

GOOD WORK



COLLECTIVE



THE MOMCO

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

.M COLLECTIVES

THEMOM.CO

PRODUCED BY THE MOMCO ©2024 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEREDITH KING

All rights reserved. MomCo mentors and leaders have permission to use content contained within this book for MomCo meetups and discussion including reproducing content specifically for use during a MomCo meetup, but all rights to this content are retained by Meredith King. This content may not be used by MomCo mentors or leaders for purposes outside of a MomCo meetup or an affiliated gathering without express written permission from Meredith King.

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.

THE MOMCO | 2370 S TRENTON WAY | DENVER, CO 80231
THEMOM.CO

GOOD WORK COLLECTIVE

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



TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 Session 1: Why Do You Work?

12 Session 2: Does Your Work Matter?

24 Session 3: Are You Carrying Mom Guilt?

34 Session 4: What Are Your Supermom Strengths?

44 Session 5: Are You Cultivating Community?

52 Session 6: Is Work-Life Balance Possible?

62 Session 7: Do You Have Rhythms of Rest?

72 Session 8: Are You Ready for Renewal?

75 About the Author



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

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.

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.

GROUP EXPECTATIONS

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.

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



YOUR WORK-LIFE REALITY

Facts About Working Women¹

- + 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.

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.

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."

Now it's your turn! Why do you work? Write your answer below.

Why do you work?

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"?

	WORK	
	FRIENDSHIPS	
	MARRIAGE/ROMANCE	
	CHILDREN	
	BALANCE	
	REST & SELF-CARE	
	HOBBIES	
	FAITH	
	ATTITUDE	
	OTHER:	

PASSION

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

PROVISION

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?

+ How would you rate the levels of passion and provision in your current work? *Mark your rating for Passion and Provision on the scales.*

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

Why is recognizing the work others do as honorable important?

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

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

For five days this week, practice finding the good - specifically regarding your work - by keeping a Gratitude Journal. Each day, follow the prompts and record your responses. If you'd like, feel free to use the simple prayer prompt on any day of your choosing.

YOUR GOOD WORK

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Dear God, I need your strength to help me:

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



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



SESSION 2

Does Your Work Matter?

GET CONNECTED

- + What is one specific task/responsibility from your work that you really enjoy?
- + When do you feel like your work matters most?
- + When do you feel like your work doesn't matter very much?

TRUTH FOR WORKING MOMS

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.

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.

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.”

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.

“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.”²

– Bill Peel



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

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

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?

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

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.

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 _____ and _____.
Man and woman's identity were securely and fully in God.	Man and woman were tempted to find _____ _____.
Man and woman lived in perfect relationship with God.	_____ and _____ separated man and woman from _____, requiring a Savior (Jesus) to set things right.

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?

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

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.

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

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



Truth #3: You are an ambassador.



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.

Truth #3: You are an ambassador.

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.

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?

*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.*

+ You are an ambassador!

Ambassador: _____ of
_____ deployed to the people in our _____.

+ As an ambassador, you are a:

Truth-teller: one who _____ as both an
_____ and a _____.

Hope-bearer: one who shares _____
and _____ 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 _____ into
dark places, providing _____, _____
and _____ into areas that might
otherwise be confusing.

Burden-sharer: one who demonstrates _____
and _____ 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?*

*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?*

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

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.

_____ *work is one way I can* _____
with _____ .

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."¹

+ 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

Review the sample Purpose Statement below then draft your own.

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

At the top of the Purpose Statement Journal, record the Purpose Statement you developed. Each day, keep a log of the ways - both big and small - you lived out your Purpose Statement. There is also a simple prayer prompt for you to use if you'd like.

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

+ 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.

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 your can partner with God's work.

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.¹

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.**

Common Comparisons

Place a star beside any common comparisons that resonate with you.

- 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.*

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.

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."²

The destructive spiral of comparing ourselves to each other compromises our impact, effectiveness and joy.

1. Comparison keeps us from _____.
_____. 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 _____.
Loving ourselves and others well is impossible
when our thoughts are consumed by sizing up
the competition.

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.

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

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.

Notes and Thoughts





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.

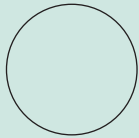
Not only is your work honorable as discussed in Session 1, but there are real benefits and value to your work!

Notes and Thoughts

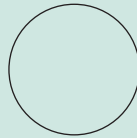
WORK BENEFITS ACTIVITY

Restate your “why” from Session 1:

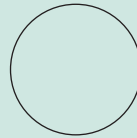
What benefits does your work provide? Fill in all circles that apply, and even add to the list if you feel inspired to do so!



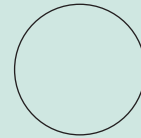
**Creative
Expression**



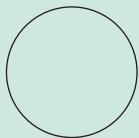
**Mental
Challenge**



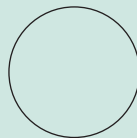
**Opportunity to
Gain New Skills
or Knowledge**



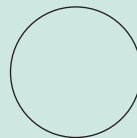
**Make a
Difference**



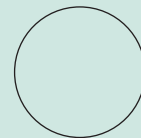
**Financial
Provision**



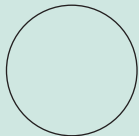
**Deploy Gifts
& Talents**



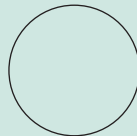
**Cultivate
Friendships**



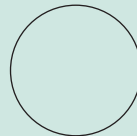
**Model Value
of Work for
my Children**



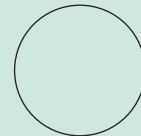
**Physical
Activity**



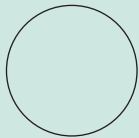
**Sense of
Accomplishments**



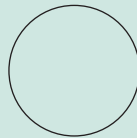
**Sense of
Belonging**



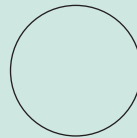
**Use of Education
& Experience**



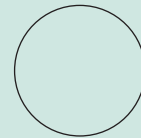
**Sense of
Purpose**



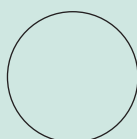
**Learn from
Others**



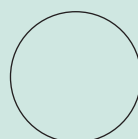
**Help Others
Succeed**

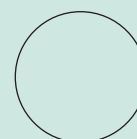


**Self
Expression**



**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 and the benefits of your work *(a few of the items you selected on the worksheet)*. **What would you say?**

+ 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?

Notes and Thoughts

YOUR GOOD WORK

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.

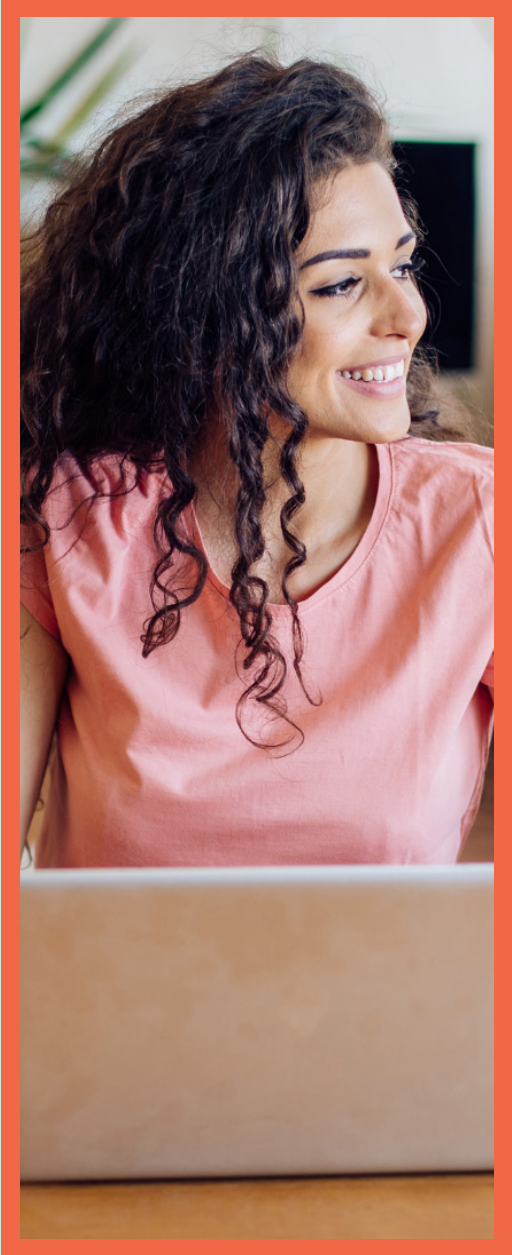
YOUR GOOD WORK

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

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

Superhero:

“A fictional hero having extraordinary or superhuman powers; also an exceptionally skillful or successful person.”¹

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.

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?

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.**

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. There are three categories of weaknesses:

- + **High-Impact Weaknesses**
- + **Inconvenient Weaknesses**
- + **Perceived Weaknesses**

Notes and Thoughts

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.

Brainstorm the benefits of knowing and embracing your strengths in the designated box.

Benefits of knowing our strengths:

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.

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

Write your top three strengths and their definitions:



Notes and Thoughts

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.

On the Strengths Action Plan Activity, rewrite your top three strengths in the left-hand column.

Work with your group to identify specific ways you can leverage the strengths you just identified. We are looking for simple, actionable items, not vague ideas.

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>

Remember: 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

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.

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

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?

*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.

- + **Friends make us brave.**
- + **Friends give perspective.**
- + **Friends show up.**

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.

- + 61% of Americans are lonely.¹
- + Loneliness is considered a public health crisis by former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.²
- + 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.

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?

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.

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.



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.

Where to Find Friendship

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? Place a checkmark beside the common places of connection that apply to your daily life.

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

Write down the names of three to five people from these places you would like to connect with or invest in.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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

MAKING TIME FOR FRIENDSHIP

Write down your group's brainstormed list of hurdles, then work together to strategize how to overcome them.

HURDLES	STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME

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?

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!

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

+ 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 this session?

+ How does celebrating others build our confidence?

YOUR GOOD WORK

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.

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

+ 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.)

LYDIA'S STORY

BACKGROUND

Lydia was originally from the city of Thyatira (modern-day Turkey), the hub of commercial trade and the epicenter of the textile industry.¹ 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.²

It's unclear if Lydia was divorced or widowed, but some scholars assume she was a single mom.¹ 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.

Notes and Thoughts

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.

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"³

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.)

*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.

THE BALANCE MYTH

- + **What words or images come to mind when you hear the word balance?**
- + **What comes to mind when you hear the term work-life balance?**
- + **What are your own personal indicators when life is not balanced?**

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.

Notes and Thoughts

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.**

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

LIFE SEASONS

01 A season is _____ you are, not _____ you are.
What happens when we get the two confused?

02 Seasons have _____.
If the season you are in doesn't have an ending, it's a lifestyle, not a season.

03 New seasons impact our _____ and our _____.
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.

Notes and Thoughts

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

- + **Having too many priorities is the same as having** _____ .
- + _____ **and should be updated often.**
- + _____ **are helpful for determining priorities.**

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).

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

+ _____ 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 _____ 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.

YOUR GOOD WORK

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.

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? _____

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? _____

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

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?

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

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

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

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

+ 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?

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 this way.

Your Aha Moments

WE ARE BUSY AND TIRED

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

Other studies show overwork does not equal productivity:

- + Smart devices add more than 11 hours to the work week, especially outside of business hours.²
- + Nearly half of U.S. workers say they routinely work more than 50 hours.³
- + 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.⁴
- + 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.

+ **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.**

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

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

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)."

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

BACKGROUND

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.



*Overwork
does not
equal
productivity.*

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.*

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

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

WARNING SIGNS

Three things tend to happen when we aren't getting enough rest:⁵

- 1. We lose energy for the people we love.**
- 2. We lose energy for the things we love.**
- 3. Bad habits reappear.**

My warning signs

ESTABLISHING RHYTHMS OF REST

Review the Ideas for Rest from other working moms. Place a checkmark beside any of the ideas that sound potentially helpful to you. (Remember: you aren't committing to these! You are simply marking what grabs your attention.)

YOUR GOOD WORK

This week, your homework comes in two parts:

Part One: Establishing your rhythms of rest. 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 next session is our last, you'll spend some time reflecting on your key takeaways from this experience.

IDEAS FOR REST

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 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. | <input type="radio"/> Monthly coffee date with a friend who enjoys deep, meaningful conversations. |
| <input type="radio"/> Sunday afternoon nap. (Even if she doesn't actually sleep, this mom lays down for an hour every Sunday afternoon.) | <input type="radio"/> 9:00 p.m. bedtime during the week. |
| <input type="radio"/> 30-minute walk after dinner. | <input type="radio"/> Journaling in the mornings before the house wakes up. |
| <input type="radio"/> At least one Saturday per month reserved as "no activities." | <input type="radio"/> Weekly time to draw or paint. |
| <input type="radio"/> One evening per week reserved as "no activities." | <input type="radio"/> Weekly time working in the garden. |
| <input type="radio"/> 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. | <input type="radio"/> _____ |
| | <input type="radio"/> _____ |
| | <input type="radio"/> _____ |

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:

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:

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

How did you feel? _____

What benefit did you experience? _____

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

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.

REFLECTING BACK

Favorite Session and Why:

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.
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>.
5. Inspired by a conversation between Lyle Wells and Meredith King, March 2018. <https://www.integrus.org>.



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

Turn to the Establishing Your Rhythms of Rest section from last week's Your Good Work section.

- + 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?

RENEWAL

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.¹*

BACKGROUND

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.

RENEWAL

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

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.

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.

Notes and Thoughts

SESSION 8 SOURCES

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



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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.

www.meredithkingblog.com | Instagram: @Meredith_A_King