



MARY SOUTHERLAND
The Stress-Buster and Women's Ministry Motivator



Take This Job and Love It

**A Four - Week Bible Study
by
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Take This Job and Love It

Welcome to Light for the Journey!

My college degree was in elementary education with a minor in music. I taught school for several years and absolutely loved my job. When my husband became a youth pastor in South Florida, I worked with senior high girls and loved it. After we adopted two children, I taught private piano lessons so I could be home with the kids. I didn't so much love teaching piano as I loved the freedom it gave me to stay home. I now teach Bible studies, am working on my fifth book, have co-founded two ministries and help direct the women's ministry of the church where my husband is the lead teaching pastor ... in Kansas. And yes, I love it here and love what I am doing. Looking back over the years, God has taken me places I never dreamed of going ... and I have not always loved the circumstances, but I can honestly say that Jesus has led me all the way ... and because of that single truth, I am successful in my work. Every time I have asked God for direction and have been willing to go wherever He asked me to go and to do whatever He asked me to do, I have made the right decision. Different seasons of life have brought new challenges and new dreams. And there are more to come. The common denominator of my life work has been God and His plan. Sometimes I have had to wait for His direction and I have not always understood the road He has asked me to travel. But He has been so faithful and I am convinced that as long as I am breathing ... I have a purpose in life that is part of His plan. As you begin this series of lessons, I encourage you to open your heart and mind to His will. Be willing to do whatever He asks you to do and He will bring you success. I know some of you are thinking that it is too late for you. Your life seems to be a failure, you have made too many mistakes and the dreams you once had are dead and gone. God can and will bring good out of it all. Ask Him to speak to you and trust Him to guide you into a successful life.

Here's the Plan: *Light for the Journey* can be completed in one day or over a period of five days ... or even ten days. Do what works for you and gives you the greatest chance of success. You will notice that the content is divided up into days but the pace of the study is absolutely yours to set. The important thing to remember is that, even if you miss a day, don't let that keep you from continuing the study. Do not give up! That is exactly what the enemy wants and since he knows the power of God's Word, he will do anything to keep you from studying it. Below you will find a brief description of the various sections in the study.

Mindset for the Journey: Pray, thanking God for His written Word. Ask Him to reveal the unique message He has for you in this study. Read the mindset passage 2 or 3 times. Make the deliberate choice to fix your thoughts on each word and each phrase as you read it. Don't let your mind wander. Focus only on God's truth and let everything else fall away. Your mind is then set and you are ready to begin.

Facts for the Journey: the main Bible Study facts and principles

Prayer for the Journey: a week-by-week plan for learning to pray simply, effectively, powerfully

Steps for the Journey: make a specific plan to *put feet to* or *apply* the truths you have learned

Truth for the Journey: pinpoint the one truth that stood out and impacted you most this week

Power for the Journey: memorize and meditate on key verses of Scripture related to this study



Mindset for the Journey

Proverbs 31:13-17 (NIV)

She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.

She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings, she plants a vineyard.

She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks."

Day 1: Facts for the Journey

Light for the Journey

Take this Job. Lesson 1



A woman was at work when the baby sitter called to tell her that her daughter was very sick. The woman quickly left work, stopping by the pharmacy on her way home. When she came out of the pharmacy, she discovered that she had locked her keys in the car. She frantically called home only to hear that her daughter was worse. Looking around for help, she spotted an old, rusty coat hanger lying on the ground. She picked it up but had no idea how to use it. By this time, she was in a panic so she bowed her head and prayed for help. An old rusty car pulled up and out came a dirty, greasy, bearded man wearing an old biker skull rag on his head. The woman was desperate so she decided to be thankful for answered prayer. The man took the hanger and in less than a minute opened the car. She hugged the man and through tears of relief said, "Thank you so much! You are a very nice man!" The man replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I have been in prison for car theft and just got out an hour ago." The woman hugged the man again and sobbed, "Thank you, God, for sending me a professional!"

I know you want to be successful in your work. Your office may be in a corporate building or just inside your front door. Your work clothes may be designer suits or jeans and t-shirts. You may be paid in cash or with crayon drawings and sticky kisses. None of these things will make you successful in the work place. Success in the work place is not determined by where you work but how you work. God is Lord of all - or He is not Lord at all! Yet, we often fail to yield certain parts of life to His control. The reality is that 95% surrender is still 5% short. God wants everything we are or ever hope to be. Making Him Lord is the only way He can fully accomplish His plan and purpose in our lives. And until He is Lord, we will never be contented.

The workplace is a common area of life where we find it easy to live out our own agendas. For some reason, we seem to think that once we sit down at our desk, report for duty or clock in, we enter a "No God Allowed" zone. How sad - when He stands ready and waiting to not only equip and empower us to be the best employee we can be, but desires to pour out His blessings upon our work. Over the next few weeks, we will examine several principles taken from the life of the Proverbs 31 woman that will enable you to be successful in your work wherever and whatever your work may be. I was so excited to discover that the Proverbs 31 woman is not real! King Solomon, the author of Proverbs, describes the kind of woman his mother wants him to marry. While she is not real, the Proverbs 31 woman should be our standard for life. It is also important to remember that this passage of Scripture describes the span of a woman's entire life and indicates that different seasons of life often bring different life goals ... but they are all part of God's plan. These verses lead me to believe that a woman can have it all. I'm just not sure she can have it all at the same time.

Principle one: Choose your work carefully.

Proverbs 31:13 "She selects wool and flax ..."

In this verse, "selects" literally means "carefully chooses." Many people never experience success in their work because they are in the wrong work to begin with. We were created with certain gifts, abilities and talents because they fit the plan God has for our life. Proverbs 22: 6 "Train a child in the way he should go." We often mistake this verse to mean the way we want our children to go instead of encouraging them toward God and His plan for their lives.

When our son, Jered, began to walk, I noticed that his feet turned inward. Dan and I were very concerned and decided to take him to a specialist. The doctor carefully examined Jered and took several x-rays. After what seemed like an eternity, he then called us in for a consultation. We braced ourselves for bad news but the doctor smiled and said, "There is nothing wrong with Jered's feet. They are simply the feet of a natural athlete and were designed to give him great balance." I can remember thinking how much fun it would be to watch our son grow and develop into a stellar athlete, but I did not understand just how important that growth would prove to be in his life - and in ours. Jered played several sports in elementary school but eventually decided that football was his first love. In high school, he emerged as a true fullback and began a disciplined regiment of working out, strength training and learning everything he could about being a fullback. Jered had sure hands and great balance. I will never forget his first high school game. The quarterback handed off the ball to Jered who burst out of the huddle and ran for the end zone - dragging three defensive players with him. Jered was hard to bring down because he was so strong and had such great balance. He attended college on a football and academic scholarship where he met his future wife. Jered and Jodi have been married three years and have two-year-old twins - our first grandchildren.

We are created in response to God's plan for our life and our jobs and careers are part of that plan. John 3:27 says, "God in heaven appoints each person's work." It all begins with God's appointment. Being successful in any area of life is the result of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We will never find joy and experience true success in our work until we discover and do the work God created us to do.



Day 2: Prayer for the Journey



Light for the Journey

Take This Job. Lesson 1

If you really want to experience success and learn to love your work, make prayer a spiritual discipline and life habit.

How? Start praying and don't quit. Talk with God and then learn to listen for His voice above all others.

I suggest that you begin this series of lessons with a commitment to pray 10 minutes each day. Keep a prayer journal in which you record prayer requests and your needs as well as the needs of the people with whom you work.

Create a section in your journal for the prayer requests that pertain specifically to your work. Until you have prayed about your job and every person whose life you touch in the course of that job, you have not tapped into the powerful plan God has for your life.

Recruit a prayer partner at work. Take a few minutes during your lunch break to share needs and specific prayer requests. Commit to pray for each other and hold each other accountable.

- Pray for God's wisdom in your work. The Bible is relevant for every area of life – including the workplace. In fact, your job is a mission field to which God has called you to serve.
- Ask God to bless your co-workers, your boss, your employees and your efforts. It is amazing how our perspective changes when we pray about it. God will give you insight and understanding for that co-worker that annoys you. Hurt people ... hurt people. Their irritating behavior may very well be a cry for attention and help. God will show you how to minister to the people with whom you work as you pray for them.
- Pray about your attitude in the work place and ask God to give you His perspective of your job. Honor God with your attitude about your work. Integrity is a powerful witness to people who do not know Him. Be honest. Work hard. And choose an attitude of joy.
- In your journal, record new insights and truths about your job as God gives them to you. Be sure to date each entry.
- Create a section in your journal for answered prayer and celebrate God's power at work in you through prayer.

Day 3: Truth for the Journey

I always encourage Christ followers to become "One Truth Christians." Each time you hear the Word of God, ask Him to give you one new truth that you can apply to your daily life. Create a section in your journal for the new truths God gives you during this series of lessons. Consider the following questions and thoughts to help you get started:

- Whose plan have you been following? Examine the level of obedience and commitment to His will in your life.
- What are you now doing that you know is a direct result of obedience to His plan for your life?
- What are you now doing that you know is a direct result of disobedience to His plan for your life?
- What is the present direction of your life? Are you really willing to abandon your plan for His?
- How can you be more aware of Him and His will for you?
- How would you honestly react to this truth: God does not want me to settle for anything less than His best?

