



**Meredith Brock:** 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, Meredith Brock and I'm here with my co-host, Kaley Olson.

**Kaley Olson:** Well, hey, Meredith. I'm so glad to be back for week two of our three-week series on the journey of motherhood and when it involves disappointment, suffering and loss. I know this is a much needed series for me and for so many listening, because we know that you probably have been through this, are going this, or know someone who is. So today, we're joined again by two experts and dear friends, Counselor Rachel Elmore and Biblical Specialist, Wendy Blight. They were so helpful last week and we are very excited to talk with them again this week.

**MB:** Well, last week's episode covered infertility and what we can do in the waiting season. And Kaley, I learned so much. It was, honestly, I feel like hard, but a beautiful episode that I think is going to help a lot of people. So whether or not you're currently experiencing the season of waiting, we encourage you to listen to it because at the end of the day, waiting is something we're all walking through and there are some very helpful truths in that episode that can be applied to your specific situation.

But today, we're going to dive into miscarriage and infant loss, and we'll unpack what attending to grief looks like in that particular season of life. Let's just be honest, let's say it, this is not an easy topic to talk about, but it's so necessary because I really think it happens a lot more than we even know. And I think there's a lot more women facing this really, really hard reality that we are not even aware of. So, Rachel, let's start there. What are some of the facts about miscarriage and infant loss? How many women are going through this? As a counselor, from your counseling perspective, why do we even need to talk about this subject?

**Rachel Elmore:** Well, it is one out of four women has had a miscarriage. One out of four and those numbers are just for me still staggering one out of four. It's something that our culture doesn't talk about. There are cultures around the world that they do honor an infant's life, even after miscarriage. There's cultures that miscarriage doesn't even really translate into their language very well because they just use the term, D breath, death, or they use loss.

So with that, we know our culture and so many of us have dropped the ball on dealing with miscarriage. It's something that nobody's really talking about. I even think in the last decade, we're starting to see people come out on Facebook groups or Instagram and saying, "Hey, I'm the one in four." And I am the one in four. I have lost a baby.

With that being said, it's something that's shrouded in a lot of shame. It's something that women are embarrassed about. Similar to the infertility talk that we had last week, it's something that women are

ashamed about and they suffer in silence. They're not speaking out about it and they don't know how to talk about it.

It's so sad because I think the reason people don't talk about it is because it makes people uncomfortable. As Christians, I look at that and I'm like, "I don't think we're called to not talk about things because they might make us uncomfortable." People don't always know what to say and the whole myth of its bad luck to tell people before the 13-week mark.

All of that feeds into this story that we don't talk about infant loss. We don't talk about miscarriage because friends, miscarriage is, it's a death. It's a loss of life. I know if you're driving your car, I know if you're folding laundry, I know that might have just knocked the wind out of you. It is a death. I want you to know that because if it... We're going to call it what it is, and it's a loss like none other, and it's a loss that nobody talks about how we're supposed to handle it. So I'm really excited today to talk about a very hard topic, but to talk about how do we deal with this and how are we set free?

**KO:** Yeah. I agree, Rachel. I think even just whenever you define miscarriage as a death, that gives us a greater context to then unpack why we struggle with it so much when it does happen to us, because I'm like you, I'm one in four as well, and thankfully work with a lot of people who are able to help guide me and point me to the right resources and point me to biblical counseling through this. But I know there's a lot of people who don't have that.

So I'm very, very grateful that we're talking about this today, but I want to toss it to Wendy now. And let's go to God's Word because we know that when we were studying and preparing for today's teaching, the Bible, doesn't specifically cover miscarriage and infant loss like it does with infertility, with those examples that you shared last week. But because Rachel just defined miscarriage as a death, death is all over scripture. It talks a lot about grieving.

I know one of the hardest questions humans have to ask when they're faced with death, any kind of death is why does God allow this? Why did this happen? So I'd like for you to start there because you were one of the people last year when I was walking through this who was pivotal and helping me process this. So I'd love for you to share that same wisdom with her friends.

**Wendy Blight:** Thanks, Kaley. And just to say, it was honestly a privilege to walk alongside you, and it was really a gift. So thank you for trusting me. Well, I want to start out by saying first what death is not, and it's not a punishment. I think that's so important, especially when you deal with a miscarriage. Roman's 8:1 — I'm going to give y'all a lot of scripture here, and I think, Kaley, we can put these scriptures in notes. So don't feel like you have to write them down, but Romans 8:1, we're just going to walk through death in the Bible for a few minutes. It says, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" Because Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. He laid his life down at Calvary so that our sins will be forgiven.

So sin has been forgiven. So what death is, is the final outcome of living in a fallen world. How do we know that? We go back to Genesis. Always going back to Genesis. Genesis 2:15 through 17 says, "*The LORD, God took the man, Adam, and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and care for it. And the LORD commanded the man, 'You are free to eat of any tree in the garden, but you must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die.'*" (NIV)

OK, right there God says, "Here's the result of your disobedience and sin." So Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, ate from the forbidden tree. Sin and death entered the world. Paul in the New Testament, expands on this in Romans 5:12 and says, "*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, that's Adam, '... and death through sin in this way, death came to all people because all sinned.'*" (NIV)

So the easy way someone told me this once is Adam's sin has been downloaded into every generation of people since. So that's really what has happened here. That's why we're all sinners because of what happened in the garden of Eden. But again, the good news comes in Genesis 3. Not necessarily good news in the sense for the three people who committed wrong, Adam and Eve and the serpent. But what was said to the serpent is where we find good news.

So God says to the serpent, because you have done this, in other words, because you have tempted and caused Adam and Eve to sin, he says first, *"Cursed are you above all livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life."* (NIV) But this is the part we care about. Then God says, *"I will put enmity..."* — that's hostility— *"... between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel."* That's Genesis 3:14 and 15.

What does that mean? So what the author is saying here in Genesis is there's going to be hostility between the woman and the seed of that woman. And Jesus eventually is the seed of that woman. And Jesus is going to ultimately defeat Satan. How? Satan is going to bruise or strike out at Jesus heel. Right? And what does that mean? The 40 days in the wilderness, Satan came after Jesus. The garden of Gethsemane, Satan came after Jesus.

Every time Jesus had to stand up to him, but on the cross at Calvary, with the death, resurrection and then ascension into heaven, Jesus crushed Satan's head. He is a defeated enemy. OK. So we being God's children, believers in Jesus are more than conquerors over Satan, over death, over sin. And then if you go to Romans 5:17, it says this very truth. It's like this is the fulfillment of that prophecy in Genesis 3. *"For if, by the trespass, the sin of one man —that was Adam —death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through one man, Jesus."* So just as death came through Adam, life, abundant, eternal life will come through Jesus. He broke the power of death forever.

So really when you look at death, it is a new beginning. It's the beginning of heaven. It's the time where we, as God's people get to enter into that promised inheritance, that eternal life. So that's all great theology, right? But when you experience death of a child, it becomes very real and it doesn't feel very fair. And your mind is not going to go to blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, Roman, Genesis, Romans. It's not going to go there.

It's going to go to this grief. And especially when it's the loss of a child. The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 57:1 and 2, *"The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart, the devout are taken away and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared evil." Those who walk uprightly enter into peace and find rest as they lie in death."*

Well, that's complicated for me to understand. So sometimes as a Bible teacher, I'll go to what are called commentaries. And those are people that are lots more brilliant than I am, and then you are, but they help bring things down to be more understandable. When I read this from Matthew Henry, who is a super old theologian that I love, he says that they are taken away, the scripture says in compassion. That they may not see the evil nor share in it nor be tempted by it.

In other words, in God's compassion and wisdom, sometimes he is going to allow an early death to protect his child from something that none of us can see, none of us can know, but God knows because He is omniscient and He knows everything. And the comfort we can take is that when that child or that person, we love whatever age they are, they enter into God's everlasting arms and are in complete joy, peace and rest.

Now, is it still hard? Yes. And we'll talk a little bit more about that, but we'll talk more about how that impacts your relationship with God and the whole waiting thing. But I think the beauty in that truth is

once again, God is sovereign and in control of everything. We've got to be in the Word to come and know His character and love so we can trust where we've landed.

**MB:** Wendy, that's so helpful. Honestly, I think one, just to kind of recap where we've come so far in this episode already, is that the reality that one in four women, one in four women will have this significant experience with death and not just death of an aging grandparent though. That's really hard, but death of a child. That is heart wrenching. There's a couple different things that we're having to contend with when we go through this, it's the understanding. The mental understanding of, "Whoa, why did God allow this? When did death even become part of this world?" You start to question all of that, and that's that theological understanding that you just walked us through is this is why this entered into the world. We live in a broken world.

So then there's this other part that we have to contend with. We may understand now in our minds what just happened, but wow, the weight and the grief that we carry, what in the world do we do with that? And Rachel, that's where I really want to turn to you. As somebody who can help us navigate the emotional side of having a miscarriage, we need some practical tips of what do we do? How do we grieve in a healthy way? Can you start one?

I think in our brainstorm session, this was really eye opening for me. This is very practical, and we've alluded to it a couple times in this episode already is we're saying miscarriage and we're saying infant loss. Can you help us understand the difference between those two? And then, because I think they may be very different experiences for our listeners and maybe some don't know where they fit and they're feeling isolated in the experience that they've had, and then let's talk about what it means to in a healthy way, with our emotions?

**RE:** And with the difference between miscarriage and infant loss, I mean, we obviously, can look at medically how they define it. I think they define it at 24 to 26 weeks. The difference with how medically they view it, but either way, it's a loss of life. And for me, it's the difference between whether or not this was a baby, we got to hold in our arms or whether we were completely robbed of the chance to hold them, sing over them, talk to them, teach them.

I mean, it is a different experience. I always encourage women to try to not say, "Well, it was early, or it could have been worse because if I'd been further along..." Or even when I've had dear clients that have had to bury their children, they'll have people that'll say, "Oh, at least they were only three or at least..." I just try to be really cautious with that kind of thinking, because I believe biblically a life is a life and that baby mattered and that baby still matters even if they were six weeks old, even if you were six weeks along.

The experience is definitely different. We are all sisters in this. We're not twins. And so grieving the loss of a miscarriage or infant loss is going to vary. The hundreds and maybe thousands of women I've worked with, it's varied. It's always been different and it's not on a straight line. It would be nice if we went through the five steps of grief and we all grieved the same way, but it's just not that experience.

We don't often think about grieving a miscarriage. It is interesting. I very often on my intake for counseling, I have a question on there about whether or not you as a couple have experienced or an individual experience miscarriage. And almost never does anyone actually list their miscarriages. It's always months later into therapy that they'll say, "Oh, yeah..." Literally, I had a lady the other day. She's like, "Oh, yeah, I had 10 miscarriages."

I'm like, "10? We were months into therapy." She never told me. I just thought, "Oh my gosh." And she tried to make it like it wasn't significant. I'm like, "Oh my gosh. These are significant losses to go through." Again, we're sisters not twins. We go through this, not on a straightforward timeline and we

grieve it differently and that's OK. We think about the kind of... They're a bit cliché, but the five stages of grief, which there's five, but I always like to add shock to it because we do go through a period of just being in some shock, but we go through depression, anger, guilt, bargaining, which bargaining I always like to point out is going through and thinking, "Well, if I had stopped running or if I had ran more, or maybe I fed them this kind of formula."

It's going back and saying what if, what if, what if. That's the bargaining. And then the last stage is acceptance. Guys, we don't go through the stages of grief in order. That would be nice. It's like a ping pong ball in a big white room. It just bounces around. In the early stages of grief, a lot of times we may go three, four stages in one day, which is exhausting. And that's in the stage which we would call mourning.

For myself, I didn't grieve my loss of, of my baby until years after. It was years that I really processed it. I know my situation was different because my oldest son was an identical twin. And I guess he still is an identical twin, but his brother is in heaven. So with that, I wasn't ready to grieve it. I was pregnant. So I was coming into this intense joy and intense sadness at the exact same time, and had guilt over. I didn't know how to grieve it. At least I'm pregnant. After going through infertility, I got pregnant.

So with that, we do go through the five stages of grief. They're not on a perfect timeline. It would be nice if they were. They're not. And everybody goes through it very, very differently. I can't even guess when a lady comes to me and has just gone through a miscarriage. I can't project and guess where she's going to be in this grieving process.

**KO:** Yeah. Rachel, that's so helpful. I think too, especially talking about the morning process when you're experiencing everything all at once, and then once you actually get through you're out of that morning period, and then you're processing it. Meredith, what do you always say to people who were process... You told me.

**MB:** Yeah. I mean, Kaley, I want to... One, I mean, I just... As we walked through this with you and alongside you, how you gave yourself the freedom to go through, to feel all the feelings that you needed to feel and you didn't try to compartmentalize it, and you didn't try to just put all your pieces back together and put it on a shelf and keep moving. You gave yourself the space to say this was a real loss. This hurt really bad. This was my hopes and expectations.

I hated watching you go through it. It killed me. You're like a daughter to me, but I was so proud of the way that you allowed the process to unfold in your life. I've told people this, many different people in my life, if you don't process your pain, it will come back to process you later.

It will show up somewhere else. It will show up in your relationship with your husband. It'll show up in your body. Your actual physical body can manifest the pain that you have not dealt with. It'll show up in your parenting. It will come back to process you. So to Rachel's point, I think you have to allow yourself to go through those five stages. Something may trigger you to go back to one of the previous stages. And it's really more of a... I think we try to think about grieving as like Rachel said, a straight line, a continuum. I'm going to go from this stage to this stage, to this stage, to this stage. And then I'm going to be done.

Check moving on. And that is just not how grieving happens. It's a cycle and you can be triggered to go right back into it years later. And that's OK. It means that you cared and that you loved something, and that God softened your heart so much, that you could feel so deeply. And what a privilege. What a beautiful privilege that is. Rachel, can you share —

**KO:** Can I —

**MB:** Go ahead.

**KO:** Before you actually go into Rachel, I do want to say something. Thank you for what you said. That means a lot. But I think what I don't want to do right now is set my grieving and mourning process up on a pedestal. But I want to say that the reason that I was able, or even knew to give myself the freedom to do it is because I have people in my life who pointed me to do that. I think because, Meredith, like you said, one of the first things you told me was that, "If you don't process this, it will process you." I took that and I was like, "OK, well then I guess I have to figure out how to process it." But you were the one who gave me permission to do that.

I know that it's such a privilege that I get to work in a setting like this where I'm given the space to do that. And there's not a lot of people, people who are given the space to grieve and to process that well. So if you're listening to this and you've been through this and maybe you're somebody like Rachel's client who might have had miscarriages and never talked about it, that's OK. You can still process years later. And so don't think that this has to be something that you do immediately, or that you have to do perfectly because Lord knows I did not do it perfectly. I had a lot of really, really hard moments that no one, but my husband ever saw.

And there's a lot of hard moments that no one, but you and whoever you live with will see as well. So Meredith, I think you were about to transition into some of the practical things that Rachel probably walks through her clients with. So if that's OK, maybe we can and go into her advice, because I would love to know what she recommends.

**MB:** Absolutely. I would love to hear that, but I do want to acknowledge too, Kaley, I think that that's a really important point for some people. Y'all, I've had dear friends of mine who had an early pregnancy miscarriage, had to go into the doctor and have a procedure done and went to work the next day. I just think, "Oh my gosh, the weight of that is a death. So giving yourself as much as you can is circumstantially the space to process that. But I think some of these pointers... Well, one, I just want to say, I'm sorry to those girls that have had it. It chokes me up. I'm so sorry for those of you, who've had to do that and had to pull up your bootstraps and pretend like this didn't happen and just go to work and put on a smiling face.

I am so sorry that you've had to go through that and we acknowledge your loss, if no one else has and say we're standing with you in that and you are not alone. But I do think some of the pointers that Rachel has, maybe this is something you can do in those moments when you get home from work or after you've put your other grown children to bed and giving yourself the space to grieve the way you need to, to process through this pain. So Rachel, can you walk us through some of those things?

**RE:** Yeah. I'd be glad to. For myself and not everyone is ready for this, a couple of things. Smaller suggestions and then I have a couple of, I guess, kind of homework assignments that I'd like to do and I've done myself. I would like to do with the people I work with. It's really helpful even with the five stages of grief, just to identify where you are that day, when you wake up just to say, "I'm really angry." It helps to identify. And especially when you're in the mourning process and you are in more than one stage of grief in a day to say, "I'm bargaining." When I keep going through and saying, "If I hadn't had cheese that one time," or whatever it is and I laugh because we seem to blame ourselves for everything in motherhood.

So just going through and saying, "OK, I'm bargaining." Just naming it is really helpful because then we can do something with it. And you're right. Grief unprocessed, it destroys. It really does. So when we're ready, and we know it when we're ready. We feel it. We feel it in our bones when we're ready to start to

name where you're at is usually the starting point. Even when you're in some shock to be able to say, "I'm feeling depression today or I'm feeling denial today. I'm feeling guilt today."

Maybe even start to feel a little bit guilty, because I might feel some relief that I'm not pregnant right now. I know that's hard to hear, but I want all the women out there to hear that if you've ever grieved over a miscarriage and had a quick moment of feeling relieved that you're not pregnant or even though you very much wanted that baby, that is so normal and human. I would love to take some of that shame away if I could.

So I like to name where we're at in the grief process. Also, one of the things I like to do is I like for the women I work with to decide, to make people uncomfortable. And with that, I'm just saying don't stay silent. I wanted to share about my baby. I didn't want it to feel he was erased, that he went away. I wanted his life to matter. So for myself, my boys know that they have a brother that didn't live and that he's in heaven with Jesus. And they know.

It was interesting, my older son, he was about four and a half and he was getting his hair and he told the lady cutting his hair, "I have a brother in heaven. I get to see him someday, and he's with Jesus. I have a twin brother." Because he was an identical twin and he is an identical twin. And the lady just was mortified cutting his hair. I mean, you could just sense it. And I loved so much. He was grieving in that moment and we just decided... Because it's on the sonogram. You can't really hide it. We decided to just... It was never a secret in our family.

I decided that there were going to be moments whether if it was talking to our pastor or we were going to talk about him. I was going to be willing maybe even in a moment to make someone uncomfortable. Now that, that was the goal, but I was ready to say that I needed to talk about what I was going through. I wasn't ready to just keep it some secret because why should it be a secret?

So that would be another thing that I'd recommend. And this is something that it's a grief technique that can work for grieving, lots of losses is to make your loss list. And guys, when I was preparing for today, I went back and made my own loss list as I often do. I just went through, and it's just a timeline where you walk through the major losses in your life and you name them because it brings all the losses to this surface. Then we can examine patterns and maybe how one is affected the next, which has affected the next, because grief unprocessed, right? It's damaging.

So when we write it down, it was so powerful for me to write it down and shed a few tears and pray about it and say, "Wow Lord, I can see and I can see your glory," which I know that's hard to hear for some of you right now, but I can still see your sovereignty in this loss list. Just make a timeline. And for myself, I put down my parents' divorce and I put down a bad breakup I went through in college, and other major losses that I went through.

Then there was a line where I put down my son that I lost. So making your loss history graph, as some people call it or your loss list is a really powerful thing to do as well. There's something about it when we put it on paper. It's like there's something we can do about it. We can process it. It's a powerful experience.

Then another thing, obviously, I have a lot zest for life today and I have a lot of passion for this topic, but I encourage women when they're ready to name your baby. When you're ready. I didn't name my baby right off the bat. A lot of women, they didn't know the gender. I did because, again, identical twins. But you might feel led to do so. You might feel led to not do so. If you're not ready, look, you're not ready. Again, grief is not linear. It's not.

So there's a really powerful thing that happens if you name your baby. And then when we name our baby, then we can say hello. Then we can even say, "See you later." I don't like to say goodbye because we're not saying goodbye. We know exactly where they are.

We haven't lost them, friends. We know exactly where my son is. We know exactly where Kaley's sweet bundle of joy is. We know exactly where they are. It just stinks for us. So one of the things... And just encourage you, I didn't do this until years and years and years after my loss of my son is we write a miscarriage letter and really it's just a grief letter. Grief letters are interesting because we talk about anything that was... Anything we need to forgive. There's all these other dynamics, but here's the thing. We're talking here about all the dreams that we had for this baby that we didn't get to see and we didn't get to experience. So we have to do something with all that love. And for me writing this letter, it was so beautiful the way I was able to get it out on paper.

So we talked about it and I talked to Meredith, and Kaley, and Wendy about it. I was like, "Should I share it?" And they were like, "Yeah, let's do it." I wanted you guys to hear, even from a therapist and therapist have issues too, about what this was like for me to write a letter to my son that I never got to hold. I named him Henry, and that's not actually one of my favorite names, but God, in a dream, I felt like God gave me the name Henry is his name.

So this is the letter I wrote to him. Dear Henry, it's been about 10 years since I found out that you died. We were told that you're an identical twin to your brother, Hunt. Sometimes I'm sad when I look at your brother. I wonder what it would've been like to have you both. I was so happy when he was born, but at the same time, I was so sad for losing you. There was tremendous joy and tremendous pain at the same time. I'm reminded by you every single day. I want you to know that you matter in this world, even though you never got a chance to live in it. I want you to know that I feel guilty in a moment, feeling relieved to only have one crying baby on my hands instead of two.

I know now that this feeling was really human and natural, and I didn't mean that I wanted to hurt you. I wanted you, I loved you, and I still love you. I don't know why God let your brother live and didn't let you live. I assume I'll never know. I know that I can trust that you are in the arms of Jesus and His arms are stronger than mine. I know His arms are more comforting than mine, and I know He can take better care of you than I ever could.

I want you to know that you weren't erased. Every time, I see someone with twins, I think of you. I'm filled with joy. Your memory lives in the walls of our house. Your memory lives in our hearts. Even though I never heard your voice, your voice lives in every moment of my life. Even in the pain of never hearing your voice, I have grown to rely on God's voice that much more. I'm glad in a way that you never experienced the pain of this world. I'm glad you never had to suffer. I'm glad that you are right now, feeling more joy than anyone has ever felt on this earth.

I'm sad I never got to hold you or watch you grow. I couldn't teach you to cook or ride your bike. I'm sad sometimes because I wish I could have seen what it would've looked like to see your dad holding two babies instead of one. I wish I could have dressed you and your brothers alike. I'm sad I never got to see you learn to read and achieve your goals. I never got to tease you girls and fuss at you about needing a haircut. I never got to get a big hug from you. I know your hugs would've been amazing.

I know you were never mine in the first place. Your brothers have never been mine either. You belong to the Lord. So I let you go, Henry. I give you back to the Lord. It hurts to say and I don't feel it right now, but I will have faith in it. I trust him that he's holding you and I will hold you someday. I wish I didn't have to, but I can and I will wait. The wait is long for me, but it will be there for you before you know it. I love you, Henry. I'll see you soon. Love, mom.

So thank you guys for letting me share that. It's been 10 years before I could read that to someone else and everyone listening, you guys are the first to hear it and hear a therapist cry. But to hear the pain and maybe hear how healing this was for me to read this to you even right now, because your baby, my

baby, our babies they matter. They all matter. And there's a purpose. I won't pretend to have it today for you. I wish I did, but I know God's got this.

**KO:** That was beautiful. I feel like if you're driving or listening to this and you need to take a moment right now, just pause it and we'll be here when you come back. Because what I couldn't get out of my head when you were reading that, Rachel, is that it's so beautiful when you lean into the grief and allow the Lord to process through you. Even though that was hard for me to hear, y'all, we're recording and we all have our cameras turn on, and I don't think there's a dry eye on the other side of where everybody is recording from their house, because that was so powerful.

But that letter was a reflection of the work that you leaned into, into your own grieving. And that's something that you chose to do. But if you're listening to this, I can't force you to grieve. No one can force you to go with the grieving process. We just learned so many practical and helpful steps from Rachel to write down loss lists and write down where we are that day and really think through how am I going to get through today?

But I think as believers, there's this bigger step that we have to take in the grieving process, which is leaning into the Lord and allowing Him to work through us in the grieving, because if we don't lean into the grief and we just keep pressing on and don't acknowledge it, then I think that has a big negative impact on our relationship with the Lord. Because then the things that we are processing internally can lead to blame and can lead to hardening our hearts against Him. And that's not what we want.

So Wendy, I would love to hear what you have to say about grieving and leaning into the suffering that we are all experiencing from a biblical perspective.

**WB:** Well, first thank you for that beautiful... It just goes right into what we're talking about, my opening question that I think we all ask in hard places. And what I'm about to talk about will apply to lots of losses. If God is a good God, why this depth of pain and loss for this discussion with a baby, with a miscarriage and infant loss? And you showed us exactly what it was. It took time. You noticed, she wrote this 10 years later. That's what this is about as a Christian. It's a waiting. It's a walking in grief. It's attending to our grief. And it's trusting that in God's economy, in His seat on the throne ruling and reigning over heaven, that He sees this bigger picture. He sees this eternal story and He knows when we surrender our grief to Him, anywhere along the way, He's waiting with open arms, that better and greater promises come to us in the midst of it and beautiful fruit like this letter, like her calling, like Kaley's calling, what we're doing here today, that's the fruit that can come on the other side of grieving.

So the best way to attend to our grief, I go back to what we said last week is to be in the Word of God so we can understand it and know that there is purpose and there is fruit both in grieving. We're going to go to James 1:2-4. *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know, the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work, so you may be mature and complete and not lacking anything."* (NIV)

Well, I'm telling you when I'm in the midst of any kind of weight, but especially what we're talking here today, words like considerate joy and testing my faith, they don't sit well in my heart. I don't want to hear those things. It sounds almost cruel, right? I mean, to me it does. But this is why biblical study helps so much. Because if we go look at the Greek, look at these words and what the author, James originally wrote them in, first of all, it talks about many, many trials.

This picture is what has stuck with me from when I learned this years ago, it means various, many colored. I went to a commentary and he wrote, "My wife and I visited a world famous weaver and watched them work on the looms. And we noticed the undersides of the rugs were not beautiful. The

patterns were obscure. The loose yarns looked danged. It wasn't pretty. And the Weaver said, 'Don't judge the worker or the work by looking at the wrong side.'"

Let's not judge from what we see today because his work is not finished yet. And that's how it is with the Lord. Our trials can be like those yarns that he uses to make this rug. They're not all alike. There's hard and then there's really hard, and then there's the kind, why God? And God yet weaves them together.

So in the midst of them, they look chaotic and unsettled and oftentimes hopeless. But we can be assured that the final product will be a beautiful masterpiece. That's been intentionally and intricately woven together by our Creator. There are times when we won't get to see the beautiful rug on the carpet, right? There are times when we won't see it this side of heaven, especially in this story of miscarriage and infant loss.

But when we cling to the promises we're talking about, then we can do what it says and face these trials of many kinds. OK, what are the trials? A trial can mean trial or temptation, but here, this is hard to hear in this place, James is talking about trials that have been allowed and shaped by God to strengthen our faith and enhance our lives.

He says when these trials come, not if these trials come. So what it's telling us is we can flip the lens through which we view this, right? By scripture, we can flip the lens and not automatically go to why me? Or if we go to why me, we can then go to truth of scripture and say, "OK, wait. You've already told me, when these things happen, this is how I process it and this is what's going to come through." So then you can say, "OK, God. I hate this and I don't like this, but will you help me walk through this and show me how you want to use it in my life."

This is how I processed my rape for a decade. I was angry with God. Is it easy? Absolutely not. This is not easy. I walked alongside a friend who lost her firefighter's son at 19 years old to one of his very first fires that he fought. It was horrible. Unexpected, unfair losses are so difficult to process, especially when we didn't do anything. It's been allowed for some reason by our Father in heaven. Job can testify to this. I mean, with Job, God even said, "Satan, have your way with him. Here's my rules. You can't do this and this, but go for it because I know he will be faithful."

OK. I don't like thinking of God like that, but this is part of who God is because He's doing something in us. So when James 1:2 says, "*Count it all joy...*", friends. Count it all joy. That word count means to evaluate, OK. It doesn't mean yippy-skippy, here's another hard thing. It means evaluate. So what do we evaluate in light of? We evaluate in light of God's Word and His character and the hope that we talked about from Romans 15:4. His love, His truth and His promises. But unless we know those things, unless we're in the Word, unless we're in counseling, Christian counseling, unless we have friends like Kaley talked about walking alongside us, we can evaluate our loss through the very one who is the only one who can bring us out the other side stronger and better. And with a beautiful story to tell.

Then the other thing James tells us at the very last part of this is he said suffering produces fruit. He talks about one of those fruit being perseverance. That word in Greek, hupomone, means abiding under. It means steadfast, not passive acceptance. It doesn't mean we have to sit there and just say, "OK, God, whatever." No, we courageously process our grief in the time that works for us.

So when I watched my friend, Rene process the loss of her son like that, lost in a fire immediately, it was like watching someone be so angry with God, didn't want anything to do with God. But then saying, "I'm going to show up at Bible study. I'm going to open up my Bible and I'm going to sit there and read it even though it means nothing to me right now when I'm so angry." But she just little by little walked in obedience because she trusted God and she kept beating herself truth.

Her husband didn't do that right away. It was counseling. He needed counseling first. Counseling is healthy and good, whatever it is to help you process and bring you back to truth. So there's some truths, if you could just say, "God, I trust You love me. God, I trust You are good. God, I trust You see me. God, I trust you will restore my joy. I trust You will work this for my good. I trust You will work this for Your glory. I trust You are refining me and conforming me." All of those come from God's Word.

And then, because you believe these truths, you can trust Him with your anger and your doubts and your unanswered prayers, and the emptiness, and the loneliness and the questions because you know He will provide.

**MB:** Wow, Wendy. I think it's so helpful to just know the truth of scripture. And even if you don't feel it right now, you don't feel it making the choice to feed yourself with truth. I love it. This whole episode, I feel like this is really going to help a lot of people. And I hope our listeners who hear the practical pieces that you feel like you can actually implement today, go do it. And then give yourself the grace as the Lord works and the Holy Spirit moves in your heart and in your life to attend to the other places, because he will lead you.

I had a mentor in college who used to say this to me and it has comforted my heart many times is "God is a much better leader than you are a follower." So trust Him to lead you through the process and just obey Him step by step. And today, maybe the only step of obedience is for you to talk about your loss for the first time with someone else. Maybe it's just that simple step. Or maybe it's getting back into Bible study because you haven't been doing it for a really long time and it's time for you to feed yourself the truth.

So whatever it is, lean into the Lord, the Holy Spirit, ask Him what step it is you need to take today to begin processing the grief that is in your heart. Wendy, will you pray for our listeners today as we close?

**WB:** Absolutely. Abba Father, we bring to You our sweet mamas who are crying out to You and maybe asking why Lord. Father, come and draw near. Hold Your sweet daughter, hold her close. Love her with your lavish love. In Jesus' powerful name. Ensure she knows you are El Roi the God who sees her. You are her refuge and strength, her present help in need. Each mama needs to know that now, Lord. Right now, do as you promise in Isaiah 41:10 to strengthen her, help her, uphold her with your righteous right hand. Give each one what she needs to humbly come before You and entrust her sweet baby to You.

Fill the void in her heart with Your unconditional love. Remind her that though it may not feel like it right now, you are good. You are faithful. You are the God of all comfort who will comfort her in her troubles. We know Your ways are not our ways and Your thoughts are higher than ours. I pray each will receive in this moment, the covering of Your presence and peace, that peace that passes all understanding that only You can give. Give her strength and courage for the days ahead, reminding her she's not alone, and you were with her and will not leave with her.

Mend her heart and wash it by the power of Your Word and Your Holy Spirit. Wash that anguish and pain that has shattered it. Help her to walk in Your love every single day as she comes to trust You. And may she rest in Your warm embrace and know You will never let her go. Cover her with your wings as she grieves.

Remind her of Your promise about heaven and eternity for we know that her precious child is in Your presence right now, where there is no sorrow and no mourning. Let your grace be sufficient for her. Help her to grieve with hope, for we know that this is not the end. She will see her precious child in heaven. We entrust each one to You and pray these words in Jesus' powerful and effective name. Amen.

**MB:** Thank you, Wendy so much. Well friends, we will be back next week and will be talking about the other side of motherhood and what really no one really likes to talk about, which is postpartum. Postpartum depression, and the reality that once you have a child, oftentimes you have to re-find a whole new identity. And what does that look like?

**KO:** It's going to be great. Wendy and Rachel, thank you guys so much for joining us and for pointing us to the Truth this week as we have a few resources we want to connect you to. But first, if you're walking through this struggle right now and feel like you need to process your grief with someone who is a professional Proverbs 31 Ministry stands behind solid biblical counseling. And we do recommend starting with the American Association of Christian Counselors at [aacc.net](http://aacc.net).

**MB:** We've also pulled together a free PDF download for you available at [proverbs31.org/listen](http://proverbs31.org/listen) in the show notes for today's episode that includes the scriptures that we talked about, the key points from what we discussed as well as what we'll discuss in the upcoming episode. So you can download it for free and use it on your own as you process what the Lord is doing in your life.

**KO:** Absolutely. And lastly, if you're listening to this now and know a friend who needs a resource to guide her through a season of just feeling like it's not supposed to be this way, which this book is exactly about that. Lysa TerKeurst's book, *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*, walks you through what to do when you are making that statement about what's going on in your life. And I think this topic today is definitely one of those. So we highly encourage you to get that and share it with a friend. You can get your copy today at [p31bookstore.com](http://p31bookstore.com).

Well, guys, thank you again so much for tuning in at Proverbs 31 Ministries. We believe when you know the truth and live the truth, it changes everything. We'll be back next week.