

WOMAN UP

**DISCOVERING YOUR
GOD-GIVEN
VOICE IN LEADERSHIP,
RELATIONSHIPS,
AND CALLING.**

STUDY GUIDE

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lori champion



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CHAPTER 1

WOMAN UP



My mother tells me that my first phrase was, “Ye me yone!” baby talk for “Leave me alone!” As the first child and grandchild in my family, I think I was given way more affection and attention than I could handle. My little self longed to control my environment, to be independent, to call the shots, to be my own boss.

Is a leadership gift formed by nurture or nature? It’s a long-held debate, but probably both! When we visit our church campuses in Africa, where we educate and feed hundreds of children daily, I see many children caring for and leading their younger siblings, simply because there’s no other choice—it’s just how they survive. A demand has been placed on their young lives, and they’ve stepped up to the challenge. Sometimes leadership is an ambition; sometimes it’s a necessity. It proves to me that there is an inner leader in all of us. We just have to Woman Up.

In writing this book, I’ve talked to so many women who say, “My daughter or my sister or my coworker would love your book. But I’m not a leader.” Women are so quick to disqualify themselves from leadership. Studies show that in job interviews, women are way more likely to talk about things they aren’t good at, as opposed to men who are much more confident, even with the same amount of experience and education as their female counterparts.

My leadership journey is one that includes many struggles with the gifts God has given to me. Navigating how and when to use my voice while in environments predominantly populated by men (add to that, in a church environment), wondering if my ideas were worthy of being shared, and sometimes not being received because of my sex or my age (when I was younger) were things I had to overcome. Many were self-imposed perceptions and insecurities. Sometimes, I even wondered if God had given me the wrong giftset for my life assignments.

Then, I met Deborah. I've heard inspiring Bible stories all of my life, but somehow this God-appointed prophet, judge, leader of Israel, and WOMAN, had escaped my notice. When God chose her, she wasn't the best woman for the job. She was the best leader for a nation in the darkest time of its history. Her life articulates how to hear from God, how to lead up, how to call out purpose in others, and ultimately how to WIN!

I'm so thankful Deborah didn't disqualify herself from leading. Her strategies and strength brought freedom to a nation and to generations. What will be on the other side of our "yes" to using God's gifts in our lives, to stepping into his calling?

Whether you see yourself in Deborah or not, there are many examples of women in the Bible that God used powerfully. We can easily see that God uses all different types of people to accomplish His purpose:

- » God uses women with a past.
- » God uses women without a past.
- » God uses women in business.
- » God uses stay-at-home moms.
- » God uses single women.
- » God uses divorced women.
- » God uses young women and not-so-young women.

We are our worst critics, aren't we? Let's do an exercise today. Write out how you would describe yourself. Challenge yourself to not only write things you dislike but things that you enjoy about who you are.

Read and meditate on Jeremiah 1:5.

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you; I
appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*

Now write out Jeremiah 1:5 for yourself in your own words.

When you hear:

- » God uses women with a past.
- » God uses women without a past.
- » God uses women in business.
- » God uses stay-at-home moms.
- » God uses single women.
- » God uses divorced women.
- » God uses young women and not-so-young women.

What do you think about?

Is there any area of your life that you struggle to believe God can use?
What, if anything, do you think disqualifies you from leadership?

READ JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through His Word regarding your area of struggle?

Thinking back upon your childhood, would you describe yourself as more of a leader or a follower? Explain.

God is calling each of us to make a difference within our sphere of influence, and many of us do not realize the scope and magnitude of that sphere. Take a moment to make a list of whom you interact with on a regular basis (the cashier at your local coffee shop, the receptionist at the school, your hairdresser, your small group, etc.). This is your sphere!

EXERCISE

Just like I wrote a “Dear Lori,” letter to my younger self at the beginning of Woman Up, I want you to take a moment to do the same. In this letter to your younger self, think about a time in your life when it would have been significant to write yourself a letter of encouragement to keep you going on the journey.

CHAPTER 2

GET UP



When my three boys were teenagers, waking them up in the mornings sometimes felt like more of a feat than resurrecting the dead. I remember going back and forth between my three boys' rooms having to repeatedly tell them, "GET UP!" until they would finally, and sleepily, get out of bed.

We may not be sleeping through an alarm clock, but sometimes we can be sleeping through our purpose. Fatigued by failures, sluggish in our struggles, overwhelmed by the obstacles of life . . . those things can get you down when God is calling you to get up.

I remember a few times in my life when God threw me into, "GET UP!" moments, and they defined me forever.

The first and biggest defining moment in my life happened in 1988 when I was nineteen years old. My mom, brothers, and I were sitting on the front row listening to my dad preach when he suddenly died of a heart attack. My dad was only forty-five years old. That day changed me forever.

Another defining moment for me was when I was twenty-three years old and Joe, my husband, and I went to a craft fair to shop for our nursery. I was excitedly expecting our first baby. I reached up to scratch my neck, and I felt a giant lump. I knew that something was wrong that day. I found out just a few weeks later that I had Hodgkin's



lymphoma cancer in my neck and in my chest. Nothing can prepare you to find out you have cancer while you are expecting a baby. There were many moments in my journey with cancer where I was overcome with fear and anxiety about what the future looked like for my husband and baby boy.

Another time was when I felt so inadequate, immature, and ill-equipped to lead in our first assignment as senior pastors. A new friend became an unexpected Deborah in my life and challenged me that I had not picked myself, but God had chosen me to lead in this season. We sometimes fail to see that getting up is not just an act of self-discipline; it's an act of obedience.

What I have found is that most people stay down because they don't have someone there to come to their "bedroom," or to wherever they are, in their sleep or in their fetal position, and tell them to, "GET UP!" (even if it's the tenth time they've had to say it). We all need people who look beyond our posture and see our potential.

We find Deborah going to Barak again in Judges 4. He is down even though he has been given battle strategies, marching orders, and a word from the Lord that he is going to win the war and free his nation from captivity. Perhaps the voices of past failures were speaking more loudly to him than the voice of a victorious future.

We can never fulfill the call of God without having voices to our future, without having Deborahs in our lives. She goes to battle with Barak, and at the same time helps him battle the voices of fear and doubt within him.

What do you need to get up out of today, and who are the Deborahs that need to surround you in your life? I pray that there are Deborahs coming around you because God has a calling for you, and **if you have a pulse, you have a purpose**. So let's get up together.

Look up, read, and write Proverbs 27:17.

Why do you think it’s so important to have the right “iron” in our lives?

Who are my Deborahs?

Some Deborahs aren’t women. They are people—men and women—who cause you to stop shrinking back (physically and emotionally) and stand tall. They celebrate your uniqueness. Thinking upon your own life, who are your Deborahs, past or present? Why?

During my grief after the loss of my father, I thought I might never feel the presence of God again. Reflecting on your own life, what were the

defining moments when you felt (or did not feel) the presence of God near or feared that you would never again feel Him?

Continuing to show up and get up, even when I felt nothing during my time of grief, broke the silence, void, and emotionless despair off of my life. What places in your life do you need to get up, even though you don't feel like it?

READ NUMBERS 13:30

*“Let us go up at once and occupy it, for
we are well able to overcome it.”*

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Journal anything that might be lingering in your heart.

Fill in the blank as a declaration today of the beginning of your new journey. “I will, with the power of the Holy Spirit, get up today and occupy _____, for I am well able to overcome _____.”

Don't forget, you, too, are a Deborah to someone else! How can you encourage and strengthen someone around you?

Take a moment to pray for that someone in your life that needs encouragement. Ask the Lord to give you a plan of action today to minister to them. Journal your prayer for them and how you believe God is going to deliver hope in their lives.

CHAPTER 3

BACK UP



My husband and I lead an incredible church, Celebration Church, in Austin, Texas. But what makes our church incredible isn't the facilities that we have, or our worship team, or our stage (all of which are amazing). It is the people. You will often find us talking to as many people as we can after our services, and we are the last people to leave on Sundays. We just LOVE people.

What makes people fascinating is not just who they are right now but what has made them into who they are today. You see, we ALL have a past. We all have a list of defining moments, like we talked about last week, that have shaped us into who we are.

However, many people never move on from the past that is behind them. It cripples them. Keeps them stuck in a cycle of bitterness, or insecurity, or complacency.

In *The Lion King*, which I watched a million times with my kids, Pumba says, "You gotta put your behind in your past." Then the great theologian Timone corrects him, "No, no, no! You've got to put your past behind you!" Some of us have our behinds stuck in the past when God wants us to put our past behind us!

When we are introduced to Deborah in Judges, we don't know much about her past! We know that she was married to a man named Lapidoth, but there is no record of her having any children. In this time of history, it would have been seen as "punishment from God" for women to not be able to have children. It would have been, as it is for



all women who have to endure barrenness, extremely painful for her to walk through.

However, we see Deborah leading with strength.

We don't know for sure, but if Deborah were dealing with the pain of not being able to have children, it didn't show in her ability to step into the calling that God had on her life. We see her taking the pain of her past and turning it into purpose.

We know that because Judges 5:7 says this:

*“The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be until
I arose; I, Deborah, arose as a **mother in Israel**.”*

Here was Deborah, without any biological children, calling herself “a mother in Israel.” She might not have had physical children, but she took that pain and turned it into responsibility to mother a **nation**!

- » Don't let your past keep you from leading.
- » Don't let your past keep you from growing.
- » Don't let your past keep you from purpose.

Let's do a little soul work today! Maybe, like Israel, you feel like life has ceased because of disappointments that you've seen as limitations. Let's back up for one moment and take time to remember what happened and also how God's Word speaks to our place of pain.





OUR HURT	HIS WORD
Example: Dad died. Feeling fatherless and alone.	Psalm 27:10 "Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me."

We must challenge our thoughts regarding our past. We CAN live amazing lives for God even with the darkest past, or we can live our

past as the only life we know. Which would others describe as the way you are living?

How can you begin to lay aside the past and start to run the race God has called you to?

What obstacles seem to keep you from getting back up, and how can you start seeing them as an opportunity to dream again?

OBSTACLE	OPPORTUNITY

Proverbs 24:16 provides a powerful challenge to us! Check it out, and fill in the verse. Let it be a guide to benefit your season.

*“For the righteous _____
times and _____ again. . . .”*

One thing we know for sure, if Jesus has done it before, He will do it again! Reflect on a time when you experienced a “down season” where you may have had to faith it over faking it until you reached your “up season.” Now is a great time to remind yourself that you have courage and faith in difficult circumstances! Write this memory down to be a reminder that God will do it again!

CHAPTER 4

COURAGE UP



I have an irrational fear of iguanas. For months, I'd looked forward to attending a destination wedding in the Caribbean, only to arrive at the resort and find the prehistoric-looking beasts surrounding the pool I'd dreamed about experiencing. Not only were they at the pool, they were at the beach. I watched a woman flipped out of her chair as the creature attacked her lunch. What started out as the trip of a lifetime became a trip I'd never repeat. I've literally stayed away from those islands ever since then, and I ask about the iguana population whenever we consider traveling to any tropical destination.

It's one thing when the thing you fear is stuck on a remote island; it's another thing when the things we fear are things we can't escape. In recent years, fear has invaded our lives more than ever before. Pandemics, political tension, moral debates, school shootings—we can't simply take a flight back to safety. Fear is at our door, in our communities, and on our airwaves.

Fear can cripple us. Fear can keep us tied down instead of freely walking in courage and strength.

You might not be dealing with the fear of iguanas, but the fear you are facing could feel like an iguana that just won't go away. It seems like everywhere you go, it follows, looming in the background, stealing the joy of the everyday moments.

However, you don't have to live with fear. You can live with COURAGE.

One of my favorite passages is Isaiah 43:2-3. It says: "When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

I want to emphasize that word **consume**. Have you let the “flames” of fear consume you? You need to know today that God is with you, and you can walk through the fire and NOT be consumed.

- » You can go through the deepest sorrow and still have joy.
- » You can go through the greatest heartbreak and still come out healed.
- » You can go through the toughest trial and have strength in the midst of it.

There are 365 verses in the Bible that encourage us to cast away our fear. These verses, like all Bible verses, don’t have an expiration date. God didn’t intend for them to become ineffective beginning in 2020 or whatever year that fear tries to take over your life.

The voice of culture should never be allowed to crowd out the voice of courage. Culture will always try to consume you with fear. Whether we notice it or not, the things that are culturally “normal,” are not God’s best for your life.

- » Culture will want you to live with anxiety of what will happen in the future, but God calls you to live with courage as you face the unknown.
- » Culture will want you to be so tied to social media that you isolate yourself, but God calls you to live with courage as you intentionally build God-centered friendships.
- » Culture will want you to live a frantic and hurried life, but God calls you to live with courage as you take on your daily challenges with peace.

In a culture that would want you to take your eyes off of Jesus, we have to stand strong—no matter what!

It’s time to COURAGE UP!

Do you consider yourself to be a courageous person? Why or why not?

God's Command + Our Obedience = The Miraculous

READ MATTHEW 14:28

"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

When has God called you to walk on waters that you haven't been brave enough to step out on?

Read and write Matthew 24:13.

What fears do you hold that may keep you from enduring to the end?

Every one of us has our iguanas! When you go through difficult season, trials, and battles, what insecurities within yourself do you recognize the most?

Let's do more than think about them, let's expose them! Be brave today. Write them out, and study God's Word to break their hold on you.



FEAR	GOD'S PROTECTION
Example: Death	Psalm 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You <i>are</i> with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

What “buts” do you offer up the most when people try to call you out of your comfort zone?

Let’s remember today that we lack nothing when the spirit of God is with us. It’s easy to think of places of lack, but challenge yourself to think of a place in your life you have something to offer. It may be a word of encouragement, flour in your pantry to make some cookies for your neighbor. Maybe it’s a dream without a budget or a kid without direction. Give God what you have, and let Him make up the difference!

Fill in the blank and pray this prayer.

*Lord, today all I have is _____
 _____, but I give it freely to you and ask you to make up the
 difference. I surrender knowing you’re faithful in every way,
 and in you I can experience peace and walk in courage. Amen.*

CHAPTER 5

WAKE UP



I live in a family FULL of passionate people. If you were to be a fly on the wall for a family gathering, we would be laughing a lot, arguing about football, debating about politics, and playing games where everyone is equally competitive.

We have a campus of our church located right outside of Naples, Italy, and sometimes when we go to visit the church, I think that our family was really meant to be Italian! We have the passion of Italians with Louisiana roots!

That passion has sometimes caused us to make a big deal out of a small issue. Sometimes it's caused a family fight when it should've been family fun. One of the biggest fights Joe and I ever had was on our first ever visit to Rome. We were tired from a long flight but couldn't wait to see some of the city, so we decided to take a "short" walk. It became a longer and longer walk as my husband decided to try every gelato place in Rome. "Just one more gelato," he said as my ankles continued to swell (as they often do on long flights), and we got farther and farther from the hotel. Two passionate people, each wanting their own way + jet lag + cankles are a recipe for a bad night!



Misguided passion can lead us all down a path that we were never meant to take. It can lead you to say things or do things that you regret. In our case, it has led to sharing this story in marriage teachings for years to come. We've actually given purpose to what was a misuse of passion.

Some passions are great, just mis-prioritized. I have a friend who is a serial hobbyist. He's been an artist, a motorcyclist, a gardener, a cowboy, a sommelier, and a self-made chef, to name a few things. Whatever he is into, he is ALL into! Hobbies are great unless they take you away from what you were ultimately made for.

The greatest day in your life is when you find Christ. The second greatest day is when you wake up to His purpose for you. There is passion that God wants you to activate. It is passion that wakes us up, and pushes us into what God has called us to do!

Ephesians 5:14 (NLT) says, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."



God is turning the lights on, so we don't have to stumble through life trying to find fulfillment in what will fill our calendar but will never fill our souls.

What fills your calendar? Take today to weigh your time, and measure if you are maximizing your passions or if you are filled up with fruitless time thieves. Let this chart inform you of areas to nurture and areas to let go of.

ACTIVITY	TIME SPENT	OUTCOME	FRUITFUL/ FRUITLESS



Think outside the box. What are some ways you can live to make a difference in the life of God’s people? Think back to those you listed in your sphere of influence in chapter one.

What are some areas of life where you are blending in when you should be standing out? Why is it hard for you to take a stand?

Where is your passion level for God right now? For church? For the body of Christ?

PASSION	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	WHY I FEEL THIS WAY:
God				
Church				
The Body of Christ				

Do a Bible word/topic search! Find as many scriptures as you can on being passionate for God. Report your findings here, and let them challenge your passion level. Here’s one of my favorites: Colossians 3:23 (NIV): “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

SCRIPTURE	THOUGHTS

As believers, we all have experienced the passion and filling of the Lord’s presence in our lives. And if we have walked with Christ long enough, we have also experienced valleys where we have forgotten how

it feels to experience that presence. If we continue to show up, we will once again welcome that presence. Take a moment to think about a time when you may have felt the emptiness and write it here.


In Judges 5, the “Song of Deborah” is sung about the triumph of her victory. In verse 12, the writer passionately tells Deborah: “Wake up, wake up, break out in song!” Passionate people can often be people who forget to celebrate because they are moving on to the next thing. You may have experienced valleys, but you have also experienced mountain tops! Wake up! Write your own song here. (Don’t worry you don’t have to sing it for anyone!) Be reminded today that you are a passionate, powerful woman of God. You have and will overcome!

THE SONG OF _____

CHAPTER 6

RISE UP





Have you ever heard a song that after you listen to it you feel like you could take on the world? I heard this song, *Rise Up*, by Andra Day recently, and the words struck me. She says:

*And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up
I'll rise unafraid
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again
And I'll rise up
High like the waves
I'll rise up
In spite of the ache
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again*

This song makes me want to RISE UP! But rising up is easier said than done.

The problem with rising up is that you can only rise out of something that is holding you down. We want to have the anthem of rising up, yet we don't want to endure the pressure, the loss, the pain of the gravity that holds us down.

Anyone can lead in good times when the growth charts are up and to the right, the kids are well-behaved, and everyone is getting along!

Deborah didn't have the luxury of leading in prosperous times. She was thrown into the deep end of a downward spiraling nation. She didn't allow the gravity of her circumstances to take her out of the fight. She didn't allow the headlines to keep her head down. I call her an antigravity leader.

Great leaders outlast difficult seasons, they turn the tide in times of testing, and they stand up when everyone else is caving in. You were meant to be an Antigravity Leader. We have the spirit of Christ, who is the greatest riser-upper of all times living in us. Let me remind you of this verse:

READ ROMANS 8:11 (NKJV)

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

- » He has empowered you to Rise Up and
- » Push beyond your limitations.
- » Press through the challenges before you.
- » Shift the altitude and your attitude.
- » Pass the test in front of you.

Antigravity leaders don't let gravity keep them down. They **RISE UP**.

READ JUDGES 4:1-4 (NIV)

“Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help.

Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.”

Leading in adversity is nothing new to women! After reading of Deborah's circumstances during her time of leadership, how does it inspire you to confront the challenges you are facing?

We have all experienced failure, but we can fail forward. Have you let failures and/or a fear of failing again keep you from moving forward or trying something new? If so, commit to being bold and courageous in obedience to what God has asked you to do.

When trials come, it's important to be anchored in the Word of God, so we can endure and even thrive. Spiritual warfare is real, and the enemy wants to hold us down and paralyze us in fear, so we won't rise to our potential. In seasons of warfare, what thoughts do you consistently battle?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 (NASB)

"We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

The thoughts will not destroy themselves; we have to be intentional with how we battle. Here are some ways you can destroy the thoughts that are trying to destroy you:

- 1) Stop them as soon as you hear them, and don't entertain the rabbit trail they want to lead you on.
- 2) Pray a blessing on the person your mind wants to curse.
- 3) Worship with all that is in you.
- 4) Repent from any offense you might be holding onto.
- 5) Do something good for someone.

What tactic are you going to employ in your battle strategy? What other ways has the Holy Spirit nudged you to deal with this specific area of struggle? Try something new this week, and journal your outcome. Think about how you felt before, during, and after executing your new strategy.

What are some ways you can improve your attitude within your circumstances? Commit to being a leader of hope rather than a purveyor of despair.

Here are some scriptures for you to read this week to assist you with your new RISE UP attitude. Look them up, and write your findings.

SCRIPTURE	TAKEAWAY
Philippians 4:8-9	
2 Timothy 2:15	
Acts 1:8	
James 4:17	
1 Peter 3:9	
Galatians 5:22	
Nehemiah 8:10	

CHAPTER 7

WISE UP



I have raised three boys, and if there is one thing that I appreciate about males it's that they are, most of the time, not complicated! They say what they mean. Sometimes they're brutally honest, but they can take what they dish out and normally don't hold a grudge. When they were growing up, I quickly learned that most of their problems were solved by making them a good snack!

Females, on the other hand, are multifaceted. Like a diamond, they have angles and depth, strengths and complexities. What makes us strong can also make us weak. Yes, we are complex. But, we should not be complicated, also known as difficult, troublesome, perplexing, or problematic.

How do we know that Deborah was complex but not complicated? It is said that the sons of Israel would line up to hear her wisdom. Men don't line up for advice from complicated women—they run or at least they should!

The Bible gives us another beautiful example of a woman who is complex without being complicated in Proverbs 31.

I remember growing up feeling like I couldn't relate to the Proverbs 31 woman. I imagined that she cooked farm-to-table meals, wore modest, long skirts, and had a dozen well-behaved children in tow. I respected her but couldn't relate to her. Once, when I was asked to speak on Biblical womanhood, I looked at this famous chapter again and realized she was so much more. She was a businesswoman, a real estate mogul, a fashion designer, and a philanthropist. She kept an insane schedule, yet she was so intentional with her family. She was an awesome wife and raised amazing kids who called her blessed! The Proverbs 31 woman was a BOSS!

What stands out most to me is verse 23, "Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land." Her gift

empowered the gifts of others. The battle of the sexes goes back to the book of Genesis. Yet, we are called to complete not to compete. She didn't lead at the expense of her husband, but her leadership caused him to rise in every area of life which brought lift to the whole family.

There are people who are smart but who aren't wise. When we Wise Up, there is a ripple effect in our families, our friendships, and our communities. James 3:17 gives us a beautiful and uncomplicated definition of what true wisdom looks like: "But the **wisdom** from above **is first** pure, then **peaceable**, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

I think we all want to be her, the Proverbs 31 woman, but we can be overwhelmed at the work and wisdom it takes to live it out.

Read the epilogue: *The Wife of Noble Character* from Proverbs 31 (NIV):

*¹⁰A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.*



*¹¹Her husband has full confidence in
her and lacks nothing of value.*

¹²She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

¹³She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

¹⁴She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.

*¹⁵She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for
her family and portions for her female servants.*

*¹⁶She considers a field and buys it; out of
her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

*¹⁷She sets about her work vigorously; her
arms are strong for her tasks.*

*¹⁸She sees that her trading is profitable, and
her lamp does not go out at night.*

*¹⁹In her hand she holds the distaff and
grasps the spindle with her fingers.*

*²⁰She opens her arms to the poor and
extends her hands to the needy.*



²¹*When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.*

²²*She makes coverings for her bed; she is
clothed in fine linen and purple.*

²³*Her husband is respected at the city gate, where
he takes his seat among the elders of the land.*

²⁴*She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.*

²⁵*She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.*

²⁶*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful
instruction is on her tongue.*

²⁷*She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

²⁸*Her children arise and call her blessed; her
husband also, and he praises her:*

²⁹*“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”*

³⁰*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a
woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

³¹*Honor her for all that her hands have done, and
let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

Now, let's do some work! Take each verse and state the character you find in it. Then, self-assess and state if you have it or if you need to develop it. Don't get overwhelmed. Trust me; this woman does not exist in totality, but we are all being transformed into woman of noble character!

Character	I've got it!	I'm going to develop it!
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
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16.		
17.		
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19.		
20.		
21.		

22.		
23.		
24.		
25.		
26.		
27.		
28.		
29.		
30.		
31.		

As women, we carry the role of protector, being multifaceted and uncomplicated, being strategic, secure, and inspirational. Thinking over each of these descriptions and using your list above to help guide your analysis, which area could use more consistency and intentionality within your leadership?

We often look at our weaknesses, but, girl, you’ve got a lot to work with, so “werk it!” Give yourself some credit, you are not who you used to be! Use this time to write how all of these amazing characteristics that you do have are being used to not only bless but to build the people around you!

Look up Proverbs 31:26 in as many translations as you can find. Write down your favorite version here, and use it as a guide in all of your conversations this week.

CHAPTER 8

TEAM UP






Sometimes people who know how big of a sports fan I am presume that I am athletic. Sadly, I'm not. In fact, I was always picked last on teams in my least favorite class, PE. If we were playing softball, I'd be so far in the outfield that I was practically out of the field. While I was out there, I wasn't dreaming of a dramatic catch to win the game, I was dreaming about one day being an entrepreneur, lawyer, or business-woman. If strategy and leadership were sports, I would have been the first to say, "Put me in, Coach!"

I might not have been the best at sports, but I have always valued the power of the **TEAM**.

You see, Deborah and Barak had to pull together as a team to win the victory. Culture would try to tell us that men and women don't need each other. Some men are prone to leave women out of their organizations or "inner circles" because it seems easier in their male-dominated world. Some women have a "girls run the world" mentality, and they push men out of the equation so that they can prove that women can do everything that men can do!

However, we need each other. We are an incomplete team without the unique gifts and skillsets that men and women bring to the table. We might win small victories without each other, but we won't win wars.

There have been times when I've experienced prejudice for being a woman. Sometimes, I've had to work harder to have my voice



heard. When I graduated from college, I was offered a position as marketing director at a technology company. The only other women who worked at the company were secretaries. When I was given my desk, I was shocked to find it was the receptionist desk. I had to do my big marketing job—in between forwarding calls.

There's nothing wrong with being a receptionist, but I literally had to do the job I was hired to do on my own time, because the men who led the company thought I made a great first impression on people coming to our high-rise offices. Many people would have left on day one, but I was eager to prove that my contributions could make a big difference. I eventually got a real office, and when I left the company, the president and vice president both extended an invitation to return at any time in the future, if I decided.

I've also seen that sometimes it's not a glass ceiling of womanhood that's keeping us out. Sometimes, we have to get out of our own way. We have to take a hard look at reasons only we can address in ourselves.

Many women aren't dealing with a glass ceiling, but a feelings ceiling. We have allowed our feelings, our emotions, to get in the way of our being invited into the conversation among leaders. We want to blame it on our "womanhood," but really, we need to honestly look at our lives to see the ceiling that we are really hitting.

Are you hitting a glass ceiling, or are you hitting a feelings ceiling?

You might be hitting a feelings ceiling if:

- 1) You take constructive feedback personally.
- 2) You think everybody has bad motives.
- 3) You need to be the hero of everything accomplished on your team.
- 4) You gain value from the responsibilities you hoard, rather than empowering others on your team to win.
- 5) You have to be the smartest one at the table.

Some of these might feel like “ouch” statements. They might be getting into your personal space. But let’s not limit ourselves as leaders. Let’s break through the ceilings that we have created, and Woman Up!

Where have you hit a feeling ceiling? What is your indicator, and how are you going to remove this limitation?

Think back. When do you first remember having these feeling?

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with this feeling that is limiting you. Journal here what the Holy Spirit shares with you, and be intentional about following through with any direction He gives you.

Write out Ecclesiastes 4:9-11.

As a leader, you are aware of your strengths. Oftentimes, the Lord pairs us with people (men and women) who are different than us. In what ways can you see that the people around you benefit you and you benefit them?

If you're being honest with yourself, and I hope you are, is it easy or hard for you to accept criticism and deflect praise? Why?

Have you ever tried to be someone you were not? What qualities or characteristics were you striving to emulate?

What would it take for you to know it was “okay to lead with strength”? List these ideas. You may be surprised to find you may have already put some of these into action.



CHAPTER 9

HUMBLE UP



Have you ever sent a text message to someone that you didn't mean to? I'm having to humble myself to admit it, but on a few occasions, I was texting about a person to someone else, and accidentally sent the text about them, to them! Once it even happened when the person was in the room with me! The feeling of dread hits you when they realize, and you realize, that you just sent that text to the wrong person. Just so your imagination doesn't run wild, it wasn't a personal attack, but it was something along the lines of "I can't talk about this in front of _____," and _____ was in the room! Am I the only person that this has happened to?

There is nothing that will make you Humble Up more than having to explain a text message that wasn't meant to be sent!

However, we cannot confuse being humble with being humiliated.

Humiliation is a feeling you have when you do something you didn't mean to, and it causes you to shrink back. But **HUMILITY** is a posture that you can carry as a leader that gives you strength.

Jesus was humble yet confident. In fact, He flipped leadership on its head by saying that the least shall be the greatest, by exemplifying humility by washing the feet of the disciples, and ultimately by laying down His life on the cross.

C. S. Lewis says, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of yourself less.”

I think many women struggle with living in a place of self-doubt and insecurity, but they chalk it up to humility. I have seen this in some of the greatest women leaders in our church. Women who disqualified themselves from applying for positions on our staff, or stepping up to lead a team, all because they didn’t want to “put themselves up for the job.”

Let me tell you today that humility is not thinking about yourself as less than or not enough. Humility is recognizing that God has uniquely given you strengths and weaknesses, and He has brought other leaders around you to complement your strengths and bring lift to your weaknesses.

The danger of living without humility is pride. The Bible speaks to pride with great caution.

Proverbs 16:8 says: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

I have noticed pride coming to the surface over the past few years. With social media at its peak, I have seen that underdeveloped leaders have



been given a voice to speak their mind, no matter the consequences. This gives a false sense of leadership to those who are not yet ready for the weight and burden that comes with a platform.

- » We are quick to cancel people.
- » We are quick to disqualify people.
- » We are quick to disassociate with people.
- » We are quick to judge people.

As leaders and Christ-followers, we have the responsibility to stay humble. It is with humble hearts that we will see people step into their leadership potential. It is with humble hearts that we will see the lost saved. It is with humble hearts that we will step into the calling that God has written for us.

How would you describe a person who has true humility?

How do you ensure you are walking in humility in your own life, being both realistic about your shortcomings yet confident in who you are and your giftings?

Have you encountered a humble leader in life that you respect and admire? How did they treat other people and make others feel?

Are you able to recognize others' worth and talents? Are you also able to recognize your own? If you are, use this space to write them down. If you are not, explain why.



Do you like to work with a team? Reflect on both the joys and difficulties of your team experiences, and write down your findings.

If you aren't teachable, you aren't teamable. Is it hard for you to take correction? If so, how is your resistance to constructive criticism impacting the team around you?

A great step in truly walking in humility is repentance. Take this time to write a prayer of repentance to the Lord. Ask Him to help you to find your strength in Him.

CHAPTER 10

PURPOSE UP



Say it with me three times: “My title is not my purpose.” “My title is not my purpose.” “My title is not my purpose.”

Thank God my title is not my purpose because there are times I’ve held too many titles, worn too many hats, and gone in too many different directions for it to possibly be my “purpose.” But don’t be mistaken; there is purpose in every assignment and in every season.

Visionary leaders often find it hard to find purpose in what seems mundane. We had such a big vision when we planted Celebration Church. In the grind of the early days, sometimes discouragement would set in when we were trying to “fix” marriages and pay the week-to-week expenses or making late-night runs to Office Depot to have monthly newsletters printed. I don’t know what we had in mind as our “destination,” but the journey was tough. One night, Joe was out late, counseling one of our members who’d left his wife, and I thought, *This is not what I dreamed about! This isn’t what I thought our purpose would be!*

God reminded me to enjoy the journey, that we were building, one person at a time.

People open doors to purpose.

King David said in Psalm 84:10, “I’d rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

What do doorkeepers do? They say “yes” to the mundane task of opening doors for other people to walk through. What seems like a small and insignificant job can actually change the lives of the people who encounter them.

One thing that I love about the animal kingdom is that animals understand that isolation equals death. When animals are found alone in the

wild, it is a sign that they are nearing the end. They have put themselves in a vulnerable position for the enemy to come in and attack.

Joe and I could have isolated ourselves early on as we were building the church. We could have always been the ones “doing everything.” We could have led worship, preached, been the kids’ pastors, led the staff, cut the grass, etc., but we would never be living out the dreams that we are living now if we hadn’t made room for people to step up and lead. One of the wins of that season was that it forced us to grow ourselves as leaders and to empower others.

I love what God says about purpose. He can bring forth His purpose out of our most difficult seasons, our deepest pains, and our worst and best days. He is a purpose-redeemer for those who love Him.



READ ROMANS 8:28

*“And we know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love him, who have
been called according to his purpose.”*

When you read Romans 8:28, what does it mean as it relates to your life?

Your purpose is not your title. How does this statement make you feel? Less or more secure? Check your title at the door, and redefine your purpose here.

Are you intentional in building a team atmosphere? In what way?



In what ways can you personally improve how you communicate in regard to your words, your mannerisms, your emotions, and your presence?

Would you say that you are more or less adaptable to change? List some ways that you are able to move forward, even if it's just the next step!

Learning to take joy in the mundane will help you to learn how to live in the present. The grass is always greener on the other side of leadership, but God has something for you today. Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your joy, and when you're hit with a task or responsibility that seems too small to matter, challenge your thoughts to instead honor God with your service. List a few things you do that you know you need a better attitude towards.

Read and write Colossians 3:23.

Let it be your driving force this week.

CHAPTER 11

BUCKLE UP



We are very blessed where we live here in Austin to have an IKEA right down the street from where we live. People flock from all over to come and explore the place that has furnished most of our homes while not breaking our bank accounts. When you walk into IKEA, every new corner you turn, you see beautiful displays of furniture, décor, and lighting set up in curated ways to show you what your life could be like if you bought those things.

And while you might pick out a few things you want to buy and feel excited about them, there is a part of the store that I fear most people dread. And that is the warehouse. It's the place where all the beautiful furniture that you once saw is now disassembled, packaged in boxes, and waiting for you to build it.

You would then get home, unbox your furniture, and begin to build it, piece by piece. However, you can't build the furniture without a small package that comes inside of it labeled "tools". The beautiful thing about building is that you can't do it without **TOOLS**.

We are all building something. We are building our families, building our careers, building our dreams, building our legacies. And just like a piece of furniture from IKEA, in the "box" of what you are building, there are tools that you need to use. Those tools are not there by accident, they are not there to simply ignore, but they are there to help you build.

Jael, in Judges, understood her **TOOLS**. Her tools might have seemed insignificant in the mundane moments of life, but when the right opportunity came, she activated them for a great purpose.

Jael used the two things she knew how to use. A tent peg and a hammer.

When Sisera, the enemy, came into her camp, she didn't have to wonder what tools she would use to defeat him. She already knew that her skills to set up a tent would accompany her in a great moment of purpose.

We all have tools of experience that we accumulate over time. We start out awkwardly learning to wield them, and then before you know it, we become ninjas. Maybe it's a first-time mom learning how to hold a baby, and before you know it, you can juggle not only the baby but all the equipment that goes with having a baby. Maybe it's work conversations. It's hard to confront someone you lead; then it becomes easier and easier.

Your greatest tool to use in the lives of others is the tool of your pain. When you have overcome something, God wants you to use the tools that you overcame with to help others overcome. The greatest defining moment of my life was watching my father die suddenly, as a teenager. Recently, a family in our church, five teenagers, lost their father in a tragic car accident. There are many people who beautifully surrounded them with care, but for me, it was a moment to pull out that specific tool from my arsenal to help them see past what would be the darkest day of their lives. I used my tool to bring them hope that they could be happy again, that God still hears, and that their dad's prayers didn't die with him, as my dad's didn't die for me.

Earlier, we talked about God taking "all things" and making them work together "for those called according to purpose."

What tools do you have that can be used by God to bring healing to others?

There are five tools we can utilize to be effective leaders: developing disciples, being available, being accountable, leading by examples and

being active. Which of these would you say you are doing well? Which do you need to improve? How can you do that?

The building process can be frustrating, am I right or am I right? Is there something you've walked away from because of frustration that you need to pick back up again?

God has the ability to provide doors of opportunity for us. While God is aware of the big desires of your heart, He also has smaller seeds of opportunities for us. What are some ways that you can continue to faithfully serve and steward what God has entrusted to you now, before the big opportunity has arrived?

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (TLB) says: *If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.* Let's make this personal and specific.

If I wait for _____, I will never get _____ done.



So what can you do to get unstuck and move forward?

Spend some time with the Lord and journal your thoughts and prayers. You can do what God is asking you to do, He's given you the tools to see it through to completion.

CHAPTER 12

LEAD UP



Leadership isn't for wimps, and neither is Christianity.

C.S. Lewis wrote in his classic, *Mere Christianity*, “If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.”

Although our gospel really is good news for eternity, Jesus doesn’t hold back in measuring our expectations and challenging us to count the cost in the passage in Luke 14:25-33.

In a world that celebrates insta-famous people, we cannot substitute making a name for making an impact. There are no shortages of gifted people who have exploded onto the world’s stage while imploding in their personal lives. Often, this is because our gifts elevate us quickly to positions or platforms while our character has not developed to the same pace.

Proverbs 20:21 (ESV) says, “An inheritance gained hastily in the beginning will not be blessed in the end.”

No wonder there are long waiting periods and speed bumps in God’s leadership tract. We are reminded of this over and over in the Bible by



heroes of faith who were developed in obscurity, whether David on the backside of a shepherd's field, Moses, on the backside of a desert, or Jesus Himself, faithfully building alongside His father for 30 years, behind the scenes, in order to do three years of public ministry. Success too quickly gained often becomes failure.

There are a million unnoticed, mundane activities on the journey of leadership greatness. If I'm looking at my life as a mom, it wasn't the Disney World trips that produced three successful adults. It was bath times and bedtimes, and homework projects. When I look back on over two years of ministry at Celebration, it hasn't been big events that built us, but pastoring people through everyday life while being consistent in our testimony. More is caught than taught. The people around you are watching you, and actually, I think they're rooting for you to be strong in your calling.

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy of the calling with which you were called**, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."



In your own walk with Christ, what difficulties have you experienced?

Grab your Bible or phone and look up and read Luke 14:25-33.

Now read Luke 14:33 in the Amplified version:

*So then, none of you can be My disciple who
does not [carefully consider the cost and then for
My sake] give up all his own possessions.*

Is there something that you are still clinging to that is keeping you from fully being a disciple of Christ? If so, write it down and make a conscious decision to fully surrender. If not, what have you learned to live without that has brought you closer to Christ?

In Ephesians 4 it talks about five attributes that should define our walk with the Lord. List those five qualities here:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

After reviewing the above list, complete the following:

My strongest attribute in my is _____.

My weakest attribute is _____.

Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to be your strength in your place of weakness. Journal any impressions, thoughts, or prophetic words you sense here.

Don't fall for the trap of "instant success"! You are made for more and my heart for you is that your character can sustain any platform the Lord gives you. Be patient, honor God and lead well no matter the task, title, or tragedy. I want to challenge you to do as I did, write a letter to your future self. Imagine what your future may look like, having grown in courage, surrounding yourself with inspiring relationships, and planting yourself in the purpose of God and His family. Dream big my friend! Happy writing!

CHAPTER 13

LOOK UP



Have you ever been disoriented or dizzy? I've sometimes struggled with vertigo at the worst times possible. With my husband and I leading a church together, I often am on stage on Sundays leading a prayer moment, dedicating babies, welcoming new people to our church, etcetera. It always seems like when I am at my dizziest, I am on stage. I stand there the whole time smiling and talking, yet hoping and praying that I don't fall over onto the hard concrete floors below me.

The time when I was in a high-pressure moment to lead is the time when I was most disoriented.

Isn't that true for our lives?

We enter the time when we are meant to step up, to lead, to lean in, but instead, it feels like the world is spinning around us. In 2020, we all experienced the "world spinning" kind of dizziness, and it knocked some of us out.

When you were younger and you played "pin the tail on the donkey", what did the person sending you off to pin the tail do first? They blindfolded you! They took away your vision, and then usually (if they were competitive), they spun you around as many times as they could so that you would dizzily try to find your way to the donkey. Most likely, you would miss the mark because you didn't know where you were going!

Many of us are missing the mark. We are missing the mark of what God has called us to do because we are letting the culture blindfold us, spin us around, and send us off, not knowing the direction we should be going.

If we aren't careful, we will let our values become suggestions, our beliefs become debatable, our community become shallow, and our calling will become secondary.

But God has not called you to live dizzy in a hurting world. He has called you to stand firm. He has called you to have clear vision. He has called you to LOOK UP.

Psalms 40:2 (ESV) says, “He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the mire bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.”

You are meant to have secure steps. You are meant to have feet set upon a rock. You are meant to hit the mark!

Leaders must know where they are going or they will just be the blind leading the blind. Do some soul searching, have your Bible handy, and prayerfully write out the following. Include scriptures to support your position.

My unchanging values are:





My Biblically based beliefs that I live by are:

My community that challenges me and brings me strength is:

My calling will not become secondary to:

Read Luke 21:25-28 (NKJV):

*“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, **look up** and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”*

When we don’t recognize the place we are in, we can focus on the things around us to solidify the fear that tries to creep into our hearts, or we can **look up** to find direction from God so that we never lose sight of where He is taking us. He’s not affected by the things that affect us. He’s calling us to trust Him and to face the battle head-on. Where are you? What fears have crept in? Be honest and be encouraged to look up because redemption is near!

Because I am a daughter,

- » I can overcome what overwhelms me.
- » I can walk in courage when I want to run in fear,
- » I can _____,
- » I can _____,
- » I can _____.

When my thoughts are scaring me, I’ve got to look up to my father and speak up to fear!

Besides being a judge, prophet, and leader of Israel, Deborah was a singer-songwriter, and we see quite a long and graphic song in Judges chapter 5. These lines stuck out to me, as they sounded familiar to our day . . .

*The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.
7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.*

—Judges 5: 6b-7 (NKJV)

Because Deborah took responsibility and she courageously stepped into her calling, her village that was once dead came back to life. I wonder what villages, neighborhoods, friends, and family members we are meant to help bring to life! God is still looking for Deborahs who will look up and say “Yes”!

You are a Deborah, don’t you forget it! I see you; more importantly God sees you. Say “Yes!” to His calling, His purpose, and His plan! Declare this today:

- » YES God, I will .
- » YES God, I will .
- » YES God, I can .
- » YES God, together we will see .

WE ARE NOT PROMISED TOMORROW, BUT WE ARE GIFTED WITH TODAY! Step into it. You are ready! Let’s *Woman Up* together!