

Introduction: Welcome to Engage 360 Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the Gospel and the life changing truth of scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hello, again, everybody, this is Engage 360 from Denver Seminary. My name is Don Payne, and we are glad you have connected with us for another conversation. Sometimes we talk about those who are in the trenches of ministry and the demands of dealing firsthand with the brokenness of people's lives. And many of these folks are unsung and unrecognized for the remarkable investments they make in the lives of others. And in this episode, we're going to be talking about what it's like to be in those trenches. And we have two guests with us, Coletta Smith and Priscilla Young, who are involved in ministry to some of the most under recognized servants, the spouses of ministry leaders, in many cases, Pastors. But those who come alongside spouses who have in some cases rather prominent ministry leadership roles. Both Coletta and Priscilla have served for lots of years alongside their husbands who occupy pretty prominent public ministry roles, and bring a lot to this conversation and are part of a ministry I think is called Alongside

Coletta Smith: It is, Alongside.

Dr. Don Payne: So welcome. Welcome to the podcast Coletta, Priscilla. Thank you. Good to have you both here. Tell us first a bit about the ministry you have, and you have had, and continue to have in this area of coming alongside ministry spouses.

Coletta Smith: So Alongside was birthed out of a need for helping ministry wives to find each other and to find strengthening resources that were gonna be going to help them embrace the opportunities that are really unique to being called, to be a ministry wife. And some of those opportunities are really obvious. Others are not so obvious and are really behind the scenes like you were talking about. And we've realized that finding those people and finding safe, safe people in your life that can speak wisdom, but also help you see where God is already moving are difficult, especially when you're a ministry spouse.

Priscilla Young: When Coletta and I first met, we realized that we had a very similar passion about helping wives and ministry. Mine takes a little different tack because mark and I have been in theological education for years and years. So I have really come alongside wives as seminary and helping them sort of, I guess, develop this idea that they're in it together. And just kind of giving them strength to go out and move into ministry together with their husbands in a way that a lot of people don't really talk about. So we found a similar passion, just a little different way of living it out.

Coletta Smith: It was exciting when we first met because we even had some of the same vocabulary and ideas and heart come out because we both had lived 25, 30, 40 years of embracing this idea of being a team. That this isn't his calling, that we each have a unique, but every bit is a weighty of callings as our spouses do. But those callings are always compatible with each other. And to be called, to be a

team in that trench that you talked about Don, is such a blessing because it enables us to push in to what God is doing in our midst and to celebrate those joys, but also be able to deal with the mortar shells that we can hear overhead. And the cost of being on that frontline in that trench, but to do it together in a way that really draws us together as a couple in our marriage, but also our family as a team.

Dr. Don Payne: Now Priscilla alluded to this, but I'd like to hear a little bit more from each of you about your own ministry history, your own ministry experiences, that you bring to the table in this current ministry you have.

Priscilla Young: Yeah. Mark and I, when we first got married we had just been through our interviews to be missionaries with our mission. And then we got married in about 30 days later. We were appointed officially and went to the mission field about a year later. And the interesting thing is when we were applying to the mission board, we were doing it individually. We had to go through the same things. We had to go through the same application, the same testing, the same rigor really as each other. And they appointed us as a couple. They just didn't appoint Mark. And then I was like the tag-a-long wife. And that, you know, I think that made a real impression on me. And as I look back, I wish that every couple who was going into vocational ministry could have that kind of experience. Yeah. Because, you know, we knew we were in it together and, you know, I joke that our picture was on people's refrigerator together for all the years that we were in missions. But that really started in us this idea that we were sharing this calling and individually, we brought different things to it. And we might've been doing different things, but our calling as followers of Jesus to go was together. And we just have kind of lived that out in all the different things that God has given us to do. Since then in a seminary ministry here in the states. Mark is a professor and then now he's president here, and each time we've had to say, okay, how are we going to live out that shared calling in ways that are meaningful and show our passion. And that's the vocabulary that we've used for years and year now.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Just paranthetically, you're reminding me of an experience. My wife and I had early in our marriage when, when we got married, she was a college professor and I was only known for about three years as her husband. And she told me at one point when we were kind of transitioning roles in venues, she said to me very clearly, I am not your appendage. Which was a very good thing for me to hear at that point. She has her ministry. And it's as valued as anything that the culture might value that in many cases a man would do. Yeah. Coletta, your story?

Coletta Smith: So Craig and I were married 28 years ago and we went immediately into youth ministry, which we did in Ohio for three years, realized how much we didn't know and how much more training we needed. But God had so gripped us for ministry in the church and also student ministry. So we came out to Denver Seminary and loved our experience here. And then Craig began teaching for

Denver Seminary as an adjunct. And he did that for about 15 years until about five years ago. Which when he had to give up that very reluctantly.

Priscilla Young: And we were sad to lose him too.

Dr. Don Payne: Maybe bitter, but really sad. Yeah.

Coletta Smith: He loves it. But the beautiful thing is we are obviously still in the area. So we see a ton of his past students, have a lot of them on staff actually at Mission Hills. So once we came out here to do seminary, we were hired on at a small church plant. It was only a year old. They had four students in some given them a chunk of money to get a youth Pastor. So, and on our drive out when we were moving, they called and said, oh, we heard you lead worship too. And that's actually how Craig and I met was leading worship with crew. Can you be a worship Pastor too? Well, when it's a church plant, you, are like of course, yes.

Dr. Don Payne: You can do everything and you can take out the trash.

Coletta Smith: Which we did. So we actually stayed at this church plant that grew and flourished for quite a few years. And then we saw it just go through a year of about or about eight years of decline and just just a painful hemorrhage. And also during that time, Craig was the associate Pastor there and we started a nonprofit. And so Craig and I were doing conferences around the country and in different countries around the world to help equip God's people, to tackle intersections of faith and culture. So we did that until until the Lord moved us into the senior Pastor position at this, what was a little church plant. We had been there about 18 years by this time. And really had the privilege of walking through really all the stages of health and unhealth that a church goes through. And then suddenly the Lord began to breathe life back into that church. And it was a joy to be able to, especially for our children because they were finally able to see joy in church ministry.

They had seen it in our nonprofit, but to see God show up and invigorate people to live on Mission with him. So we did that for about two years and then suddenly the Lord intervened and moved us to Mission Hills, which is for those of you not from this area, it's only about 15 miles down the road from our original church. So that was a really different kind of transition. I assumed that I would just kind of maintain all the friendships that were a part of that 20 year investment. But they really really changed a lot. And going from a church of four 50 to a church of 4,500 when we came to mission Hills that was a big adjustment as well. I can remember sitting in the back of the big room and just not being able to breathe and going Lord, how am I ever going to find a place here? There is no space here and God meeting me in all of my fears. All those things that I was really anxious about and saying, I see you and I'm going to meet you, and I'm going to create a space for you.

Dr. Don Payne: I'm glad that you, you both mentioned that some of the things you've done along the way that have led up to this, and we were talking about this before we got on the recording today, how it's easy for people who may not know each of you very well to see you only in terms of what you're currently doing. And the ministries that, in your cases your husbands currently have, which are pretty high profile and lose sight of the fact that you were in lots of different forms of ministries, kind of trudging along, you know, as all of us do. And in anything, any, any form of ministry from time to time, we're just kind of doing the next thing and doing multiple things. Right. So you bring all of that, those thin layers of experience to the the ministry you currently have coming alongside pastor's wives. What do you see, I mean, since the two of you work primarily, I think with the wives of male pastors I know that's, that's not the case everywhere, but that's probably dominant. What are some of the common challenges you see Pastor's wives face?

Coletta Smith: So I think one of the biggest challenges is not realizing that she or he has a calling on their lives that has so much intentionality by the Lord. And wait, a lot of times we can see ourselves as accessories or an appendage. And sometimes other people tend to see you as an accessory, yes. Yeah. In fact, a short story, I had somebody come up to me one weekend and they said, you know, they went into the usual, Craig is such a blessing to us. He's so gifted. We get ministered to every weekend when we come, you know, and I say, I'm so glad that God is using him. But then they went on to say, oh, and we're just so glad that you love to be in the background. Like, you're just so content being just kind of behind the curtain. And I thought, oh, what an assumption you just made because I'll tell you what, the conversations that Craig and I have had when we were in seminary and throughout the past 25 years there was no hiding behind the curtain in that rubbing up against each other and distilling what we really stand for. So that assumption, I think is, yeah, not quite.

Dr. Don Payne: I have to believe that when that kind of thing, however, well-intended, it might be. I have to believe that when that is said, the way that is often heard is, oh, you're content to be nobody. I mean, do you think that's the way it's internalized?

Coletta Smith: Sure. And I think the biggest challenge that I see for, for myself living through it, but also for the women that we are coming alongside is to help them see how God is uniquely crafted them, their personality, their experiences, whether they would label them good or bad. The passions that really draw out their heartstrings the needs that around them, all those things God works together to show them exactly what he wants to do through their lives. And that he has a plan and those good works that he created in advance that they would walk around in them like Ephesians talks about.

Priscilla Young: Well, I'm going to speak directly to my target group, which is seminary wives. And just say that, I think one of the things that I hear is this is my husband's thing and my calling is to be a nurse or a teacher. And I, you know, I take exception to that and that's the kind of language that I want to help them listen

to and then begin to reconsider, because I think when you think about this is his calling, this is my calling. You're kind of going in two separate directions. And I feel like when God brings us together as a couple, he wants us to be going in the same direction. So what is your calling while your calling is to be a follower of Jesus and his calling is to be a follower of Jesus and how are you going to live that out? And how can you live that out with your uniqueness, but also coming together and seeing yourselves in a shared calling. So these are some of the things that I talk about with the wives here at Seminary, as I said before, you know, hoping that they'll begin to think differently. And when they go out into the ministry whether it's pastoral ministry, whether it's counseling or a nonprofit, or some of the many other ways our students go out and express ministry they'll go out with this just kind of a new vision of what God can do with them together. And they'll have that commitment and they'll live out that passion of being followers of Jesus on the same mission and expressing it in these ways.

Dr. Don Payne: What does that look like Priscilla? When each spouse does have a fully engaging career that is in some cases very different and they both feel very called to and very engaged in those respective career directions, even though one of them may be a pastor. What does that look like to have a ministry together, when they do in fact have two very different orbits professionally?

Priscilla Young: Well, I cannot paint a picture for somebody else, so I can't tell you what it's going to look like, but I think it's really a hard attitude. So that's what I would be talking about is you know, it's going to look different for you. I mean, and I think honestly just as a little paramedical statement here, what we're talking about, I think could be applied to every Christ following couple, whether they're in vocational ministry or not, but our people happen to be vocational ministry people. But I think it's, you know, just in a big picture way, it's gonna look like we've had conversations. We've talked about our individual callings. We've talked about what we're passionate about, and we understand one another and we want to support one another and we want to find ways to impact people's lives together. How's that going to look for Mark and me? It is going to look different than how it looks for you and Sharon Sharon, your wife and I have had this conversation and we want to have it more because she's had a very distinct vocation for many, many years that isn't engaged with the seminary. And so it looks different for you guys. And I don't doubt for a minute that you have a shared calling, but it's not, it doesn't look the same as it does for us or for Craig and Coletta.

Coletta Smith: I love that. You talked about, it's all about impacting people for Christ's sake and figuring out how we each, what we each bring to the table in that. I think we need to get away from this. I'm not the typical Pastor's wife or language, because I think that's like so outdated. There is not a typical anymore, and that's really freeing. I tell the women that I'm coaching, that this is not about adding more things to your schedule. This is not about you becoming a leader in kid's ministry or worship ministry or whatever, taking on more responsibilities, directing the choir and playing the piano. That was our generation exactly. Or

leading women's ministry, Bible studies. Yes, that's not what we're talking about. What we're talking about is being fully engaged in those heart wrestling conversations and the two o'clock in the morning seeking God and besieging him for direction. And like, what should we do with this situation that is, doesn't seem like there's any good options that we could decide or lead forward. And so it's about being in that together and being willing to resist the desire to have him leave church at church, or leave counseling at the office or all of those, that's a real temptation to want them to just separate it. But what happens is hurting people have weight and they have, it's heavy and it's gonna pull, so ministry is always going to pull any, it can either pull a marriage apart, or it can pull you together toward this front line of what Jesus is doing in your life.

Dr. Don Payne: What have you seen that tends to make the difference between the stresses, the demands of ministry pulling a marriage apart or pulling it together?

Coletta Smith: What a great question. So I think a lot of that has to do with husband's humility, and forgive me for the gender stuff. It's just what my situation looks like. Of course we're going to have women Pastors, and things like that. But in my context it takes the woman that is in that leadership role that humility to seek out the counsel of the one that God brought alongside him. And then on her part, it takes a refusal to let bitterness set in because when things go sideways, as they always will and we're mistreated or whatever, something hurtful happens, there's a tendency to hold onto that bitterness. And that makes us push ministry away and create a wall to protect ourselves, our own hearts, and our family from being consumed. And we need to resist that with all that we are to press into that, to figure out some good ways of healing. Cause it's easier to heal wounds than it is a cancer, so we can talk that's a different conversation. But I think those are the two things that I see that make a difference is a husband's humility and a wife's refusal to embrace bitterness.

Priscilla Young: I think one of the things that I would add to that, especially for couples in vocational ministry particularly in church ministry is for the wife to recognize that as she walks with God, if she is the most important voice that her husband needs to hear besides the holy spirit. And, you know, as we've always choked, sometimes the holy spirit sounds like our spouse, but I think oftentimes women wives of men in ministry leadership feel like their voice isn't heard. And so they silence their voice or they lose their voice. And sometimes, unfortunately their husbands silence it's their voice, but I just feel like it's so important. God has given us as spouses, a voice in each other's lives. As we walk with God, that should be the most important voice we listen to.

Coletta Smith: Amen. Yeah.

Dr. Don Payne: Assume that many of the women you come alongside in this particular ministry might connect with you because they're already in kind of a bad place. Is that fair or do you get a good number of women who are also thinking more proactively and preemptively?

Coletta Smith: I think this generation now that are in their twenties and thirties is more proactive and preemptive than past generations of anyone that I've ever worked with.

Dr. Don Payne: That is good news.

Coletta Smith: Well, yeah, and I think it comes from all the conversations about self-care and spiritual formation and all those pieces of staying healthy. So I think that there's more people being proactive and realizing that, okay, we got to figure out how to do this team thing together because we are not unified and we've got to fix this. So that's where a lot of women come to us. Once we discern that there's some real deep seated wounding that's happened in their ministry past, all of our coaches can kind of pull them aside and spend some one-on-one time with them. And and we have some resources that help them work through that. Yeah.

Dr. Don Payne: In addition to some of the things you've already mentioned, are there common things you find yourselves saying a lot to women?

Priscilla Young: One of the things that we talk about both in the seminary groups and in the pastor's wives groups is I use this illustration of train tracks. And so we all talk about, we always talk about that as kind of being a picture of what, how we see marriage. So you got two rails on a track and they're going in the same direction, and they're tied together with lots of ties. And, you know, I see that as a good illustration of how our marriage and, you know, I mean, in our context, marriage and ministry, but how our marriages have to be you know, obviously we want our, two individual rails always going in the same direction, but we have to lay down lots of ties. If the ties begin to break, the tracks will separate and the train derails. So I use that as a way to just say, Hey, yeah, we have to be always putting down ties. Making sure that we have lots of ties.

And the ties can be so many different things, but the ties aren't the children, because you see so many couples, you know, as the children grow that the ties break and they fall apart. But just so many different ties that tie us together. And that can be a number of different things and Coletta uses different examples than I do because we're speaking to two different groups of people, but that's something that we, that we use a lot. I don't know where I got it, but that's a really good illustration. She loved it. And I've been using it for years. We even have a date night homework that we give all of our women that are involved with our cohorts to go home and go on a date and work through this about where are your railroad ties that are going to prevent you from this natural drift that happens. So that's, that's pretty fun.

Dr. Don Payne: That is a great image. Going back to whatever the percentages are of the, the ministry wives, and maybe ministry wives to be. Well, how does the reality of ministry as they're experiencing it, compared to what they thought it would be?

Priscilla Young:

When we have these discussions with wives who are seminary many of them have already come from some kind of ministry. Many of them have had some negative experiences already, or they're engaged in ministry as they're here. So yeah, I mean, we, we hear some of the ideals from the wives. But many of them, I don't know that they have, they have an idea, they're pretty fresh, you know, many of the young ones who are coming straight out of college and really like, many of them are newlyweds. So it's really fun to be able to impact them without them already having experiences, but some already have experiences and some already have hurts. So that's been interesting to go ahead about what is your biggest surprise and both negative and positive. And the biggest negative surprise that I hear consistently is I never thought it would be so lonely because you're surrounded by so many believers. Like we should all just be like doing life on life and be this big family that is just really going through all of this together and like-minded and all of that. But to realize that, oh, when I sit in a small group, like if I choose to do a Bible study with some people and everybody's going around and sharing the thing, that's really weighing on their hearts and they want prayer for, I've got to click through 10 things before I can come up with something I can share.

Because oh, this thing that's keeping my husband and I up at night, it's actually your husband, or, you know, y'all could just straighten up love each other. We'd be good. Yeah, they are really surprised at how lonely it is and how difficult it is to find a friend who can not only listen well, which is super rare but is wise enough to really help them see where Jesus is moving in their midst, because that's what we really need to be pressing in on. The advice from somebody. I mean, I think that there's some sticky situations where some good advice can be really helpful from someone who's been there before. But I think the really intense need is to be able to point them toward where is God moving in your heart? What is he asking? What does he want for you in the midst of this? Does kind of want peace for you in the midst of this conflict? Does he want you to be resting in his presence in the midst of a crazy busy situation or busy schedule? You know, all of those things that we know from scripture that God wants for us, but then what does he want from you? Not from anybody else, not from your elder board, not from those people that are causing conflict, but to be able to really press into those things. It's super hard to find someone like that.

Dr. Don Payne:

I know this is a generalized question, but can those individuals be found easily within the ministries where they're serving or do they need to be generally people outside the ministries?

Coletta Smith:

So, that's a crazy question because I would have said 10 years ago that, oh, absolutely. It can be found in your church. And I thought, yeah. And I thought all those people that were telling me, you have to have a friend outside the church. I thought they were crazy. And I thought you just don't have a healthy church. Honestly, that's what I was little judgy. Right. So I, but my idea has changed because as the complexity of the organization has changed. So for the 20 years that we led at this smaller church, I had an intimate friend that understood me, helped me walk well. And that was the relationship that God most used. But I

found that I needed someone outside the church when we moved to Mission Hills. What do you think Priscilla?

Priscilla Young: What the inside, outside? Yeah. you know, we've been in different ministry. We were in church ministry for a number of, well, nine years when we were still in Dallas. And honestly I've heard, I've heard it both ways from people. So I don't know. And maybe it depends on the season. Yeah. I think provides differently in that season.

Coletta Smith: I think the important thing is that we are seeking out, we're praying for, and we're seizing the opportunity to have somebody speaking into our life, whether it's inside or outside.

Priscilla Young: Yeah. And I think too, and one of the things I share with the gals here at seminary is we have to take the initiative when we see possibilities for friendship, because oftentimes people look at us as leaders and they say, oh, I can't, you know, I can't be their friend. So I think any kind of ministry leadership, we really have to take initiative. And that's hard for a lot of people. Yeah. It's hard for those of us who are extroverts because you, sometimes you just tire of always taking initiative, you know, and you're just like, okay, I'm done, but I think it's a valuable asset, a valuable character trait. Let's say for anyone who's going to be in vocational ministry to develop and to ask God to help them with, because if you don't take initiative, you're going to be more lonely.

Dr. Don Payne: I would assume that some of the women you deal with are in a really, really bad place. And by the time they get connected with you, and if you're thinking about the difference between long-term healing and stop the hemorrhaging. What are the things that you would that maybe, that you do say, but that you would say to listeners who are either in this place, or they know a pastor's wife who was in this place? What's the first thing do to stop the hemorrhaging?

Coletta Smith: I think it's like dealing with any kind of trauma you have to recognize and call it what it is that you are in crisis, and you're in trauma. So you need to figure out a way to do triage and get yourself to a place where the, you can pull up, pull away a little bit from the cause of the pain, just so that you can regroup and assess the damage. Okay. So it's kind of basic trauma care. Right. But beyond that, I think women especially, well, no, I think both of us underestimate the need to create some space, to grieve and to allow yourself to feel all of the pain and the gross stuff and the anger and all of that. And to be able to get that out outside of yourself so that you can see, okay, this is real, it's valid. This is what we went through. But then to be able to find a safe space with someone else and sometimes it needs to be someone besides your spouse. Because when you're both hemorrhaging and you're both in such crisis it's very difficult to figure out who's gonna, who's going to be the one that lifts the other. Right. It's good for two to be together. Right.

But when you're both in the pit that's pretty difficult. So creating a safe space with someone else, that's not only a good listener, but someone that is able to

offer some concrete steps. Okay. Here's the next thing? How do we offload, call some of this pain, what it is, tell your story, get it outside of you, but then look at, okay, where is God working in this healing process? And what does he want from me? And what does he want to do in me in the process of this? Sometimes that's a counselor. Like I came to a point where I was like, I am willing to pay somebody to be my friend, because there's no one safe and that's what it takes. And I know, I understand that there's probably Pastor's wives listening to this right now that are thinking to themselves. Yeah. It would be nice if I could afford that, but I can't. But there are resources that we can help them find if that's the issue. So I just encourage them to not give up, but to pursue that safe space.

Dr. Don Payne: Before we're done, we'll ask you to maybe tell how they can connect with you or help begin to find some of those resources if that's where where people are, Priscilla?

Priscilla Young: Yeah. I think often for those of us in ministry, it's really hard for us to admit that we need help. And you know, it's just like a physical illness. I'm getting over pneumonia. And I had to just say, okay, I got to stay home, take a nap. Rest, not do anything, not talk to anybody except my husband when he's at home. But you know, we have to come to a place of saying, this is not somehow my failure spiritually. Like the things from outside are taken us down. And I think that's really hard for people in ministry.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, especially, if they are the ones in the trenches there to help others. When their worlds are falling apart.

Priscilla Young: Absolutely. Yeah. So I think that's the first step is just saying we need help.

Coletta Smith: I think somehow it's an admission of like, I'm not spiritual enough or I'm not exactly like, depending on Jesus enough that I'm not able to just be okay with this and heal by myself. But there's some pain, there's some payment, oh, God brings other people into our lives to help us navigate. There's a great book called Healing, Your Church Hurts, it's by Stephen Mansfield. And I am just loving how he is able to walk people through the steps of, of that healing specifically from friendly fire in the church.

Dr. Don Payne: If you had a chance, I don't know if you ever do have a chance this chance, but if you were to have a chance to speak to people in the churches where in many cases, these Pastor's wives are languishing, what would you say to people in the churches about their Pastor's wives?

Priscilla Young: I think I'd first start a Pastor's wife appreciation Sunday. Cause there's a Pastor's appreciation Sunday. And I never heard about that. Yeah. How about a whole month Pastors wives appreciation. I've never heard of that, but I think that's an, I think Pastor's wives are an overlooked asset and an overlooked they're overlooked people who just have a lot of assumptions made on them and aren't fully appreciated for sure.

Coletta Smith: There is the assumption that the paycheck is thank you enough. But there's really no other job that requires me to show up every week to embrace all of my husband's colleagues and their spouses and help them through any kind of spiritual crisis or family crisis to walk alongside those people and all the people that are the clients of my husband's business, I'm needed to minister to them too like, if I work at Google, I don't have to do that.

Dr. Don Payne: And the great thing is you don't get a paycheck for any of that. Right, right.

Coletta Smith: Right. And this idea that if things go sideways and fall apart that my whole friend group and my whole community is destroyed. That's just, it's just different. And the idea that it's the same as any other job just isn't valid. So yeah, I think just being seen a lady came up to me and hugged me the other day and she said, I just want you to know, I see you. And my eyes teared up because that's my primary goal with our congregation every weekend is there are people there that just need to be seen. And that's where I am, depending on the Holy Spirit to lead me to them directly. And when she said, I just see you, that was so sweet.

Priscilla Young: Yeah. Years ago when we were on church staff in Dallas, I was in the choir. If any of you remember what choirs are? And there was a man behind me, an older man, older gentlemen in the tenor section. And he and I would chat and just got to know each other. And just had a nice little, you know, back and forth relationship. It was months into my time in the choir when he said one night, oh, I just realized that you're Mark's wife. Mark was one of the main Pastors and would fill the pulpit when the main pastor was gone and so forth. So he was very known and, you know, it just did my heart good that he had known me for all those months. And he hadn't said, oh, you're Mark's wife. You know, it's just good that he knew me as me. And that story made a big impact on my life in that time.

Coletta Smith: So I think there's a tension. You bring that up and I love that you told that story. But there is a tension that ministry wives need to wrestle with. And that is that being on this frontline is great because you see all the great things God is doing from a front row seat, but you also get to get hit on the, on this front line. But it also brings some opportunities. And while I want to be known for being Coletta and not just Craig's wife there's an opportunity that comes with being Craig's wife. That if I stay in my own, I need to be me. I will miss it. Like, there's this girl that she came up to me in the foyer. This was many, several years ago. And she she said she had tears in her eyes. She got really close faced, to face to face and said, you're Craig's wife. I think I need to talk to you. She was clearly about seven months pregnant and she said she had just moved into town. And she had been listening to Craig and been attending our church for about six months. And she said, I feel like I can trust him. So will you teach me how to follow Jesus? Because I don't know what I'm going to do. And my husband, my, or my boyfriend is in prison.

And I don't know whether to tell him about the baby and all these things, these circumstances that I could have been like push, push away because the certain circumstances are intimidating. And I could have pushed away because, oh, you're just seeking me out because I'm Craig's wife. Well, I want you to seek me out because I'm who I am, what I bring to the table, but I had to really get over that because it's about kingdom advancement. I don't care how the opportunity comes to me. Right. And if they have learned to trust Craig, because of his vulnerability and his heart for Jesus from upfront, and they can somehow like transfer that to me and I can pick up where he left off and take them by the hand. Absolutely. but my own pride can get in the way of that. And I think we need to wrestle with that.

Priscilla Young: Yeah. I agree with that. Yeah. And, you know, I would be the first to say that I love the opportunities that I have to minister to people. Just because I'm Mark's wife and he's the president of Denver Seminary. I mean, we meet so many people, and I have an opportunity to minister to them in ways that he doesn't, and it's really beautiful.

Dr. Don Payne: Of all the demands and the challenges and the, the, the cost, the sometimes ugly side of it that you deal with routinely, what's the upside?

Priscilla Young: Yeah. I would say we do see good, bad and ugly. And there are a lot of demands. There are a lot of challenges and there are a lot of heartaches, but the upside is what I was just saying. We get to meet a lot of people and we get to see God working in a lot of ways. Both in students' lives, in faculty and staff, for us in the lives of donors and constituents. And just a couple alongside them. And honestly, God gives us opportunities to pastor people especially some of our older donors who don't necessarily feel like they're Pastored. I mean, we give communion, we pray, Mark is going to be doing some funerals and, you know, just to be able to be in the lives of people, the presence of Christ that we would never know, otherwise. It's been a beautiful thing. And we really love that.

Coletta Smith: So well said, Priscilla, I love you. I think I would say the, the best thing is watching the Lord do through us together. What is too big for us to do separately? And getting a front row seat to that until to collapse in bed at the end of a crazy hard day and know, oh, we serve Jesus well today. And we did it together. We did a hand in hand and the world got to see unity.

Dr. Don Payne: What a great note. Thank you both. Before we sign off, tell listeners how they can connect with you or what you would recommend they do if they don't know who to connect with.

Coletta Smith: The best is through our website is alongsideministrywives.com. They can click on any of our coaches, actually myself and Priscilla are toward the top of the, our team page. And you can send us an email directly if they would like to talk with us. We get back within 24 hours and we're usually able to set up a zoom call. Specifically if there's some, some tender heart things that needs to be talked about soon. So yeah, those are great ways to connect with us.

Dr. Don Payne: Do you have a blog as well?

Coletta Smith: We actually send out biweekly resources that are specifically for women or ministry wives, and they touch on a lot of the pain points, but they really point us to what God is doing through those so that we have our eyes fixed on Jesus. So all they have to do to get that is to sign up for, they get regular emails at the top of the homepage.

Dr. Don Payne: And the homepage again was?

Coletta Smith: Alongsideministrywives.com.

Dr. Don Payne: Good. Coletta Smith, Priscilla Young. Thank you both.

Coletta Smith: You're welcome.

Dr. Don Payne: This has been a great conversation. And listeners, let me thank you again for spending some time with us and invite you to visit our Seminary Webpage, Denverseminary.edu. Find lots of good resources there for lots of things, lots of needs. And we want to be a help to you in any way we can want to give a special thanks to all of you who who helped make Denver Seminary possible. Those of you who shared generously with us and help us do what the Lord has called us to do to help men and women engage the needs of the world with the redemptive power of the Gospel and the life changing truth of scripture. That continues to motivate us and hope it motivates you as well. In the meantime, I'm Don Payne and we will look forward to another conversation with you very soon. Take care.