

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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- Meredith: Well, hello, everyone. 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 I am here with my co-host, Kaley Olson.
- Kaley: Well, hi, Meredith. This episode is releasing just as we've entered into a New Year. So, Meredith, what comes to mind when you think of the word "resolution"? I want to know.
- Meredith: Oh, boy. Something along the lines of "I should probably exercise next year and eat less potato chips."
- Meredith: That's what goes through my mind because, guys, I just really like potato chips too much.
- Kaley: I do too. They're good. The ones with the salt and pepper on them.
- Meredith: Those are delicious. I mean, Doritos are delicious. Plain potato chips are delicious.
- Kaley: I don't think Doritos are a potato chip, but we can revisit that later. We'll talk about resolutions, but when I think of resolutions, I think very clearly of Mrs. Farrar's third grade class when she made us journal about them.
- Meredith: Okay, Mrs. Farrar.
- Kaley: Ninety-nine percent sure. Yes. Ninety-nine percent. Sure. Mine was to stop being mean to my sister. So we can talk to my mom about [crosstalk]. Almost 20 years later, but we're fine. But that's the last time I did resolutions because I feel like they're hard to keep — kind of automatically makes me feel like I'm failing. And maybe right now you're listening and you're rolling your eyes because like me. Maybe you need a goal that fits with your life because sometimes resolutions are so big and lofty that they don't fit with your season of life. Or maybe you're listening to this in June, and it's not January anymore, and maybe you're disappointed in yourself because the goals that you said you didn't keep, but wherever you're at right now, we want this year to be the year that you dig deeper into God's Word. That's a good goal to set, and we can help you with that.

Meredith: Yeah, absolutely. We talk about this all the time at Proverbs 31. Our goal is to help you know the Truth of God's Word and live out that Truth because when you do, it really will change everything for you. We've got two great options for you to get connected to the Word. First, check out our free online Bible studies, or you can download our free First 5 mobile app. Just go on over to proverbs31.org/study to check out our current options. And we would really love for you to join us as we dig into God's Word this year.

Kaley: Yes, absolutely. And now we are so excited to welcome our guest teacher on the show today. We've got Rebekah Lyons with us. Rebekah is a speaker, a bestselling author of several books and host of the *Rhythms for Life* podcast. We are so happy to have you with us today, Rebekah.

Rebekah: Thank you so much. I'm grateful to be with you guys.

Meredith: Well friends, if you're anything like us, we imagine you might be a little bit tired coming off the old 2020, right? I mean, it has felt like we have been running a marathon for an entire year, and that's why we're so thankful Rebekah is here to teach us about renewing our minds today. And we pray this teaching is helpful for whatever situation you're facing. So Rebekah, why don't you take it away?

Rebekah: Hello. Hello. Have you ever found yourself trapped in fear or feelings of unworthiness or rejection — loneliness perhaps, or depression? I know I can feel lethargic sometimes when I'm trying to think of a new gear and ways to get energy to get going. But this restlessness, this boredom, this isolation. If you do feel these things, know this — that God makes a way of escape. Not only escape, but He promises a life of abundance, a rich life, not just escape from negative cycles. So rescue is waiting and ready for us, but so often, we're unable to see it. And instead of looking up, we'll keep our heads down. We'll circle the stall. We'll wonder why our circumstances don't change. And so today's talk is all about rhythms of renewal, rhythms that will restore us and revive our hearts.

Turns out only 20 people who make resolutions each year, keep them. And so I'm talking to the 80% of us who have the best of intentions, but three weeks in find ourselves struggling to have this great new way of doing things when really what God is inviting us into is this boundaries of rhythm. Ten years ago, I had my first panic attack when we moved to New York City. We had three children under age nine, and we were starting kind of a new journey, a new adventure. I remember telling friends it was like we were going off to college, except this time with kids. It turns out that's actually not a thing. But I did learn that after that first decade of being home with toddlers and littles and my head down, that I was feeling some of those feelings of trapped, unworthiness, rejection, loneliness, depression that I mentioned at the beginning. And I wanted God to just do a new thing.

So as we get to the city, my youngest daughter begins kindergarten, and I'm going, where was Rebekah before motherhood? Who is she? What was she wired with? What was she excited about? And in that journey of kind of drawing near to God, and God drawing near to me in that season, I did find it that I had to lay some things down, and I found that I had some long-term grief that I hadn't even really expressed before the Lord. And the four months into my time in New York, I had my first panic attack, and

that continued for about a year and a half. And I remember crying out to God in that season so often. And towards the end of that, I remember saying, "Rescue me; deliver me. I cannot do this without you." And God flooded me with His perfect peace.

And as a result, I started to walk out a healing journey that looked different than that first year and a half in New York. And that was all informed by setting new patterns, new rhythms of intention, where God would invite me into where He already dwells. And so I would love to talk today about the four rhythms that have been a new way of walking out a healing journey for me called "rest, restore, connect, and create." Those first two rhythms, rest and restore, are input rhythms. And they fill us back up. They actually give us the input that we need so that we don't burn out, so we're not trying to operate on empty. And what I learned is that God created us in rhythm. Evening and morning were the first day, the second day, the third day as we read about in Genesis, and that he created tides on the beach in rhythm.

He created planets in orbit, in rhythm. He created us, humanity, in rhythm. You've got heartbeat in rhythm. You've got pulse in rhythm. You've got breathing in rhythm. You've got labor pains in rhythm and contractions in rhythm. All new things that come to life happen in rhythm. And because God is a rhythmic God, He made us to be rhythmic people. And when I started to think about this rest rhythm, I realized that so many of us are so burned out. So many of us coming off a very hard seasons into this new year have had just so many trials that we have had to walk through and things we've had to lay down before the Lord. And so I want to begin with the rest rhythm with the passage of Matthew 11:28-30, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest, take up my yoke and learn from me because I'm lowly and humble in heart and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

This is something that the Lord invites us in. He wants us to receive the bounty of blessing and with rest. And so when you look at Genesis 1, and the creation account, at the end of creating God rests, and then He blesses that day. And I believe that rest is a part of God's blessing. Rest is not optional to God; it's a mandate. He actually decrees; He says, "*Remember the Sabbath, [to] keep it Holy*" (Exodus 20:8-11, KJV). Sabbath or rest is a reminder that we are not God, that we are frail, that we need replenished from the Lord. Christ models this every time in His ministry, that He retreats to the mountain to pray. God becomes His dwelling place, the Father becomes a filling for Christ in the same way that He models that we would rest, we would rest our soul. We would get that soul rest. And so the reason why rest is so vital is because it really takes a look at the interior life. It's all about our inner life, our spiritual vitality, our health that sometimes is unseen.

Sometimes we can see health on the outside, but inner life is something only God can see. And so things I learned so much in the rest rhythm was getting quiet, silencing the noise, tech detox. I took three months off of social media a couple of years ago to quiet my heart, to ask the Lord, what was I grieving? My father had just passed away, and I found that I did not want to hemorrhage publicly. And so I just put my head down and in my journal, just the Lord was so loud to me. And now that has become a rhythmic practice of getting off social media every week, every month, every year for different portions of time and doing that in rhythm, because I know that rest sometimes could be

the first thing to go, but we don't run to earn rest. We run fueled from a posture of rest. And when Jesus says, come into my rest, exactly what he means is that rest is not isolation or numbing out, rest requires pursuit. And it's a bidding; it's intimacy; it's communion. So as you can tell, rest is so powerful for me. And I lay that as the foundation of these four rhythms, because everything builds from there.

The next rhythm is the restore rhythm, and that is all about our bodies and our physical health. And when I think about the restore rhythm, once we've taken care, looked at daily our interior life, our morning routine each morning, that could start in prayer or Scripture or gratitude and journaling. Then this restore rhythm is very important next, in my opinion, because God has given us a temple as our bodies to steward every morning that we wake up with breath is a chance to take care of our bodies, to thank God for our bodies. Thank him for the health that we have. Even when we're sick and we're not feeling a hundred percent, thank him that he in his nature is Jehovah Rapha, which is healer and ask him to show us some places that we've maybe been neglecting our bodies or neglecting what we put in our bodies or neglecting moving our bodies.

And so I learned that when I was in a funk after several days, it was because I wasn't moving my body. And so I want to read a passage here and I was in Isaiah 58:11 and 12. The Lord will always lead you. He'll satisfy in a parched land. He'll strengthen your bones. You'll be like a water garden and a spring whose water never runs dry. Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins. You'll restore the foundation laid long ago. You'll be called the repairer of broken walls, the restorer of streets where people live. So when I thought about these firm bodies and strong bones, that when you actually live a fortified life from a place of physical health, then you get to be a part of helping rebuild cities and old ruins and make communities livable. Again, it's amazing how much our work, our actual everyday vocational life is contingent on how we feel physically. It's very, very hard to go out and have even energy to walk in the ways or the Holy imagination that God invites us into when we're always struggling physically.

And so for me in the restore rhythm, I had to take on some serious practices of eating smart and using brain food. When I think about that, I just think about what God gave us in the garden and what he gives us every year in gardens. And for example, this year, we had more time with quarantine. So we decided we would try to garden — like legit garden with raised beds and try all these different things. And I don't have much history with any of that, but I used to live in New York City, now I'm in Nashville. Now we have chickens. Yes, we have gardens. I had to learn a hundred different ways to cook okra and eggplant this summer. I didn't even know what I was getting myself into, quite frankly, when we began, but what it did do for me, is it helped me appreciate God's order in creation.

Every morning, I would walk out, and I would just be something that bloomed overnight or a tomato that popped. And I would harvest it. I would go out with the kids, and I would harvest in the morning. And it was just this very literal expression of "*give us this day, our daily bread,*" this bounty from You, God. I mean, You created the sun and the rain and the soil. And here we have seeds, and I'm watching God's provision in real time. And it got so loud for me, how God says, "I care about everything so much so that I will

even provide the nourishment and the food that will help you thrive, that will help you have more energy, more natural vitamins.”

And I'm not saying that everybody listens to this has to garden, but what I have learned is like, let's eat more that's grown on a plant, not made in a plant. If you know what I mean. Something that's more in the nature, of the way God intended from the ground up. The less we mess with and process it and put chemicals in it, the more we will, I think, feel physically nourished and physically strong, so that's one part of the restore rhythm.

Another part is clearing the brain fog. I found that when I would take a walk — I'm a writer, so when I would get writer's block, and I would just need to get out because the sentence wasn't landing or the chapter wasn't closing well. I would just get up and go out and walk. And when you're walking, it unblocks or unclogs the brain and your subconscious kind of takes over and starts to connect the dots. And then, all of a sudden, you have these great ideas, and you're like, “Oh! I got to finish.” The problem is, I don't like to walk with a phone, so sometimes I would get back and go, “Okay. Um, I had it crystallized when I was walking, now what was it?” So sometimes I'll have to bring a phone, and I'll have to voice memo. The clarity that can come when you step away from something and move your body.

So not only does walking stimulate creativity, another thing that it does is if you're brisk walking or you're working out in a way that elevates your heart rate for 15 to 20 minutes, it doesn't have to be a sprint at all. But if your heart rate is elevated, what that will do is release serotonin in your brain and serotonin is known as the happy hormone. And it elicits feelings of excitement, well-being, positivity, momentum. That's why, if you have a great workout for those of you who do that, and you do it more than once a week, I don't know about you, but at the end of something like that, I feel like, “Yes, we can do this. We can try this. We could try that. We could try the other,” and so what it does is it kind of elevates maybe what you might typically think you're capable of trying, and just gives you a desire to try something new.

And I think, the innovation of God is so beautiful because He invites us. He's always doing a new thing. When you think about God, He's a regenerative God. He is the author of life. Every morning, His mercies are new, meaning His mercies are new to give us new thoughts, new dreams, new energy, new excitement, new visions of what He's doing now that He wasn't doing yesterday, or what He's doing next month or next year that He didn't do last year. When we can always look forward in that way, grounded in His strength and our bodies are in communion with that, then we are always primed for God to invite us into things that He's wanting to lay out. And I think that's one of the most exciting things is that God's never short of visions or dreams.

He's never short of new ways of creating life for us and abundance for the roads that walk. But part of it's up to us to prime ourselves in a way that we're communing with Him, not just in rest, but we're also communing Him in the rhythm of restore. Prayer, walks, movement, praising God as you walk, move your body. That, to me, has been some of the most life-giving ways of not seeing as I need to fix my body, or care what the scale says exactly, or my size. It's just that I can meet Jesus in the movement.

Scholars believe that when Jesus ministered for three years, that He walked over 3,000 miles in all the places as they charted, all the towns and villages that He went. So when Jesus says, “walk with Me,” it's not a metaphor, guys. It's like a literal legit, use your actual legs and walk with Me from town to town, laying hands, feeding people, being a part of my healing ministry, because they met Him in the movement. They watched it firsthand. They engaged it physically, and that's why even taking communion or the Eucharist is a physical act. Jesus is saying, even as you take the bread and the cup do this in remembrance of Me. There's a physical embodiment of our faith that we should never abandon or just set it to the side. We should meet Jesus right there in the movement. So those two are those input rhythms.

And the last two rhythms are the output, and those are “rest and restore.” I'm sorry, “connect and create.” The reason why we start with input is so that we're filled back up. We're energized; we have the mind of Christ. We have come before the Lord, that first hour of the day in the morning routine, it sets the tone and the stage for the rest of the day as we go into work or we serve our children or our families or communities or whatever that is, God then allows us to pour back out. So the connect rhythm is the first output rhythm, and that is all about our relational health. The reason why relationships come next is because a lot of trauma, a lot of wounding happens in the boundaries of relationship. So the reason why we attack “connect” as the first output rhythm is we then can respond to the idea that healing also happens exponentially in the boundaries of relationship.

So I'd love to talk for a moment about the connect rhythm in the passage of John 17:20-23. He prays for us. This is in the Upper Room, one of my favorite passages of all scriptures. It says, *“I pray not only for thee,”* he's talking about his disciples, *“but also for those, us, who believe in me through their word, may they all be one as you father are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe you sent me. I've given them the glory you have given me so that they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me so that they may be made completely one that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.”*

Isn't it amazing that our connection and intimacy as sons and daughters of God is part of what Jesus requires so that the world will know the message of God is true, the love of God is true, the story of Christ is true? When you think about the connect rhythm, I talk a lot on friendship and how we have to be the friend that we wish to have. So many of us are waiting on someone to be a friend to us, and I think sometimes God looks at us and says, “Well, why don't we start with you? Why don't you become the person maybe you never received in a friendship, maybe you become the mentor that you never received in a mentoring relationship.” I know I'm in my mid-forties. I have four children ranging ages 20 all the way down to 7. And there have been times where I didn't really have someone pouring into me on how to raise two children with Down Syndrome, and two typical children, and work with my husband, and just live a life that was kind of uncharted in every way.

And yet the Lord, as I started to pray, as I started to mentor even women behind me or younger than me, God would sometimes surprise me with women older than me, who would just reach out and say, “hey, if you ever want to talk.” So God just tells us to take

dominion with whatever, be fruitful and multiply, take dominion in Genesis. Take dominion with whatever agency you have, with what's in front of you, with what God has entrusted to you. And so friendship is a way of doing that. Take the initiative. And that leads us into vulnerability. Part of what friendship requires is honesty and reciprocity in relationship where you would share something vulnerable that costs you something. Vulnerability is a little bit different than transparency in that transparency is sharing where you've been, but vulnerability is sharing where you are currently.

So I can tell a story that's 10 years old, or six years old, or four years old, but when I tell a friend that I'm walking through life with right now a story that's one week old, that is a more costly story, because it's like, this is me in the middle of a mess. And I'm trusting you with this because I know that that is what God invites us into in real intimate communion and relationships with our spouses, with our friends, with our families, whatever those people are that God's entrusted and that they also reciprocate. There's not just one person who's expressing all the need and the other person's expressing all the aid. It's where both parties are risking some things for connection.

Another part of the connect rhythm is hospitality, finding a way to welcome others in, in a year that you can't really obviously host people very easily. Sometimes you have to get very creative with that outside, in your yard, on your porches in smaller intimate gatherings. But knowing that the generosity of hospitality is welcoming someone in that might not have another place to go. Another expression of that connect rhythm is to bear one another's burdens in suffering and loss — to carry the load for them. There's been so much suffering that a lot of us have had to journey through, and having those friendships established, that vulnerability established, the space of our homes established. We can help one another carry the load.

And then one of my favorites in the connect rhythm is all about embrace, which again, you can only do this with the people that are your people to hug, but when you hold a hug, this is amazing. When you hold a hug, like a real hug with someone for more than five seconds, it releases dopamine in your brain, which is the hormone and the chemical that helps you feel connection and belonging. So of course, I make sure when my teens come home from school, mom wants like a *big* hug. I don't do that in front of their friends. I'm not trying to embarrass them, but when they're home, I want them to know when they cross that threshold, they are known here. They are seen here. They are loved here in the absence of shame so that they can create beautiful things.

Part of this is just a stepping stone. If you've got the rest, restore and the connect, then you get to where you can create, but you've got to feel connected first to people. You've got to feel seen and known and loved in the absence of shame so you can begin to create. It's just how children are wired. It's how adults are wired. And so with those connect principles of hugs, of burden-bearing, of working on your marriage, focusing on those things, apologizing first in conflict, this is all examples of what we can do when Jesus prays that will be one. These are physical, tangible expressions of oneness.

And finally, the last rhythm is create, which I love to crescendo with create because one of my favorite passages of all of Scripture, I keep saying my favorite. I have several favorites, as you can tell, but I memorized Psalm 139 in college. The whole chapter; I

don't know why. I wasn't required to, but I just, as I kept reading it in college, it felt like almost a mandate passage of how God knit us in our mother's womb with birthright gifts, how He calls destiny out over His sons and daughters as a Father, as a heavenly Father, and how all our days were written and planned before one of them began. So I'm going to read here in verse 13 of Psalm 139.

"For it was you who created my inward parts. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you because I've been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous and I know this very well." I'm going to keep going here in verse 15. *"My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret when I was formed in the depths of the earth."* Verse 16. *"Your eyes saw me when I was formless and all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began."* That just gets me fired up. Calling and vocation and create is one of my greatest life passions, because I believe that our mental health is very much connected with our understanding of our purpose, understanding what God intended when He gave us those birthright gifts in the womb, understanding our DNA and our natural bent. When you think about birthright gifts, it's the things that are effortless for you, that you don't have to overthink. People notice it in you because you just do it and it comes out naturally.

And when I think of some of my friends in the kitchen, they never use a recipe. I mean, they're just throwing things together in a bowl, and it's just incredible. And they could basically walk through your pantry and make a meal out of what you thought was never going to become anything. I'm not that person; I need a recipe, but I think it's funny that so many of us look at what somebody else does so effortlessly and it's like, "Wow, I wish I could be like you doing that creative thing so naturally, and simply." But sometimes we forget to ask God, "Well, what is the thing that you've put in us? What is that natural bit that you gave us?" And so in this rhythm, I invite us into dreaming again and recovering our passion maybe of our youth.

I know for me when I was eight, I was called Becca Book because we didn't have a TV until I was in eighth grade. And I only had books. In fact, I read 62 *Nancy Drew* books just in fourth grade because my mom was a fourth-grade teacher. I went to the library every day after school, kind of bored to death. So I was like, "I'm just going to read." But I learned about life through the power of a narrative story. And so I just kept reading and reading and reading. Turns out at age 32, my mom is pushing my son on a swing and she's like, "I always thought you'd write." And I thought that would have been super helpful in college when I was picking a major. I never imagined myself having the gifts or talents to write whatsoever. But what I do know now is that readers make writers, and I loved vocabulary. I loved sentence structure. I love telling a good story. And I just, somehow late in life, I call myself a little bit of a late bloomer.

I didn't start writing my first book until I was 38. And I was shocked how fast it poured out and how another one came a couple years later. Another one after that, another one after that. So God's not confused about the timing of this at all. He says all your days were written and planned before one of them began. Sometimes we just want to force His hand or say, "this is what I think it should be." When part of it is just going back to if calling is where those talents and those burdens collide and calling to me is like to

call. When you think of vocation, the Latin word for vocation is *vocare*, which means to call, and calling begins with a caller. God is the caller. We are responding to His invitation. So He says “Join Me in the renewal of all things.” That’s what God’s inviting us to do. He doesn’t have to, but He chooses to, which is amazing as sons and daughters that we get to actually join God.

We get to participate in the gifts that He entrusts to us. What an honor and a privilege. So when you think about calling, being where your talents and your burdens collide, talents are those birthright gifts, those natural bends that you’re given in the womb and burden is very much informed by the story you’ve lived, the family you were born into, the pain, the suffering, the things that break your heart. So when you use those gifts that God’s entrusted to you in the womb, to redeem the things that break your heart there in life’s calling. And so I’ll just close with an example of this.

When I was 18, my father had what I wouldn’t have known then, but was some sort of a mental breakdown. And I remember him crying in the chair in the living room and I watched him for hours. And a year later, when I was in college, he actually went into a psychiatric hospital for about a week. And again, I didn’t have language for this. My dad was brilliant. He had multiple Master’s degrees, taught English and math. Both sides of his brain were very educated. But what I learned later in life, as he struggled with mental — he just had mental struggles and chronic depression, anxiety. And then I have my first born son 10 years later with a Down Syndrome diagnosis with an IQ in the forties. All of a sudden, I found myself as a daughter sandwiched between a father and a son, the struggles with a lot of mental illness. And so when I moved to New York, and I started having my own panic attacks, I thought, “Okay, it’s my turn. I’m in this family line of mental struggle.”

And I think what God was doing in that season was to show me, “I’ll still be with you.” I don’t always promise the fear won’t come knocking, but I always promise a way of escape, which is how I began this message, was that God will provide escape and refuge, and He is our ever-present help in every moment of trouble. And so when I think about using the gifts of writing, or teaching, or communication, or whatever those natural bends God might have given, to talk about things like health, wellness, a journey of healing, therein lies calling, therein lies almost the crux of what I feel so called to. My dad went to be with Jesus three years ago, end-stage Parkinson’s, and just struggling with things mentally.

But I do know that even in those final hours where the veil was so thin that God was giving him, He was making him new. He would redeem and renew and restore his body, restore his mind. And I know that same for my son. And I think we have to be people who carry hope like that. We have to be people who take whatever God has given us and entrusted to us in the area of vocation and say, “Hey, just put one foot in front of the next and walk with the comfort that I go before you, and that I bring people around and I will actually every day invite you into a rhythm and a cadence with Me that will just bring you back to life and bring your own heart, your own body, your own relationships and your own creativity back to life.” But then also draw you in such intimacy and communion with me that you won’t want to look any other place.

Meredith: Wow. Rebekah, so powerful, and so helpful and hopeful for our listeners today. I want to circle back to a thought that you said at the beginning that really captured me, that you referenced, you said our world, our DNA is created for rhythm. And I think you mentioned quite a few different things, morning and evening, the sun rising and setting. The oceans, I mean, there's so many things that God shows us: "I created you for rhythm." So if we look at the inverse of that, which is when we're not working in rhythm, we're actually working against our own design. And so of course you're going to feel this disconnect or discontentment, or it may even manifest itself in what you described. For you, maybe it was panic attacks or depression for certain people.

And then you said this line that I thought was so powerful, and you just kind of breezed over it. And I wanted to be like, Rebekah, stop that. So I want our listeners to hear this. And that is, your pathway to healing was through setting new patterns and rhythms in your life. And I feel like somebody today needs to hear that very, very clearly is that you may be stuck in a season where you feel depressed or lonely, and you are searching for rescue. You are searching for that healing. And it can be found in clearly setting some new rhythms. And I think Kaley had some questions about that.

Kaley: Yeah, I did. That's a great setup to my question because, at the beginning, you said the words were circling the drain. Like we're all tired right now, and I think that's kind of the story of 2020 for everybody, no matter what season of life you're in right now. And I can imagine that there's somebody listening, and they're thinking, "I want to rest. I want to be restored. I want to connect. I want to create."

Rebekah: That sounds so great.

Kaley: Yes. And Rebekah, you helped us understand kind of where you were and where this started with you out of a result of the panic attacks that you were facing, but for the listener who is curious about this right now, where do you recommend that she starts? Does she have to start with the rest? Is there another part in the process if she can start with? So kind of walk us through that process and what you recommend.

Rebekah: The reason I start with rest is the first chapter in the *Rhythms of Renewal* book, it's called, "Take Inventory," and if you cannot heal what is hidden. A lot of times, people will say "I'm overwhelmed," but when you say, "what are you overwhelmed by?" They're like, "I don't know, just everything." Or "I'm anxious." Well, what exactly? Where's the trigger? "I don't know. I just feel anxious. I have shallow breathing all the time. I can't get a deep breath. I can't sleep through the night." So what we can do is express the symptom, but we actually can't express the root. And so the take inventory, I made that be the very first chapter in the Rest Rhythm because it forces you to respond with four questions. And it also put this in the *Rhythms For Life Journal* that just came out as a *90 Days To Peace and Purpose Planner and Journal* that goes as a companion to the book because people were starting to make their own journals and trying to create these take inventories.

I was like, "Hey, I'm gonna take it for you and help you do that. But all that to say, the take inventory exercise asks you four questions. What's right? What's wrong? What's confused? And what's missing?" And you can answer those slowly. You can answer

those with your spouse or your family, your friends, your colleagues, whoever. But I would say, take a stab at it first on your own and then invite somebody in and go, “Is this what you would think is true? Is there something, a blind spot I'm not seeing? So what's right is like, what are the blessings? What are the abundance? What are the things that are giving you life?” What's wrong, clearly. That's not too hard to define, but sometimes we really do need to write it down.

We need to define what's the biggest thing that's wrong. What are the everyday things that are wrong? We need to look at a macro and a micro view of these answers. What's confused me often is what are the interruptions of God that you did not see coming? Or what are the transitions you feel caught in, like a loop of just not clear? So un-clarity, where are we going? I feel like this is Groundhog's Day circling the drain. So what are those categories of big things and small things that feel just confusing, just can't make sense of it right now?

And then lastly, what's missing? If we were to add this into your life, how would this help XYZ? If your daily rhythm allowed space for X, how would this impact you in a positive way, your relationships in a positive way, maybe your intimacy with your spouse in a positive way, your health? So again, you can answer all four — what's right, what's wrong, what's confusing, and what's missing, with small things and big things. And in fact, at rebekahlyons.com/takeinventory, I have that guide. It's a PDF. It'll take you through. I think it's like 12 pages long. So anyone could do that exercise if they want to just have it already right there, printed out for them.

Meredith: I love that. That is such a helpful resource. Will you say that website again? Because I really want some of our gals to listen to this because I don't know about y'all, but sometimes when I am circling the drain, I need someone to tell me what to do. Will you say it again, Rebekah, what was that website?

Rebekah: Yes, it's rebeckahlyons.com. And again, my name is spelled R-E-B-E-K-A-H L-Y-O-N-S.com/takeinventory.

Meredith: That's wonderful. Thank you so much. I'm going to ask you one last question, and that is practically speaking. So you've taken inventory. You're starting to find these rhythms, but I'm going to guess that some of our listeners, I know me, I've got some bad habits and I've got some bad rhythms that I have set in my life that there have certainly been times, okay, we'll go back to the potato chips. I just love that. They're so delicious. And I'd like to eat them every night, sometimes like around 8:00 p.m. with a Sprite. Sounds really nice. So that is a bad habit. How do I start breaking some of those bad habits?

Rebekah: Well, this is so funny. I'm not a nutritionist, but what I would say is you do not actually have to break your potato chip craving. There's just a couple tweaks. Everyone eats every day. Everyone has friendships every day. Everyone sleeps every day. Everyone has work every day. It's not cutting out everything. It's tweaking what you're already doing and enjoying. God wants you to like — so for example, when you said Doritos earlier were potato chips, those are not chips. So when you think of, turn the bag around.

Meredith: You're calling me out, Rebekah, and my love for Doritos?

Rebekah: Hey, I love potato chips. So I get the kettle chips. If you turn the bag around and you look at the ingredients, and there's only like three to five items they list in the ingredients, there's not a bunch of chemicals you can't pronounce, but it's actually like potatoes, sea salt, some sort of olive oil or some sort of oil. When there's like three to five ingredients, those actually are not bad for you whatsoever. If you eat them within reason, not eating the whole bag. And then instead of Sprite, what I would suggest is like, what I have had to do, because I am obsessed with salt and potato chips, just like you, I do Pellegrino.

Meredith: Yeah.

Rebekah: Some sort of sparkling water. And then I'll take a lime and cut it in half and just squeeze half of it, fresh in ice cold sparkling water, all of a sudden you're getting a replacement that's so much better for your body. There's no chemicals going in your body. And yet you're still having that salty, that savory, that bubbly snack. So that's just very tangible, but that's how I've kind of had to think through food that I put in my body, is it just simple whole foods, but still are really yummy and delicious.

Meredith: Well, and I love that too. I mean, let's just be honest. I have no idea what they make Doritos out of. We should all be afraid of [crosstalk] when your fingers and your lips turn orange after eating something, we should be concerned. But I do love the idea of maybe, it's not focusing on breaking the habit, but replacing it with a healthy alternative. And so that it's not this big dramatic change in your life as much as just a slight shift. I love that.

Rebekah: Yeah. I'm not going to be the girl to say "no sugar, no coffee" for 2021. You'll never hear that from me. I'm not one who cold turkeys anything. I probably have a little bit of dark chocolate every single day of my life and definitely with some peanut butter. But it's less about, but it's not a big thing in my life. It's like, oh, it tastes good and I enjoy it, but it has its proper place. Does that make sense?

Meredith: It certainly does.

Rebekah: And I don't mean to, trust me, I've had a history of struggling with food, so it's not like, I'm like, "Oh, nice for you, Rebekah. You've never struggled with food." It's more just going as you continue to put the things for fuel in your body that are in their most natural state, those sugar addictions, those carb addict, like just those compulsions start to fade over time because the chemicals are not there making that happen.

Meredith: So good. Rebekah. This has been incredibly practical, helpful, inspiring. We are just so thankful for you joining us today. Thank you for taking the time.

Rebekah: Thank you for having me.

Meredith: Absolutely. We do, again, I want to point our listeners to some of your resources if they didn't hear about it earlier so that they can really dig in to changing some of these patterns and rhythms in their life. Rebekah wrote the book, which we've said it, *Rhythms of Renewal*, and like she mentioned, created a brand-new journal that just released called *Rhythms for Life Planner and Journal*. So if you are in that place, and you are looking for rescue in the midst of life being hard, and you need a change, we really would love for you to take a look at these resources.

Kaley: Absolutely.

Rebekah: That planner is *90 Days to Peace and Purpose*. It's a wonderful way to kick off a new year.

Meredith: Love that.

Rebekah: And what it does is give you daily prompts of like, "Today I will drink water with fresh lemons or write a friend a note." [Crosstalk].

Meredith: Right now, I'm going to stop eating Doritos today and eat kettle chips instead. Oh, boy.

Rebekah: Sometimes we just need a friendly prompt. You don't have to do it. We give you options for each day. You can just say "yes" or "no." But it's got a couple of hundred ideas there, which, sometimes we just need ideas.

Meredith: That's right.

Rebekah: I'm holding your hand as you go.

Meredith: I need a hand-holding right now. It's good. It's really good.

Kaley: You guys, we earlier mentioned a couple of resources: our Online Bible Studies and our free First 5 mobile app at the beginning of the podcast for ways for you to dig deeper into God's Word this year, and I love what Rebekah said earlier about small changes. We're not making 180 turns right now. You can start small. In our First 5 mobile app, you can spend the first five minutes of your day reading a teaching from God's Word. That's easy. That's simple. With Online Bible Studies, you can make a five- to six-week commitment and do a Bible study. You can learn more about our online studies or our First 5 mobile app at proverbs31.org/study.

Meredith: That's right. Thank you all so much for joining us today. Thank you, Rebekah, for your incredible teaching and helpful tips. Can't wait to dig into that book. We pray that today's episode helped 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.