

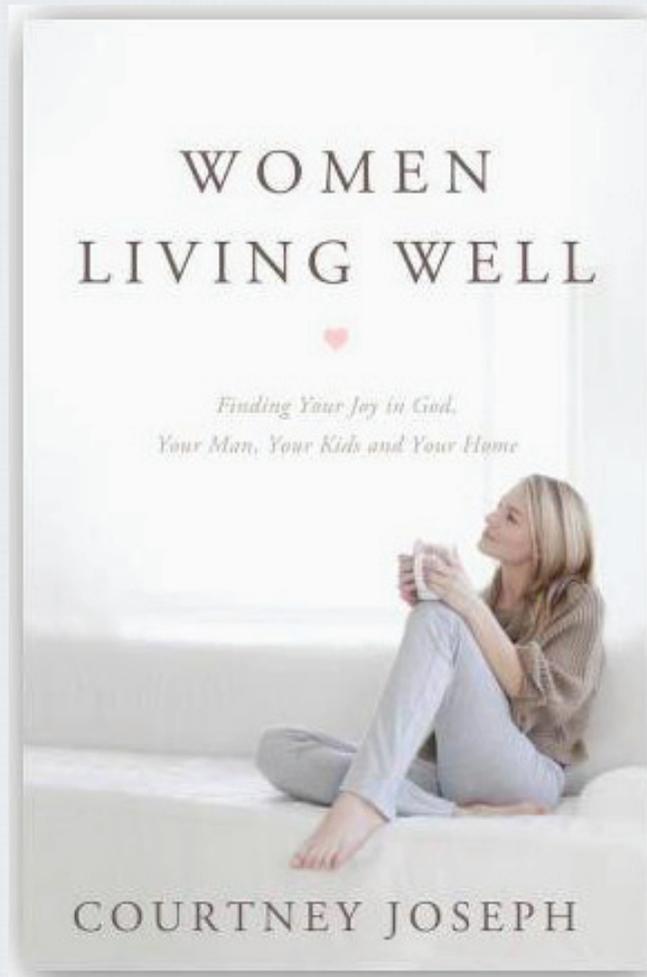


WOMEN LIVING WELL

BY COURTNEY JOSEPH



— *Companion Study Guide* —



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CHAPTER 1 | I Want The Spa - But What I Need is Solitude With God

- ♥ When you hear the word “solitude” what thoughts, images, or memories pop into your mind?
- ♥ What would you say is your greatest hindrance to carving our quiet time to meet with God in your busy day?
- ♥ Read Hebrews 11:5-6. What does verse five record about Enoch?
- ♥ What does verse six state that we must do and believe if we want to have the same thing be true of us? List the phrases out here.
- ♥ “We must slow down and create calm moments. It is in our unhurried moments that we can see and hear clearly.” (page 7)
- ♥ How could you begin to intentionally slow down to create calm moments so you can hear from God over the noise of the world? List some practical ways you could create space in your life for your walk with the King to flourish:

— PRAYER —

Father help me to carve out calm in my day so I can hear from You clearly. I want to be like Enoch, walking closely with You, my King. Amen.

CHAPTER 2 | No Time for A Quiet Time

- ♥ What has been your experience with having a regular time of meeting with God each day? When did you first hear about it? When did you first try it? Do you have such a time currently? Describe your experience in this area of life.

 - ♥ Read Luke 5:12-16. What do we find Jesus doing in the beginning of this passage in verses 12-15? List out specific things the Lord did here:

 - ♥ How does a busy wife and mom's daily agenda mirror some of the same activities we see Jesus doing these verses? Write down what you do similarly in your life as a wife and mom:

 - ♥ What do we find Jesus doing in verse 16?

 - ♥ What do you learn from the Lord's actions immediately after he spent time listening to requests from people, working with His hands, serving, touching, healing, and giving instructions? How should we as busy moms follow His example?

 - ♥ On a separate piece of paper, a note card, or a notes app on your phone, write out a prayer of commitment to the Lord about spending time connecting with Him each day. If the Lord Himself needed time alone, we do too!
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CHAPTER 3 | How Thirsty Am I?

- ♥ Do you ever have a hard time focusing when you are attempting to grab some alone time with God? What clamors for your attention and distracts you?
- ♥ Think about the concept of pacing your home while whispering prayers. What might some of your one-sentence prayers be as you roamed your home? List them here:
- ♥ Do you have trouble waiting on God to answer your prayers? Take a moment to read Isaiah 40:28-29. Read it once slowly. Then, read it again and record here all that this passage says about God, His character, and His actions toward us:
- ♥ Now, look back over the list you just wrote above. Which characteristic do you most love about God or most need to know right now in your life as a wife and mother?
- ♥ Now, read Isaiah 40:30-31. What do these verses say about the person who waits on (trusts in, believes in) the Lord?
- ♥ Which of these characteristics will you ask God to grant you as you wait on Him?

— PRAYER —

Father, may I never forget the powerful and amazing ways You provide for me as I thirst after You and Your word. Teach me to wait on You with patience and eager expectation as I go about serving my family. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 4 | The Effects of the Media Revolution

♥ List all of the various media forms you use or encounter in a typical day both inside and outside of your home.

♥ How have modern media devices distracted you from your walk with Christ? Have they helped in any way? Describe their effects below, both the negative and the positive.

NEGATIVE:

POSITIVE:

♥ What about the ways media has strengthened or hurt your friendships? Can you name a time where a relationship with someone was either damaged or fortified by a modern media form?

♥ Read John 15:4-5. What do you think it means to “remain” or “abide” in Christ and have Him do the same to us?

♥ What are we promised if we are careful to do this?

♥ Take time now to whisper an earnest and honest prayer asking God to help you learn to remain in Him despite the media distractions of today.

CHAPTER 5 | Never Walk Alone

- ♥ Where have you ever walked side-by-side with other women as you grew spiritually as either a part of a Bible study or small group?
 - ♥ How did being part of such a group help you to grow as a Christian? What did the group provide that you couldn't get on your own?
 - ♥ Have you ever had a mentor, either one in real life or one who mentored your through her books or online ministry? Describe her and what this mentorship did for you in your walk with Christ.
 - ♥ Look up Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 in the Bible. What does this passage teach about working and walking through life?
 - ♥ What other tangible benefits do you receive from walking closely with another person as you process life with its ups and downs?
 - ♥ Take inventory of your life right now. With whom are you walking in an Ecclesiastes 4:9 way?
 - ♥ If the answer is "no one", spend a few moments in prayer asking God to bring someone in your life who will walk alongside you as you seek to love and serve the King.
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CHAPTER 6 | The Time Warp Wife

♥ How have the ways society views marriage—and the roles of men and women—changed over the years? (Think of the ways that the husband-wife relationships portrayed on television have morphed since the 1950's.)

♥ Look up Ephesians 5:22-33. List below what the instructions are for both husbands and wives:

Husbands are told:

Wives are told:

♥ How does the way society currently views marriage support or go against the biblical roles of husbands and wives?

♥ What does Genesis 2:18 say that women are to be to their husbands?

♥ What are some ways you can help your husband in particular? In what areas of his life could you be a source of support and encouragement?

♥ Now, name one specific action you will take this week to help your husband or to show him respect. Call a friend and tell her your plan. Ask her to follow up with you to help keep you accountable to do it.

CHAPTER 7 | Marriage in the Age of Media

- ♥ *"I stick to my belief that technology is amoral."* (page 71)
"Amoral" means neither good nor bad. How it is used may be for good or evil but the device is neutral. How is this true with media devices? Name some ways technology can be used:

For good:

For evil:
- ♥ What affect has media had on your marriage in particular? Do you or your husband ever find yourselves competing with a phone, computer, or television for the attention of your spouse?
- ♥ Read Proverbs 14:1. How does this verse pertain to media? How might a woman be "tearing down" her house with her own very hands?
- ♥ Think for a moment about your own use of media. What are some guidelines and boundaries you can put in place to ensure that you don't let media get in the way of your time spent with your husband or the health of your relationship as a married couple?
- ♥ Take a few moments in prayer to ask God to reveal to you any way that media might be detracting from your relationship with your husband. Commit to keeping any boundaries in place He may show you are needed to have a distraction-free and healthy Christ-centered marriage.

CHAPTER 8 | Banishing Bitterness to Find Happily Ever After

- ♥ When you were a little girl or teenager, what did you hope your husband would be like? How did you hope he'd make you feel when you were married? Did you envision fights and conflict or smooth sailing?
- ♥ When conflicts arise in marriage—and they always do—how do you tend to handle them? Are you cranky or critical? Do you suddenly become a history expert and bring up old wounds and mistakes—his not yours? Or do you become withdrawn and sulk, refusing to deal with the matter?
- ♥ Read Hebrews 12:15. What does it mean for something to take root and spring up in the world of plants (and weeds!)? Why is it dangerous for bitterness to do the same in our heart?
- ♥ “Whenever I start to feel critical or bitter toward my husband, I must choose instead to forgive my husband and to pray for him.” (page 88)
- ♥ Where do you fall on the “forgiveness difficulty” scale? Place an X where you see yourself most often after an issue or conflict arises.

I eagerly and easily
forgive my husband



I am stubborn and
hold a grudge

- ♥ Spend time now in prayer. Be honest with the Lord about any unforgiveness you may be harboring in your heart toward your husband. If you are carrying any, confess it and repent. Then, go to your husband and ask his forgiveness too.

CHAPTER 9 | The “Completing Him” Marriage Challenge – Week 1

- ♥ Read Genesis 2:24. What thoughts does the phrase “one flesh” bring to your mind? How is “one flesh” different than “two random people doing their own thing”?

“You were not created to compete with your husband but to complete him.” (page 91)

- ♥ Do you find you compete with your husband at times? Over what do you compete? (The look of the house? The discipline of the kids? Etc...)
- ♥ Which of the following areas of this week’s challenge did you find the easiest? Put a star before it and afterwards write why. Also, which did you find the most difficult? Circle it and afterwards tell why.

Captivate Your Husband

Remember Your Marriage Vows

Pray for Your Husband

Admire Your Husband

Communicate With Your Husband About Your Priorities

- ♥ Using the answer to the previous question, spend time thanking God for the area that comes most natural to you. Also, ask Him to give you the grace and strength to work on the area that is most challenging of the challenge!

CHAPTER 10 | The “Completing Him” Marriage Challenge – Week 2

- ♥ How does the fact that marriage is a momentary gift, but one patterned after the covenant relationship between Christ and the church, make you take it more seriously?
- ♥ Read Titus 2:3-4. List below the things wives—both older and younger—are instructed to do and be:
- ♥ Which area above most jumps out at you as being one where you could use a little work? Why? What will you do this week to better yourself in this area?
- ♥ Which of the following areas of this week’s challenge did you find the easiest?
- ♥ Put a star before it and afterwards jot down why. Also, which did you find the most difficult? Circle it and afterwards explain why.

Cook Your Husband’s Favorite Meal

Follow Your Husband’s Vision

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Kiss Him Like You Mean It

Assess Your Marriage

- ♥ Using the answer to the previous question, spend time thanking God for the area that was least difficult for you. Also, ask Him to grant you strength, energy and creativity to work on the area that is the hardest in your marriage right now.

CHAPTER 11 | My Mom

- ♥ If a mother who walked with God raised you, what specifically did she do that caused you to want to follow Him as well? (If you weren't raised by a Christian mother, is there someone who was a mother to you in the faith—one who pointed you toward Christ? Answer the above question with her in mind instead.)
 - ♥ When you think of the concept of our children being sponges who are soaking in what they see and hear and observe in us spiritually, how does this make you feel? Does this cause you concern in any area? If so which one?
 - ♥ Look up Psalm 145:4-7. What does this passage state? Summarize it using your own words in the space provided here:
 - ♥ What specific ways have you seen God be majestic, wondrous, awesome, righteous, or great?
 - ♥ Now, have you ever shared this with your children? When? If not, why not?
 - ♥ Will you make a commitment to put telling and showing your children about the many glorious characteristics of God higher up on your list of priorities? Write a prayer out here telling God so. Then, make it happen. He IS glorious and our kids need to know!
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CHAPTER 12 | Parenting in the Digital Age

- ♥ When you were growing up, do you feel your home environment was strict, permissive or somewhere in between compared to other homes you knew.
- ♥ Explain using examples if you can.
- ♥ Does your family currently have any rules regarding the following? If so, list them afterwards in the space provided.

Cell phones

Social Media

Music

Television

Video Games

Movies

- ♥ Are there any of the above areas that you feel you and your husband need to revisit to adjust the boundaries? How about to set boundaries at all (if there currently aren't any in place)? Set a time to discuss this with him, praying as you do.
- ♥ Read Philippians 4:8. How can this verse be used as a grid to determine what guidelines your family will have about using devices in this digital age?
- ♥ Write out the "things we are to think about" from Philippians 4:8 on a note card or two. Post them in a prominent place next to the TV, computer or cell phone charging station as a constant reminder for your family to keep their thoughts pure.

CHAPTER 13 | Motherhood Mess-Ups

♥ What is one of your most memorable “motherhood mess-ups”? What happened and how did it make you feel?

♥ In retrospect, did God use your shortcoming or mistake to teach you an important life lesson? If so, what?

“I love parenting books and have read many, but none of them can replace the prayer of a mother for her child.” (page 137)

♥ On a scale of 1-10—with one being non-existent and 10 being constant—what role does prayer for your children currently play in your life? Rate yourself.

♥ Explain why you chose the number that you did.

♥ How would you like to see that number change? What adjustments would you need to make in your daily life for this to happen?

♥ Turn to Joshua 1:9 and read it slowly (and out loud if you are somewhere you can!) How could really believing the words of this verse transform your mothering especially when you have fear of “messing up”?

♥ Using Joshua 1:9 as a springboard, pen a prayer here begging God to help you in the midst of the mess that is often motherhood. Then, believe that He will do it. Believe that He is always with you every step of the way!

CHAPTER 14 | I'm Gonna Blow My Top

♥ Have you ever witnessed a mother blowing her top in public with her children? What happened? How did you feel when you observed her behavior and the reaction of her kids?

♥ Now—you knew this was coming—have YOU ever blown your stack with your own sweet children? What led up to the incident? How did your child (or children) respond? How did you, as their mother, feel afterward?

♥ Of the following possible reasons given in chapter 14 for making us have a short fuse, which is the one to which you can most relate? Circle it and then write your thoughts about it in the space below the list.

TOO-HIGH EXPECTATIONS EXHAUSTION DISORGANIZATION BITTERNESS IN MARRIAGE

♥ What is your reaction to the following statement:

Perfect Women Aren't Real; Real Women Aren't Perfect.

♥ Why do we so often pursue perfection rather than just looking for progress in our parenting?

♥ Look at Galatians 5:22-25. What qualities are mentioned in verse 22? Which of these do you most need God to grant you right now in your mothering?

♥ How do you think we can carry out the directions in verse 25? What do you think it means to be "in step with the spirit"?

— PRAYER —

Father You are love. You give joy and peace and patience. You are kind, good, faithful and gentle. Only through You can I display self-control. Help me to always pursue these qualities as I interact with my children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 15 | I'm Gonna Blow My Top

- ♥ How were you schooled as a child? Did you go to a public school? A private one? Were you homechooled? Or was it a combination of a few ways?
 - ♥ What were the advantages of how you were schooled?
 - ♥ Any drawbacks you observed?
 - ♥ What led up to the decision to school your own children in the way your family has currently chosen? Did you and your husband readily agree on this important issue?
 - ♥ Re-read the quote by Angela Perritt given at the open of chapter 15 and jot down your reaction to this statement here.
 - ♥ In what ways can you—no matter how your kids are schooled—support other mothers in your circle of friends, your neighborhood or church, who have made other schooling choices?
 - ♥ Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. How can this ancient command be carried out in our modern day, whatever way we school our kids? What does it look like practically?
 - ♥ Using Deuteronomy 6:4-9 as a template, sketch out a job description of a mom who is commanded to diligently teach her children about the Lord. Then, spend a few minutes in prayer asking God to empower you to tackle the job to His glory!
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CHAPTER 16 | Juggling Homemaking, Ministry and Work

- ♥ What kind of home did you grow up in when it comes to the mom working outside the home, being a stay-at-home mom, or something in between.
 - ♥ In what ways—if any—did this backdrop influence your own choices when it comes to being employed inside or outside of the home? Are there other factors that entered into your decision?
 - ♥ List all of the many duties you must juggle each week. Include all the duties, roles and responsibilities in your home, work, child-rearing, church, community and your extended-family.
 - ♥ Now, glance back over that list. Which one takes the most time? Which one seems to fall by the wayside most often? Are there any where you need to make time or attitude adjustments?
 - ♥ The book of Proverbs 31, we see a woman who had many duties to juggle each day. Doing household chores over and over again can become mundane. How did this famous woman in scripture manage to maintain a proper attitude in the midst of the monotony? (Hint: It has to do with who she actually worked for. Look for your answer in verse 30)
 - ♥ How can knowing “who you work for” help you to obtain a godly attitude as you go about your tasks at home? Write out a two or three sentence mission statement that sums up for whom and why you tackle your work at home.
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CHAPTER 17 | Making Your Home a Haven

- ♥ Grab a dictionary or hop online and locate the definition of the word haven. What do you discover? In your own words describe what a haven is.
- ♥ Why is it crucial, in the times that we live in, that our husbands and children have a haven to come home to?
- ♥ Would you honestly say your home tends to be more distant and distracted or engaged and enjoyable? Why is this the case?
- ♥ What are some practical ways spelled out in chapter 17 that you would like to try in the hopes of creating your own family's haven?
- ♥ Which of the following have you ever used—or would like to consider using—in your home to help create a welcoming atmosphere? Circle all that apply.

MUSIC CANDLES CLUTTER-FREE ZONES YUMMY AND COMFORTING FOOD

- ♥ Read Proverbs 15:1. What part does this verse play in the creation of a welcoming atmosphere in the home when it comes to the words a mother speaks?
 - ♥ Write out one specific goal below for how you would like to create an atmosphere of love, welcome and peace in your home. Perhaps it is lighting a candle each night this week, paying attention to the noise and sounds of the home, or being intentional with cleaning or home cooking. What goal will you have this week?
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CHAPTER 18 | Routines That Bring Rest

- ♥ When it comes to routines in your week, do you have any regular ones? Do they have to do with housework? Cooking? Laundry? Your children? Your time with God?
- ♥ Why do you think that routines can bring rest to your week? How does planning out a schedule help to bring calm instead of chaos?
- ♥ Peek again at Proverbs chapter 31. Read closely verses 13, 17, 27 and 30. What do these voices say about a woman and her weekly work at home?
- ♥ Does your family have any routine when it comes to Sundays and worship? If so, what?
- ♥ Why is it important to take a day of rest and worship? Is there something you, as the mom in the family, can be doing in order to make Sundays smoother at your house? How could you, like many women of the 1950's did, plan ahead for the meal and the day of rest?
- ♥ When was the last time you took time out for a nap or a bubble bath? Why don't you do this more often? Make a point in the next day or so to stop. Rest. Refuel. You'll be so glad you did!

— PRAYER —

Father, please help me to build both routines and rest into my busy week. I want to make the most of my time but also to take time to just rest in You and soak in your goodness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 19 | Media and Your Homemaking – Times Have Changed!

- ♥ In what ways do you find this statement to be true: “Media gives us a plethora of ideas but in the rush of life we don’t slow down to implement them”?

 - ♥ How can social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, detract from our duties as keepers of the home?

 - ♥ What role does social media play in jealousy and comparisons to other women?

 - ♥ Are there any ways you can think of that the modern-day pastimes of social media can actually help our homemaking? List out your thoughts here:

 - ♥ Look up both Luke 9:23 and Proverbs 31:27. Can you see a way that these two verses are connected? How does striving to not be idle relate to daily taking up your cross?

 - ♥ If you struggle in the area of over-indulging in social media and wasting time being idle, tell the Lord about it. Take the space below to write out a heart-felt prayer to God asking Him to keep your heart and time in check when it comes to the time you spend on social media and the computer.
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CHAPTER 20 | Discipline and Diligence: The Proverbs 31 Woman

- ♥ How do you react to the concept of the anonymous woman in Proverbs 31 being a model for King Lemuel as he would someday look for a wife? Does it encourage you to realize she probably didn't do all of the activities listed all in one day?
 - ♥ Of the statements listed on pages 198-199 that chronicle what a wife of noble character does NOT look like, which one most convicts you? Why?
 - ♥ How have you (or how have you not!) invested time into acquiring the skills of homemaking? Which ones have you made an effort to master?
 - ♥ What skill or skills do you need to concentrate more on perfecting at this point in your marriage and mothering?
 - ♥ Read Colossians 3:23. How can this verse serve as a perspective for us as we serve and help our husbands, love and teach our children, and effectively and efficiently manage our homes?
 - ♥ The woman in Proverbs 31 had a dream. She turned that dream into a plan that kept her active and benefitted her family. Do you have such a dream? Briefly write it out here.
 - ♥ How might that dream come to be WITHOUT you having to neglect your family and your home responsibilities?
 - ♥ You've come to the close of this book. What is the one major take-away you have learned? How do you want what you have learned to alter your actions as a wife and/or mother? May God bless you as you serve your family and as you continue to walk with the King!
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