



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

Meredith Brock: Well, hi, Kaley. Today, you guys, we've got a great episode from our friend Cindy Bultema. She's an author and speaker, and is coming on the show to unpack her journey toward recovery from a cocaine addiction. Y'all, I'm going to be honest, it's a hard conversation. Any time we talk about addictions, the reality of what addiction is sits really hard on us. We never, ever, ever want to button it up and make it sound easy like, "If you would just do this or do that, you'd overcome your addiction," because the reality is, addiction can be absolutely devastating. We want to handle this conversation with care, with humility, with compassion. We also want to encourage you that, even though this conversation is hard, stick around to the end of the teaching, where we get into some discussion that I think will be really, really helpful to hear some different perspectives on how to approach addiction and think about addiction.

MB: But even before we get into the teaching, I want to say: If you are dealing with an addiction right now and you are in the midst of it and you don't know what to do, we want to recommend starting with going to the American Association of Christian Counselors at aacc.net. They can help you find the resources that you need to get through the addiction that you might be facing.

KO: Mm-hmm. Absolutely. We know that many of our listeners are moms who have littles in the back seat, so right now, I would just say, this might not be something that you want to process in real time with a little one who might have a lot of questions in the back seat, so it's probably best to press pause on this and listen at a later time. But Meredith, what I do love is that we end with the hope of the gospel, and I think it's such a... That hope and that message is for any age, so I think, at some point, it will be appropriate for you to be able to share what you learned with your kids, but maybe process it on your own before you do that.

And before we transition into Cindy's teaching, I do want to remind our listeners of our free *Encouragement for Today*, devotions. Cindy is actually a guest author sometimes on our devotions, and we've got a lot of other women who write just like her. If you are looking for a way right now to feel met where you are and encouraged through scripture, all from the convenience of your inbox, then you can subscribe for free today at proverbs31.org. All right, friends. Here's our conversation with Cindy.

MB: Well, we are so excited to have Cindy Bultema on the show with us today. Welcome to the show, Cindy.

Cindy Bultema: Hello. Thank you so very much.

KO: We're so excited. Cindy, we learned before this that you're joining us from the great state of Michigan, so thank you for joining us virtually on the podcast and being here for the first time. We're so looking forward to hearing what you're going to unpack with us today. So excited.

CB: My pleasure. Thank you so much.

KO: Awesome. Of course, of course. Well, from what I know about you, you've got a really powerful testimony, and so much was [inaudible 00:03:35] share with us later. But before we do that, on the show, we do like to get to know our first-time guests a little better. I did do a little digging and investigating on your website and saw you listed 47 random things about yourself, which made my job a lot easier, because as a list person, I was like, "I think I could be friends with Cindy. She just laid everything out right there for me." I have some questions for you based on the 47 things. Are you ready for this?

CB: Oh, I'm so ready. Yes.

KO: Awesome. Awesome. OK. You said that you usually read at least four books at a time. What are you reading right now?

CB: That is a true story. Let's see. If I thought of my nightstand, a new book, *The Thing Beneath the Thing* by my friend Steve Carter, a book called *Resilient* by the team at Awana. So good about raising up the next generation to love Jesus. Some productivity books so I can get my life together. One is *A Minute to Think* by Juliet Funt, and Carey Nieuwhof new book, *At Your Best*. Super helpful. And then of course, I always have my Bible and a Bible study. Right now, I'm going through Lysa TerKeurst's *Trustworthy*. So, so good.

KO: Wow. Honestly, Meredith, I don't know about you, but when I heard that list of books, and there was one of them... Was it about Time to Think? I thought, "How does she have time to think if she's reading five books?"

MB: No kidding.

KO: Be honest, Cindy. That's great. That's awesome. Thank you for plugging Lysa TerKeurst's Bible study in there for us. That was a win for us right there, too. OK. Next question. You said you love celebrating all holidays, but if you had to pick, which one's your favorite?

CB: That is tricky. It's like picking my children. I love them all. I love celebrating every day. People that know me, they know I usually have confetti in my purse. I think Valentine's Day, even when I was little, I loved Valentine's Day, because I got to tell people that they were loved. Not the romantic part of it. When I was in college, I would send my Valentines for my friends to Valentines, Virginia, so they would get a special postmark. [inaudible 00:05:39]. I know. I love Valentine's Day. And then Fourth of July is a close second, because I love being able to celebrate freedom.

KO: That's awesome. That's awesome. I also love that you just mentioned that you have confetti in your purse at all times. That's very exciting to me. OK. Last one. You mentioned that you used to despise your

red hair, but now you love it. This is a little plug here, y'all. Go check out Cindy's Instagram. You can actually see her hair in real life there. But when did you finally embrace your red hair?

CB: Unfortunately, it was probably about the time that I had to start paying for it to be red. When I was little, it was just not cool to have red hair, and I was teased and I was bullied. I would've done anything just to fit in and not stand out.

KO: Wow.

CB: And now, I'm known as Cindy, that one with red hair. When my hair started to turn white and gray, I'm like, "I need to fix this." Maybe the Lord will work on me, but for now, I just keep it red and keep my stylist in business, for sure.

KO: That's amazing.

MB: Cindy, I love that. You know what is really funny? I wonder if that happens to all of us women in a certain degree when it comes time when you have to start coloring hair. I turned 40 this year, and I have really curly hair, and I hated my curly hair until this year. I finally was just like, "What am I doing? I'm just going to let my wild hair be wild, curly hair. That's what I'm going to do." I'm like, "Man, I wish I would've done this a long time ago." I think it came from that place of, "I just want to fit in and look like everybody else and not be different." Now, I have a very large mane of hair, and I'm good with it.

Well, we are so excited that you are here with us today, Cindy. We know that you have a fantastic message that you want to share about living full and walking free. That's about your own personal story of overcoming addiction. We can't wait to hear it. The floor is yours, our friend.

CB: Well, thank you. Thanks, Meredith and Kaley. I guess let's just start with confetti and celebrating, because I recently celebrated another important milestone. It was this summer that it marked my 25th anniversary of being cocaine-free.

KO: That's awesome.

CB: That is confetti-worthy. 25 years. But when most people meet me, they say, "Cindy, you had a cocaine problem?" But unfortunately, I did. In fact, we could just say I had lots of problems. As this little girl with red hair, I didn't grow up knowing God. Instead, I just tried to fill that emptiness and the loneliness in my heart with anything and everything. Really, you name it, and I tried it. Food, men, alcohol, shopping and even drugs. But nothing worked. Before long, what I was using for a sense of control began to control me, and cocaine became a daily habit, much like brushing my teeth, and I didn't know how to stop.

I finally hit rock bottom, some might call it, in the summer of 1996, when I was a single mom of a delightful little two-year-old guy. I accidentally overdosed on cocaine. I ended up at med center, and then the hospital, and nearly lost my life to my addiction. In fact, my mom was at the med center that day, and the medical team told her to say goodbye, that, as they rushed me to the hospital, I would probably be dead on arrival. Thankfully, they were wrong. But the doctors were really clear. If I ever used cocaine again, it would most likely kill me. And the police were even clearer. I needed to get my act together, and fast.

Thankfully, I finally reached out for help. I called a woman I didn't really know very well, a woman named Carol, and told her about this big mess that I was in. This woman had the courage to share with me four simple, but life-changing words. She said, "Cindy, you need Jesus." I didn't even know what that meant. But after listening to Carol tell me about Jesus and His unconditional love, I stood in the kitchen of my little duplex and prayed a simple, but life-changing prayer, and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. Meredith and Kaley, can I just tell you, that was the best decision ever. But did this make all of my problems go away? No. But in the midst of my mess, I began to experience a new peace and a hope and a joy, a strength. And over time, God even gave me a brand-new reputation. And with the help of a mentor, therapists, my family, a small group at the church I began attending, I started to build a new life in Christ, addiction-free.

But can I be real? It was not easy, and I could never have experienced victory without God's help. Willpower alone is not enough, but Jesus is. Friend, whether our temptation is cocaine or cookies, social media or shopping, ex-boyfriends or ex-habits, our inheritance is not to live numbed out in a pit of self-defeat, shame and despair. No. Instead, John 10:10 reminds us that Jesus came so we can enjoy life. Have it in abundance, to the full, until it overflows. And not just when we get to Heaven someday, but today. Jesus alone can rescue, redeem, save, deliver, restore and open up the prison gates and set any captive free, including me, and including you.

A verse that I clung to during this season is 1 Corinthians 10:13. Listen to it from the Amplified Bible. It says, *"No temptation, [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful to [His word— he is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation, He [has in the past, and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy]."* Wow, what a power-packed verse, right? I think it belongs on my refrigerator, because not only is a high-calorie treat not the boss of me or you, I can pass on the chips and guac with joy. Who knew?

I keep this colorful fishing lure with sharp hooks on my desk, I wish you could see it, as a constant reminder. Just like fishermen pick different lures depending on the fish they want to catch, Satan, our enemy, uses a similar tactic. He's like this experienced fisherman who carefully examines our behavior in order to choose the most effective bait. The enemy knows exactly what to use to lure and entice each and every one of us off the path of God's best for us. Maybe for you it's the lure of success or the enticement of online shopping, or perhaps you've been caught by the bait of sexual sin or hooked by the artificial offers of other addictions. Social media, sugar. Or maybe what started off as one glass of wine to take the edge off has led to one bottle, and now two, and you're not sure what to do. Friend, I get it. You are not the only one. What do we do if we find ourselves caught in the hook of addiction? What's our role, if any, when a flashing lure of temptation from the enemy gets cast our way?

When God says in that verse in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that He will make a way, does that mean we have no responsibility? Can we just lounge on the sofa waiting for God to airlift us out of there whenever we feel tempted to compare, overspend, or scarf down that hot fudge sundae? Let's start with setting this verse in context. Paul wrote these words to Christ-followers located in the city of Corinth, which was the Sin City of Paul's day. When we hear Sin City, what U.S. city comes to mind? Las Vegas, right? Well, when you think of Corinth, think Las Vegas but times 10. Instead of 1 and 2 Corinthians, we could look at these books in the Bible like 1 and 2 Las Vegas.

And the sisters and brothers in Corinth, they were surrounded with constant temptations of immorality, idolatry, indulgence. They were living in temptation nation. And the people in Corinth, they were swimming in a culture of prostitution, drunkenness, idol worship, casual sex and most of the Corinthians

grew up with very pagan or non-religious background. Imagine what it would've been like to grow up in Corinth, to live in this corrupt city with its loose-living values and culture. It's all you would've known. And then one day, the Apostle Paul comes to town, and he teaches you a new and better way to live. No longer would sin be your master, because Jesus Christ came to set you free. Regardless of what you had done in the past, your future was secure in Him. And because of the resurrection power of the cross, you are clean, pure, forgiven. What good news, right, friend?

But the challenge with the Christians in Corinth, they had new hearts, but old habits. And rather than the church impacting the culture, the culture impacted the church. And instead of living full and walking free, they were slipping and sliding into their old choices and behaviors. Some of them, forgetting that they were the temple, stuffed themselves with rich foods. Several had liquored up despite their determination not to become inebriated again. Certain folks jumped back in the bed with temple prostitutes, following the treacherous path stamped with "follow me" all the way back to sexual immorality. That's why Paul reminded them and us of God's promises.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 10:13 one more time, but this time in the NIV. It says, "*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*" The Greek words translated, the way out, the compound of two words meaning, in the Greek, "out and then to walk." When they're compounded together, it means to walk out, as to walk out of a difficult place or to walk out of a place that isn't good for you.

Friends, let's not miss this. Right here is our invitation to walk free. If you ask God for help in your moment of temptation, He will show you how to walk out of your difficult place towards fullness and freedom. He always provides an exit door. God helps you resist the temptation, infuses you with His power and gives you an escape route so you can get out of dodge, and fast. That's His part. But then for you and I, we got to do our part, too, because our human strength of resolve is no match for Satan's wicked schemes. Instead of arming ourselves with more willpower, we must arm ourselves spiritually so we can stand our ground. We have a responsibility to pray, make a battle plan, and stand firm, steadfast and grounded, when our cravings come trying to knock us down.

In my own life, as I've battled my way towards cocaine addiction recovery, Jesus did deliver me from my pit of self-defeat and despair. He did. But I also had to take responsibility and do my part. With the help of my mentor, I created an eight-part temptation victory plan. Let me just share three of the eight parts with you now. Number one, I committed that I will pursue a daily relationship with Jesus Christ through His Word and prayer every day. And even today, every day, I still ask God to protect me from temptations, replace my cravings with His satisfaction, surround me with women who will build me up and fill my heart and mind with truth. Number two, I will repeatedly renew my mind with truth. Our beliefs shape our behavior. Wrong beliefs lead to wrong actions. Friend, we must know truth in order to stand up against the devil's sneaky schemes.

And then number three, I will leave behind the old life. When we follow Jesus, we become brand spanking new. I love that. But we must choose to walk out, our new life in Christ. For me, this involved letting go of unhealthy friendships, avoiding environments when temptations would be high. Was it easy? No, of course not. Is my freedom worth it? Oh my goodness, yes. You bet. Executing my temptation victory plan was the key to my daily victory, and as I asked Jesus to enter into my struggle, it became a collaborative effort, a joint endeavor, me and Jesus. In Christ's strength and power, I began making small good decisions, and then choice by choice, I slowly backed away from the cliff and onto solid ground. Praise God.

Often, when I share my story, women will come and whisper, and they'll say, "Cindy, are you ever tempted still?" Yes. But remember, even Jesus was tempted, and sin is only sin if we give in. And then

women will ask, "Cindy, did you ever relapse?" And I tell them the truth. About four months into my sobriety, little lies began to pop in my head regarding my old drug of choice. Suddenly, it seemed appealing to use again. Surely, the doctors had been a little overly dramatic about my overdose. It's not that bad, right? The road to sin begins in our thought life.

I'm so sad to share that, one night, I picked up the phone to call a guy I knew. Yes, he also happened to be a drug dealer. When I told this dealer I had money and I wanted to connect, you know what he said? "Cindy, I'm not selling to you." I was like, "What? You're a drug dealer, I have cash. Remember, this is how it works. Where do you want to meet?" But this drug dealer absolutely refused. He said he heard I was a Jesus freak now, and that freaked him out. But I wanted those drugs badly, so I decided, "I'll just go to a location where I know I could make a purchase. I don't need that guy." As I walked out my front door, I found a friend on my front porch standing there with movies in one hand and snacks in the other. God had impressed upon her good, listening heart that she needed to keep me inside my house that night for my own protection.

The enticement of cocaine was a shiny lure Satan had cast my way. My own willpower was obviously not enough to resist that strong of a hook, obviously. Willpower alone never, ever works. Trust me. However, the temptation did not overpower me. God made a way. Friend, no lure has overtaken you except what is common to all of us. Our God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. He just won't. But when you are tempted, remember, temptation is not a sin. It's only a sin if you give in. And this, I promise you, God will provide a way out. Don't look at the hook. Look for God's hand. Your help is on the way.

Here's what I want you to do if you know today that you are hanging on a hook, whether it's sexual sin, drug or alcohol addiction, an eating disorder, stinking thinking, or anything else that has you paralyzed on your freedom journey. Two words. Are you ready? Tell someone. Yep. Tell someone. Now, don't call your drug dealer, your drinking buddy, or your friend who's going to say, "Oh, that's not big of a deal." No. Tell someone who knows God's truth, lives the truth, and will share truth with you, with love and grace. Independence is dangerous for any addict. We don't heal in isolation, but connection. There are no lone rangers on the journey of freedom. Tell someone.

And for all of us, here's the good news. 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* All. I love that little three-letter word. All. Isn't that awesome? Whatever artificial lure the enemy has used to entice you, whether it's an affair, gossip, porn, credit card debt, envy, pride, sexual immorality, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and will forgive us. If you confess it, He forgives it. And the beautiful message of Jesus is never shame on you, but always shame off you. Friend, regardless of your past choices and experiences, you are not meant to spend your life dangling on a painful hook. In Christ, we can live free from our sinful behaviors and choices, and cultivate holy, pure lives through the power and freedom of Jesus Christ. It's time, friend. It's time. It's time to live full and walk free.

MB: Wow, Cindy. That is a lot to process all at one time. I know you've walked a long road.

CB: Amen.

MB: A really long road to recovery. I have a very long family history of addictions, anything from drugs and alcohol to many, many other vices. So much so that I, later in life as an adult, went on to get a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling for people going through addiction recovery.

One thing that I've learned along the road as I walked with a lot of people through this is that nobody wakes up one day and says, "You know what? I'm going to get addicted to alcohol today. That's what I'm

going to do." Nobody ever wakes up and decides. It's never a volitional act, an act of the will, for addiction to happen. It's almost always, I've always seen it happen, to be a slow process to becoming addicted, from a place of desperation and hurt, whether they want to admit it or not. It's usually something that's... Whatever the source that's driving them to the addiction, it's a place of pain, whether it's loneliness or overwhelm or rejection. But it always comes from some place of... Or it could be the place of, "I want more." Envy, like you said. I think, as I've walked with people through it, you have to recognize that, just like becoming addicted didn't happen overnight, recovery doesn't happen overnight. Recovery is a really slow process. I've never met someone who it wasn't, honestly. In my entire adult life, I've never met someone whose recovery... It's a lifetime journey of staying sober from whatever your addiction was.

Another thing that I have just seen along the road is that our God is so compassionate, so compassionate with our feeble, weak selves in the process of becoming unentangled from our addictions, because He sees below the addiction the hurt that was driving you to the addiction. That's what He's really trying to get to, is that place of pain that you were trying to fill with something else other than Him, right? I want to ask you, Cindy. One, it sounds like you had that moment where you were certainly tempted to go back to using cocaine. Was that the only time that ever happened to you?

CB: Where I used a lot of drugs, and I couldn't even drive past that restaurant. For sure. I still don't go to that restaurant or go in that restroom, because the old thoughts and feelings which are lies, they came back, and they come back strong. I was so very tempted, so I had to be so absolutely deliberate to build a new life and be very careful with all of the sources coming in, whether that was friendship or media. Even the music that I would listen to had to be so deliberate.

I tried to start with the end in mind. I tried to picture a newspaper headline, local woman dies of cocaine overdose and leaves her son an orphan. I had to put that up and remind myself, "One choice, Cindy, and this is where you're going to end up." Yeah. The road to freedom isn't easy, but Jesus is so worth it, and we're worth it.

MB: Yeah. Absolutely. I think that's the thing that I want our listeners to hear today when they walk away from this, is that you are worth it. You are worth the hard work of recovery. The you that you're hiding, if you're struggling with an addiction, the real you is hiding underneath that addiction, and that woman, that person is beautiful, and the world wants to see her and get to know her and watch her thrive and bloom into the beautiful woman that God created her to be.

Cindy, this is getting real personal, so I don't know how comfortable you are with this. I'm so sorry. I'm putting you on the spot, my friend. But in your recovery journey, tell me a little bit about what it looked like. I think that there are what I would call "symptomatic things" that we address, which are those triggers that you just said. I have people in my family that do the... They know that they can't drive through certain neighborhoods, because if they do, they're going to reengage with old friends, and those old friends would love to loop them right back into their old lifestyle. They stay away from old triggers. I think that's, what I would say, treating symptoms, treating triggers. You're being smart. You're keeping away from those places that are going to trigger that old behavior. In your recovery process, in all of this, and like I said, this is getting real personal, so I'm sorry if I'm putting you on the spot, what did you discover underneath that was a drive towards your addiction? What was it that you were trying to numb? What was it that you were running from?

CB: Yes. That is a great question, and you're exactly right. For healing to come, we have to get to the root of the problem, that thing beneath the thing. To me, though, it was kind of like a tangled ball of necklaces, right? There was a couple of things. There was the loneliness, the rejection, the fear. But at

the very root, the lie that I had believed was that my worth was equal to my weight. For me, especially the cocaine, it was about living thin in a very unhealthy way. That was really what drove me to the cocaine, was wanting to be very unhealthy. As a little girl, when I was a chubby girl, I was teased and bullied. When I lost a ton of weight and was a size zero and was a messed up woman, my grandma said, "Oh, Cindy, you're so beautiful now."

MB: Wow.

CB: The cocaine was really about that lie: The worth is equal to your weight. In my recovery journey, I had a mentor that I met every single day. Every single day. She needed to look me in the eye for two years. I had to renew my mind with truth, and I started to find specific truths from God's promise that my worth was not equal to my weight. I made a whole list from A to Z that I was accepted, that I was beautiful, that I was chosen, that I was delivered, that my worth was so much different than what the world says, but my worth was based on what God's Word says. Kelly Minter says it this way. She says, "Satan may tell us what's true, but he never tells us the truth." There was another time just a few years ago where a woman saw me, and she was like, "Wow, Cindy, you've gained weight." First of all, you don't say that to someone, right? We know that.

MB: I know, right? Who is this lady? Somebody needs to teach her some [inaudible 00:34:07].

CB: Right. That's for the next podcast, right? But we don't know, right? I can go different directions all day long. I never would have guessed. We can't plan for all of the triggers always. But at that moment, I thought of that Kelly Minter quote. "Cindy, it's true. Remember, Satan will tell us what's true, but he never tells us the truth. Cindy, it's true. You've gained weight. The last time she saw you, you were two pant size smaller." It's true, right? But the capital-T truth is this. That's why I love Proverbs, guys. They're so passionate about helping women know truth. The truth is, my worth is not equal to my weight, that I am a masterpiece, that I am accepted, that I am beautiful. I went through that list and had to stand and declare and talk to myself like, "OK, girlfriend, this is the truth. What are you going to do?"

And I realized then, again, Cindy, you have a choice. You have a choice. You can allow that woman's comment to go back to all your old habits, call a drug dealer. Is that what you want? Or I can end this moment, stand in the hurt and the yuck, and be like, "That stinks," and I can stand on God's promises. But again, I had to do the work there. But thankfully, God had provided a way that I could get in my truck and talk to myself. Again, I'm thankful to say I didn't go back. In my hope and my prayers, I am faithful to the very end. But yes, you're exactly right. We've got to figure out what the thing is beneath the thing and allow God to do that work there. And again, I would say, most often, that happens not in isolation, but in community and connection.

MB: That's right. Cindy, I think... One, thank you for sharing that, because I can guarantee, Cindy, that so many women listening to this podcast right now have tied their worth to their weight. They may not have run out and started using cocaine to get thin and get to that kind of an unhealthy place. They may be instead just online shopping to cover up, buy more clothing, because then, maybe they'll be beautiful. Or have engaged in relationships that they don't want to be in, because they have believed that lie.

I think this has been a theme in a lot of the people that I have engaged with around addictions, is that they feel totally unlovable. They've never felt loved, they've never been told that they were loved. They feel like they don't matter to anyone. That ache in their heart is so strong and overwhelming that the only way they know how to deal with it is to numb out. They don't want to feel rejected and unlovable

anymore. I just want to say to every single podcast listener today that has chosen to give the last 30 minutes to us, those are lies. You are loved. You are absolutely worthy of love. No matter what shape or size or condition that you are currently in, the God of the universe loves you right where you are at right now, no matter how addicted you are to whatever vice it might be.

Here at Proverbs 31, we do want to point you back to the truth of God's Word, because that is where you will be set free, but we have to start first by uncovering that wounding and allowing Jesus into it. And oftentimes, just like Cindy said, it takes a friend to help you find that wound, to help you say it for the first time. Or a counselor. A counselor really... Oftentimes, they can bring you through exercises, but that first step of not doing this alone is so, so incredibly important, I think.

I've talked enough. Kaley, do you have any questions or thoughts here? Can you guys tell I'm very passionate about the subject?

KO: You both are definitely very passionate, but I think that this is something that's definitely needed in the space that we have here on the podcast to talk about and unpack and really get to the root of the things beneath the things. But as I was just absorbing your conversation, and Cindy, your testimony, I can't get away from thinking about the hope that we have in Jesus, and that He is the one that we do this with first, and with community as well. And like Meredith said, at Proverbs, we are all about helping women understand the truth of who they are. Just like you said earlier, whenever you had to preach to yourself, "My worth is not in my weight," knowing that truth and knowing where you can go in scripture, I feel like is so, so pivotal, because behavior modification alone doesn't ever lead to lasting change. I think that's why the hope of the gospel is so important with this. Thank you for pointing us to scripture and helping us see that we always have to rebuke the enemy with the lies that he's planting in our heads, and that we have the power to do that.

Meredith, I do want to get to where we can close, but I'm going to read Psalm 51, verses 10 through 12 over us, because I think it's a good place for us to land and wrap up today, because God is the one who really can create in us clean hearts. Psalm 51, starting in verse 10, says, "*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.*"

I love those verses so much, because it's like a prayer that we can pray in the midst of not feeling like our hearts are clean, and feeling like, in the moment, this thing that I'm struggling with makes me unworthy. Everybody struggles with something right now. Everybody's got something that they're wrestling with that they're having to refute the enemy on. But what I love about this is the promise that the Holy Spirit can grant you a willing spirit to sustain you, and then that's what gives you the power to be able to make a choice in this moment to move forward and live full and walk free. Cindy, thank you so much for your teaching today. This was very powerful, and I'm grateful that you came on to share your story with us.

CB: Thank you so very much.

MB: Yeah, thank you so much, Cindy. I hope all of our listeners today walk away knowing that they are loved, they are seen, they serve a God who sees, and you are not alone. You just have to bring your feeble efforts to Him, and He will meet you right there.

Well, before we let everybody go, first thing's first, we want to point you to the American Association of Christian Counselors at aacc.net. If you're currently struggling with any kind of addiction, you guys, we want you, just like Cindy said, to talk to somebody. Find some help. Addiction is not a small thing. This is

a big thing, and we don't want you to derail your life. Reach out to them. Find yourself a counselor that can help you walk through the season that you're in.

We also wanted to point to Cindy. She has a resource you can download for free called the *Temptation Victory Plan* on her website at cindybultema.com. We've linked it for you in the show notes, and I think that might be a helpful resource to get you started if you're at the point where you're saying, "You know what? I want to start moving towards victory with some of these addictions I'm facing."

KO: Yeah, absolutely. And Cindy's book, called *Live Full, Walk Free*, is available to purchase, and we've linked directly to it in the show notes for today's episode at proverbs31.org/listen. If today's teaching ministered to you and you want to learn more from Cindy, then you're definitely going to want to check that out.

And finally, we want to connect you guys to Cindy herself so that you can learn even more about what God has taught her through this journey. You can connect with her on Instagram at [@cindybultema](https://www.instagram.com/cindybultema), and check her out on her ministry online called GEMS. It's the go-to resource for girls' spiritual growth from toddler to the teenage years. And honestly, what a needed ministry in our culture today. Cindy, thank you so much for just ministering to that age of girls and for what the Lord is doing through you there. I'm so excited to be able to check that out myself. You can check out GEMS at cindybultema.com/gems.

MB: All right. Well, that's it for today, friends. At Proverbs 31 Ministries, we believe, when you know the truth of God's word and you live it out, it really will change everything. We'll see you next time.