

the
PROVERBS 31
MINISTRIES
podcast

Biblical truth for any girl in any season.

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Kayla Ferris: But, you know, we can all agree in the big scheme of life and the world, these are very minor. It's not really going to affect our ability to be friends and get along. However, what do we do about really big opinions? Like those big, strong, deeply felt opinions on things that matter to our core? So, for example, we might differ in our ideas on, you know, what's the best way to nurture our environment? Or what's the best way to raise children? And then we have super dividers like politics, or how to use money, just to name a few. So how do we navigate a world of divided opinions? Well, guys, I'm just so glad that all of you tuned into our podcast today, because we're going to take this question to the Bible. And we're going to see what the Lord has to say. So, Kaley, Meredith, I thought what we could do today is: I want to take us to a very specific book of the Bible. You mentioned it, it's the book of Colossians. And Paul, the author of Colossians, he was very well versed in dealing with divided opinions. This was a constant his whole life; he had disagreements with Peter, and Barnabas and John Mark. Like, that's just a few examples. So, I think we can consider Paul to be an expert on this subject. And then the church in Colossae that Paul is writing to, they were having some division. Just all of the opinions and arguments were tearing them apart. And honestly, many during this time period, were considering walking away from Christianity altogether.

So, can we stop there for just a moment? Because I just wonder: what are our arguments and fights accomplishing? Like, how many people are walking away from Jesus because we can't get along with each other? I don't know... just something I've been thinking about. So, Paul, an expert in dealing with divided opinions, writes a letter to Colossae a church who was hurting from divisive thoughts.

If you have time this week, just read Colossians, OK? It's only four chapters. Yay. It's super short. But it is so good. So, for today, I want to pull three truths from the book of Colossians for you to take with you today. Like these are just three things you can put in your pocket. And then, the next time that you're faced with some divisive opinions, you can pull out these three things just to help you navigate that space. All right, so we'll start with number one. And number one is this: **Find the truth.** Find the truth. I mean, like that's what we're really after right? With all these divided opinions, how do I know which is right? Which is true? Well, in Colossians 2:3, Paul tells us that he knows where is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Yes, Paul tell us, "Where do we find this?" And he says that understanding and knowledge is Jesus. OK, now stay with me. Because this isn't just a blanket Sunday

school answer here. This is profound. Paul is saying that all truth — the only true truth in this world is Jesus Christ. That means all the opinions out there, whether they're political or social, or environmental, or you know, the ones in our church or in our home or with our in-laws or on social media, all of the opinions, we bring all of them, and we weigh them against the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. We ask Jesus, “What are your thoughts? What would you do?” And we find the answers to those questions in our Bibles. We find them by studying God's Word. But you say, “How? How do I find the answers in my Bible?”

Well, there's a few things that I do personally. And you know, maybe they will be useful to you as well today. But when I come across a thought, or opinion, and I want to know the truth, like what would Jesus say about this, one place I recommend starting is the *Sermon on the Mount*. Jesus' words here just cover so much of life: money, worry, anger, lust, it's all there. So, a quick place for me to start is by reading Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7. And then, if I'm, you know, I need a little more, I like to visit biblegateway.com. Or, you know, you can absolutely use the concordance in the back of your Bibles. But what I love about this is that you can look up either a word or a phrase or a topic. It's going to search the Bible for scriptures that relate to that subject. And it's usually going to give you a whole bunch. So, here's the key: do not pick and choose which ones you like. I know that that can hurt a little bit. But seriously, we are looking for truth. And, we don't have to like the truth for it to still be the truth. Truth isn't affected by our opinions of it. So, I look at all the scriptures that I can find. So, I can get a really good overall sense of what the Bible is saying. And I don't pick and choose because I just don't want to take anything out of context.

Also, okay, before we go on, obviously, you know, the Bible isn't going to give us black and white answers to every question we have. I cannot type in like, “Should I vote for Judge Smith this November?” So, think about when you are searching, “What are we really after? What's the big picture topic here?” You know, so in that case, and you know, maybe I search “leadership.” The Bible has a lot to say about what makes a good leader. You know, another example: Aunt Carol might tell me that I'm hurting my children by letting them consume red dye. Well, the Bible it doesn't speak to that specifically. But I can search raising children and parenting. And that's going to give me the big overall things that I need to be doing as a parent. And then from there, my husband, and I can make the best choices, with guidance from the Holy Spirit, about what we allow or don't allow in our house. So, I get to the heart of the question, and then I do a really good Bible search.

The next thing I do is actually something that ties back into Colossians. In Colossians 2:7, it says that I need to walk in Christ. It says, “... *just as you were taught*...” which says to me that it's important to be taught solid, Christian principles. I need good teachers in my life. So, the next thing I do is I look for Christian based resources. If I want to learn more about parenting, I find a Bible based parenting resource. If I want to learn about the church and race, I find Bible based books from people who can help teach me that. So, the question is now “How do I know it's Bible based?” Honestly, you know I read the reviews. I love me some good Amazon reviews. Or go to christianbook.com. That's another great place to find books and read the reviews there. Also, this, this is a little nerdy, but I look at things

like who wrote the foreword, or who wrote endorsements on the back. And is that from people that I know are trusted solid Bible teachers, or writers or pastors, whatever it is, so there's kind of a glance into my process. Do you guys have any processes that you go through?

Kaley Olson: Kayla, I honestly have to admit, a lot of times, it's really hard for me to take the time to do all of that., because what you just said, it was honestly convicting. In a way, because I am more of a person who really likes a quick fix solution. And that tells me that usually when I'm doing that, I'm relying on someone else to do the hard, hard work that I actually need to do. And so, I think whenever I hear about ... wow, this is Kayla's process. This is what it looks like for somebody who's a Bible teacher and somebody who's versed in the Bible, who has a very trustworthy relationship with the Lord to draw an opinion or a conclusion on what truth is and what truth looks like. And that's a lot of hard work.

Yeah, especially for our day and age. Because I'm a very black and white person. I want things to be simple. I want there to be a step one, a step two and step three, but there's not really a formula –

Meredith Brock: Right.

KO: — to it, finding something that that I really want to know, I feel like it's more about what is my heart wanting to seek right now. And instead of me looking for an answer that I want, I have to really let God's Word—and processing with the Holy Spirit— inform me of what the truth is that I'm looking for, instead of trying to make it fit. Yeah, where I want it to fit.

MB: Yeah, I think that's good, Kaley. I think one of the things we see the most right now is that people want to... it's that quick fix culture and mindset and “tell me what to think right now, so I can move on and check my box, have my opinion, be able to talk intelligently at a dinner party, without putting in the time and energy to really research what I really, really believe. So, I think this is, these are some great resources, Kayla, but there... you know I'll be honest. It can, it feels overwhelming to me.

KO: Mm Hmm.

MB: It feels like “holy moly, that's like finding the truth is going to take me... I'm going to have to get a college degree in this.” You know, I'm raising three children and have a full-time job. And so, what do we do with that? When we just don't, you know, there's, there's, you have, let's... I'm going to play a scenario out here. And maybe this is where you're going with your next point. So, I don't want to steal your thunder. Okay Kayla?

KF: Yeah.

MB: So, tell me if I am. But I think about, I'm at the dinner table—I'm going to play it out. All of our listeners right now, you're sitting at the dinner table, family member x brings up “the vaccine.” Dut. Dut. Duh. And you know, family member x and you have very differing opinions. You know it. You know going into the conversation, what in the world do you do? Do you say, pause, “You know what? I

did my research on that. I read 14 different articles. I found out that Dr. Such and Such and Dr. Such and Such endorsed such and such and such and such.” You know, do you go into that? Or for me, I'm like, I just have to be honest, I, the realistic boundaries of my life right now are I have to spend my time and energy raising my three children, you know, and I have to spend my time and energy being a good steward of the job that the Lord has given me. And so, spending a tremendous amount of time on researching some of these hot topics is not something that I can realistically do. So, what do I do?

KO: Yes.

KF: That's great. Now, those are great questions. And just to say, “Is it a process?” It is. With all the voices and opinions out there, I think it's really important for us, you know, to be thorough and diligent about finding the truth, and that is going to take a little bit of work. But again, you know, if you don't have the time, like you said, to pour into reading all of these resources, that great place to start is the *Sermon on the Mount*. There's so much there that we can gather just about how we love God, and how we treat other people. And I think that's going to be a really important thing to remember, when we're sitting down at the dinner table with all of these opinions that are coming out, so how we treat each other is going to make a big difference, which it leads perfectly into point number two, Meredith. So, let's, let's get to it. Let's get to point number two and see if this helps a little bit answer part of that question.

So, point number two. Point number one — let's review real quick — **We find the truth**. Right? We know the truth can be found because Colossians tells us it's in Jesus. So we go to our Bibles, we find Jesus. But it's really important point number two: **We marry that truth with grace**. You know, when my kids were in kindergarten, they had this ceremony where the letter Q and the letter U got married. It was so cute. It was cute because you know Q and U always go together; you know when you're learning to read? Well, I think that's a great image to have in our minds when we're thinking about truth and grace. Because truth and grace are just, they need to be together forever. John 1:14 says that Jesus Christ came full of grace and truth. So, there they are, side by side in Jesus, they are inseparable. They are who He is. So, when we come across people who are different than us, we might be tempted to ask ourselves, “Is this a grace situation? Or is this a truth situation where I need to tell them all, you know, my resources?” The answer is, it's both. It's always both. I love how Pastor Kevin DeYoung said it. He said, “We need to be grace people and truth people. Not half grace and half-truth. Not all grace on Mondays and all truth on Tuesdays. All grace and all truth all the time.” So that's good stuff. But you know... “how?” And it's, that's where Colossians kind of steps in. And it's in Colossians 1:21. And it says, “*You know you were once alienated and hostile and mind doing evil deeds.*” And this is not talking about those people I disagree with. This is talking about me. And I think this is the way we keep grace and truth married together. We remember the truth about ourselves. First, I am a sinner. I have been hostile in mind. I've done evil deeds. I have been wrong. It's important to remember that I've been wrong. But I've also been drenched with grace. And the full grace of Jesus just runs over and drips from my being. So, I think, what I can walk into every situation with this image in mind, just, you know, me, a sinner dripping in Jesus's grace. Then in everyone I approach, I can see someone just like myself, you know, that person with the different opinion, even if that opinion feels hostile or are evil or wrong, like, that

person is just like me. It's a person Jesus loved enough to die for. And I think this really keeps us from turning truth into a weapon to beat people over the head with, if that kind of makes sense.

KO: Yeah.

MB: Mmm.

KF: So, does that help a little bit? We'll get into even more on point three, if you want to just go straight to point three.

MO: Yeah, let's do it.

KO: That sounds great.

KF: Okay, let's keep going. Okay, so point one, we said, “find the truth”; point two “marry truth with grace”; and then, point three, y'all: **Always lead with love.** It might be my favorite verse in Colossians. Colossians 3:14, it says, “*And above all these,*” — which this is big words, because Colossians has covered a lot up to this point — it says, “*above all of these other things, put on love, which binds everything together, in perfect harmony.*” Ohhhh. Perfect harmony. It sounds like heaven, because y'all, it will be what binds everything together in perfect harmony. It's love.

So, you know, I found it so interesting. They've actually done studies that show when we argue with someone who thinks differently about something, especially when we come at it aggressively, or you know, in a confrontational way, they say that they have found that it actually strengthens the other person's beliefs to their own original ways. In other words, many times, arguing over opinions only deepens the divide. People will walk away even more strongly attached to their opinions. That's fascinating to me.

Now, I'm not saying we don't have hard conversations. We absolutely need hard conversations with truth and grace. But the way that truth and grace will start to create change is when the leading factor is love. Like leading with anything else can actually have the opposite effect. But love is what creates the atmosphere for change. And I, just let me show you the perfect example. So, I just have one last story for this point. I love it. I just love it. Maybe you know the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. We find the story in Luke Chapter 19. Like Zacchaeus was a tax collector, and tax collectors, they, they were the worst. I mean, greedy, cold hearted; like Zacchaeus had definitely cheated some people, you know, like he was the crook. So, when Jesus comes to town, Zacchaeus just wants to see what all this fuss is about. And he can't see over the crowd. So, he climbs a tree. So, get this image in your mind: we have up in this tree, this thief, this crook and down below, we have Jesus, perfect Jesus. Jesus, who loves the poor and cares for the oppressed, and hates cheating and thieving. And friends don't miss this: when Jesus encounters Zacchaeus, who is the very opposite of himself, He doesn't point to him and say, “You sinner.” Jesus points to him and he says, “You want some dinner?” OK,, you'll see what, you'll see what I did there: “sinner”, “dinner.”

[Laughter]

And ya'll, that changes everything. But the next thing we know is Zacchaeus starts offering to right all of his wrongs and change his ways. And the thing that stands out to me is that Jesus led this conversation with love and lunch. Jesus took the time to have a relationship with Zacchaeus. And it just makes me wonder, when we come across someone with a different opinion, what if we had these conversations across the table, instead of maybe across the internet? Or yes, even for me a text message? Like, what if we looked each other in the eye, and loved first? Which also makes me start to wonder, like, if, if we don't have the kind of relationship with a person where we can sit down and have a conversation over dinner, then maybe it's not our conversation to have right now. Like, I just don't want my opinions to deepen the divides. Because I'm not in a place at that moment to lead with love.

KO: Yeah. Yeah.

KF: So, guys, let's just wrap all of this up. You might say that we're living in a world of divided opinions. And let's be honest, it's hard. It's hard to navigate. It's all the thoughts and ideas and voices. And sometimes people think or say or do things that just eat us up. But the next time we find ourselves in the situation, maybe we can try these three things we learned from Colossians. Maybe we can, number one, take a moment or two, and **“find the truth.”** Bring it to the Bible, what would Jesus have to say about this? And then number two, **“marry that truth with grace.”** And I'm a lot more likely to bring both truth and grace to others when I remember the truth about myself, and the grace Jesus gave me. And then number three, **“lead with love.”** And I do that by putting down my screen and setting up a table. You know, less pointing out the sinners, more sitting down for dinners. I think that's going to be my new saying. But love is what's going to bind us together; in perfect harmony. So, Kaley, Meredith, I mean, Colossians am I right. Like what a time for us to study this book of the Bible that has so much to say to our lives right now.

KO: Yeah, yeah, Kayla, so good. I feel like I have so much to consider about the way that I approach this. And I want to highlight one thing that you said, as you were kind of going into point number three, that I think is a really important thing in this day in our culture. You said “it might not be my conversation to have.” And I think that's really important for somebody to hear, because I think we're so fists up with the way that we go into conversations, especially social media, because we lose a filter almost, and can feel so attacked, to where I feel like you're right, if I don't have a relationship with this person, that I can't sit across from the table and love them — like Jesus would have loved them. But maybe, maybe that's not my battle to fight. It's not my conversation to have.

But I think the thing that was most challenging to me here is reminding myself that I cannot go to the Bible to look for a truth that's going to satisfy an opinion that I have that's going to help me win an argument. I get somebody because that's never –

that is never going, yeah, that's not going to bring people to Jesus. That's not showing the love of Jesus. And like, I've never even considered going to the *Sermon on the Mount* to find truth. But what it did,

what you shared there open my eyes to remind myself why Jesus came. And He came as the Word of God in the flesh to show us truth; to show us the way, not only in Word, but also in deed. And so, what did He share in the *Sermon on the Mount*? How did He say it? And it might not that, the Sermon might not answer my question. But the way that He talked; the words that He shared; and the manners and the people that He interacted with; and how He invited himself into their lives to then build that relationship; and then inform them of the truth, helps me reorganize my thought process. And how to approach this is to remember, it's not about me winning this.

MB: Yep.

KO: Ultimately, it's about bridging the gap between me and somebody who might be a believer, who might not be a believer.

MB: Right.

KO: But the ultimate goal is where we have to be a representative of Christ. And if I always lead with my fist up, and I always lead with trying to prove a point; trying to be right, that doesn't do anybody good.

MB: That's right.

KF: Yeah.

KO: And the enemy wins the battle just then. So, Kayla, thank you so much for this teaching, we have so much to chew on.

MB: Kaley, I love that kind of end point there. And I'll give a little practical example of how this might look in my own life. Because I, there are particular friends in my life, that I know— I have a long history with these friends— that I know, there are certain topics for us that always cause an argument, always. And for years these particular friends would want to talk about that subject. And at one point, I finally said, “Hey, I care way too much about our relationship to keep fighting over this one thing. There's so much other stuff that's good –

KO: Yeah.

MB: — in our relationship. It's just this one topic that tends to take us off track. Can we just agree that we won't talk about this anymore, because we value our relationship way more than we value, dissecting this topic?” And it has saved this friendship. Like it would not have lasted. It got so heated, the opinions were so different, and so on opposite ends of the spectrum, that it had driven very much a divide into the friendship. But when it came down to the point where we were just willing to say, “OK, let's just make a healthy boundary here and say, we won't talk about that topic anymore. There's millions of other things we could talk about.”

[Laughter]

It kind of put us back in that place of actually, the relationship is far more important. And proving my point here. And so that's... Kayla, this is so, there's so many good things to ponder here. I am so excited about studying Colossians because I feel like where we're at, in our culture, where we're at in the church right now, we need this message desperately to help us come back to the core of "how do we, how do we live together in unity? How do we, how do we navigate this world of divided opinions?" And the author of Colossians, Paul, really has a lot to teach us. And so, if you've been listening to today, and you are ready to dig into the book of Colossians, I hope that you will join us in the First 5 mobile app. But we also, I think today, Kaley, am I right? We have some free sample pages out from our study guide that Kayla wrote that you can download right now. All you have to do is go to proverbs31.org/listen, and we'll have it right there for you to download; to jump right in and start studying; start learning a little bit more about what Paul had to say in the book of Colossians about divided opinions.

KO: Yeah, absolutely. And earlier we talked about our free First 5 mobile app. And I just want to invite you to download that if you haven't downloaded it. Get it, it's free on any mobile device. We also have a website. You can access the daily teachings at first5.org. Or if you want to download the app, just go to your App Store and search First 5, it's the number "5", not "f-i-v-e" spelled out. And download it to get started. The study of Colossians starts in the app on September 20. And we can't wait for you to study with us. And if you already have the app, then this is a perfect opportunity for you –

MB: Yeah. Come on.

KO: — to invite a friend. Yeah, maybe she needs a level a little better in your life. And y'all can do this together. And this will transform your relationship.

MB: And that's a great idea, Kaley, maybe I'll do that with my friend that I was mentioning. I think that's a really, really good idea. And I think that we have said the word free probably 10 times in the last two minutes. And I want to use this opportunity to remind our listeners that pretty much everything here at Proverbs 31 is free and we are able to make it free because of the generous gifts of our donors here at Proverbs 31. And so, I'm not sure if our listeners knew, but we are totally a nonprofit ministry and so we provide our biblical resources to people for free because we believe that, that is the most important work that we could be doing with our lives. And so, if you've been moved by today's message or if the Lord is stirring your heart to give to this ministry so we can continue to offer these resources for free, we would absolutely love that. All you have to do is go to our website, proverbs31.org. Find that button "Give", and it'll lead you right through the process.

KO: All right, friends, that's all we have for today, folks at Proverbs 31. We say when you know the truth and love the truth, God's Word, it changes everything. We'll see you next time.