



Meredith Brock: Hello friends, thanks 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: Well, hey Meredith and hey friends. We have a new guest and a new friend on the show that you guys are going to hear from in just a minute. Her name is Kaitlin Garrison, and she is awesome. She has a great teaching that I know we all need to hear today. And I'm not going to spoil it too much, but because we live in a culture that keeps saying, "get it together," we often live like we're just striving from thing to thing in our own energy. And Kaitlin's going to give us a message filled with truth that's going to speak to a lot of the lies that we believe today, about how we are supposed to live as believers. And so I can't wait for you guys to hear, but Meredith has one more announcement before we get to that.

Meredith Brock: That's right. Well, one special thing that we learned about Kaitlin is that she — from this message — actually wrote a book, but that she was also a member of our COMPEL's Writers Training online. And Kaitlin will tell you a little more about her story in just a moment, but one piece of it I want to highlight before you all hear from her, is that through Proverbs 31 Ministries' writers training program called COMPEL, Kaitlin actually won her first ever book contract ...

Kaley Olson: That's a huge deal.

Meredith Brock: It's a huge deal.

Meredith Brock: ... with a publishing house. And she's going to release that first book later this year. At Proverbs 31, we do ministry every day through this podcast, our daily devotions, the First 5 app and so much more, but we also equip others to do ministry on their own, by hopefully learning how to communicate the messages that God's given them. And together we can make an even greater impact for the Kingdom when we really kind of join forces.

So, if you're listening to this today and you know that God has given you a message and you want to be developed as a communicator, and maybe even have an opportunity to get published, we want to encourage you — go check out our COMPEL Writers Training. You can go to compeltraining.com to find out more, but we do these writing publishing challenges a couple times a year, and it's a really rare and unique opportunity for people to get access to opportunities that they wouldn't have had ...

Kaley Olson: I agree.

Meredith Brock: ... had they not have been part of the program. So I really want to encourage those writers out there, those communicators out there, go check it out. But without further ado, let's jump in to this week's episode.

Kaley Olson: Well, friends, Meredith and I are here in the studio at Proverbs 31 Ministries in Matthews, North Carolina, with our new friend — joining us virtually — named Kaitlin Garrison from New Mexico. Hi Kaitlin.

Kaitlin Garrison: Hello!

Meredith Brock: Kaitlin, we're so glad that you are here today, and we're glad that you're in New Mexico and we're not.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: Because New Mexico is so hot. It's the hottest.

Kaitlin Garrison: It's like a hundred degrees here.

Meredith Brock: Oh man. And it's like walking inside of a blow dryer.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yes. Yes.

Meredith Brock: I went and visited last summer and seriously, my lips have never been so chapped just cause it's so dry. So Kaitlin, before we jump into your teaching, I really want our listeners to get to know you a little bit better. So other than living in New Mexico, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah. Well, I am a wife to my redheaded husband, Lance. He's a lot of fun. I'm a writer, a second-grade teacher at a public school. And so in the margins of teaching, I like to write, do anything crafty or just curl up with a book. That's my jam.

Meredith Brock: OK. Second grade teacher ...

Kaitlin Garrison: I know.

Meredith Brock: Bless your heart. I have a daughter going into second grade and every day during the pandemic, when we had to do teaching, she was like in kindergarten/ first grade-ish, that whole era. And every day I was like, oh, teachers, they need a raise.

Kaitlin Garrison: I know.

Meredith Brock: They all need a raise and more coffee or something. I don't know. But I don't know if they'll do it.

Kaitlin Garrison: I know. Seriously.

Meredith Brock: OK. So I'm going to ask you a random question. And I'm really putting you on the spot here, Kaitlin. So get ready.

Kaitlin Garrison: OK. Let's hope I can deliver.

Meredith Brock: OK. Strangest thing you've experienced as a teacher? I feel like you've got some gold there. Like there's got to be like maybe a child throwing up in your classroom. Surely this has happened.

Kaley Olson: I was that child at one point.

Meredith Brock: Oh boy. So Kaitlin give it to me. Strangest thing ... Strangest thing that you've experienced as a teacher.

Kaitlin Garrison: Oh my gosh. Strangest thing ... I've had some really awful things happen as a teacher. I don't know that we want to depress people. Trying to think of something funny. Let's see, I want to give you something really good. Well, I don't know if this is strange more than it is funny, but we had the book fair going on and one of the kids bought this Pokemon card book, and he would bring it out to recess and all the kids would follow him. I mean blocks of children coming after this boy with the Pokemon book. And so I told him, "Hey, bud, you need to just go ahead and leave it in your locker so that people don't ruin your new book." And so he's like, oh, "OK, Ms. Garrison." And so we're lining up for recess. And I see under this little boy's shirt, the outline of the Pokemon book that he's trying to hide up his shirt, and I called him out in line and I was like, "Buddy," I was like, "what did I tell you earlier?"

I said ... I pulled him aside, and I said, "Do you know what it means to be deceitful?" And he's like, "No." And so I told him, "It's when you're trying to hide something and you want to get it pass me and you don't want me to see that you're hiding it from me and you're being sneaky." And so he's like, "OK, I'm sorry." And so anyways, this other kid in the class buys the Pokemon book and I tell him the same thing. He tries to sneak it in his jacket. And the same kid who I got onto earlier, in the middle of class, stands up and yells, "Ms. Garrison, I won't say his name, Johnny's being deceitful." And makes a huge announcement. And it was just so funny because it stuck with him. But those kids in that Pokemon book, it was ridiculous. But that was such a funny memory. I will never forget.

Meredith Brock: Pokemon, man. It's a real thing.

Kaley Olson: It's still a thing. How is it still a thing?

Kaitlin Garrison: I know, for real.

Meredith Brock: But my two older children love Pokemon, guys. I've got lots of Pokemon in my house.

Kaley Olson: Weird, so weird. Well, Kaitlin, you know my favorite part of the story that you just told us is that you — in the retelling of said Pokemon story — went into your teacher voice.

Kaitlin Garrison: Oh.

Meredith Brock: It's true.

Kaley Olson: That was going to be my question of like, Kaitlin, what is your teacher voice? Because every elementary school teacher has that voice and you gave it to us.

Meredith Brock: I love it.

Kaley Olson: So thank you very much.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yay.

Kaley Olson: But I know that you're here to give us a teaching that you've prepared for us on escaping the grip of the false gospel of grit. And I know I'm excited to learn more, and so you can take it away now, Kaitlin, and Meredith and I are going to listen in.

Kaitlin Garrison: Wow. Well thank you guys so much. I can't thank you enough for having me. It is such an honor to be here. I love listening to you guys. So it's crazy to be on this podcast, but just to start off our time together, I'm going to ask our listeners to do something. I want you to take a minute and close your eyes unless you're driving, do not close your eyes, keep those babies open. But if you're in a place to do this, I want you to close your eyes and take note of what comes to mind when I ask you this question. Where do you see Jesus, as you are walking out your Christian life, when you're depleted of strength, when you're worn thin? Do you picture Him up in the sky, looking down on you from afar? Do you imagine Him right beside you patting your back, giving you a pep talk and then sending you on your merry way?

Maybe you picture Him being occupied with somebody else with a bigger problem than you and you maybe get a third of His attention. Where do you see Jesus? Where is He? Well, I want to share with you where and how I used to picture Jesus. For much of my Christian walk, I pictured my walk with Jesus, like a race. And I probably snagged this imagery from Hebrews, but I specifically pictured Jesus and I on a track field running, not just any old race, but one of those dreaded medley relay races. I've experience with these and I can tell you they are awful, but in this race I pictured Jesus and I on the same team. But in this race, I imagine Jesus initiating the race, right? He took the baton first and did His part by living a perfect life, dying, being raised to life. And He ran His part first, but then I imagined Him handing the baton to me and then it was my job to finish the race and do my part.

And so, my Christian life became about how I performed this second part of the race, if you will. And so with this picture in my mind of Jesus, watching me finish my part of the race, I imagined He had some kind of invisible tally chart above His head tracking my right moves and my wrong moves. His face fluctuating from being pleased in me, to disappointed with me. And so as I live my life with this picture, my heart would inflate with pride in my good performance, my good behavior, or in doing all of the right things. And yet, in those moments of weakness, my heart that was once puffed up with pride, not only deflated, but was shriveled by shame. And where pride had convinced my heart of God's pleasure with me, shame now convinced my soul of God's disappointment in me.

And I was certain that I was forever going to be an incapable Christian and a wimpy frail inconsistent teammate in this partnership of Christ and me. And the truth is that the pictures we hold about where God is in the midst of our everyday lives says a lot about what we believe about Him, and for me the bottom line of what I believed. And I think what so many of us can be tempted to believe is that Jesus

did His part by saving us and bringing us into a relationship with God. But from here on out, it's up to you and I to do better, be better and keep all of this up ourselves.

And this is what I've come to call a Christ and me perspective. Christ did His part and I will do mine. And so maybe some of you are familiar with these intense feelings and pressure of not being able to hold up your end of the salvation deal. Maybe you've experienced the same thoughts about God delighting in you when you get things right, or when you go above and beyond, but in the same token, maybe turning His face away when you aren't doing enough or when you do get it wrong. Or perhaps, you feel like you're always making this hypothetical resume of all the good things you're doing to somehow prove to God that you are doing your part, that you are changing into a better version of yourself or even trying to prove ...

But the problem with the Christ and me mindset is that it leads us into this repetitive cycle of striving and running to either earn something from God or to prove something to God. And so in the first part of this cycle, we experience pride — this internal sense that God is pleased with me solely because of my good behavior. And inevitably we will fall short at some point of those expectations, whether that be through moral failure or inconsistency and devotion, or just feeling inadequate, which will then lead us into the third part of the cycle — shame. We feel we can't come to God and we hide from Him until we can get our act together and be better, which leads us right back to the beginning to pride. When we finally feel like we've done enough to be worthy, to come back to Him, and then we take a ride all over again, running harder and faster trapped in this ruthless spiritual hamster wheel.

And while we might be tempted to boil these feelings down to, “Well, I just want to please God, is that so wrong?” But more often than not, especially in my own life, I've found that these symptoms of striving, proving and earning are the toxic fruits of a distorted gospel or a false gospel that I like to call *the gospel of grit*. And the problem with this false gospel is that it really does sound a whole lot like the gospel Jesus proclaims in scripture, but it's distorted just a little bit and sounds more heroic because it puts more emphasis on what we can do. The narrative of the false gospel of grit is that it encourages you and I to place emphasis on our own grit rather than on the continual empowerment of the Holy Spirit through grace. Now, this gospel acknowledges Christ's sufficient work on the cross, but it demands that you and I, that we carry out the implications of that freedom by ourselves.

It preaches that it's our job to sanctify ourselves through self-effort. And as a result, when we live this way, it keeps us stuck in this shame build cycle of trying hard. While we grow super frustrated with our own inability to change and better ourselves through our own willpower. And if I could give this false gospel a little tagline, this is what it would say, “living in the hope of Christ and me.” This is the heartbeat of this false gospel, and it's the lens that we will view absolutely everything through when we're wrapped up in its narrative. Now, we are team Christ and me. Now, I'm going to get a little nerdy on you for a minute. I am a teacher after all, and I could not help but to squeeze a little language arts in here. But when it comes down to it, this gospel of grit and the Christ and me perspective, it all stems from one teeny tiny error in grammar.

The problem with the term Christ and me is the conjunction, and ... quick grammar refresher from sixth grade English. Conjunction is a word that adds two ideas together and it puts them in the same sentence, kind of puts them side by side. And so in this case, I'm no longer separated from Christ. We're on the same playing field, but we're carrying out our own parts. And so when we have a Christ and me

perspective, we believe that Jesus did His part by making us right. But from here on out, it's up to you and I to carry out that work of maturing, growing and becoming more Christlike. Two separate partners, completing two separate parts. And so this false gospel only has the power to keep us hopelessly stuck. But luckily, we've been given a powerful reminder from the apostle Paul that helps us come back into alignment with the Truth of God's Word and it leads us to freedom.

Because we're not the first people to be tempted to drift in the waters of this gospel distortion. In fact, the believers at the church of Colossae were presented with a false gospel, very, very similar to the false gospel of grit. And Paul had words for them, and he has words for us today. And so we're going to camp out here in the book of Colossians, which as I mentioned, was written by the apostle Paul. And so at the time he was writing, not just to encourage and build up this body of believers, but at the same time, he's trying to combat these heretical, false teachings that were trying to add to the gospel that this church had been told. And Paul was notorious for doing this. And so many of his letters to the churches, he spent time reminding the Christians of the gospel of Jesus.

And he was coming against any kind of false teachings that were floating around because he wanted to make sure that these new Christians were standing on no other gospel than the gospel of Jesus. And so oftentimes when we hear "false teachers" mentioned in the Bible, these false teachers typically would've fallen into two camps, either the Gnostics or aestheticians. And these were people who belonged to the church. They were even highly esteemed within these body of believers. They were very persuasive, very impressive teachers. And yet the longer time went on, their hidden agendas would come out, and they taught things that contradicted and even twisted the gospel of grace. It would manipulate and pervert the gospel to fit what they wanted, their purposes, and even cause people to doubt legit teachers who were teaching the Truth. And so that's kind of the backdrop of what's going on in Colossians.

And so in this book, some of these false teachers were in infiltrating the Colossian church, trying to get the believers to engage in aesthetic practices. So, these aesthetic practices were ultimately rooted in the belief that through your own willpower, your own strength, by denying yourself harshly, that you could attain this higher level of spirituality, a higher level of righteousness, and you could access secret privilege knowledge about God all by just working harder by your own self-driven effort. And these practices, for sure, would lead to apply pride inflated hearts that believed that God was more pleased with you and that you were considered more righteous in His eyes because of your own grit. Sound familiar? Paul combats this teaching by reminding the Colossian church of their position in Christ. This is his defense to those ideas. He says this in Colossians 1:27, and this is the CSB translation.

"God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ in you. Who knew that one little preposition could change absolutely everything here. It is again — grammar refresher. Number two, prepositions tell the position of two things in relationship to one another. And so these three words, "Christ in me" reminded the church that the power to change, mature, run on mission and grow was not fueled by what they could do, but because of who was in them. The power is in the preposition, "in," not Christ and me, but Christ in me. The false gospel of grit encourages you and I, that we can change, grow and mature ourselves through this self-will grit-my-way-through-it kind of self-determination attitude. But I can tell you for sure that we will eventually come to the conclusion that we can't do what God is asking us to do.

The truth is, we can't. We cannot finish in the flesh what Christ has started by the power of the Spirit. The real gospel, the gospel of Jesus introduces us to this groundbreaking reality that our relationship with Christ is not additional, it's prepositional. It's not Christ and me running like separate partners in a race and us trying to earn our place. But it's Christ in me running this race as a fused union with the one who's already won it all. It's the person of Christ in us, which is the Holy Spirit. The same power who lives inside of us is the same power who gave Jesus the power to do every one of His healings and miracles, who gave Jesus all of His wisdom, who resurrected Jesus from the dead, who took Him up to heaven. This was the same spirit that Jesus told the disciples would come to them once He ascended back into heaven.

The Holy Spirit is also the one who seals us when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, as it says in Ephesians 1. He's the one who gives us the strength, the wisdom, guidance, discernment, teaches us and transforms us. The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit in us is the difference between the false gospel of grit and the gospel of grace. The false gospel of grit is founded on what we can do for God. It places the work of transformation on us, but the gospel of grace is founded on what Christ did for us and the life we're now empowered to live because of who is in us. Changing our perspective from Christ and me to Christ in me completely changes the way that we live. So some of you might be thinking, "OK, I get it Kaitlin, Christ is in me. So does this mean that I don't need to give any effort that the Holy Spirit's just going to do it all and my participation doesn't matter anymore?" And what I would say to that is that "Grace is not the couch that we kick back and sit on, but rather it becomes the fuel by which we run." Because where we used to be fueled by this self-driven effort, we now run on grace-driven effort. Going back to Paul's letter in Colossians, after he tells us what our position in Christ is, Christ in me, he then goes on to tell us what it looks like to live the rest of this life out. He says this in Colossians 1:28 through 29. He says, so we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ.

That's why I work and struggle so hard depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me. This reminds us that we aren't passive spectators but we are active participants with Christ's strength and the knowledge that He is in us. We run, we teach, we use our gifts. We love people even when it's hard. We keep our eyes on the Kingdom while it's our prayer, to see it come here. And yet, and doing all of these things, we remember this reality — Christ in us. The gospel of grit says run with your strength, but the gospel of Jesus says run with His strength. And remembering that Christ is in us, ultimately sets us free to run wild into all the things that God has laid out for us to do with our very precious lives. So friends, this is the freedom that you and I were made for — Christ in us.

Let's let this be the picture that we hold in our minds when we think about God. Let's change our narratives of Jesus, of being some kind of outside force, a separate partner. But rather let's look at Him and imagine Him as an inside source, who is present every step of the way. And so, as you're running this glorious race that God has marked out for you, you can guarantee that you're going to come up against a temptation and try to do this thing yourself, to strap up your boots, to grit your way through fear, rejection, insecurity and struggle. But in those moments, I want you to pause and get quiet, to close your eyes, just like we did at the beginning of our time together and get quiet enough to hear your new heartbeat, the heartbeat that reminds you, that this life, this isn't something you have to do on your own, or by your own strength.

Put your hand over your heart in that moment and feel the pulse. Let your ears hear its anthem with every beat. Let it serve as a loud, tangible reminder of how you will walk the rest of your life out, Christ in me. Thank you.

Kaley Olson: Well, Kaitlin, that was so good. And I think as an Enneagram One, this spoke directly to a lot of the struggles that I think are kind of repeated anthems in my life. Meredith is looking at me across the table, like, yeah, I know this. Let's talk about this.

But you said something closer to the top of your teaching. You said the word symptoms of striving and I think it takes a lot of self-awareness to identify what those are in your life. Because like you said, at the end of your teaching, it's so easy to fall prey to the pattern of striving in our own strength for the sake of the Kingdom and call it "Kingdom work" when it's really all based on you and the strength that you muster up. And I know that's one of the things that I'm trying to work on, is growing that self-awareness muscle to really look at what are the things that I'm making too hard in my life right now that I don't need to be doing. And how am I making this mine rather than letting God's grace really operate and flow through me into those things.

And so I know you've written an entire book on this, and so I would love to hear from you as you've walked in this area: What do symptoms of striving look like for you and your life, and how do you catch those and allow the Holy Spirit to kind of rework that path back into a path of grace?

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah, well, I can definitely relate to that one. I'm a Nine wing one (Enneagram) so I got those tendencies too, but, I tend to be one of those checklist people. Like loves checklists, and it works for me in my regular life. And so I think my biggest area of striving tends to be with spiritual disciplines or spiritual practices, because instead of those being tools for me to grow in my relationship with Christ and to know God, they became like a measuring stick of my righteousness. And so if I had a solid, quiet-time routine, if I was doing an intense Bible study, if I had my prayer time, if I was volunteering in ministry, discipling young women. If I was doing all of these things, it was almost added to my righteousness.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: And I could feel those things because when, for some reason I was in a season when I couldn't do those things, I would think, "Oh my gosh, like God distanced Himself from me or He's mad at me, or He's disappointed in me."

And those things were the marker of our relationship. And now — don't get me wrong — those things are absolutely important and necessary in our walks with God. But I was doing them to try to earn something from Him and that's not what they're for. And so I would say that I think the biggest thing for seeing if you are striving, is asking a question, what am I trying to earn right now? Cause I can feel that pressure inside of me when I'm trying to earn something. And so, if I'm feeling a whole lot of pressure surrounding my time with the Lord or prayer or volunteering, I have to pause and go, "Hold on, am I trying to earn something from God right now?"

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: And more often than not, I'm going, "Yes I am." Because I'm using this as some kind of measuring stick to add to what Jesus has already done and I don't have to do that. And so in those moments, I'm able to kind of combat that sense of earning with reminding myself, hey, you cannot earn

what Jesus already paid for. And really just going back to the fundamentals of the gospel and telling that to myself, because that tends to be the only thing that gets me back on track.

Meredith Brock: That's really good.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: I think of this idea of, Christ and me as such a Western independence ...

Kaley Olson: Absolutely.

Meredith Brock: ... mindset. I think it's so ingrained into us. Kaitlin, you're ... so even in our school systems, and this is not a bad thing, it's just something that I think as we become more aware of it, that we're told from the time that we're little, independence is the goal. You need to grow and be independent. And we define, Americans specifically, I think, define freedom as the ability to need no one.

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: Dang.

Meredith Brock: When the gospel defines freedom as reliance on Jesus and the triune relationship, and that's freedom. And so I think we find ourselves resisting this idea of dependence on God, because we've been told our whole life not to be dependent. Like dependence is bad. Don't be dependent on God, because then that means you're weak. That means all these different things. And so I want to bring us back to this whole idea in the Bible where it talks about this, because I think this is very counterintuitive to what we've been taught our whole lives.

Kaley Olson: Absolutely.

Meredith Brock: Is this idea of when Jesus talks about dying, killing your flesh, we think, or at least I do, think that means, OK, don't lie and steal. I need to not steal. Well, that's not hard for me to do. I'm not going to lie. I'm not going to steal. That's not really killing my flesh. Killing my flesh is killing the part of me that wants to say, "I don't need you, God, I can do this myself."

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yep.

Meredith Brock: I am perfectly capable of running my own life. Can you just give me a gold star when I've done a good job?

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: You know?

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yes.

Meredith Brock: And so really for me, I think this, this message Kaitlin is really saying, no, I must kill the flesh of this grit. That's exactly what you have been teaching about. So I want to ask you one question though, that I think that is really important for us.

And I'm leaning into my counseling background guys. So get ready. Here we go. But I think you've taught something really important at the top of the teaching about the cycle that we get in. And that last little piece of the cycle is shame and how powerful shame is in a person's life, if you've ever done any studying. And I hope maybe you haven't had personal experience with this, but I think most of our listeners probably have either in their own personal life or in someone they love. But in the addictive cycle, shame is one of the most powerful steps because it sucks you right back into the addiction.

Kaitlin Garrison: Wow.

Meredith Brock: Shame in this cycle does the same thing. And so Kaitlin, in your experience, when you are feeling that sense of shame, like maybe it's centered around, I didn't do my quiet time today.

I didn't ... I should have paused and talked to that girl a little bit longer because that's what Jesus would've wanted me to do. And then you feel the weight of the shame. What do you do, Kaitlin? How do you get out of that cycle? Because what that would normally do, that feeling of shame, would plunge you back into, I need to try harder. I need to, OK, I'm going to tonight, instead of watching Netflix, I'm going to have a three hour long quiet time. Like that's what shame propels you back into, the cycle. So tell me what you have done personally to break that shame, that part of the cycle for you.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah. So I would say just a practice that helps me is I'm a very visual learner. I've come to realize — and I love what you said about shame. I'm like, oh gosh, shame is so powerful. And I feel it often and because I know that I feel it often, I know that when I do, I need to have an active strategy. And so I'm a post-it note queen and a couple of years ago I just found myself in that cycle all of the time. And so what I did was, I went through Romans and Galatians and I pulled out some of those verses that specifically target ... there is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:1), or I had been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), or I have been made new because of the power of Christ (Colossians 2:10), or my righteousness is not my own (Philippians 3:9).

I would pull those verses that were anchors of my new identity. Because for me it looked like making that conscious decision in the middle of shame that I can chase achievement in the name of Jesus or I can come into agreement with the finished work of Jesus. And I know it sounds simple, just write scriptures on the cards, but it did something to me because when I felt shame, it was almost like coming off kilter from my identity. Your soul doesn't feel settled because I was trying to move off of the solid rock of Christ's righteousness. But by having those verses and saying them out loud and I put them all up in my closet, so I could read them when I was getting ready. But that was the way to just tell my soul, to come back into alignment with the finished work of Jesus, and scripture is powerful.

It's alive and active and it's our offensive weapon. And so that honestly was so huge for me. And then of course having your trusted friend who ... I have a really good friend and we will text each other, like "I'm

going down the rabbit hole.” We call it the poisonous watermelon. We're like, I ate the poisonous watermelon and now I'm not thinking straight. Please tell me Truth.

Meredith Brock: Yeah.

Kaitlin Garrison: And so just having a trusted friend who knows your heart, who knows your struggle and can be like, “OK, I'm going to tell you the Truth and you're going to listen.”

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: That's great.

Kaitlin Garrison: Having that friend is so good.

Meredith Brock: Yeah. It's so necessary. Honestly. I think what you just said, Kaitlin, I know is such a key to breaking the shame-cycle because if you go and do any kind of studying on where does shame come from or anything like that, it always starts with some kind of experience or belief you adopted early, early on. It is so deeply embedded into your actual cognition and your physiological experience. That's why, do you all ever have a sense of shame and you can feel there's something happening in your body?

Kaley Olson: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: Your face may turn red.

Kaitlin Garrison: Oh yeah.

Meredith Brock: And so what you have to do is you have to go back to where you started believing that. And for many people, I think who struggle with this gospel of grit, it goes back to maybe you had a parent who really said, come on, get your act together. You need to achieve and that's not a bad thing.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: They were trying but you can't apply that same thinking to your relationship with God.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: And so you have to go back ... and what you are saying, Kaitlin, I think is so powerful because you have to replace the lies with the Truth. And scripture is exactly that for us in those moments of shame when you're telling yourself, “Oh my gosh, I am such a disappointment. I didn't have a quiet time this morning. God is distant from me.” That's not true.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yeah.

Meredith Brock: You're not a disappointment. What scripture says.... And then you start inserting those new beliefs. What a good message for us to hear ...

Kaley Olson: I agree, so good.

Meredith Brock: ... when we're living in a society where we are just being told, get it together, girls. Pull it together.

Kaitlin Garrison: Yes.

Meredith Brock: We, we don't have to. It can be Christ in us. So I hope you have enjoyed this message. And if you want to hear more from Kaitlin, I know I certainly do, we'd encourage you guys to go pre-order her book. It is called —what a great title — *Sweet Relief: How the Gospel Frees Us from a Life of Striving*. It'll be on our show notes. You could go find this at proverbs31.org/listen. You can also go check out Kaitlin's Instagram and follow along on her journey at Kaitlin Garrison.

Kaley Olson: Yeah. And we'll link her Instagram handle in our show notes as well. And lastly, Kaitlin, we're so inspired by you and your journey to become a published author. And we don't want our friends listening to miss out on opportunities to be developed as a communicator if that's a call that you feel on your life as well. So guys, don't forget to check out COMPEL Writes Training at compeltraining.com to learn more about how to become a member today. That's all for today's friends best.

Meredith Brock: It's the best.

Kaley Olson: I know it is the best. Thank you for being here.

Meredith Brock: Shameless plug.

Kaley Olson: I know. Thank you. Thank you for that. I agree, it's great training. But Kaitlin, we are so thankful that you joined us on the show today. And guys, we're thankful that you joined in to listen. We pray that this teaching really blessed your life at Proverbs 31. We believe when you know the truth and that the truth, it changes everything. We'll see you next time.