you've done. The person owns it, and they're really owning it, but it may be that they're not owning it as much emotionally as you'd like them to. So on this side of the street — so I'll offer this if I've done this, and then let it go and let them have the process.

Lysa: And I do want to say, Jim, I have so much empathy for the person who feels like the wrong done to them is so costly. It's so hurtful. Maybe even you felt at times the hurt that the other person caused is unchangeable. That can start to feel unforgivable because the wrongs can never be righted in a way that returns me back to the pre-trauma or pre-traumatic event that happened to me.

Jim: In some ways, maybe at times, literally, they cannot be righted at all because I've worked with many people, and Joel and I were talking about this before we went on set, is to help people forgive dead people in an empty chair and say, "dad, mom." Or they've gone by a cemetery, and I know the body is there and the person is not there, but they speak and there's no chance that person can speak and own it. So they can say, "I want to release this and lure the person won't be able to respond like at all, but they could still forgive."

Lysa: And I think the place that I had to get is to recognize that God hasn't commanded forgiveness so that the other person is set free from the actions that they took. If God hasn't commanded forgiveness to negate that there are consequences here, God hasn't provided forgiveness that the, sort of that it makes light of your pain or says that what you went through doesn't matter. There is a freedom aspect to forgiveness, but you are not freeing the other person from the consequences of their choices; that is between them and God. And any sin that a person commits, I believe the consequences for that sin are already built into their action. So you don't have to worry about "Will this be addressed? Will this person learn their lesson? Will this person finally wake up and see what they did?" That is for God to do. And even if you never see it, don't assume God isn't addressing it.

Jim: Love it.

Joel: Yeah.

Lysa: All right. The freedom aspect for forgiveness is that I deserve, when I've been deeply wounded by someone, I deserve to stop suffering because of what the other person has done to me. And the only way to sever the suffering is to implement this gift that God has given us, and the gift is "Lysa, forgive. Take the forgiveness I have given to you, let it pass through you, and it will clean out from you the heaviness of bitterness, resentment

and ongoing anger, and it will start to sever the suffering so you can get on with the healing.”

Jim: I like that. As Dave Ramsey likes to say on his radio show, have people scream “We're debt free!” And back to *aphiemi*, to cancel the debt, and the idea there to be there and say, I'm releasing all of this, and I'm going to borrow, hopefully not out of context or exegetically as we say in theology, but to tell a side that Jesus, it is finished. And there's a part of that Greek word to say, “I've released it all.” Now the emotional forgiveness as we've talked may take time, but to save in their *tetelestai*, it is finished, or some level, I'm done, I've really released this. And may I just ask real quickly for Joel or for either one of you, there's two things I want to comment on. You're the first person I've ever heard say and teach what you taught, so how I've missed it, unless you, God gave you that through a divine seriously message or divine anointing from His Word.

But the idea when you said the first time that “Hey, everybody, vengeance is mine. I will repay,” which is in this passage that Joel just took us to. But you said when I sin, God has promised you won't be mocked; you reap what you sow. There is a reaping, but I don't see it. And I remember when you first said that, I was stunned by that, and I went be assured that person in their own secrecy, addiction, their own [inaudible], they are reaping. I just may not see it. So I want to thank you for that, because that really helped me. I thought, “Boy, that really helps,” because the context, Joel, that you read here, I noticed it's like a doughnut hole. Do not be hardy, all that repay evil no one. And then, it's impossible as far as it depends on you, live peaceably. There's right back to but leave it to the wrath of God never avenge yourselves. So it's like that; we are wired for justice aren't we? And I want it now, and you may not get it with the other person.

Joel: Yeah, we'll have talk about it some other time, but one of the really cool aspects of that passage is what I see is a chiasm. And a chiasm is where the meaning of that text is in the middle, and the rest of the text, before and after it, gets its meaning from it. And so we have this call, this command, to pursue a life of peace, and Lysa, you said the word is important; it is. It's the Greek word *eirene*, and it actually is rooted in the Hebrew word *shalom*.

Jim: That's awesome.

Joel: And so I mean we just have [crosstalk].

Lysa: And *shalom* we know is a greeting, or it can be like a hello or a goodbye, but it's peace.

Joel: It's peace.

Lysa: It's peace be with you, peace go with you. Peace when I greet you and peace when I say goodbye.

Joel: Yeah.

Lysa: Well, thank you both so much. And just as we wrap up today, I want to acknowledge one other thing that I think is really important and certainly when you read *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*, the book that I've written on this, this is a big part of what you will start to understand, that's something I didn't understand for a long time. And now that I do because of studying the Bible with Joel and hours of counseling work, hours and hours and hours of counseling work but Jim, I now understand something about forgiveness that I want to leave you with today. Forgiveness is both a decision and a process. You don't have to feel like you have to rush through your hurt or negate what you've been through or even boss your feelings around and conjure up some kind of spiritual maturity that overrides your emotional well-being to pursue forgiveness; you don't have to do that. You can make the decision to forgive. And you can walk through the process of forgiveness. And God is patient with us, God respects the gravity of pain in the human heart; Jesus himself in Hebrews Chapter 2 very much is aware that He was complete divinity and absolute humanity all in one.

Jesus knows the weight of the hurting human heart. So there is grace in His process. For me, it was important that I verbalize, "I forgive you," and then follow up those words and whatever my feelings will not yet allow for the blood of Jesus will surely cover. That just acknowledged that God's forgiveness that flowed to me now flows through me and that is what is enabling me to even say the words of forgiveness that start the process. And I've made the decision to forgive, and no one can take that away from me. And even if weeks down the road, or even hours down the road, if those feelings of trauma start coming back, that doesn't mean I'm a forgiveness failure. It doesn't negate that I did something with this forgiveness; it doesn't mean I did this forgiveness thing wrong. It means I've made the decision to forgive. No one can take that away from me. But now, the emotional trauma, and the processing that happens when those memories come back, that hurt when those feelings come back that feels so fresh and so strong over what this has cost me, it's just time now that I'm dealing with not just the fact of what happened but also the impact that this has had on me.

And so there may be many other more moments of forgiveness, as I deal with the impact of this, but the fact of forgiveness is sure and secure. When I added those words, "I forgive," that is being obedient to God's command, then I can also walk through the process of emotional healing and through the process in time, as I become aware of the impact, I can forgive and forgive and forgive, for all of the instances of the realization of how much this has cost me. I pray that that helps you today. Forgiveness — it is not easy, but it is a beautiful way to start pursuing healing in your heart, keeping your heart swept clean, so you don't have to carry the weight of all of the hurt that you've experienced. It is time to stop suffering because of what other people have done to you.

Meredith: What a great start to this series right?

Kaley: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meredith: We know forgiveness isn't an easy topic to unpack, and we can't imagine where you are in your our own journey of forgiveness, but whatever your circumstances are, know we

are praying for you as you do your own wrestling and trusting the Lord to bring about healing that only He can provide.

Kaley: Absolutely. Well friend, you've got a few great resources we want to point you to. First, we mentioned Lysa's book earlier called *Forgiving What You Can't Forget: Discover How to Move On, Make Peace with Painful Memories, and Create a Life That's Beautiful Again* is available right now. Lysa shares a lot of her own personal journey with forgiveness in this book, and we believe it's going to be a powerful tool for you as you walk through your own forgiveness journey. So you can get that at p31bookstore.com and next, you can also get a companion to the book called *The Forgiveness Journal*. We're really excited about this product. It's beautiful. It's beautiful, but it also includes short prayers and key scriptures related to each topic of Lysa's book, as well as journaling prompts for personal processing. You can get this resource as well at p31bookstore.com.

Meredith: And I want to point out something really special about that resource, and that is it's actually a picture book as well. It's beautiful. It has pictures of the actual real places that Lysa processed a lot of her forgiveness journey in her own home and in her rose garden in her house and things like that. So it's a really, really special resource; I'd encourage you to take a look at. Now I want to end this episode with something really important, and that is we'd be remiss if we didn't want you to a Christian counselor because we're big believers in processing what you're going through with a trusted guide. And we'd recommend the American Association of Christian Counselors; you can go to their website at acc.org if you're looking for a trusted Christian counselor. We'll be back next week for another episode of "Therapy and Theology," so be sure you're subscribed to get the episode as soon as they release. At Proverbs 31, we really believe that when you know the truth of God's Word and you live out that truth, it really will change everything.