

Everything You Need

A promise for women of God who want
to be it all and do it all for Him



A Bible Study by Courtney Kendall Steed

21st Century Christian Publishing

Table of Contents

3	Dedication
7	Introduction
9	Group Introduction
11	Lesson One: Having Everything
12	Step One: A Diagnosis
19	Step Two: The Supply
25	Step Three: His Everything
30	Step Four: The Demand
33	Group Discussion Guide
35	Lesson Two: Finding Everything
36	Step One: Everything for Real
43	Step Two: Your Everything
52	Step Three: Power Up
56	Step Four: Preparing for Work
61	Group Discussion Guide
63	Lesson Three: Working for Everything
64	Step One: Defining Good Work
70	Step Two: What It's Not
77	Step Three: The Right Question
83	Step Four: The Right Scale
88	Group Discussion Guide
89	Lesson Four: Managing Everything
90	Step One: The Stress Connection
94	Step Two: Your Stress
98	Step Three: Resource Management 101
102	Step Four: Resource Management 201
107	Step Five: Resource Management 301
113	Group Discussion Guide

115	Lesson Five: Misusing Everything
116	Step One: The Guilt Trip
123	Step Two: Apples and Oranges
129	Step Three: The Fear Factor
134	Step Four: Pride Before Imbalance
140	Group Discussion Guide
141	Lesson Six: Living with Everything
142	Step One: Everything at Home
148	Step Two: Everything in Time
155	Step Three: Everything in Relationship
161	Step Four: Everything in Crisis
167	Step Five: Everything in Body
174	Group Discussion Guide
175	Acknowledgements
176	Endnotes

Everything You Need

{A PROMISE FOR WOMEN OF GOD WHO WANT TO BE IT ALL FOR HIM}



The *Everything You Need* Bible study has been a labor of love for me. As I have learned to trust in the reality of the promises here, I have so desired to share them with my sisters in Christ. I have learned more along this journey in my effort to share than I did before the journey started. It's been a wonderful ride so far, and I am so glad you are joining me for this part of it.

This study was designed for women of God who desire *all of it*. It's for those who want to be wives, mothers, single women, grandmothers, career women, stay-at-home moms, mentors, sisters, friends, *and* Christians. It is for us who want everything the Lord has planned for us, every good plan and perfect blessing.

If you are like me though, you may not really know how to do it. You may not feel capable of managing all of it. You may feel inadequate and under-equipped for doing it all for Him. You may feel crushed at times by the weight of all the responsibilities that are inherently ours. If so, then I think that the fact that your heart so desires to be all that it should be, often puts your heart at risk for being further weighed down by guilt and frustration. Ultimately, you may feel exhausted from the weight of it all.

The *Everything You Need* Bible study is for us women of God who need to be gently reminded that the secret does not lie in us, but in the power of the God we desire to serve. It is a search of God's word to learn to trust and believe the promise found in 2 Peter 1:3.

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness"

I am prayerful that you will learn how true this promise is, and how you can come to recognize it in your life. I am praying now that you will come to learn what I have, and that is we already have everything we need to have the desires of our heart and be all He plans for us to be. You may be comforted to know that having that *everything* is not about how caught up your laundry is, or how many meals you plan ahead. I know I was.

Because we are going to be on this journey in the midst of our busyness, I did us a favor and didn't make each section a week or a day. We have just six lessons, with a few "steps" each. I did that so that you can go at the pace the Spirit is guiding you (or, the screaming baby, the meetings scheduled, the burning dinner, the phone ringing, the kids or the husband allows you to).

Take your time to consider each challenge. If I say to meditate, that's code for "*you have permission to walk away and think about it for a bit, then come back.*" Consider these things prayerfully. Let these promises sink in and change you. These lessons are worth taking to heart.

I am so blessed you are here, and that you are taking this journey with me. If you're entering this study on your own, proceed to Lesson One. If you're studying as part of a group, let the Group Introduction serve as your first meeting together.

Group Introduction



If you will be doing the *Everything You Need* Bible study as a group, you are going to be so blessed! While anyone can do this study on their own, there are some great benefits in sharing these lessons with your sisters in Christ.

I so wish I were there to hear your hearts and learn from your insight. I have learned so much from my own time sharing these thoughts with groups of women from different seasons and different backgrounds. There was so much encouragement in hearing both from those who had matured past these struggles, as well as learn along with those who were in the midst of them. I am excited for you for all that lies ahead.

If you're doing this study along with other ladies, use this **Group Introduction** as your first lesson together. You can move into Lesson One in your second meeting. This group introduction will serve to get you familiar with both the study and each other during your first session together.

Let's get started! To be sure we all understand what our study is about, let's back up and read the **Introduction** to this study together.

- ✧ Do any of you ever feel “*overwhelmed, inadequate, and under-prepared*”? Allow volunteers to share their thoughts and feelings.

We may be fooled into thinking that this feeling is one that is very specific to us or our season of life.

As a group briefly describe each of your own seasons. Take time to understand where you are on your own journey.

- ✧ If you were able to say that you are feeling overwhelmed, inadequate, or under-prepared in your current season, why do you think you feel that way? If not, do you recall feeling that way in past seasons? If so, why?
- ✧ Turn together to 2 Peter 1:3 and 2 Corinthians 9:8. Read each in as many different translations as available in the group.
- ✧ What concept do you find in common between these two verses?
- ✧ What does that concept mean to each of you?
- ✧ Do you think that this promise of “everything” and “all things” is literal?
- ✧ If this promise were to be meant literally, why do we feel we are so inadequate at times?

In the study ahead, we will be learning what God means when He says, “*everything you need*” and “*all things at all times.*” Also, we will learn about the purposes behind these promises.

To learn more about both, let’s read a little more of the context of these promises:

- ☞ Read 2 Peter 1:3-8. What phrase stands out the most to you?

For me, it is “***they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.***” Back in verse three Peter had just told us that we have “everything that we need” for a life of godliness. We can draw the conclusion from this passage that we are able to be effective and productive *because* we have that “everything.”

- ☞ The times when you do/did feel under-equipped or inadequate, did you feel like you were also being unproductive and ineffective? If so, in what way(s)?

God promises relief from that feeling right here in His promise for “everything.” Our study will guide us to realizing these “*very great and precious promises.*”

- ☞ Read 2 Corinthians 9:8-12. Notice the reference in verse 8 to “work.” Note how in both verses the promise for complete provision is connected to getting done what God would have us do.

In verses 11-12 we learn why.

- ☞ Why does God offer to give us everything, at all times?

In the study ahead we will be learning what the “everything” that God promises us looks like. We will look at why He has given it to us. We will learn how it looks when we don’t use that everything rightly. We will learn how to use it in ways that it is meant to be used. We will learn how to bring into real life the promise of having everything, and all things at all times. We will try to set a pace through these lessons that best fits our group.

Between now and our next meeting, please complete *Lesson One*. You can use the ***Group Discussion Questions*** at the end of each lesson to guide your discussion.

- ☞ Conclude your time together with prayer. Pray for the needs of your hearts and for God’s blessings on this time of study together as it begins.

Looking so forward to our time together!

Lesson One: Having Everything



To say that I am glad you are on this journey with me is grossly insufficient. It always helps to know that there are others on the same path you are, and even more so when the journey is one that may challenge and leave us each desiring to be different.

If you are embarking on this journey with me, you may be a woman of God who struggles with finding a balance between what the world and God expect of us. You may be a woman who desires to be all that God wants you to be as a woman, sister, wife, mother, and friend. You may also feel incredibly inadequate to that task.

More than any culture before, the women around us struggle with juggling it all. We have more pressures and demands than ever. It seems that the demands on our bodies, our minds, our spirits, and our hearts are growing exponentially on a daily basis. We are managing marriages in a culture against marriage; we are raising children in a world fighting us every step of the way; we are struggling against images of beauty, and our roles in home and community are vague and overwhelming. The expectations keep coming.

If only we had what we needed to keep up. Then, we would not feel so left behind and out of sync. We would not feel so stressed, so harried, so flustered, and so inadequate. If only.

The first step on our journey is one of the best. We will learn here that we do, in fact, have all we need. We will learn to believe in God's promise that we really do have *"everything [we] need for life and godliness"* (2 Peter 1:3). We will lay the groundwork for a life that has potential for being fully balanced between what we need and what we have.

Are you a *Harried Woman of God*? Let's find out together.

I am so blessed that you are here!

My prayer for you as we begin: *"And this same God who takes care of me will **supply all your needs** from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen"* Philippians 4:19-20 (NLT, emphasis added)ⁱ.

An overview of this lesson:

STEP ONE: A Diagnosis (let's put a name to this feeling)

STEP TWO: The Supply (find out what makes you different)

STEP THREE: His Everything (it's already yours)

STEP FOUR: The Demand (who is really doing the demanding here?)

Step One: A Diagnosis

I would suspect that all of us start from the same place once we decide to embark on such a quest as this. For every one of us who determines to put down on paper the scriptural journey that God has led us through, we first have to feel the need in our own hearts to make that journey.

I know for me, that is certainly the case. As I started this journey I felt that I was lacking so much that I must be the only one who feels so inept. After all, everyone around me seems to have it more together than I do ...right?

The starting point for my exploration of the lessons ahead was my own need for their comforting effect. I will assume from here on out that we are in the same boat, you and I. And you do the same, as we are on this journey together.

As we move forward even the smallest step, let's first pray and commit that God will be our guide, shall we?

Lord, You know where each of us is starting right now. You know the deepest parts of our hearts and spirits. You know which of us are crying out in desperation for the need to feel sufficient and worthy of our tasks, and which ones feel simply overwhelmed by the enormity of them. We ask that You take each of us to the place we need to be to know You better. Please guide our hearts and minds to an understanding that brings us closer to You and allows our work to be effective for You. Show us what our hearts need to learn. Amen.

{A Name for It}

A few years ago I found an article that really struck me. At the time, I was a mom of two little boys, had been a wife for a few years, the house was getting harder to keep up, and the tasks seemed to just keep piling up. Over the course of the following years, I added another child, endured a few hardships, the house got messier, and the tasks continued to multiply at a staggering rate. I was feeling the serious pressure innate with all those things.

The article stuck with me, because I related to it so well. It was about a new medical diagnosis called *Hurried Woman Syndrome*.

Hurried Woman Syndrome was coined by an ob/gyn named Dr. Brent Bost who, after eighteen years of medical experience noticed a trend with his patients. Over time, as the lifestyles of women in the U.S. got increasingly more frantic and stressful, he noted that more and more of his patients were presenting with similar disconcerting symptoms.

Hurried Woman Syndrome (HWS) is considered a chronic stress illness that is caused by the lifestyles of the women of our culture. The four major symptoms associated with the syndrome are weight gain, low sex drive, moodiness, and fatigue. According to Bost, as many as 30 million women between the ages of 25 and 50 are affected (Bost, 2005).ⁱⁱ

Even with what little you know of this diagnosis, can you relate?

Are you, like apparently 30 million women in our country, in the throes of feeling they are at the end of their rope, beyond their ability to maintain the life-styles they have created for themselves, and having a body of physical symptoms to show for it?

Could you diagnose yourself with HWS, simply based on the four main adverse symptoms of living a hurried life-style that Dr. Bost noted?

 Circle the ones that apply to you:

fatigue weight gain low sex drive moodiness

Maybe you can relate to one or more of those. Maybe you wouldn't quite want to go as far as diagnosing yourself as of yet, but can relate to having some physical symptoms of a hurried life. These are just a few of the physical symptoms that can be reflected in our bodies as a result of that kind of lifestyle.

All you need to do is type "symptoms of stress" in a search engine and you return a staggering number of physical ailments, both acute and chronic, that have been linked strongly to a body under constant stress. These include anything from heart disease to cancer, hair loss to pimples, anxiety disorders to manic depression. Our bodies weren't designed to be under the amount of stress we place them under so constantly.

 Do you have other physical symptoms of being stressed and hurried?

hair loss unexplained pain "raw" nerves
neck pain insomnia chest pain
shortness of breath lack of concentration back pain
unhealthy skin stomach problems exhaustion

Of course, these only skim the surface. Consider ones that you have aside from this list.

 Can you list any other physical symptoms of your own that you relate directly to stress?

Aside from physical symptoms, there are a number of emotional symptoms of a hurried lifestyle as well.

 How do you feel? (Circle any that apply)

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| anxious | worried | fretful |
| stressed | imbalanced | discontent |
| overwhelmed | inadequate | frustrated |
| tense | weary | exhausted |

The pressure is incredible and our bodies show it.

It is no wonder they do.

We wear the hats of wives, mothers, friends, sisters, providers, counselors, cooks, chaperones, financial experts, weight watchers, lovers, gardeners, chairmen, party planners, den moms...the list goes on, and on, and on.

We are under tremendous pressure to do all these things in a way that makes us look balanced, graceful, together, and like we have it in us to do it all, and be it all.

We have to do it all...well. It makes us more than *hurried*. We are *harried*.

Consider for a moment what pressures you feel from our culture and society as a woman at this point in time.

Are you a single or single-again woman? Are you a mother or a wife? Are you a single mom or a grandmother raising a second generation of little ones? Are you in between young mom and grandmother, still juggling full-time hours? Are you an older woman or one who is just moving into adulthood?

Each of these carry their own demands when it comes to our culture.

 Take a moment to consider and note here which demands you find the most weighty for your current place in life? If this isn't enough space, feel free to use the sidebar.

Is it any wonder that this generation of women gets our own illness?

{Harried Christian Woman Syndrome}

Christian women step it up a bit, though. We get to claim that same list of demands and pressures as the harried women of around us, but with the added pressure of doing it so well that it glorifies God!

No longer must we simply appear balanced, but we must appear balanced for the sake of representing the kingdom.

Not only must we raise well-balanced, well-educated, well-rounded children, but we must do it to the degree that they will qualify for entrance into heaven.

Not only must we work toward homes that run smoothly and effectively for the sake of appearing to have it together, but they must be available for hospitality and be a center for teaching God's laws to our children.

Not only must we be wives fighting for our marriages against a tide of a culture dead-set against the sanctity of marriage, but then God asks us to *submit to our husbands!*

No pressure ...right?

With the pressures of the world around us, blended with the expectations of our being women of God, we may feel an even greater degree of pressure than our non-Christian counterparts. With so much more at stake, our bodies will surely reflect the same degree of hurriedness of those gals, if not more.

I hereby declare we get our own diagnosis ...*Harried Christian Woman Syndrome!*

What do you think?

Of course, *Harried Christian Woman Syndrome* is not an actual medical diagnosis, but it helps us to distinguish from the pool of hurried women around us those who *also* claim to be Women of God. This distinction can make a big difference when it comes of our prognosis and treatment.

Could you also diagnose yourself as having HCWS?

Hint: If you said "yes" to having *Hurried Woman Syndrome* and you are taking this journey with me right now, I'll go out on a limb and answer "yes" for you.

If that is the case:

 On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the least severe and 10 being the most severe, where would you put yourself in terms of suffering from HCWS?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Wherever you find yourself on that scale, know that you are not alone, sweet sister.

{The Same}

The good news is that if a woman can diagnosis herself with any degree of HCWS, her prognosis is a good one. While there are some similarities between harried ladies who claim a harried life devoted to God and those who do not, there are also some real differences. These differences are what give us a hope of a cure for this illness.

Let's look at the ways we are the same, aside from having matching symptoms of our ongoing stressful busyness. We are also similar in that the cause of all these symptoms is the same. The root of all of the symptoms noted by Dr. Bost, as well as the ones we noted for ourselves, is stress itself. Stress, when it evolves into an ongoing state of being, creates both *Hurried Woman Syndrome* and *Harried Christian Woman Syndrome*.

To fully grasp the full impact of that, we need to define for ourselves what exactly stress is.

Stress, though defined in many different ways, can be simply defined for our purposes as: *the tension that is created when what we have and what we need is unequal.*

In other words: *When our supply and our demand are off balance, stress happens.*

When what we have for our busy lives and what we need for them don't match up, it creates "tension" that we typically call "stress." It's that feeling that you get when you feel that things are not quite right.

This "tension" is what creates a world of physical symptoms that have both short-term and long-term effects on our feminine bodies. This tension leads to our feeling perpetually stressed, and with that comes all the physical and emotional symptoms we have already talked about.

We harried gals, Christian or not, have this lifestyle of ongoing stress in common.

For the sake of visualization, Harried Women everywhere could be represented like this:



-  How well does this particular off-balance scale represent your present feeling of being harried, hurried, and stressed? Add arrows to either side of the scale to help it represent you better.

Oh, how I wish I could see what you just drew. I bet if we compared them, we would be surprised to find that we all feel at least this out of balance most of the time, and most often I am guessing more.

We can relate to our non-Christian gal pals this way.

We do not, however, have everything in common. Therein we find the hope.

{A Bit Different}

Where the harried Christian and harried non-Christian woman diverge is where we start looking at the individual elements that make up our reason for being stressed and harried.

When we start looking at both the “supply” and the “demand” aspects of our stress we will find that, while they may look somewhat familiar at first, in the end they are totally different.

At first glance, the demand aspect of our scales look very much alike. Basically, we both have a big pile of things that we expect of ourselves and feel that others expect of us. These things are subject to judgment of the cruelest kind, both from ourselves and others. The pile only gets bigger and bigger every day, and never seems to lighten its weighty effect on our hearts, spirits, or lives.

At second glance, though, we can distinguish some very real differences in the demand aspect of a Woman of God’s scale. In the coming lessons we will look at just what those differences are. They will change the weight on that side of your scale. I can’t wait.

As for the supply aspect of things, girls, this is the best part.

This is what separates the Harried Woman and the Woman of God who is harried. You see, the supply element of the scale of our feminine counterparts comes from the same place as the demand element: The world. Our culture. Our society.

The world tells all of us that we are our *own* supply. We are our *own* cure for our stress. If we would just be more, do more, organize more, be more educated, date more, exercise more, weigh less, and have it more together, then we would have everything we need for that giant pile of Demand.

It’s all on the Harried Woman to be all, do all, and manage all.

If we believe the world, we don’t have a chance.

The result of women trying to be their own supply is an ongoing lifestyle of attempting to relieve that imbalance between the world’s demand and our own supply. This eventually affects the body to the degree that women of today can claim syndromes and illness related to stress and hurriedness.

The Harried Woman of God, however, holds a different Supply altogether. This Supply makes all the difference.

As a Woman of God, your Demand and Supply look dramatically different. You *do not* subscribe to the demands of this world, my sweet sister.

You are not reliant on the much-too-limited supply of yourself. You are not subject to the ridiculous impossibility of being required to find the whole of the supply needed to balance out that scale.

