



**Meredith Brock:** Hi, friends. Thanks so much for tuning in 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 Olson:** Hi, Meredith. And hey, everyone. I hope your new year is off to a great start. And speaking of the new year, Meredith, I have to ask you a question. Are you ready?

**MB:** OK. Lay it on me.

**KO:** Have you ever gotten to the second week in January and used the phrase "I'll start again Monday" in response to what you've committed to either start or stop doing as a [New Year's] resolution?

**MB:** One hundred percent.

**KO:** Seriously. I know I totally have. And guess what, guys? Lysa TerKeurst has said this, too. In fact, she just came out with a shortened version of her bestselling book *Made to Crave*, and it's literally called — wait for it — *I'll Start Again Monday*. What a catchy title, first of all.

**MB:** I know. Right?

**KO:** So fun, such a good title. But it addresses our motivation to make lasting changes, specifically around healthy living.

**MB:** OK. So let's pause right here. I don't want to brush over the point of this message. And I just want to acknowledge that we are all at different places with our journey toward healthy living and defining what "healthy" is. And if you could see me right now, I did those air quotes for you.

**KO:** Oh, I got it.

**MB:** Because defining what "healthy" is ... is different for each one of us. But no matter where you fall on the spectrum, this can be a really hard topic to address — because I want you to know our heart here at Proverbs 31 and on this podcast is to always, always, always point you back to Jesus and biblical Truth, and to meet every girl where she's at, in whatever season she might be, with that biblical Truth. And so we don't want to get sidetracked from that conversation.

**KO:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, absolutely. And I know, for me, it's easy to look at another woman on the outside and, being the superficial human being we can all be, think, *Well, she doesn't struggle with this*. But part of being a woman is — no matter how much or how little you may or may not struggle in this area — overcoming the temptation to define your worth by what you look like. That's really, really hard and a battle that I think the enemy wants to keep us in.

And so, guys, that's why we're here today. We're not here to preach a message about how to reach your New Year's goals, if focusing on your health is one of them. We're here because ultimately we're a ministry that's focusing on Jesus, who is the only One capable of creating true and lasting heart change, not just behavior change.

So we're about to listen to an audio chapter from Lysa TerKeurst's book that we mentioned earlier, called *I'll Start Again Monday*. And the title of the chapter is "Replacing My Cravings." And the heart of the message is about a choice that Lysa made that changed her heart and attitude toward her own struggles in this area. So, friends, take a few minutes to listen to this chapter, and we'll jump on at the end to talk through our favorite points.

**Narrator:** Chapter 2: Replacing My Cravings.

I roll over and look at the clock. Another day. Beyond all reason and rationality, I slide out of bed and strip off everything that might weigh even the slightest ounce as I head to the scale. Maybe today will be the day the scale will be my friend and not reveal my secrets. Maybe somehow, overnight, the molecular structure of my body shifted, and today I will magically weigh less.

But no. I yank out my ponytail holder — hey, it's got to weigh something — and decide to try again. But the scale doesn't change its mind the second time. It is not my friend this day. Vowing to do better, eat healthier and make good choices, I head to the kitchen ... only to have my resolve melt like the icing on the cinnamon rolls my daughter just pulled from the oven. *Yum! Oh, who cares what the scale says when this roll speaks such love and deliciousness?* Two-and-a-half cinnamon rolls later, I decide tomorrow will be a much better day to keep my promises to eat healthier. And since this is my last day to eat what I want, I better live it up. Another cinnamon roll, please.

The next morning, I turn over and look at the clock. Another day. Beyond all reason and rationality, I slide out of bed and strip off everything that might weigh even the slightest ounce as I head to the scale. Maybe today will be the day. But once again, it isn't. I yank out my ponytail holder and try again, but no. Vowing to do better, eat healthier and make good choices, I head into my day ... only to find myself making more excuses, rationalizations and promises for later, always later.

And the cycle I've come to hate and feel powerless to stop continues. Who can I talk to about this? If I admit my struggle to my friends, they might try to hold me accountable the next time we go out. And what if I'm not in the mood to be questioned about my nachos con queso with extra sour cream? I'll just tell them I'll be starting on Monday, and they'll be fine with it. They don't think I need to make changes.

But I did need to make changes. I knew it — because this wasn't really about the scale. It was about this battle that raged in my heart. I thought about, craved and arranged my life too much around food, so much so I knew it was something God was challenging me to surrender to His control, really surrender to the point where I'd make radical changes for the sake of my spiritual health perhaps even more than my physical health.

Part of my surrender was asking myself a really raw question. May I ask you this same raw question?

Is it possible we love and rely on food more than we love and rely on God?

Now, before you quit reading this book, hear me out. The question is crucial. I had to see the purpose of my struggle as something more than wearing smaller sizes and getting compliments from others. It had to be about something more than just me. I had to get honest enough to admit I relied on food more than I relied on God. Food was my comfort, my reward, my joy. Food was what I turned to in times of stress and sadness and even in times of happiness.

I felt stupid admitting that. I felt like such a spiritual failure. I told a few people about it, and most seemed supportive. But one well-meaning woman quipped what others would echo in the months that followed: "You're making this diet thing a spiritual journey? Does God really care about our food?" Yes, I think He does. God never intended for us to want anything more than we want Him. Just the slightest glimpse into His Word proves that.

Look at what the Bible says. When God's chosen people, the Israelites, wanted food more than they wanted God, they willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. (Psalm 78:18) Yikes. And what became of them? They never reached the promised land. These people wandered in the desert for 40 years, and no one but Joshua and Caleb, the next-generation leaders, was allowed to enter the land flowing with milk and honey.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to wander about in a desert, unable to enter into the abundant life God has for me, because I willfully put Him to the test over food.

When I started, I knew this battle would be hard. But through it all, I determined to make God my focus. Each time I craved something I knew wasn't part of my plan, I used that craving as a prompt to pray. I craved a lot. So I found myself praying a lot.

Don't rush past that last paragraph. I used my cravings for food as a prompting to pray. It was my way of tearing down the tower of impossibility before me and building something new. My tower of impossibility was food. Brick by brick, I imagined myself dismantling the food tower and using those same bricks to build a walkway of prayer, paving the way to victory.

Did this simple visualization make it easier? Sometimes it did. Other times, my cravings for unhealthy food made me cry. Seriously cry. Sometimes I wound up on the floor in my closet, praying with tears running down my face. And I gave myself permission to cry, just like the psalmist: "*Listen into my words, LORD, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray. In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly*" (Psalm 5:1-3, NIV).

That is exactly what I did.

*God, I want a biscuit this morning. Instead, I'm eating poached eggs. I'm thankful for these eggs, but I'll be honest in saying my cravings for other things are hard to resist. But instead of wallowing in what I can't have, I'm making the choice to celebrate what I can have.*

*God, it's 10 a.m. and I'm craving again. I want those snack crackers that are screaming my name. But instead of reaching for them, I'm praying. I'll be honest: I don't want to pray. I want those crackers. But I'll have a handful of almonds and, brick by brick, prayer by prayer, lay a path for victory.*

*God, it's lunchtime and all my friends are heading out for Mexican [food]. I love Mexican [food]. I could seriously justify a big bowl of chips and guacamole right now. But once again, I'm choosing to pray instead of getting stuck in my craving. Help me, God, to feel satisfied with healthier choices.*

And that's how my prayers continued throughout the day, laying my requests before God and waiting in expectation. Then one morning, it finally happened. I got up, and for the first time in a long while, I felt incredibly empowered. I still did the same crazy routine with the scale, no clothes, no ponytail holder, but I only stepped on it once. The numbers hadn't changed yet, but my heart had. One day of victory

tasted better than any of that food I'd given up ever could. I had waited in expectation, using prayer as my guide, and I did it. I did it that day and the next, then the next. Why not shoot for four victorious days in a row and then maybe one more?

I can't promise you there won't be any more tears. And I can't promise the scale will magically drop as quickly as you wish it would. But it will be a start. A really good start.

**KO:** Well, at the end of the chapter, Lysa said, "For the first time in a long while, I felt incredibly empowered. I still did the same crazy routine with the scale, no clothes, no ponytail holder, but I only stepped on it once. The numbers hadn't changed yet, but my heart had."

And, Mer, I love that line ... because, before we heard this chapter, we mentioned that heart change is what we're in the business of doing here at Proverbs 31 Ministries because Jesus is the only One who can really help change our hearts. And we know that talking about [our] body-image battle means that ... something different for each person listening. But at the core, our goal really should be to start with lasting change from the heart.

**MB:** Yeah. If this is the journey you're on as you head into 2022, I just want to recommend picking up a copy of *I'll Start Again Monday* and using it alongside whatever healthy lifestyle plan you've chosen to maybe try to tackle this year. There's a reason this is one of Lysa's most popular messages, you guys, because this is not a how-to-get-healthy book. It's a book that's going to help you find your "want to."

**KO:** Mm-hmm.

**MB:** And I don't want you to miss that — that's the focus, guys. It's not the "how to." It's the "want to" that goes beyond that physical decision. So we've linked directly to *I'll Start Again Monday* in the show notes for today's episode.

**KO:** Yes. And maybe you listened to this podcast today and your "I'll start again Monday" doesn't have to do with weight loss goals, but it's more about getting into a regular quiet time routine or just starting something that you can do today that you'll do long-term. And so we've got a great, free resource for you that's available to download right now. It's called "The 21-Day Invitation: Steps To Reconnect With God." And it's available to download in our show notes at [Proverbs31.org/Listen](https://Proverbs31.org/Listen). With this free download, each day you'll be encouraged to read through one of our free *Encouragement for Today* daily devotions that we have here at Proverbs 31 and use the day's scripture as a foundation for your time with God. The free resource is printable and includes space for you to journal each day for 21 days in a row. So grab your copy and one for a friend in the show notes for today's episode at [Proverbs31.org/Listen](https://Proverbs31.org/Listen).

**MB:** All right. That's all we have for you today. Thanks so much for tuning in. At Proverbs 31 Ministries, we believe that when you know the Truth and live the Truth, it changes everything.