

GOOD WORK



COLLECTIVE

!M

THE MOMCO

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

.M | COLLECTIVES

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The *Good Work* Collective is anchored in two themes: We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do! Our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do. This is an invitation to join us in discovering what your good work is.

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# GOOD WORK COLLECTIVE

Our good work isn't limited to what we do;  
*it's also in the way we do what we do.*



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## FACILITATOR REMINDERS

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- + Before the first session, remind participants to print their workbook.
- + Send a personal thank-you email or text after the first session to each participant.
- + If someone is absent, send a personal email or text to check in.
- + If someone joins the group after the first session, take the time to do quick introductions to integrate them.
- + Review the material in advance. Some lessons may need to be adjusted in order to fit your group.
- + Some lessons include more Scripture or spiritual emphasis than others. Adapt the content as needed to best address the spiritual climate of your group.
- + You may not have time to ask every discussion question throughout the session. Before each session starts, mark

the ones you feel are most important for your group so you are sure to get to those.

- + Each session begins with a Get Connected question, discussion or activity. These are designed to set the pace, energy and level of engagement of your group at the beginning. By verbally engaging every person in your group at the beginning of the session, their level of participation and engagement will likely increase.
- + Each session ends with Your Good Work, which is application-focused homework designed to be completed between sessions.
- + As you facilitate each session, note any prayer opportunities or needs you pick up on for the women in your group. Use your list as a tool in your own personal prayer time to pray for your group in specific ways.

## TIPS FOR FACILITATING ON ZOOM

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- + Test your sound and lighting in advance. If possible, set up in a light-filled space.
- + To help the quick pace of the Get Connected exercises, drop the questions or prompts into chat.
- + When facilitating introductions or Get Connected exercises where everyone should verbally participate, give the person in the top left of your screen a heads up they will go first. Instruct the group to verbally “tag” someone to go next at the end of their turn. This will keep things moving and help avoid awkward silences.

- + When appropriate, consider using the Whiteboard feature on Zoom to have participants drop answers or visualize a concept.
- + Consider asking participants to “mute” when they are not speaking in order to minimize background noise.



# SESSION 1

## Why Do You Work?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Group Expectations
- + Your Work-Life Reality
- + Understanding Your Why
- + Passion vs. Provision
- + Finding the Good
- + Your Good Work





*We are  
created to  
do good  
work, and  
there is good  
work for us  
to do!*



# SESSION 1

## Why Do You Work?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 1 of Good Work!*

This Collective is anchored in two themes you'll hear repeated throughout: We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do! Our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do. This is an invitation to join us in discovering what your good work is. Our good work includes our perspective and how we approach every aspect of our lives. Every session, we will gather for discussion (be sure to have your workbook handy), and for those who are up for it, we will do a little homework (found in the Your Good Work section). The homework this session will give us the starting place for next session's discussion.

This session will focus on WHY we work, as well as the specific benefits of your work, which will help us frame a perspective of gratitude whether we are in a season of loving our work or dreading it.

*Facilitate a simple introduction exercise. Introduce yourself first by answering the questions below, and ask the other women to do the same. Then lead the group in prayer.*

**+ What is your name?**

**+ Where do you live/where are you from?**

**+ When you were in elementary school, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

**+ What kind of work do you do now?**

**+ If there's one thing you could change about your work, what would it be?**

*our perspectives of our work, and everyone should be able to identify some tangible next steps.*

*Any time a new member joins your group, invite them to introduce themselves and to answer a few of these introductory questions.*

*Make notes for yourself regarding the things the group wishes they could change about their work to use as you personally pray for the group members in the coming sessions. Be sure to acknowledge we won't be able to address all of these concerns during the Collective, but the coming conversations will be a benefit regarding*

*Once everyone has answered the questions above, ask one more: What inspired you to say, yes to joining this Collective?*

*When it comes to expectations for you as the facilitator, explain that your group can expect you to be reliable, empathetic, respectful and trustworthy. Also, to have fun!*

## GROUP EXPECTATIONS

Our hope is to provide a comfortable environment where participants experience community and connection. In order to create a safe, meaningful space where you feel comfortable sharing, there are a few things we all should keep in mind:

1. *Group Attendance.* Your presence matters! Let's give priority to our meeting time and our homework.
2. *Confidentiality.* We will keep everything shared in this group confidential. This is a safe place to be yourself and share your story.
3. *Respect Difference.* We will not judge one another or compare ourselves to one another. We are here to care for and support each other, not to compete.
4. *Safe Space.* We will not give advice or try to "counsel" other members. We are committed to offering a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on.
5. *Full Attention.* We will keep our phones turned off during our time and will do our best to minimize other distractions.

## YOUR WORK-LIFE REALITY

### Facts About Working Women<sup>1</sup>

*Read through the following information with your group. You can read each statistic aloud or ask a volunteer to help. The purpose is to better understand the landscape of working women.*

- + 50% of the total American labor force is made up of women.
- + Children are most likely to be raised by a single working parent or two married parents who are both employed.
- + Only a minority of children will grow up in families with a full-time stay-at-home parent throughout their childhood.
- + 41% of mothers are the sole or primary breadwinners for their family, including single mothers, mothers earning at least half of their

total household income and mothers who out earn their husbands.

- + Sons of working moms are more likely to contribute to chores and spend time caring for family.
- + Adult daughters whose moms worked outside the home are more likely to work themselves, hold more supervisory responsibilities and earn higher wages than women whose mothers stayed home full time.
- + Children who grow up in working-mother homes grow up to be just as happy as children of moms who stayed home.
- + 56% of all working parents say finding work-life balance is difficult.

*Ask your group for their thoughts and insights on these statistics: What stands out to you?*

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*Pray especially  
for your  
group to gain  
understanding  
of the good  
work God has  
for them to do.*

---

## YOUR WORK-LIFE REALITY

The facts and statistics we just reviewed represent millions of working women! There is great diversity in the types of jobs and fields women work in, and, as you heard in our introductions, the same is true in this group. Our types of work, and even the reasons we work, may differ from one another, but we share some important common ground:

**We carry responsibilities for our family, and we carry responsibility outside of our family – our jobs.**

**Work is one part of our multifaceted lives.**

In the coming sessions, we are going to talk about work, but we will also discuss many other areas of our lives too! *Ask your group to look back at the table of contents and share which question resonates the most with them right now and why.*

Taking inventory of our current reality will position us to grow and to maximize the conversations we will share.

*Ask your group to go through the Work-Life Inventory in their workbooks, then discuss with the group. This should only take a minute or two.*

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR WHY

Among working moms, the reasons for working are as diverse as the women themselves. As this Collective was prepared, a handful of working moms were asked to explain their why. Here are a few of their answers:

*"I work to help provide health insurance for my family."*

*"I'm paying off student loans while also getting tuition assistance for my children."  
(This mom works at a university.)*

*"I love using the skills and education I have to benefit others."*

*"I genuinely love what I do, but we also need me to work to financially support my family."*

*"What I do is meaningful, challenging, and I get to work with great people!"*

*"Unexpectedly, I'm suddenly the sole provider for my children."*

*"I'm modeling a good work ethic for my child."*

*"I worked because I loved being a nurse and helping people through whatever crisis brought them to the emergency department." (This mom is retired.)*

*"I'm a better wife and mom when I work."*

*This is a good time to remind your group we aren't comparing here. None of us has everything in check because our lives are dynamic and changing.*

The purpose of this exercise is twofold: 1) To take a good look at what areas of our lives are as healthy and vibrant as we'd like for them to be, and what areas might need a little attention; and 2) To practice a tool we can use as often as is helpful. Some women might find it helpful to use the Work-Life Inventory a few times a year (or even once a quarter).

### Discussion Prompts and Questions:

+ Which one or two areas landed closer to the check box?

+ Which one or two landed closer to the thumbs down?

+ Sometimes, areas of our life move toward a thumbs down for a brief season, but it wouldn't be wise to leave them there. Of the ones closer to the thumbs down, is there one you'd like to improve? If so, how would doing so add value to your life?

# WORK-LIFE INVENTORY

This inventory represents different areas of a working mom's life. Place an X on the line to represent your current reality. Is it "In Check" or "Thumbs Down"?

	..... <b>WORK</b> .....	
	..... <b>FRIENDSHIPS</b> .....	
	..... <b>MARRIAGE/ROMANCE</b> .....	
	..... <b>CHILDREN</b> .....	
	..... <b>BALANCE</b> .....	
	..... <b>REST &amp; SELF-CARE</b> .....	
	..... <b>HOBBIES</b> .....	
	..... <b>FAITH</b> .....	
	..... <b>ATTITUDE</b> .....	
	..... <b>OTHER:</b> .....	

Now it's your turn! Why do you work? **Write your answer in your workbook, then discuss with the group.**

*Encourage the women in your group to not overthink this question. There's truly no right or wrong answer.*

Understanding the why behind our work can help us navigate challenges our jobs bring and even provide insight we need to increase our level of job satisfaction.

*Why do you work?*

---

PASSION

10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

## PASSION VS. PROVISION

Whether you are working primarily from a place of passion or primarily out of necessity of provision, your work is important and honorable.

Have you noticed the increasing pressure our culture places on people to aspire to have their income-producing work also be their purpose and meaning-producing work? Social media glamorizes turning your passion into a paying job. Sure, some individuals do earn a living by getting paid to facilitate their life's passion, but the concept of a "perfect job" is the exception, not the norm. Many people feel pressure to find their passion and get paid to do it, or to turn their favorite hobby into a business, and it simply may not be possible or even preferable.

If you've identified something you are passionate about, this doesn't mean you should abandon it. It just may not be the best fit as a primary source of income.

**+ In what ways is the increasing pressure to turn passions into income-producing work discouraging or possibly even harmful?**

*Answers may include: those who cannot earn a full-time living getting paid for their passion may feel like a failure; those who aren't sure what their passion is may feel less-than; it may steal the joy of enjoying a passion in your off-hours if you think really living your passion means turning it into a job.*

Some of us are working primarily out of passion, while others are working primarily out of necessity of provision.

**+ How would you rate the levels of passion and provision in your current work?**

*Example: If you are working hard to get out of debt, you may be going all-in on provision right now in multiple jobs that you don't love, so passion may be low and you may rate provision high. If you absolutely love what you do, but compensation is low, passion may be high and provision may be low. The combination of passion and provision will be unique to you.*

**+ Are you satisfied with your passion and provision ratings, or are you hoping to change one or both?**

*Briefly discuss responses with your group.*

We'll talk more about the comparison trap in coming sessions, but for now, let's acknowledge comparing the work we do to someone else's work isn't beneficial.

PROVISION

10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

---

*Whether you are working primarily from a place of passion or primarily out of necessity of provision, your work is important and honorable.*

---

*Why is it important to confidently embrace our work as honorable?*

*Why is recognizing the work others do as honorable important?*

## FINDING THE GOOD

Recognizing our work as honorable will help us frame a perspective of gratitude whether we are in a season of loving our work or dreading it.

Studies show people who practice gratitude sleep better, have higher self-esteem, are healthier, have more empathy, don't get angry as easily and have more meaningful relationships. Gratitude doesn't do much to change the logistical circumstances of our work-life or mom-life, but it certainly changes us. There's good news here: we don't have to wait for gratitude to find us, we can cultivate it.

Adding gratefulness for our work opens the opportunity to love our work.

+ What benefits could you see in cultivating more gratitude regarding your work-life?

## YOUR GOOD WORK

*Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook.*

This session, we will practice finding the good – specifically regarding our work – by keeping a gratitude journal. Every day, for five days, there's a W3 prompt:

- + **Who** do you work with that you are grateful for?
- + **What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for?
- + **When** did you smile or feel proud?

Simply record your answers each day. There's also a simple prayer prompt for you to use if you'd like. End by inviting each person in your group to share one key takeaway from your discussion. Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## GRATITUDE JOURNAL

*Dear God, I need your strength to help me:*

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### GRATITUDE JOURNAL

#### *Day 1*

**Who** do you work with that you are grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**When** did you smile or feel proud? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### *Day 2*

**Who** do you work with that you are grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**When** did you smile or feel proud? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### *Day 3*

**Who** do you work with that you are grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**When** did you smile or feel proud? \_\_\_\_\_

### *Day 4*

**Who** do you work with that you are grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**When** did you smile or feel proud? \_\_\_\_\_

### *Day 5*

**Who** do you work with that you are grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for? \_\_\_\_\_

**When** did you smile or feel proud? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SESSION 1 SOURCES**

##### 1. Facts About Working Women:

Tara Law, "Women Are Now the Majority of the U.S. Workforce – But Working Women Still Face Serious Challenges," January 16, 2020, <https://time.com/5766787/women-workforce/>.

Sarah Jane Glynn, "Breadwinning Mothers Continue to Be the U.S. Norm," May 10, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/10/469739/breadwinning-mothers-continue-u-s-norm/>.

Dine Gerdeman, "Kids of Working Moms Grow into Happy Adults," July 16, 2018, <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/kids-of-working-moms-grow-into-happy-adults>.

Claire Caine Miller, "Stressed, Tired, Rushed: A Portrait of the Modern Family," November 4, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/05/upshot/stressed-tired-rushed-a-portrait-of-the-modern-family.html>.





# SESSION 2

## Does Your Work Matter?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Truths for Working Moms
- + Your Work Matters
- + Your Good Work

# SESSION 2

## Does Your Work Matter?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 2!*

As I shared with you last session, this Collective is anchored in two themes you'll hear repeated throughout: We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do! Our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do. This Collective is an invitation to discover what your good work is.

Have you ever wondered if your work matters? That's where we are turning our conversation next.

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the questions below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.) Then lead the group in prayer before transitioning into the main content.*

#### **+ What is one specific task/responsibility from your work that you really enjoy?**

Note: we are looking for tangible and specific answers. Examples might include: "I love restocking inventory because it's methodical and I have a great sense of satisfaction when I'm done" or "Leading staff meetings is one of my favorite things to do because our whole team comes together and there's great energy."

#### **+ When do you feel like your work matters most?**

#### **+ When do you feel like your work doesn't matter very much?**

In this session, we are going to discuss why our work matters by connecting to the bigger-picture purpose of our work. Before we dive in, let's touch base on Your Good Work from last time!

We ended last session by discussing the benefits of cultivating gratitude regarding our work lives. Adding gratefulness for our work opens the opportunity to love and appreciate our work, and this perspective inevitably will impact other areas of our lives.

*Ask for a handful of volunteers to share a few of their gratitude journal entries, and then invite responses to the following questions:*

- + What caught you by surprise?
- + How did this exercise impact you?

*Pray for this session and for your group to gain insight and understanding on the bigger-picture purpose for our work.*

## TRUTH FOR WORKING MOMS

There are a lot of lies our culture promotes when it comes to work:

- + Career success determines my value.
- + My job title contributes to my identity.
- + Work is a necessary evil.
- + Hustle earns respect and is worth celebrating.
- + Purpose and happiness are found in doing and achieving more.

*Ask your group for thoughts/feedback on these. How do they see these lies promoted in our culture? Is there anything they would add?*

Though the workplace is not without challenges, we know women were created for purposeful work in their everyday lives and workplaces. Here are three biblical truths for working women:

1. You are created in the image of a God who works.
2. Your identity is not determined by what you do.
3. You are an ambassador.

**Truth #1: You are created in the image of a God who works.**

*Ask for a volunteer to read the passage below.*

### BACKGROUND

*We often consider work to be a very tangible, earthly construct, but the way we view work is actually a deeply spiritual issue. Genesis chapter 1 holds the story of creation. The first line of scripture declares, "In the beginning, God created...." In other words, in the beginning, God went to work. The chapter continues with God speaking our world, the universe, and everything else into existence – all His good creation.*



*Truth #1:  
You are  
created in  
the image  
of a God  
who works.*



*Notes and  
Thoughts*

## GENESIS 1:26-28 (HCSB)

*26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*

*They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”*

*27 So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.*

*28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”*

+ What did God tell both Adam and Eve to do in verse 28?

God introduces men and women as the *imago dei*, his image-bearers in the world. Because we are created in his image, we are called to work – to create, cultivate, sustain and keep the world as his representatives.

### Thoughts to share and discuss with your group:

+ The phrase “fill the earth” means “bring to full flower,” to develop the earth’s resources to the fullest.<sup>1</sup>

+ Don’t let the word “multiply” throw you. It’s easy to assume Adam and Eve’s responsibility for multiplication was limited to procreation. However, as the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), Jesus fulfilled all that God appointed Adam and Eve to do – perfectly – and he was not married, and he didn’t have biological children.

Simply put: Jesus produced disciples (see Matthew 28:19 for Jesus’ commission to his disciples and all believers).

This is important for all of us – those who are married, single, mothers or, like Jesus, those who have no children. We are “fruitful” and we “multiply” when we pass on our faith to our friends, coworkers, neighbors, children and family members.

*How do you think Jesus was able to fulfill the mandate to be fruitful and multiply?*

"As Creator, God could have placed Adam and Eve in the midst of a highly developed world with roads, bridges, buildings, technology and everything needed for modern life as we know it. Instead, he gave us the earth and all its resources, and appointed us stewards, developers, and co-creators with himself."<sup>2</sup>

– Bill Peel

*You can ask your group to answer these questions in their workbook and then discuss, or, to save time, you can facilitate as a discussion only.*

*What does Genesis 1:26-28 and the quote by Bill Peel tell us about our identity?*

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*When you consider God appointed us as stewards, developers and co-creators with him, what does this infer about our value to God and the value of our work?*

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*Are any of these thoughts and ideas new for you? If so, how might they shape your perspective of your work?*

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*Truth #2:  
Your identity is  
not determined  
by what you do.*

## Truth #2: Your identity is not determined by what you do.

In Genesis 2, sin and brokenness enter God's good and perfect creation, changing everything. In your workbook, fill in the right side of the chart.

BEFORE SIN AND BROKENNESS	AFTER SIN AND BROKENNESS
Work was good and perfect.	Work became <i>more difficult</i> and <i>laborious</i> .
Man and woman's identity were securely and fully in God.	Man and woman were tempted to find <i>identity outside of Christ</i> .
Man and woman lived in perfect relationship with God.	<i>Brokenness</i> and <i>sin</i> separated man and woman from <i>God</i> , requiring a Savior (Jesus) to set things right.

+ How else do you see evidence of sin and brokenness when it comes to our work?

While brokenness and sin make work more difficult and laborious, it doesn't mean work itself is bad; it's still good and necessary. In fact, work is good because God created it, but the brokenness of sin distorted God's good plan for work. Work was never designed to carry the weight of our identity and worth. We weren't created in the image of our job titles, our compensation or the organization we work for. We were created in the image of God.

### *What are some indicators we might be pursuing identity in our work?*

Examples might include: Asking ourselves, "Do people know what I do, and do they think it matters?" Difficulty leaving work "at work." Forfeiting focused time with friends and family for one more email, one more post, one more quick task. Thinking we don't have time to rest. Feeling embarrassed when we are in a season of unemployment.

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*We weren't created in the image of our job titles, our compensation or the organization we work for. We were created in the image of God.*

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*Where do we see our culture celebrating and pushing for work as identity?*

Note: In social norms of conversations, like when you meet someone new, one of the first questions asked is, "So what do you do for a living?" Their answer, to some extent, will inform the way you think of them. Or when someone asks, "How are you?" Our initial response is often, "Busy!" Rewarding long, excessive hours with bonuses or affirmations. Believing we don't have time to rest.

Searching for identity in work ultimately leads to discouragement, discontent, disillusionment and disengagement. Why? Work is an expression of our identity, not the source of it.

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*Work is an expression of our identity, not the source of it.*

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*How can embracing this truth create freedom in our lives?*





## Truth #3: You are an ambassador.



### Truth #3: You are an ambassador.

*Note: Be sensitive to the spiritual pulse of your group members. This section may be confusing for those are aren't in a relationship with Jesus yet. If it would serve your group better, focus on the first two truths.*

God strategically places Christian women in their workplaces and inside their spheres of influence. We are called to work as Christ's ambassadors in our daily lives, including our workplaces.

*Ask a volunteer to read the verse below.*

#### BACKGROUND

*This verse is part of a larger explanation of the "ministry of reconciliation" appointed to every Christ follower. It explains our role in God's big-picture work of bringing the world into relationship with him. All of our day-to-day work should be an extension of, and in alignment with, God's big-picture work.*

### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20A (HCSB)

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us.*

*What role does this Scripture say we play?*

God has prepared an important role for us – that of ambassador. An ambassador is regarded as the personal representative of the king or leader who sends them, and they carry out the interests of the sender to the people throughout the land. They are usually deployed to a specific area, region, people group or country.

In this way, you've been strategically deployed to your daily workplace. You have access to people others may not be able to reach. As an ambassador, you are a truth-teller, hope-bearer, light-giver and burden-sharer as you bring Christ into your daily responsibilities and interactions.



*You've been  
strategically  
deployed to  
your daily  
workplace.*

*As an  
ambassador, you  
are a truth-teller,  
hope-bearer,  
light-giver and  
burden-sharer as  
you bring Christ  
into your daily  
responsibilities  
and interactions.*

*Fill in these definitions in your workbook:*

**+ You are an ambassador!**

*Ambassador:* personal representative of Christ deployed to the people in our daily lives.

**+ As an ambassador, you are a:**

*Truth-teller:* one who speaks truth as both an encourager and a challenger.

*Hope-bearer:* one who shares hope and encouragement with others through the way they live and the intentional words they speak, showing there is hope beyond our earthly circumstances.

*Light-giver:* one who takes the light of Jesus into dark places, providing clarity, discernment and wise illumination into areas that might otherwise be confusing.

*Burden-sharer:* one who demonstrates empathy and compassion by walking with others through trials and seasons of difficulty.

*How does embracing our role as ambassadors  
reframe our perspective on our work and the people  
we interact with through our work?*

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*What are some practical ways we can live out being a truth-teller, hope-bearer, light-giver and burden-sharer in our workplaces? Work as identity?*

Examples might include: Instead of offering vague feedback on changes I'd like to see and hoping they get the hint, or even assuming they know I think they are awesome, I can be a truth-teller to the people I lead by giving both specific encouragement and honest feedback to help them grow. Being a hope-bearer in conversations or meetings full negativity, complaining and discouragement; speaking words of life that point people toward hope. As a light-giver, helping someone think through a situation that feels overwhelming or complex to help identify a solution. When someone is facing a difficult season personally (maybe a scary diagnosis or difficulty in their family), I can act as a burden-sharer by checking in on how they are doing, serving them in tangible ways (like providing a meal) or even praying with them.

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## YOUR WORK MATTERS

In our next session, we will dedicate a significant amount of time discussing the comparison trap.

In short, the comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.

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*The comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.*

---

*Ask your group members, "How might the comparison trap trip us up when it comes to believing our work matters?" Invite responses from a handful of participants.*

Consider these thoughts: Have you ever found yourself comparing the value of your work to the value of someone else's? Have you ever compared your position with someone else's and felt like you were coming up short? Or perhaps comparison has created space for pride over your own accomplishments compared to someone else's.

The three biblical truths we just unpacked all point to the fact that your work matters. All your work matters – your work as a mother, your work at your job, your work as a volunteer, etc.

**Your work is one way you can partner with God's work.**

In your workbook, you have a similar version to that statement, but here's how you will fill yours in: **My work is one way I can partner with God's work.**

When we work to meet human needs, we are working for God and God is working through us, whether we realize it or not. When it comes to our work, it's easy to get caught in the day-to-day grind, but we can tap into purpose a little more if we connect to the bigger picture. "Think of it like this:

+ An administrative assistant is not simply a schedule manager and meeting arranger. The individual is a reflector of God's orderly character and contributor to the smooth functioning of business.

+ A loan processor is not simply a paper pusher. This person is a shelter provider and dream fulfiller, creating places where families can blossom.

+ A sanitation worker is not simply a trash collector. This person is a vital contributor to the community's physical welfare and ability to flourish."<sup>1</sup>

+ A taxi driver doesn't just drive people from point A to point B. They have the opportunity to provide a warm welcome and to leave a great impression on the people traveling in their city.

+ A hair stylist's job isn't just to cut, color and style hair. They help people feel good about themselves.

+ A teacher's job isn't just to transfer knowledge to students. They cultivate a passion for learning and call out the best in their students by challenging them, encouraging them and equipping them to give their best.

## REFRAMING YOUR PURPOSE

Now it's your turn! How can you tap into the bigger-picture purpose of your work? In your workbook, there's an opportunity for you to reframe the purpose of your work by filling in the blanks.

*Note: Review the examples with your group, and if time allows, give everyone a few minutes to fill in the blanks and then debrief as a group. If time doesn't allow, ask participants to do this in preparation for completing the Your Good Work section.*

## EXAMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENT

MY JOB AS A TEACHER ISN'T JUST TO TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE  
TO MY STUDENTS. I CULTIVATE A PASSION FOR LEARNING AND  
CALL OUT THE BEST IN MY STUDENTS BY CHALLENGING THEM.  
ENCOURAGING THEM AND EQUIPPING THEM TO GIVE THEIR BEST.

## MY PURPOSE STATEMENT

MY JOB AS A \_\_\_\_\_ ISN'T JUST  
TO \_\_\_\_\_. I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## YOUR GOOD WORK

Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. There's a simple prayer prompt for you to use if you'd like.

As you conclude your session, ask each person to share their one key takeaway from your discussion. Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## PURPOSE STATEMENT JOURNAL

**Dear God, I need your strength to help me believe the truth about my work, especially that:**

*(Place a checkmark by all that apply.)*

- ☐ I am created in the image of a God who works.
- ☐ My identity is not determined by what I do.
- ☐ I am an ambassador.

**Ask God to help you trust him for his help.**

This week, you'll keep your purpose statement front and center. Each day, you'll keep a log of the ways – both big and small – you lived out your purpose statement.

*My purpose statement:*

DAY 1

*Today, I lived my purpose by...*

DAY 2

*Today, I lived my purpose by...*

DAY 3

*Today, I lived my purpose by...*

DAY 4

*Today, I lived my purpose by...*

DAY 5

*Today, I lived my purpose by...*

## SESSION 2 SOURCES

1. Bill Peel, "Does Your Work Matter in God's Eyes," August 7, 2015, <https://centerforfaithandwork.com/article/does-your-work-matter-gods-eyes>.
2. Bill Peel, "How to Boost Your Creativity," July 13, 2015, <https://hbu.edu/center-for-christianity-in-business/2015/07/13/how-to-boost-your-creativity/>.



# SESSION 3

## Are You Carrying Mom Guilt?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Comparison Trap
- + Recognizing the Benefits of Your Work
- + Your Good Work

# SESSION 3

## Are You Carrying Mom Guilt?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 3!*

As I've shared before, this Collective is anchored in two themes you'll hear repeated throughout: **We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do!** Our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do. This Collective is an invitation to discover what your good work is.

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the question below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.)*

**+ What is your guilty pleasure?**

We call these life-giving or fun pleasures “guilty, but usually there’s no reason to feel guilty about them! It’s important to create space for things that are fun or life-giving. Unfortunately, this isn’t typically the only place guilt tends to show up. Our focus for this session is centered on an important question: “Are you carrying mom guilt?” Before we dive in, let’s touch base on Your Good Work from last time.

We ended last session with this simple truth: All of your work matters. In fact, your work is one way you can partner with God’s work, which is why it’s important to keep the bigger picture in the forefront of your mind.



*Your work is one way  
you can partner  
with God's work.*

*Note: If the Reframing Your Purpose exercise was done outside of your group, debrief it now by asking your group members to share their completed statements from their workbooks.*

Over the last week you logged some ways you lived out your Purpose Statement. Ask for a handful of volunteers to share a few of their journal entries and then invite responses to the following questions:

**+ What caught you by surprise?**

**+ How did this exercise impact you?**

*Pray for this session and ask God to bring awareness in every heart where we might be getting caught in the comparison trap so we can move forward in freedom and confidence.*

## COMPARISON TRAP

In 2013, NUK conducted a survey of 2,000 moms and discovered 87% of mothers experience mom guilt at some point, with 21% reporting feeling this way most or all of the time. 69% of moms feel guilt over the ratio of the work-life balance, and 40% worry they are not giving enough time to their children.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, mom guilt seems to be one of the most significant commonalities among mothers. Mom guilt means different things to different women but almost always originates in the comparison trap. In short, **the comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.**

Before I ask where you most easily fall into the comparison trap, I want to share some of the most common ways mothers tend to compare themselves. Open your workbooks to follow along. Place a star beside any common comparisons that resonate with you, but also give a thumbs-up to the group. There's room to add to the list if something else comes to mind.

*Read through Common Comparisons out loud. Ask participants to give a thumbs-up to the ones that resonate with them. This will show just how common these comparisons are (be sure to mention the commonalities to the group).*

---

*Briefly discuss with your group. No matter how strong of a person we are, we are all susceptible to the comparison trap. What pulls on you today may be different than what pulled on you six months ago, and what pulls on you six months from now may be different than today. Recognizing where we are vulnerable right now is important in finding freedom from the comparison trap.*

+ Based on this list, or the additions you made, where are you most susceptible to the comparison trap in your life right now? Invite a few participants to share.

# Common Comparisons

- 01 **Physical appearance.** Weight, clothing size, complexion, hair, makeup.
- 02 **Work and education.** Job titles, career path, level of education, earning potential.
- 03 **Children's extracurriculars.** The quantity and type of activities our children are involved in.
- 04 **Marriage.** Enough said.
- 05 **State of our homes.** Organized, cluttered, neat, dirty, décor, location, size of home.
- 06 **Mothering strategies.** How we parent, how we express love, how we approach celebrations like birthday parties and holidays.
- 07 **Personal accomplishments.** Level and quantity of personal achievements while working and raising children.
- 08 **Our children's habits and behaviors.** Screen time, how well they listen, their academic achievements, what they eat (or don't eat), their obedience (or lack thereof).
- 09 **Spiritual life.** Perception of others' vibrancy and depth in their spiritual lives compared to ours.
- 10 **Luxuries.** Vacations, vehicles, shopping habits.
- 11 **Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 **Other:** \_\_\_\_\_



## THE TRUTH ABOUT COMPARISON

As working moms, it's easy to feel like if work is winning, home is losing; and if home is winning, work is losing. According to the research, most of us experience this tension a good portion of the time. While a wide array of factors contribute to this tension, the largest factor driving mom guilt is comparison.

---

*It's easy to feel  
like if work  
is winning,  
home is losing;  
and if home is  
winning, work  
is losing.*

---

Lauren Smith Brody, author of the bestselling book, "The Fifth Trimester: The Working Mom's Guide to Style, Sanity, and Big Success After Baby," interviewed hundreds of women as part of her research, from Fortune 500 executives to part-time workers, freelancers to moms on career-pause. They all reported feeling guilty, though none seemed as though they'd actually done anything wrong or were deserving of guilt. "Collectively, they make a strong case: If everyone feels guilty, there is no other 'better' mother to compare ourselves to. Mom guilt is a sham."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, the idea of a "better" mother to measure ourselves against is an illusion. It's a false standard rooted in comparison. Why? Because we are all in the same boat!

+ How would believing mom guilt is a sham impact our perspective on ourselves as mothers? And our perspective of other mothers?

**The destructive spiral of comparing ourselves to each other compromises our impact, effectiveness and joy.** When we get caught in the comparison trap, before we know it, we are caught in a spiral of discouragement and unmerited shame. **Comparison keeps us from being our best. Why? Here are two reasons:** (fill in the blanks in your workbook)

*Briefly discuss: How else does comparison keep us from being our best?*

*Ask for a volunteer to read the passage below.*

*1. Comparison keeps us from saying yes.*  
Whether it's yes to a new friend or to a new opportunity, comparison robs us of more than we can even comprehend.

*2. Comparison distracts us.*  
Loving ourselves and others well is impossible when our thoughts are consumed by sizing up the competition.

### BACKGROUND

Paul, a missionary who helped establish and expand the early church and author of several New Testament books of the Bible, wrote Galatians as a letter to the newly established churches scattered throughout Galatia (a portion of modern Turkey). The overarching theme of Galatians is twofold: 1) Salvation comes through grace alone, not by human effort or merit, and 2) As Christ-followers we should embrace the new life we have through Christ, leaving our old ways of living and decision-making behind and embracing true life fueled and lead by the Spirit.

## GALATIANS 5:25-26 (THE MESSAGE)

*Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.*

Ask for reflections and discuss the following:

- + Reread the first verse. What would cause us to hold our new life in the Spirit as just an idea in our heads or sentiment in our hearts?
- + How do we work out our new life in the Spirit into every detail of our lives?
- + How does our new life in the Spirit set us free from the tendency to compare ourselves with others?

+ What does it mean that each of us “is an original”?

The temptation to look from side to side at what others have isn't from God. Don't fall for it. God marked a lane for you to run in and you are just right for it. No one else has the same personality, gifts, passions and abilities as you. You are the only one who can deploy those in your home and in your workplace. So don't let comparison diminish your value.

## CRUSHING COMPARISON

If you've ever wondered, Am I doing a good job? (at work or at home), you aren't alone. Hopefully our discussion has reinforced the fact you aren't alone! We really can win at work and at home, but mom guilt makes it feel like we aren't winning. So what's the solution? Here's something important to remember: confidence crushes comparison. If we are confident in who we are, why we work, the benefits of our work and in our unique strengths as mothers, there's little room left for comparison.

Have you ever considered the role of confidence in crushing comparison? In your own understanding and experience, describe how you think confidence creates less space for comparison.

How do we bolster our confidence and crush comparison? There are many ways, but we are going to focus on four practical strategies:



1. Being confident in the benefits of our work.
2. Leveraging our unique supermom strengths.
3. Cultivating meaningful friendship and community.
4. Cheering others on.

It will take some time to unpack each of these strategies to crush comparison. We'll spend the rest of this discussion focusing on the first one and the next few sessions addressing the others.



## RECOGNIZING THE BENEFITS OF YOUR WORK

The first strategy for bolstering our confidence and crushing comparison is this: being confident in the benefits of our work.

As we discussed in our first session, our types of work, and even the reasons we work, may differ from one another, but we share some important common ground: **we carry responsibility for our family, and we carry responsibility outside of our family – our jobs.**

### **Work is one part of our multifaceted lives.**

Many working mothers cite the time and attention they give to their work as a source of mom guilt. Recognizing and remembering the benefits of our work can help us stay focused on the truth when mom guilt or comparison knocks on the doors of our hearts. Additionally, as a bonus, remembering the benefits of our work can help us reframe and find purpose on the days work just feels like work, regardless if we are fighting mom guilt or comparison.

Not only is your work honorable (as discussed in Session 1), but there are real benefits and value to your work! To effectively crush comparison, we should be able to clearly articulate those benefits. By the end of this session, you should be able to do exactly that!

*Read through the Work Benefits Activity out loud, pausing as needed so participants can complete the activity in their workbooks as you go. They will likely need to revisit the workbook pages from Session 1 to find their “why.”*

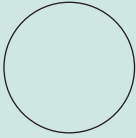
Keep in mind: your work benefits may be connected to your “why,” or it may not be. This exercise should help us start envisioning a bigger picture.

Being confident in the benefits of our work is our first strategy for crushing comparison. So let's take time to unpack this a bit:

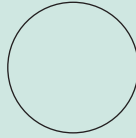
## WORK BENEFITS ACTIVITY

Restate your “why” from Session 1:

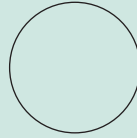
What benefits does your work provide? Fill in all circles that apply, and even add to the list if you feel inspired to do so!



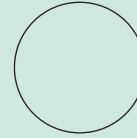
**Creative  
Expression**



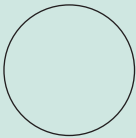
**Mental  
Challenge**



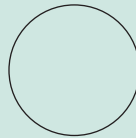
**Opportunity to  
Gain New Skills  
or Knowledge**



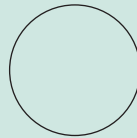
**Make a  
Difference**



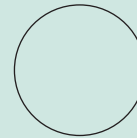
**Financial  
Provision**



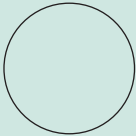
**Deploy Gifts  
& Talents**



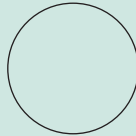
**Cultivate  
Friendships**



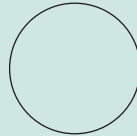
**Model Value of  
Work for my  
Children**



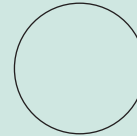
**Physical  
Activity**



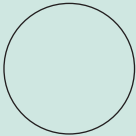
**Sense of  
Accomplishments**



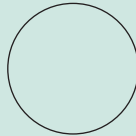
**Sense of  
Belonging**



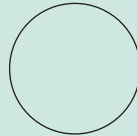
**Use of Education  
& Experience**



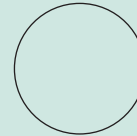
**Sense of  
Purpose**



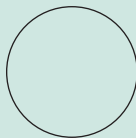
**Learn from  
Others**



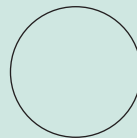
**Help Others  
Succeed**



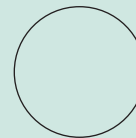
**Self  
Expression**



**Service to  
Others**



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**+ When you look at an actual list of the collective benefits of your work, how does it make you feel?**

**+ Imagine you had 30 seconds in an elevator to boldly and confidently explain why you work (at the top of the worksheet) and the benefits of your work (a few of the items you selected on the worksheet).**

**What would you say?** *(Invite a few from your group to share their “elevator pitch.”)*

**+ How could reminding yourself of these work benefits help you combat mom guilt that creeps in over the amount of time and attention work is receiving?**

**+ For some of us, work really is receiving too much of our time and attention in this season, regardless of the benefits it provides. How can we still reap these benefits while increasing the boundaries around our work?** *(We will address this more in a future session.)*

## **YOUR GOOD WORK**

*Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. This week, we are going to focus on building awareness regarding the benefits of our work by recording a benefit we experience each day. Each day, review your selections from the Work Benefits Activity and note which you experienced, then make a few notes regarding how you experienced that specific benefit. A few examples are provided.*

*As you conclude your session, ask each person to share their one key takeaway from your discussion.*

*Pray together and remind your group when you’ll have the next meetup.*

# YOUR GOOD WORK

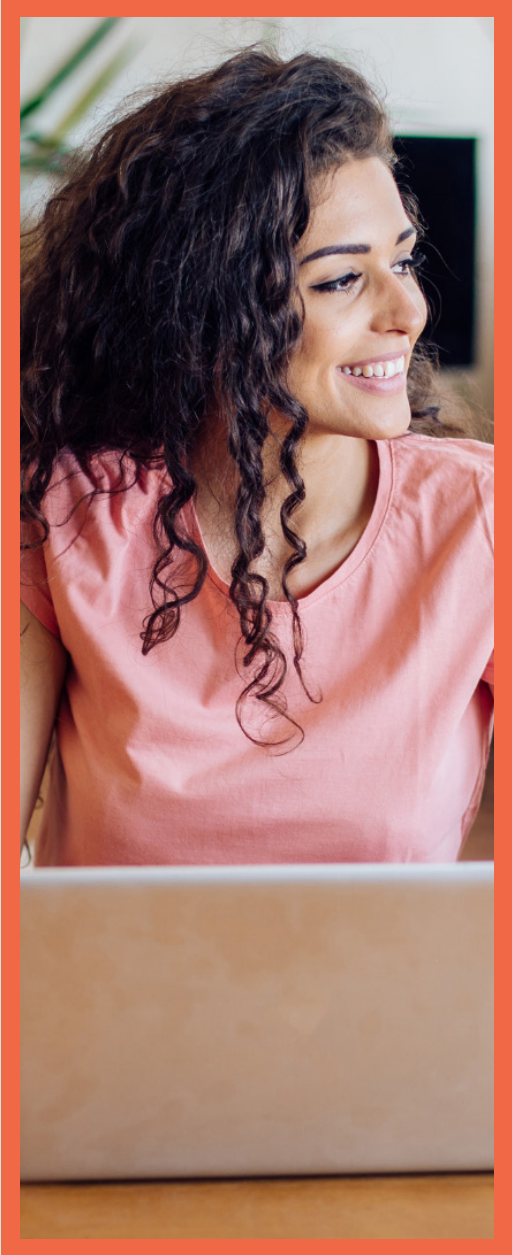
## WORK BENEFITS JOURNAL

	WORK BENEFIT	NOTES
	<i>Opportunity to gain new skills or knowledge</i>	<i>I spent four hours learning our new CRM.</i>
	<i>Financial provision</i>	<i>I was able to take my child to the doctor today and had funds to pay for the visit.</i>
DAY 1		
DAY 2		
DAY 3		
DAY 4		
DAY 5		

### **SESSION 3 SOURCES**

1. Sumera Rizwan, "Can Mom Guilt Ever be Scraped," September 2, 2020, <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/can-mom-guilt-ever-be-scraped-ba223b782430>.
2. Laura Smith Brody, "Why Mom Guilt is the Biggest Lie of All," March 5, 2021, <https://www.todayparent.com/family/parenting/why-mom-guilt-is-the-biggest-lie-of-all/>.





# SESSION 4

## What Are Your Supermom Strengths?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Should We Ignore Our Weaknesses?
- + Benefits of Knowing Your Strengths
- + Your Supermom Strengths
- + Leveraging Your Supermom Strengths
- + Your Good Work



# SESSION 4

## What Are Your Supermom Strengths?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 4!*

As a mom, you've probably watched your fair share of superhero movies or television shows, or maybe you've even dressed up like one. Check out this definition of a superhero:

*“A fictional hero having extraordinary or superhuman powers; also an exceptionally skillful or successful person.”<sup>1</sup>*

While no one can fly like Superman or infinitely bend and stretch like Elastigirl, as a mom, you certainly have your own set of superpowers. Have you ever stopped to determine what your supermom strengths are? That's where we are turning our conversation next, but before we do, let's consider the supermom strengths of other moms we know.

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the questions below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.) Then lead the group in prayer before transitioning into the main content.*

---

*The comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.*

---

Think of one awesome mother you know (could be your own mother, a friend, a mentor, etc.) then share your responses to these prompts:

- + Who is the mother you have in mind? (Who is she and how do you know her?)**
- + What is ONE of her supermom strengths?**
- + How does this supermom strength contribute to making her a great mom?**

I'd like to point out a few observations and then ask a question:

- + We likely could have shared *many* more strengths of the mother we selected. It might have even been difficult for some of you to narrow it down to one!
- + This didn't seem like a difficult exercise for us to do. It actually seemed easy to identify the unique strengths in others, didn't it?
- + Do you feel it's easier to easily identify strengths in others than it is to identify strengths in ourselves? Why or why not? *Invite a few responses from your group.*

Last session, we discussed two important realities regarding working-mom guilt: 1) it's unfortunately one of the most significant commonalities among mothers, and 2) it originates in the comparison trap.

*Ask someone from your group to restate the definition of the comparison trap (they may need to look back in their notes from last session).*

**The comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.**

Remember: **confidence crushes comparison.** If we are confident in who we are, why we work, the benefits of our work and in our unique strengths as mothers, there's little room left for comparison. There are many ways to strengthen our confidence and crush comparison, but we are going to focus on four practical strategies:

1. Being confident in the benefits of our work (this is what we focused on last session).
2. Leveraging our unique supermom strengths (where our attention will be in this session).
3. Cultivating meaningful friendship and community (the final two strategies will be covered next session).
4. Cheering others on.

Before we dive in to leveraging our unique supermom strengths, let's touch base on Your Good Work from last time!

Last session, we completed the Work Benefits Activity and you recorded some of work benefits you experienced throughout your week. Ask for a handful of volunteers to share a few of their journal entries and then invite responses to the following questions:

- + What caught you by surprise?
- + How did this exercise impact you?

*Pray for your group, especially for God to reveal the value and beauty in the unique strengths he has placed in each person.*

**SHOULD WE IGNORE OUR WEAKNESSES?**

It's almost impossible to have a conversation about our strengths without feeling the need to address our weaknesses. Should we ignore our weaknesses in favor of embracing our strengths? No, not at all. In some cases, our weaknesses need to be developed because they keep us from being the mother we want to be, or, in other cases, those weaknesses may be harmful to us or others. These are **High-Impact Weaknesses**. For example, if we possess the weakness of a short temper, it's worth addressing so we can demonstrate patience and cultivate peace in our homes. If one of our weaknesses is a phone or technology addiction, it's worth addressing so we can be

present with the people we love most by giving them our full attention. Some High-Impact Weaknesses are best addressed with the help of outside resources, like a therapist, friend, extra accountability or a support group. Pursuing outside support and resources to address these weaknesses is a worthy investment and brave act of love.

Some weaknesses are worth developing simply because it will make life easier, less stressful or simply better if we do. These are **Inconvenient Weaknesses**. If keeping up with laundry or cooking meals are weaknesses for you, developing a new system that works for your

family or getting some outside help might make life easier for everyone.

In other cases, we might assume we possess a weakness due to the comparison trap. These are **Perceived Weaknesses**. For example,

you might compare your more homemade-birthday-party-throwing ability with a mom whose parties are picture-perfect and assume party throwing is a weakness of yours. If a perceived weakness is rooted in the comparison trap, we should let it go.

## BENEFITS OF KNOWING YOUR STRENGTHS

For most moms, it's easier to focus on what we need to improve or to ruminate on our mistakes than it is to confidently acknowledge and embrace our strengths. Because we don't want to be boastful or arrogant, we might be hesitant to openly acknowledge and embrace our strengths. There's a significant difference between arrogance and being confident in your strengths.

Before we identify our unique supermom strengths, let's brainstorm the benefits of knowing our strengths. (In other words, let's make sure we understand why knowing our strengths is important).

*Brainstorm with your group before sharing the benefits listed below.*

- + Builds confidence.
- + Can help crush comparison.
- + Develops appreciation of traits you previously undervalued.
- + Becomes a springboard to build, grow and develop new skills

*Benefits of knowing our strengths:*

## YOUR SUPERMOM STRENGTHS

*Review the Supermom Strengths Activity from the workbook with your group. Once you've read all of the instructions aloud, remind your group this is about identifying strengths. No one will check every item on this list – we are only looking to check five to seven strengths (you could likely check many more). Answers will vary, and that's a beautiful thing because we are all unique. The unchecked items are not a new list of to-dos or weaknesses to develop. Please don't let this activity become something it's not! This is about identifying your unique supermom strengths.*

*Please emphasize not overthinking this and encourage your group to work quickly. Everyone should finish in less than five minutes.*

### **Discuss the following with your group:**

- + How does it *feel* to see three of your top mom strengths actually written down in front of you?
- + Ask everyone to share the top strength and definition they listed first.
- + Why is it so important to be able to articulate our strengths? How can this help us combat mom guilt and the comparison trap?

# SUPERMOM STRENGTHS ACTIVITY

*Checkmark five to seven strengths that are most true for you. Keep in mind, you likely could check far more than five to seven! But as you read through the list, really look for the characteristics you feel most contribute to your unique combination of mom strengths. From the five to seven that you checked, write down your top three. Narrowing it down to three doesn't diminish the value of the many others that are true. We simply want you to be able to succinctly name three strengths that are most true for you as a mother in this season.*

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b> We set goals together, then I coach my children toward success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>AFFECTIONATE</b> I lavish my children with snuggles, hugs and kisses and enjoy when they take my hand while walking somewhere.
<b>AUTHORITATIVE</b> I set boundaries for my kids even if they don't understand their need for them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CALM</b> I try to be the calmest person in the room because when they are upset or worried, they need someone with a clear head to talk them through it.
<b>CREATIVE</b> I make simple things extra special through using my creative insight and abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>EMPATHY</b> I teach my children about the diversity of thoughts, feelings and emotions others have while encouraging them to put themselves in someone else's shoes.
<b>ENCOURAGER</b> I speak and/or write out words of blessing and encouragement so my children know how much they are valued.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FAITH-FOCUSED</b> I love talking to my kids about Jesus and God's Word.
<b>FAIR</b> I make decisions that are just and equitable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FLEXIBLE</b> When the unexpected happens, I embrace the pivot.
<b>FOLLOW-THROUGH</b> I keep the commitments I make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FORGIVENESS</b> I extend forgiveness easily and do not hang wrongdoings over my children's heads.
<b>FUN</b> Instead of being too "adult" all the time, I create fun and laugh hard with my kids at silly things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>GRACE</b> While holding them accountable, I give my children grace when they mess up. I also ask for grace when I make a mistake so they understand grace is given and received.
<b>GUIDE</b> I teach my children about the world around them, what there is to do in life, how to go about it, how to interact with people and what to steer clear of.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HELPFUL</b> I give assistance to my children when need it and help them look for opportunities to be helpful to others.
<b>INTENTIONAL IN ACTIVITIES</b> I prioritize activities based on goals that align with our values and our beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HUMBLE</b> I'm willing to own and admit my mistakes.
<b>KINDNESS</b> I treat my child with the same kindness I display toward my friends, and I model giving kindness to others, reminding them to do the same often.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>INTENTIONAL IN RELATIONSHIPS</b> I help my children pursue friendships with those who share common faith and values, teaching them how to prioritize those values in relationships.
<b>LOYAL</b> I'm with my kids and for my kids for the long haul.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>LISTENER</b> I create space for my children to open up and talk because really listening helps me know where they are spiritually, mentally and emotionally.
<b>ORDERLY</b> I ensure everything has a place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NURTURING</b> I strive to be a source of comfort and a soft place to land.
<b>PRINCIPLED</b> I'm unapologetically firm in my convictions and values, even when other parents may be making different decisions for their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PLAYFUL</b> I play with my children and enjoy giving them the quality time they crave.
<b>POSITIVE</b> I'm a glass-is-half-full kind of person, and my children feel my positive perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PRODUCTIVE</b> I get things accomplished and model the value of time and responsibilities for my children.
<b>RESOURCEFUL</b> I'm great at finding solutions even if resources are thin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>RESILIENT</b> I'm able to bounce back and learn from the blows life hurls at us.
<b>SUPPORTIVE</b> I encourage and show interest in my child's passions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SACRIFICIAL</b> I joyfully set aside my own convenience and preferences for my children.
<hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>UNCONDITIONAL LOVE</b> I know my child will make mistakes, and I ensure they know I will always love and support them.
<hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*Write your top three strengths and their definitions:*



## LEVERAGING YOUR SUPERMOM STRENGTHS

Being a “good” mom is a vague ambition that’s difficult to achieve. In fact, setting a goal of being a good mom without further definition and clarification walks us right to the edge of the comparison trap. If we lack clarity, we will be tempted to look at our perceptions of everyone else’s versions of being a “good mom” and assume we need to emulate them. However, we are unique as mothers, and the needs of our children and the dynamics of our families are unique too.

Mothering is important work, and it’s work given to us by God. Determining how best to leverage our strengths in this season of mothering can add definition and clarity around doing this work well. Leveraging our unique strengths starts with identifying them and being able to succinctly name them, which is why we narrowed our list to a top three.

Open your workbooks to the Strengths Action Plan Activity and rewrite your top three strengths in the left-hand column. Allow time for everyone to complete this before you press on.

As you consider the season your children are in, let’s identify specific ways you can leverage the strengths you just identified. We are looking for simple, actionable items, not vague ideas.

*Review the examples together. Strategies go in the right-hand column. There’s a place for “Current Strategies” (things you are already/ currently doing to leverage this strength), and for “Potential Strategies” (new things you could start doing). Participants may not write something by both “Current Strategies” and “Potential Strategies.” That’s Okay!*

*Give everyone two minutes (set a timer) to brainstorm strategies for their strengths. They may not finish, but they should go as far as they can. The key is to not overthink it!*

*Encourage participants to finish on their own time if needed. If anyone got stuck and couldn’t think of anything, ask the group to chime in to help.*

### **Spend 5 to 10 minutes debriefing with your group by discussing the following:**

- + What is one strength are you currently leveraging and how? (It’s important to celebrate what we are already doing instead of only focusing on what we need to start doing!)
- + What’s one potential strategy you’d like mobilize this week, and what strength would it be leveraging?

# STRENGTHS ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY

STRENGTHS	STRATEGIES
<i>Supportive: I encourage and show interest in my child's passions.</i>	<p><i>Current Strategy: I take her to dance and watch her classes so she knows I'm interested. She loves cooking so I ask her to help me make dinner.</i></p> <p><i>Potential Strategy: Learn to play a video game she enjoys.</i></p>
<i>Positive: I'm a glass-is-half-full kind of person, and others feel my positive perspective.</i>	<p><i>Current Strategy: I remind my children to "shine bright" before they get out of the car at school every morning.</i></p> <p><i>Potential Strategy: Leave encouraging notes in my son's lunchbox at least once a week.</i></p>
1.	<p>Current Strategy:</p> <p>Potential Strategy:</p>
2.	<p>Current Strategy:</p> <p>Potential Strategy:</p>
3.	<p>Current Strategy:</p> <p>Potential Strategy:</p>



I want to remind you: your work matters, and this includes your work of mothering. The work of mothering has a cumulative impact over our children's lifetimes, and it matters a great deal! When we look at the work we do as mothers, and specifically the strategies to leverage the strengths we just discussed, it matters!

## **YOUR GOOD WORK**

*Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. This week, Your Good Work has a 3-2-1 emphasis:*

**3: Post your top three strengths that you identified during the Supermom Strength Activity in three places you'll see them regularly.** You can use a Post-it Note, an index card or whatever means you prefer.

**2: Have two intentional conversations about the discussions we shared in this session.** You might want to get feedback from your family regarding your strengths: do they agree with your top three? Would they have put another one from the list on your top three? You might want to share some of the questions and insights we discussed with another mom over coffee.

**1: Put one of your Potential Strategies into practice.** Look back at your Strengths Action Plan and choose one strength and one of the ideas you listed as a potential strategy to put into practice.

*As you conclude your session, ask each person to share their one key takeaway from your discussion.*

*Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.*

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## 3-2-1 JOURNAL

**Post your top three strengths that you identified during the Supermom Strength Activity in three places you'll see them regularly.** You can use a Post-it Note, an index card or whatever means you prefer.

3

*Where did you post your strengths?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TWO: Have two intentional conversations about the discussions we shared in this session.**

You might want to get feedback from your family regarding your strengths: do they agree with your top three? Would they have put another one from the list on your top three? You might want to share some of the questions and insights we discussed with another mom over coffee.

2

*Conversation #1 - Who:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Conversation #1 - Key Takeaways:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Conversation #2 - Who:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Conversation #2 - Key Takeaways:* \_\_\_\_\_

**ONE: Put one of your Potential Strategies into practice.** Look back at your Strengths Action Plan and choose one strength and one of the ideas you listed as a potential strategy to put into practice.

*Which strength did you leverage?* \_\_\_\_\_

1

*What was your strategy?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Any thoughts or insights on how it went or how you felt about trying something new to leverage this strength?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



#### **SESSION 4 SOURCES**

1. Merriam-Webster, "superhero," accessed March 27, 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/superhero>



# SESSION 5

## Are You Cultivating Community?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Friendship and Community
- + Making Time for Friendship
- + Celebration vs. Comparison
- + Your Good Work

# SESSION 5

## Are You Cultivating Community?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 5!*

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Call out the “Would You Rather” prompts below. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.) For in-person groups, you can assign “stand up” to the first option and “sit down” for the second option. For Zoom groups, you can assign “one” to the first option and “two” for the second option, asking participants to hold up the appropriate finger for their preferred answer. Whether in person or virtually, stop to invite comments or explanations along the way. Then lead the group in prayer before transitioning into the main content.*

**When it comes to spending time with a friend, would you rather:**

- + Grab a pedicure or head to the mall?
- + Have coffee or lunch?
- + Be outside or inside?
- + Travel or stay close to home?
- + Watch a rom com or sci-fi movie?
- + Wear hair up or hair down?
- + Dress up or dress down?
- + Wear heels or flats?
- + Go to the mountains or beach?

We’ve spent our last few sessions discussing strategies to crush comparison!

*Ask someone from your group to restate the definition of the comparison trap (they may need to look back in their notes from last session).*

**The comparison trap is the habit of measuring your life against others to determine your own level of success or failure.**

Remember: **confidence crushes comparison.** If we are confident in who we are, why we work, the benefits of our work and in our unique strengths as mothers, there’s little room left for comparison. There are many ways to strengthen our confidence and crush comparison, but we are going to focus on four practical strategies:

- 1. Being confident in the benefits of our work.**
- 2. Leveraging our unique supermom strengths (this is what we focused on last session).**
- 3. Cultivating meaningful friendship and community.**
- 4. Cheering others on.**

Before we unpack the third and fourth strategies by asking, “Are you cultivating community?” let’s touch base on Your Good Work from last time! Your Good Work had a 3-2-1 emphasis:

**3: Post your top three strengths that you identified during the Supermom Strength Activity in three places you’ll see them regularly.**

**2: Have two intentional conversations about the discussions we shared in this session.**

**1: Put one of your Potential Strategies into practice.**

Ask for a handful of volunteers to share a few of their journal entries and then invite responses to the following questions:

- + What caught you by surprise?
- + How did this exercise impact you?

Pray for your session, for the time you will share with your group, and ask God to open your hearts to the importance of cultivating community.

---

*God designed  
us for  
relationship  
with him and  
with others.*

---

## FRIENDSHIP AND COMMUNITY

The third strategy for strengthening our confidence and crushing comparison is cultivating meaningful friendship and community.

God designed us for relationship – with him and with others. We not only need an active, alive relationship with him, we need other women. Part of lifting the burden of mom guilt and overcoming the comparison trap is being consistently connected to community where we cheer one another on, speak truth when it's needed and provide perspective and help we can't obtain on our own. We need each other!

+ **Friends make us brave.** They help us see and believe we have potential we wouldn't recognize on our own.

+ **Friends give perspective.** When we share our lives, we are reminded that others experience similar joys and challenges. We learn from one another, and their experiences sharpen us.

+ **Friends show up.** Whether it's to pick up a kid from school when we are running late, to deliver a latte when we are home sick, to show up with cupcakes or balloons to mark a celebration or milestone or even with a box of tissues when we are neck-deep in grief.

*Briefly discuss the following with your group.*

- + How did you rate the category of friendship on the first session's Life Inventory? (*Participants may need to look back in their workbook.*)
- + Do you have the friendship and community you desire? Or is this an unmet need in your life?

## THE LONELINESS CRISIS

Being connected is not the same as experiencing connection. It's possible to be connected to many people but still experience loneliness due to lack of quality of relationships and the absence of vulnerability within those connections.

Read through the following information with your group. You can read the bullet points out loud or ask a volunteer to help. The purpose is to better understand the reality of loneliness.

+ 61% of Americans are lonely.<sup>1</sup>

+ Loneliness is considered a public health crisis by former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.<sup>2</sup>

+ People who are lonely have greater risk of heart disease, stroke and dementia.

- + Loneliness is often overlooked as it's commonly expressed as anger, irritability, frustration, depression or anxiety.
- + In January 2018, Britain announced the world's first ever "Minister for Loneliness."
- + In early 2021, Japan announced their appointment of a "Minister of Loneliness" in response to their increasing suicide rate.

**If you are lonely, you are not alone.**

*Ask your group for their thoughts and insights on this information: What stands out to you?*

How have technology and social media contributed to our loneliness?

The same spirit of independence, self-reliance and pursuit of success celebrated by our culture is the same spirit, if left unchecked, that can lead us down a path of loneliness. It's the same spirit of independence and self-reliance that leads us to prefer ordering from Amazon instead of borrowing from a neighbor; it's why we prefer learning via YouTube instead of asking for help.

**+ Why is it hard to "need" others?**

*Ask for a volunteer to read the passages below.*

**BACKGROUND**

God made us for community. Our need for relationships – with Him and with others – is part of His masterful design. Scripture speaks to the great value of friendship in many ways; these are just a few examples. As you read/hear these passages, consider how you would put the main idea into your own words.

**PROVERBS 27:17 (NIV)**

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

**PROVERBS 13:20 (NIV)**

*Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.*



*The same spirit of independence, self-reliance and pursuit of success celebrated by our culture is the same spirit, if left unchecked, that can lead us down a path of loneliness.*

## PROVERBS 27:9 (TPT)

*Sweet friendships refresh the soul and awaken our hearts with joy, for good friends are like the anointing oil that yields the fragrant incense of God's presence.*

After each verse, ask for brief reflections and insights on what these verses tell us about the value of good friends.

### Where to Find Friendship

As we've mentioned already, healthy friendships with other women are a necessity for our lives, not a luxury, and cultivating them requires one-on-one connection. Two of the greatest questions working moms face regarding friendship are: 1) Where do I find them? and 2) How do I make time? We're going to talk through both questions.

+ Which one of these questions resonates most with you and why?

It's tempting to focus your friendship search on finding a BFF, but the best starting place is casting a wide net to cultivate connections you already have. In other words, start by prioritizing the people already in front of you. As you lean in to those potential relationships, you will build your village in meaningful ways. Over time, you'll likely identify a few friends within that village who have great BFF potential.

**Who is right in front of you?** Review this list of common places of connection with your group. Ask them to put a checkmark by any that apply to their daily lives.

<input type="radio"/> WORK	<input type="radio"/> NEIGHBORHOOD	<input type="radio"/> OTHER PARENTS IN YOUR KIDS' CIRCLE OF FRIENDS
<input type="radio"/> CHURCH	<input type="radio"/> PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="radio"/> SMALL GROUP
<input type="radio"/> MOMCO	<input type="radio"/> REGULARS AT YOUR FAVORITE COFFEE SHOP	<input type="radio"/> OTHER _____

+ Have you missed prioritizing the people already in front of you? If so, why?

Ask your group to write down a list of three to five names of people from these places they would like to connect with or invest in.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## MAKING TIME FOR FRIENDSHIP

Before we discuss making time for friendship, let's consider this important question: How do your children benefit from experiencing friendship? Allow a few people to respond.

The same benefits are true for you!

Working moms often sacrifice community because they feel guilty spending more time away from their families. Remember: our families benefit from our investment in meaningful community. We come home refreshed, refueled, encouraged and inspired. Therefore, we have more emotional capacity to invest in our families, not less. Plus, it's an opportunity to model healthy, meaningful friendship for our children.

As working moms, let's brainstorm a list of hurdles that potentially keep us from cultivating meaningful friendships and community.

Instructions: You'll find space for your list in your workbook on the left side of the chart. We are going for three to eight hurdles.<sup>3</sup> Each time a new hurdle is named, give a thumbs-up if it applies to you. We'll put a star for each person who identifies with that hurdle. Once we are done brainstorming, the stars will indicate our top hurdles.

*Take a few minutes to brainstorm, then identify the top one or two hurdles experienced by your group. Ask everyone to circle those on their lists. Use the righthand side of the chart to brainstorm strategies to overcome these. If your group struggles to get started brainstorming, use the examples listed below (only shown in the leader guide) to get the group started.*

**ZOOM TIP** *Create a similar chart on the Zoom whiteboard feature in advance. Do the activity there so everyone can see the answers, which makes recording them in their workbooks easier.*

Facilitator Notes	HURDLE	STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME
	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p>****I don't have time.</p> <p>***I don't know many people.</p> <p>*I can't afford to go out.</p> <p>My home isn't attractive.</p> <p>*I'm shy.</p> <p>I feel guilty being away from my family.</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p><b>I don't have time:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Leverage a lunch break.</li> <li>+ Save one Saturday morning a month for a friend meet-up.</li> <li>+ Invite a friend to join your walk.</li> <li>+ Talk to a friend on the phone during your commute (set an alarm to remind you!).</li> </ul> <p><b>I don't know many people:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Join a MomCo meetup.</li> <li>+ Join a Bible study.</li> <li>+ Start a book club.</li> <li>+ Chat with another mom at one of your kids' extracurriculars.</li> </ul>



*Note: If women in your group indicated they are lacking meaningful friendships and community, you may want to remind them friendships aren't always built quickly or easily. Persistent effort is required on our part. We initiate, initiate again and keep initiating.*

## CELEBRATION VS. COMPARISON

The fourth strategy for strengthening our confidence and crushing comparison builds on cultivating meaningful friendship and community: cheering others on.

As strong, capable, faith-filled women, what if we replaced comparison with celebration? Instead of wishing for someone else's gifts, success or abilities, let's celebrate who they are and how God made them.

**+ How could measuring our lives against others (i.e., the comparison trap) keep us from cultivating meaningful friendship and community?**

Instead of measuring our lives against others to determine our own level of success or failure, let's make cheering others on a priority. Not only our friends and family, but our coworkers, our bosses, our neighbors, acquaintances at church and even women we follow online. There's opportunity to cheer others on in our inner circle of close relationships, but also in our outer circle of acquaintances and people we simply encounter in our daily lives (i.e., the person at the grocery store checkout, the waitress who delivers your lunch, etc.).

Celebrating others doesn't have to involve balloons or parties. Cheering others on doesn't

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*Celebration is its own special superpower. It's hard to keep comparing when your cheering keeps getting louder!*

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*Instead of wishing for someone else's gifts, success or abilities, let's celebrate who they are and how God made them.*

---

require pompoms or clever chants. It simply requires expressing your encouragement, appreciation, support and wishes for someone's success. It's a perspective that starts in our hearts but makes its way through our mouths into spoken words and through our fingers into text messages, comments, DMs and emails.

Celebrating others moves our perspective from being inward focused to outward focused. While it certainly has an outward impact, a byproduct of celebrating others is bolstering confidence within us. We become change agents and voices of encouragement. We become celebrators.

Celebration is its own special superpower. It's hard to keep comparing when your cheering keeps getting louder!

### Discussion questions:

- + Who has cheered you on in your life, and what has that meant to you?**
- + How do you think a perspective of celebration could crowd out comparison?**
- + Who is someone in your day-to-day life you could cheer on?**
- + How does celebrating others build our confidence?**



## YOUR GOOD WORK

*Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. The theme this week is Connecting and Celebrating!*

1. Inside the Connecting section, choose one name from the list of three to five people you wrote in your workbook that you'd like to connect with or invest in. Set up a time to get together this week for coffee, a meal, a walk, etc. If your calendars don't align this week, set a time for the near future.
2. As you go throughout your week, choose other moms and women to celebrate! Express your encouragement, appreciation, support and wishes for someone's success via text, email, handwritten note or through conversation. Record who you celebrated in the Celebrating section, and make a note of what you celebrated them for.

*As you conclude your session, ask each person to share their one key takeaway from your discussion.*

*Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.*

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## CONNECTING AND CELEBRATING



### CONNECTING

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place/Activity: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_



### CELEBRATING!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_

### SESSION 5 SOURCES

1. Cigna, "Loneliness and the Workplace," 2022. <https://www.cigna.com/static/www-cigna-com/docs/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combating-loneliness/cigna-2020-loneliness-factsheet.pdf>

2. Peterson, Andrea, "Are you Lonely? You're Not Alone." March 2, 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/are-you-lonely-youre-not-alone-11583174002>

3. Hurdle activity inspired by: Jessica Turner, "Stretched Too Thin: How Working Moms Can Lose the Guilt, Work Smarter, and Thrive" (Revell, 2018), 205.



# SESSION 6

## Is Work-Life Balance Possible?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Lydia's Story
- + The Balance Myth
- + Creating a Balanced Life
- + Your Good Work

# SESSION 6

## Is Work-Life Balance Possible?

### GET CONNECTED

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the question below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.)*

**+ What is one thing on your bucket list that you'd like to accomplish in the future?**

*(If you don't have a bucket list, simply share a fun dream or accomplishment you'd like to see realized.)*

Bucket lists are fun to dream about, but like so many other desires and goals, if we don't resource them with the right measure of time and attention, they simply won't come to fruition. We might not classify our bucket lists as urgent or super important for our present daily lives, but what about the things that are? How do we live our priorities? Our focus for this session is centered on the question, "Is work-life balance possible?" This conversation is for any woman who has felt overwhelmed or stretched thin by everything she has to do. It's for the working mom who is currently in a season of overwhelm – you will find practical insight to help move out of that season. It's for the working mom who is spinning all the plates, but just barely – you

will discover next steps toward relief. It's for the working mom who is in a great season of fresh air and balanced living – you will be introduced to tools and perspectives you'll need as your season changes because, after all, seasons do change. Before we dive in, let's touch base on Your Good Work from last time!

We ended the last session by discussing the importance of connecting and celebrating!

*Ask for a handful of volunteers to share who they connected with and who they celebrated with and then invite responses to the following questions:*

- + What observations do you have about this exercise?**
- + How did celebrating others impact your perspective?**
- + How do you think being celebrated impacted their perspective?**

*Lead the group in prayer before transitioning into the main content. Pray for the time your group will share in this session. Confess our tendency to live in overwhelm and ask God to provide wisdom as we purpose to live in alignment with our true priorities.*

### LYDIA'S STORY

There are many examples of strong, working women in the Bible. Today we will meet Lydia, whose story is mentioned in Acts 16.

#### BACKGROUND

*Lydia was originally from the city of Thyatira (modern-day Turkey), the hub of commercial trade and the epicenter of the textile industry.<sup>1</sup> When we meet Lydia, she has moved to Philippi, a thriving Roman colony in Greece. As a dealer in purple cloth (think luxury goods for the leading citizens of the day), she was a successful and independent businesswoman. In fact, she was wealthy enough to own her own home, a home large enough for her own family and potentially household and business employees, with enough room to host the Philippian church.<sup>2</sup>*

*It's unclear if Lydia was divorced or widowed, but some scholars assume she was a single mom.<sup>1</sup> Because there's no mention of a husband, and Lydia appears to be the leader of her household, which was unusual in any part of the Roman Empire, scholars assume she was not married when Paul and his companions met her.*

Ask a volunteer to read the passage below. Encourage your group to take note of what they learn about Lydia as a person and regarding her faith journey.

### **ACTS 16:11-15 (NIV)**

*11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.*

*13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

Ask for a few very brief observations from the group regarding who Lydia is and her faith journey.

### **Lydia's Life**

"If Lydia of Philippi, the amazing woman celebrated in Acts 16, had a LinkedIn profile, it might look something like this.

#### ***Lydia of Philippi***

*CEO of Luxury Textiles. Manufacturing luxury purple cloth and purple dye for the 1st century's elite. Philippi, Macedonia, Europe.*

#### **Experience**

- + Cofounder, host, and benefactor of the Philippian church and the first Christian in Europe
- + Exporter/importer of luxury trade goods
- + Manufacturing textiles

#### **Education**

- + Certificate of conversation and baptism through the apostle Paul

#### **Volunteer Experience**

- + Hosted weekly prayer meetings
- + Cofounded first Christian church in Europe

#### **Skills and Endorsements**

- + Effective church planter – the apostle Paul
- + Persuasive business leader – Timothy
- + Influential businesswoman”<sup>3</sup>

Like you and other supermoms you know, Lydia:

- + Balanced a thriving career with being a single mother.
- + Managed a busy household and business.
- + Rose above stereotypes and others' expectations.
- + Prioritized her faith.
- + Gathered regularly with others to pray and worship God.
- + Embraced her role as God's ambassador. (Note: Because she embraced her role as God's ambassador, her entire household came to faith and the Gospel was established in Philippi for the first time.)

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*Let's be bold  
women who know  
our priorities and  
unapologetically  
live them!*

---

*In what ways do you relate to Lydia's  
lifestyle and career?*

*What does it mean to you that Lydia's  
story is included in Scripture?*

Lydia's story is proof God uses working women in building the kingdom and to participate in his work. We don't know Lydia's day-to-day schedule or how she balanced her children's needs and the significant demands of her business while also helping to start a church, but she seems to have been a bold woman who knew her priorities and unapologetically lived them. Like Lydia, you can boldly identify your priorities and unapologetically live them while also creating a balanced life. Let's talk about *how*.

## THE BALANCE MYTH

### + What words or images come to mind when you hear the word **balance**?

*Examples might include: calm, equal, under control, enough time, margin, not overwhelmed.*

### + What comes to mind when you hear the term **work-life balance**?

*Examples might include: winning at home and at work, everyone feels tended to, boundaries.*

### + What are your own personal indicators when life is **not balanced**?

The word balance tends to present an idea of a calm equilibrium, but that is an illusion. Holding out a picture-perfect ideal as our desired outcome really ramps up the pressure while positioning us for disappointment. Just as building physical balance and endurance is difficult and uncomfortable (much like a challenging Pilates move), so is creating a balanced life. It stretches us, causes us to grow and even feels a bit like work, because it is. The tension will always exist because

our lives will never be stagnant. If you are using the gifts and talents God has given you, if you are actively engaged with your work and your family, your life will have plenty of meaningful activity.

We often think about balance as something we do. In fact, when talking about life balance, we often use stressful, anxiety-producing analogies like spinning plates, juggling balls and walking a tightrope. None of us wants to live that way, especially for a prolonged period of time.

Creating balance means confidently giving the right things the right amount of attention at the right time. Even if you are busy, you can live in a sense of balance you create by identifying what's right for this season and aligning your time and attention with those priorities.

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*Creating balance means  
confidently giving the right  
things the right amount of  
attention at the right time.*

---

## CREATING A BALANCED LIFE

Here is a simple framework for creating a balanced life:

1. **Acknowledge your season.**
2. **Determine your priorities.**
3. **Say yes to your priorities.**

For Your Good Work this week, you'll go through each of these categories and apply them to your life. For now, we are going to review the framework.

### Acknowledge Your Season

Not all life seasons are the same. Some seasons are a **double-down season**, where you are going all-in on big projects, big responsibilities or a lot of commitments at one time. Other seasons are a **scale-back season**, where you are simplifying and saying fewer big yeses.

Some seasons call for lots of margin, slow mornings and playtime, while others are more scheduled and focused on activity or productivity. Some seasons allow for a clean house and a clean kitchen, while others call for more mess so attention can be directed elsewhere.

Here are a few important insights to remember regarding life seasons (*fill in the blanks in your workbook*):

## LIFE SEASONS

- 01** A season is where you are, not who you are.  
*What happens when we get the two confused?*
- 02** Seasons have endings.  
*If the season you are in doesn't have an ending, it's a lifestyle, not a season.*
- 03** New seasons impact our priorities and our schedules.  
*Failing to embrace the change will pile on unnecessary pressure as we try to carry forward the rhythms, habits and expectations from the last season.*

### + What are a few examples of season changes warranting an update to our priorities?

*Examples: Going back to school while still working full-time might mean a messier house during the week and less margin for play and hobbies. The arrival of a new baby might call for an entrepreneur mother to scale back her 12-14-hour workdays. Caring for an elderly parent might mean less travel or temporarily setting aside a dream of starting something new. Other new season markers might include a sports season for your kids, health challenges resetting your exercise goals, starting a new Bible study with friends, etc.*

### + When have you experienced the burden of unnecessary pressure and unrealistic expectations because you moved into a new season carrying the habits and expectations of the previous one?



+ **Are there any changes in your life you need to acknowledge are impacting the season you are in? If so, what are they?** *(Just invite one or two responses as this question is repeated in the homework.)*

+ **How would you describe the season you are in – double-down or scale-back?**

### **Determine your priorities**

The word priority didn't always mean what it does today. Greg McKeown, in his best-selling book, "Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less," explains the history of the word and how its meaning has changed over time.

*The word priority came into the English language in the 1400s. It was singular. It meant the very first or prior thing. It stayed singular for the next five hundred years.*

*Only in the 1900s did we pluralize the term and start talking about priorities. Illogically, we reasoned that by changing the word we could bend reality. Somehow we would now be able to have multiple 'first' things.*

*People and companies routinely try to do just that. One leader told me of this experience in a company that talked of 'Pri-1, Pri-2, Pri-3, Pri-4, and Pri-5.' This gave the impression of many things being the priority but actually meant nothing was.*

Here are a few key reminders when it comes to determining your priorities *(fill in the blanks in your workbook)*:

+ **Having too many priorities is the same as having no priorities.**

*Too long of a list sets us up for unrealistic expectations and unnecessary pressure. The key question to ask yourself is "What matters most right now?"*

+ **My priorities are not stagnant and should be updated often.**

*Because our lives are in constant motion, our priorities change. We can't "set it and forget it" when it comes to our priorities.*

+ **Specific time frames are helpful for determining priorities.**

*Three factors make it difficult to live our priorities: 1) priorities that are vague or undefined, 2) too long of a list (i.e., too many priorities), 3) too big of a time frame. A lot of women start a new year with resolutions or goal setting by considering the year in its entirety (i.e., read 12 books, get in shape, have a consistent quiet time, spend more time with my children, etc.). While a great starting place, our minds have difficulty connecting to a time frame that big. When it comes to clarifying our priorities, it's better to shorten the time frame to one month, one week or even one day.*

+ Which of these three reminders resonate with you the most? *(Just invite two or three quick responses as this question is repeated in the homework.)*

+ How can you see shortening the time frame of our priorities to be beneficial?

Everyone has a list of baseline priorities that must occur. Things like food, shelter, paying bills, schooling your children, etc. In addition to that, we choose where we will give priority attention and resources too. It can be helpful to brainstorm your priorities in three categories:

**1. Baseline Priorities** *(see description above).*

**2. Chosen Priorities** *(the things I'm choosing to prioritize right now).*

**3. Potential Priorities** *(the things I hope to prioritize when there's time and space).*

A quick note regarding Potential Priorities: our priority lists often end up too long because we don't have a landing place for things we hope to get to, so we try to fit it all in now. This category can serve as a landing place for things that are important but don't fit right now.

Once you have your Chosen Priorities and Potential Priorities lists, you can add to them at any time, remove from them at any time and you can even trade priorities between them at any time. Remember, your priority list is dynamic and changing. You get to decide.

**Say yes to your priorities (and no to things that aren't priorities).**

+ What does it look like to say yes to our priorities?

Saying yes to our priorities requires us to *(fill in blanks in your workbook)*:

+ **Resource** priorities with time and attention.

True priorities are resourced with time and attention. What is important gets scheduled, and what gets scheduled gets done. A great reality check is to review your list of priorities and then review your calendar. If your priorities aren't reflected on your calendar, they probably aren't priorities.

+ Say **no** to opportunities that compromise your priority list.

By saying no to some things, you are actually saying yes to your priorities. Saying your best yes isn't always easy. There's an important element of discipline and dependence on God here. Saying no is difficult at times, especially when the opportunities in question are good. Part of our struggle is knowing how to actually say no. In case you need some fresh ways to say no, you'll find suggestions in your workbook.

+ Which one of these areas do you need to put into practice right now?

## YOUR GOOD WORK

*Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. This week, you'll walk through our simple framework for determining your priorities. You can do it all in one sitting, or you can do a little each day. There are three sections with reflection exercises. Please don't rush this process. Dedicate some time (maybe in your favorite chair or your favorite coffee shop) to really think through the questions. Review each section from the workbook with your group.*

*As you conclude your session, ask each person to share their one key takeaway from your discussion.*

*Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.*

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## CREATING A BALANCED LIFE

### 1. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SEASON

#### Insights Regarding Seasons

- + A season is where you are, not who you are.
- + Seasons have endings.
- + New seasons impact our priorities and our schedules.

*Which one of the above insights resonate most with you and why?* \_\_\_\_\_

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Some seasons are a **double-down season** where you are going all-in on big projects, big responsibilities, or a lot of commitments at one time. Other seasons are a **scale-back season** where you are simplifying and saying fewer big yeses.

☐ **DOUBLE-DOWN**

☐ **SCALE-BACK**

*Which season are you currently in?*

*How do you feel about the season you are in?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Are there any changes in your life you need to acknowledge are impacting the season you are in? If so, what are they?*

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## 2. DETERMINE YOUR PRIORITIES.

### Insights Regarding Priorities

- + Having too many priorities is the same as having no priorities.
- + My priorities are not stagnant and should be updated often.
- + Specific time frames are helpful for determining priorities.

Which one of these three reminders resonate with you the most and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>BASELINE PRIORITIES</b> <i>Your basic nonnegotiables (i.e., food, shelter, educating your children).</i>	<b>CHOSEN PRIORITIES</b> <i>The three to five priorities you are choosing right now.</i>	<b>POTENTIAL PRIORITIES</b> <i>Things I hope to prioritize when there's time and space.</i>
	<p>My time frame for this priority list:</p> <div data-bbox="654 1161 963 1234"> <input type="radio"/> <b>THIS WEEK</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>30 DAYS</b>  <input type="radio"/> <b>60 DAYS</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>90 DAYS</b> </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

### 3. SAY YES TO YOUR PRIORITIES

#### Saying yes to our priorities requires us to:

- + Resource priorities with time and attention.
- + Say no to opportunities that compromise our priority list.

Take a look at your list of Chosen Priorities from the previous section. Then review your calendar (or planner). Make some notes regarding your observations as you consider these questions:

- + Are my priorities reflected in my calendar?
- + Am I willing to create space to resource my priorities with time and attention? Why or why not?
- + What would it take to resource my priorities with the time and attention they need? What changes do I need to make?
- + What do I need to say no to right now so I can say yes to my priorities?

Notes and Thoughts

#### Suggestions for Saying No

- + This sounds like a great idea (or opportunity)! Unfortunately, my schedule is maxed out at the moment so I'm going to have to pass this time.
- + This would normally be an easy yes for me, but right now I'm overcommitted and couldn't do this opportunity justice. Thank you for thinking of me though!
- + That sounds fun! Unfortunately, I'm keeping that night open for our family to be together at home. I hope you have a blast!
- + Volunteering is important to our family, and I love that you thought of me! Right now, we've already committed to volunteer for XYZ organization, and I don't think we can add anything else right now.
- + I'm excited for your trip/move/project, but that day doesn't work on my end. Hopefully next time!

*Is saying no difficult for you?  
Why or why not?*

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*What current commitments do you wish you would have said no to?*

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*What noes might be required so you can say yes to your Chosen Priorities?*

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#### **SESSION 6 SOURCES**

1. Richard S. Ascough, "Lydia: Paul's Cosmopolitan Hostess" (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 2009), 17, 45.
2. Christian Origins, Current Faith, "Lydia of Thyatira," <https://www.cocfministry.com/lydia>
3. Kat Armstrong with Dr. Joy Dahl, "The Working Boldly Guide: How Christian Women Can Live & Work Boldly as Ambassadors of Christ," <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/26675-women-working-boldly-a-study-of-lydia-in-acts-16/day/1>.



# SESSION 7

## Do You Have Rhythms of Rest?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + We Are Busy and Tired
- + You are Created in the Image of a God Who Works and Rests
- + Warning Signs
- + Establishing Rhythms of Rest
- + Your Good Work



# SESSION 7

## Do You Have Rhythms of Rest?

### GET CONNECTED

Welcome to Session 7!

Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the question below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.)

**+ If you had a whole day off to rest and spend in ways that renewed your soul, what would you want to do most with the time?**

As we near our final session (note: next session will be the final session), I want to remind us of the theme we've heard throughout: **We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do!** Our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do. For many of us, our way is one of fatigue and exhaustion. It doesn't have to be that way. Our focus this session is centered on this critical question: "Do you have rhythms of rest?" Before we dive in, let's touch base on Your Good Work from last time!

You spent time working through our simple framework for creating a balanced life:

- 1. Acknowledge your season.**
- 2. Determine your priorities.**
- 3. Say yes to your priorities.**

+ Which of these three reflection exercises resonated the most with you? What were your aha moments?

+ Based on your notes and responses for each exercise, what's your most important next step to live your priorities more fully?

*Pray for your group, thanking God for the conversations you've shared so far throughout this Collective. Acknowledge that practicing rhythms of rest is countercultural and uncomfortable for many of us. Ask God to teach you about his perspective on rest.*

### WE ARE BUSY AND TIRED

*Read through the following information with your group. You can read the bullet points out loud or ask a volunteer to help. The purpose is to better understand our tendency toward overwork at the cost of rest.*

Recently, three "mom-led" companies and researchers from four universities released a study regarding working mothers.<sup>1</sup> Their findings included valuable insights and startling statistics:

**+ Lack of sufficient sleep leads to burnout problems with executive functioning, including sluggishness, impaired memory and even greater risks of high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.**

**+ Less than 25% of working moms get the recommended average night's sleep (seven to nine hours). 53% of working moms get fewer than six hours of sleep.**

**+ Due to busyness and exhaustion, one in four moms report they no longer have time to engage in "common self-care practices" like exercise, preparing/eating healthy foods, meditating and maintaining social connections.**

**+ Most feel it's almost impossible to keep their work and home lives separate.**

Other studies show overwork does not equal productivity:

- + Smart devices add more than 11 hours to the work week, especially outside of business hours.<sup>2</sup>
- + Nearly half of U.S. workers say they routinely work more than 50 hours.<sup>3</sup>
- + Overwork doesn't actually help our productivity levels.
- + Employee productivity falls sharply after a 50-hour work week, and takes a deep dive after 55 hours.
- + In one revealing study, managers could not tell the difference between those who actually worked 80 hours and those who just pretended to.<sup>4</sup>
- + It's not that we can't ever pull a long day or a long week to navigate a crisis or meet a deadline, we just can't do it routinely.

*Ask your group for their thoughts and insights on these statistics:*

- + What stands out to you?



*Overwork  
does not  
equal  
productivity.*

While the above information is specifically in the context of paid employment, it's important to keep in mind there are two categories of work: the work we get paid for (i.e., our jobs) and the work we don't get paid for (i.e., everyday life stuff – cleaning the house, running errands, washing dishes, taxiing etc.). The work we don't get paid for is often piled in our “margin” hours or on our day off – our supposed day of rest. It's no wonder we are tired!

Our culture celebrates overwork. Our stress and busyness have become a status symbol – we wear them like badges of honor. One of most common responses to, “How are you?” is a single-word answer: “Busy!” Even our end-of-year holiday letters bear evidence of overwork and overcommitment as we describe how busy we are – often “busier than ever!” Busyness has become a competition, and somehow long work hours and a lack of leisure time mean you are winning.

Work is like a river: it's a valuable resource that creates beauty and contributes to human flourishing when kept inside its boundaries, but it becomes a destructive force when it leaves its banks.

*Do you believe we have to choose between work and rest? How could the two coexist?*

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*Work and rest live in a symbiotic relationship. If you don't learn how to rest well, you will never learn how to work well (and vice versa).*

*– John Mark Comer*

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God's original design didn't require a choice between the two. John Mark Comer, author of "Garden City: Work, Rest, and the Art of Being Human," explains, "Work and rest live in a symbiotic relationship. If you don't learn how to rest well, you will never learn how to work well (and vice versa).

+ How does our perception of work and rest shift when we understand they live in a symbiotic relationship? *Invite two to three responses from the group.*

Prioritizing rest may feel radical or uncomfortable. It's certainly countercultural. But as we will discuss, God established a rhythm of work and rest at creation. Embracing one without the other robs us of his intentional design. This means you were meant to experience rest.

## **YOU ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF A GOD WHO WORKS AND RESTS**

Remember in Session 2 when we talked about being created in the image of a God who works? That same Creator God also rests.

### **BACKGROUND**

*Ask for a volunteer to read the verses below.*

*Like work, we often consider rest to be a very tangible, earthly construct, but the way we view rest is actually a deeply spiritual issue. The first few chapters of Genesis hold the story of creation. In fact, the first story in Scripture starts with God working and ends with Him resting.*

### **GENESIS 1:1 (NIV)**

| *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

### **GENESIS 1:31 (NIV)**

| *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good ...*

### **GENESIS 2:2 (NIV)**

| *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.*

### Thoughts to share and discuss with your group:

+ God created everything from top to bottom. For six days God works, creating the world and filling it with life.

+ Describe the feelings you experience after you work hard, pouring your heart and soul into a project or initiative, especially when it's successful and the outcomes exceed your expectations.

+ God doesn't grow tired, and he doesn't need sleep or a vacation. So why do you think God chose to rest?

+ Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 2:2 represent a pause in the work of creation where God draws joy and satisfaction from the fruit of his good labor. It's an act of delight.

+ Remember, as we discussed in Session 2, we are made in God's image. We are a tangible display of who he is to the world. God's original intent was always for us to join him in his rhythm of rest and work. God works, so we work. God rests, so we rest.

+ Consider this thought from Elisabeth Elliot, author of "Discipline: The Glad Surrender:" "Work is a blessing. God has so arranged the world that work is necessary, and he gives us hands and strength to do it. The enjoyment of leisure would be nothing if we had only leisure. It is the joy of work well done that enables us to enjoy rest, just as it is the experiences of hunger and thirst that make food and drink such pleasures."

What do the verses from Genesis and the quote by Elisabeth Elliot tell us about the value of work and rest?

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+ Are any of these thoughts and ideas new for you? If so, how might they shape your perspective on the importance of rest?

## WARNING SIGNS

God created us to participate in his rhythms of work and rest. As you've seen throughout our conversation, work and rest are mutually beneficial. Not only do they strengthen one another, they strengthen us too. When we try to override this basic human need of more work (paid or unpaid work), more pushing, more burning the candle at both ends, we are operating in denial, and our bodies, minds and souls lose in the long run.

### Three things tend to happen when we aren't getting enough rest:<sup>5</sup>

#### 1. We lose energy for the people we love.

Patience eludes us, we may become withdrawn or shorter tempered, we don't have the energy for heart-to-heart conversations and we start to miss out on the sweet, unscripted moments of life.

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*It is the joy  
of work done  
well that  
enables us to  
enjoy rest.*

*Elisabeth Elliot*

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**2. We lose energy for the things we love.** Saying things like, “I used to love to \_\_\_\_\_!” is an indicator life is probably crowding out rest. Whether the “used to” is a morning walk, teaching a Bible study, painting, watching the sunrise or having coffee with friends, part of rest is engaging with activities that refuel our souls.

**3. Bad habits reappear.** Things we fought to overcome or change in the past pop back up: emotional eating, poor sleeping patterns, giving in to unhealthy relationships, binge watching Netflix, a few too many drinks, etc. Before we know it, we start to become the person we used to be instead of who we want to be.

+ Which of these three represent the initial warning signs when you aren't getting enough rest?

*My warning signs*

## ESTABLISHING RHYTHMS OF REST

Look back to your Work-Life Inventory from Session 1. How did you rate “Rest & Self-Care?” *Ask for a few responses from your group.*

Most of us have room for improvement in this area, so if that's you, you are in good company! We all have rhythms in our lives. The question is, are we intentionally establishing rhythms that support our priorities and our need for rest, or have we unintentionally fallen into rhythms that aren't serving us well? Rhythms of rest will not happen by accident.

As we prepare for this week's homework, it might be helpful to review some rhythms of rest from other working moms. As we go, put a checkmark beside any of the ideas that sound helpful to you. *(Ask one or more volunteers to read these out loud.)*

*Ask a few participants to share what examples they checked.*

+ What could you add to this list based on rhythms of rest you already practice or would like to recommit to because they were life-giving in the past? *Invite personal examples from the group and record in the blanks.*

## IDEAS FOR REST

- ☐ **Weekly 24-hour phone and social media breaks.** From Friday night to Saturday night, no email, no social media, no responding to texts (this mom turns on an auto reply as part of her “do not disturb” setting). Another mom reported the same, just a shorter time frame.
- ☐ **Sunday afternoon nap.** (Even if she doesn't actually sleep, this mom lays down for an hour every Sunday afternoon.)
- ☐ **30-minute walk after dinner.**
- ☐ **At least one Saturday per month reserved as “no activities.”**
- ☐ **One evening per week reserved as “no activities.”**
- ☐ **Allocating one day of PTO per semester** (a total of three per year) for a personal day spent alone doing activities that are fun and rejuvenating.
- ☐ **Monthly coffee date with a friend who enjoys deep, meaningful conversations.**
- ☐ **9:00 p.m. bedtime during the week.**
- ☐ **Journaling in the mornings before the house wakes up.**
- ☐ **Weekly time to draw or paint.**
- ☐ **Weekly time working in the garden.**
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR GOOD WORK

Ask your group to turn to the Your Good Work section of their workbook. This week, your homework comes in two parts:

**Part One: Establishing your rhythms of rest.** You'll answer a short series of reflection questions from our conversation and then select one new rhythm of rest to practice.

**Part Two: Reflecting back.** Because our next session is our last, you'll spend some time reflecting on your key takeaways from this experience.

In our next session, we will spend a good amount of time discussing responses from your Reflection Guides, and we will wrap up our Good Work Collective by addressing our final question: Are you ready for renewal?

*End by inviting each person in your group to share one key takeaway from your discussion. Pray together and remind your group when you'll have the next meetup.*

# YOUR GOOD WORK

## REFLECTION GUIDE

### ESTABLISHING YOUR RHYTHMS OF REST

**Reflection Questions:**

- + What did your mom or other women in your life teach you about the value and practice of rest? How has that impacted your rhythms for rest?
- + What do you want to teach your children regarding the importance of both work and rest?
- + Review the statistics shared during this week's session. Do any of the risk factors resonate with your current reality? If so, list them below:

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**Your Practice**

*Review the example rhythms of rest from other working moms. Choose one from the list (or create your own) to practice this week. Write it below:*

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**After you've given this new practice a try, come back here to reflect:**

*How did you feel?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*What benefit did you experience?* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Could this practice become a regular rhythm for you? If not, what would you like to try next?*

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## REFLECTING BACK

In preparation for our final session, please take time to review your notes and think back on this experience.

### Favorite Quotes:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### *Most Impactful Exercise/Activity:*

### New Truths to Hang Onto:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Review your Work-Life Inventory from Session 1. Which one or two areas do you feel more equipped to strengthen (and move a little closer to a “thumbs-up”) based on what you’ve learned throughout this Collective? Name the areas below and describe what you’ve learned – could be an aha moment or a practical strategy you are now implementing.*

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## REFLECTING BACK

*Favorite Session and Why:*

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**Next Steps:**

*Note: This should address where you go from here. It might be something you need to start doing or stop doing. It might need to be a rhythm you want to establish or an action you need to take. It might be something you want to learn more about or have a conversation with someone else about. The possibilities are endless because these are your personal next steps based on all you've learned and considered over the last seven sessions.*

*Next Steps*

## **SESSION 7 SOURCES**

1. Clint Rainey, "The pandemic's crushing toll on working moms," February 7, 2022, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90719426/the-pandemics-crushing-toll-on-working-moms>.
2. Yoon Ja-young, "Smartphones leading to 11 hours' extra work a week," June 22, 2016, [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/488\\_207632.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/488_207632.html).
3. Bob Sullivan, "Memo to work martyrs: Long hours make you less productive," January 26, 2015, <https://www.cnbc.com/2015/01/26/working-more-than-50-hours-makes-you-less-productive.html>.
4. Sarah Green Carmichael, "The Research Is Clear: Long Hours Backfire for People and for Companies," August 19, 2015, <https://hbr.org/2015/08/the-research-is-clear-long-hours-backfire-for-people-and-for-companies>.
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# SESSION 8

## Are You Ready for Renewal?

### AGENDA

- + Get Connected
- + Renewal
- + Final Reflections
- + Your Good Work

# Session 8

## Are You Ready for Renewal?

### GET CONNECTED

*Welcome to Session 8 — our final session!*

*Facilitate a simple Get Connected exercise. Answer the questions below, and then ask the other women to do the same. (This is designed to be a quick exercise.) Depending on the size of your group, you may need to ask each person to choose one of the questions to answer rather than each person answering all three.*

**Let's revisit our gratitude activity from Session 1 to kick off this session:**

- + **Who** do you work with that you are grateful for?
- + **What** task, project or responsibility on your plate are you grateful for?
- + **When** did you smile or feel proud?

I want to remind us of the theme we've emphasized throughout: **We are created to do good work, and there is good work for us to do!** My hope is that you are more confident than ever that our good work isn't limited to what we do; it's also in the way we do what we do.

We've covered a lot of ground over the last seven sessions! Thank you for showing up and for sharing your heart in our discussions. In addition to reflecting on our experience and key takeaways, we will address one final question: "Are you ready for renewal?" Before we dive in, let's touch base on the first part of Your Good Work from last time!

*Ask participants to turn to the Establishing Your Rhythms of Rest section of last session's Your Good Work.*

- + Which rhythm of rest did you choose to practice?
- + How did you feel?
- + What benefit did you experience?
- + Could that practice become a regular rhythm for you? If not, what would you like to try next?

*Pray for your group, thanking God for the conversations you've shared over the last seven sessions. Ask God to solidify the truths you've learned in your hearts and in your actions.*

### RENEWAL

After all we've shared throughout this experience, I believe we are ready for renewal as it pertains to viewing our work, ourselves and even the rhythms of our lives in light of God's truth and intentional design.

*Ask a volunteer to read the definition of renew.*

#### Renew

*1) to make like new: restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection. 2) to make new spiritually: regenerate. 3) a. to restore to existence: revive. b. to make extensive changes in: rebuild.'*

- + What words stand out most to you in the definition of renew?

## BACKGROUND

Ask for a volunteer to read the verse below.

*Romans 12 describes the transforming power of the Gospel. In fact, it describes how it transforms and renews every part of us as individuals, which overflows into every part of our lives.*

## ROMANS 12:2 (TPT)

*Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God's will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.*

### Discuss with your group:

- + What does this verse tell us to stop?
- + What does it tell us to start?
- + Do you think the inward transformation by the Holy Spirit and the total reformation of how we think is a one-time thing or ongoing?
- + What does the inward transformation by the Holy Spirit and the total reformation of how we think empower us to do?

For the sake of this discussion, it seems appropriate to come up with our own definition of renewal based on Romans 12:2 (*participants should fill in the blanks in their workbooks*):

## RENEWAL

*Through the power of the Gospel, experiencing inward transformation by the Holy Spirit and the total reformation of how we think.*

- + What does it mean to you to experience this kind of renewal as it pertains to viewing our work, ourselves and even the rhythms of our lives in light of God's truth and intentional design?

Notes and Thoughts



## FINAL REFLECTIONS

Really, everything we've discussed throughout this Collective has represented part of this renewal process. Let's reflect on what we've learned and gained through this experience together.

*Ask participants to turn to the Reflecting Back portion of last session's Your Good Work. Walk your group through the reflection questions and prompts, inviting participants to share their responses. If someone in your group didn't complete the reflection exercise, invite them to participate by sharing their responses in real time. Save Next Steps for the Your Good Work section.*

## YOUR GOOD WORK

After every session, you've had the opportunity to complete Your Good Work, and the same is true for this session! This time, Your Good Work is the Next Steps you identified at the end of your Reflecting Back exercise.

*Invite participants to share their Next Steps.  
Pray to close your final session and thank your group for participating.*

## SESSION 8 SOURCES

1. Merriam-Webster. Accessed March 27, 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/renew>.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**MEREDITH KING** catalyzes ministry leaders with compelling, biblically-based resources proven to strengthen kingdom builders for higher impact. She is the same whether on stage or in a coffee shop sitting across the table from you — disarmingly kind and devoted to helping leaders maximize their impact. Meredith is a world-class leader, life-changing coach, and nonprofit executive.

Meredith's entrepreneurial and strategic instincts led her to create and sustain national initiatives with global impact. In addition to two decades of ministry and nonprofit leadership, Meredith pulls from her lived experience as a pastor's kid, pastor's wife and working mom.

She invests in thousands of top-level leaders worldwide every year through executive coaching, insanely practical strategic planning and wisdom-filled keynotes.

Meredith is the executive director of Integrus Leadership, founder and board member of True to Life Ministries and the author of "Immovable: Reflections to Build Your Life and Leadership on Solid Ground." She and her husband, David, have been married for 16 years and have two energetic daughters, Abigail and Ella. Meredith joyfully survives on coffee and queso.

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