



*Seasons*  
of a Woman's Life  
*Bible Study*

*Lois* EVANS  
PASTORS' WIVES MINISTRY

[loisevans.org](http://loisevans.org)

## Week One – The Season of Seed Planting

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### Chapter 1: The Call

The first seed that should be planted in the heart of a godly woman is the seed of God's call. Every woman who walks with the Lord has a different story to tell about how He reached down and drew her to Himself. Why does God call us planting the seed of discipleship in our hearts? He calls us because He loves us. He calls us because, before the foundation of the world, each of us was foreseen and designed in every intricate detail.

Many women are satisfied to be saved and on their way to heaven, not realizing that the Lord has a divine purpose for them on earth. Each woman the Lord calls to Himself has been created to use her gifts, talents and skills to promote His kingdom. However, God does more than call us into salvation; He calls us into His service. Esther's life is a clear example of this.

Esther was a Jewish girl who was raised with a rich tradition of faith and godliness. The Lord chose Esther as the one who would intercede on behalf of the Jewish people to her husband King Ahasuerus. Initially, Esther was afraid and did not embrace the purpose God had for her. It was her cousin Mordecai who helped her to see that she was not chosen to be queen just to be another pretty face. With the Lord's help, Esther used everything she had including her beauty, her position and her intelligence to save her people from annihilation.

In the book of Esther, God's call is not explicitly stated, God's name is never mentioned, and He doesn't speak directly to anyone as He does to other people in the Bible. Yet as the story unfolds, you begin to see the Lord working, moving things around, and setting things up to accomplish His goal.

Sometimes in our own lives we struggle to discern what our purpose is, and we desire to know what God's specific will is for our individual lives. But as we seek to be obedient to what He has revealed to us in His Word, our story will unfold, and we will recognize that we are living out the purpose He has for us.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. — Psalm 119:105*

### On Your Own

How did God reach out and draw you to Himself? Describe your unique purpose for which you have been called. If you have not yet discovered your purpose, continue to pray that the Lord will make it known to you.

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Read Jeremiah 1:5, Ephesians 2:10 and Psalm 139:13, 16. List the common words and themes found in these verses.

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What do these verses tell you about who you are?

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Investigate the lives of the following people. How did the Lord call them and for what purpose? Take note of the events and people that God uses to bring them into their purpose.

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Esther (Esther 1-9)

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Ruth (Ruth 1-4)

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What did you learn about the methods God uses to engage us in the plan He has for our lives?

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### Discussion Questions

- Share your salvation story. How did God reach out to you and draw you to Himself?
- Share a time when you knew God had moved you into a strategic position for His purposes.
- Are you avoiding something God is calling you to do? Share what that is and why you are hesitating in moving forward.



## Chapter 2: The Commitment

Only those who are committed to God's purpose will come to know, understand and experience that purpose. Commitment, which follows our response to His call to salvation, is a commitment to follow Him, not only as Savior but as Lord. We commit ourselves to becoming His disciples. And through discipleship we commit ourselves to God's purpose. Then, as we learn to follow Him, listen to Him and obey Him, He reveals to us our gifts, talents and opportunities.

A commitment to Jesus and the discipleship process that follows is similar to the education we go through when we are working for an academic degree. Whether it is a two-year associate's degree, a four-year bachelor's degree or a master's degree, we make the determination that we will commit those years—difficult as they may be—to the educational process. And as we go through a degree program, there are demanding times—some of them almost unbearable. But we hang in there anyway because there is a goal to accomplish. We change our focus to the purpose in mind.

The same is true of our commitment to what the Lord has called us to do. Whether you are in a top executive role or filling the double role of a single parent—whatever your status is you have been placed where you are for such a time as this. Eventually, this season will pass, and you will be ready for another time—another level of service.

Mary and Joseph both lived lives of commitment to the Lord. Joseph honored his commitment to Mary even though she was pregnant. He honored the Lord and obeyed His instructions not to secretly divorce her. Mary's commitment to the Lord led her to believe the words of the angel Gabriel that she would give birth to the promised Messiah, even though she was a virgin. They were both committed to preserving the gift of God's Son and obeyed when they received instructions to flee to Egypt. Mary and Joseph faced ridicule, danger and uncertainty but remained true to their commitment, and as a result, they experienced the Lord's power in their lives.

### On Your Own

Describe a time you felt overwhelmed by a specific commitment. What did you learn about God as you fulfilled your commitment?

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Read the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17–19

What is Elijah called to do?

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Describe how Elijah demonstrates his commitment to the Lord.

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Write down the number of times the phrase "The Word of the Lord came to Elijah" is mentioned. What does the Lord say throughout this story? What is Elijah's response?

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Elijah's calling and his commitment puts him in tense and risky situations. How does Elijah handle these situations?

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What principles from Elijah's life can you apply to your own commitment to the Lord?

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### Discussion Questions

- Share a commitment you've made to the Lord. How has it been an easy or challenging commitment to keep?
- Sometimes our commitments require us to take risks. Share a time when you took a risk, and the Lord saw you through.



## Chapter 3: Christian Communion

Nurturing your relationship with Jesus is essential to navigating the various seasons of your life with grace. Throughout Scripture, we are constantly reminded to place our trust in the Lord, to abide in Him, to rest in Him and to take refuge in Him. It is in Jesus Christ that we find everything we need to live out the lives He has planned for us. We will not be successful without regularly communing with Him.

Communion is intimate fellowship and rapport with Jesus Christ. If we want to reap the full benefits of our lives in Christ, we have to know Him. We can only know Him by spending time in His Word, in prayer and in meditation on His Word.

We must continually develop the discipline of communing with the Lord. We must be intentional about it, especially in the world we are living in. Our society is all about the now and the urgent: express lanes, high speed and convenience. We're also living in the selfie age—not just pictures of self but focusing on our own desires, our goals, our dreams and our achievements. Nothing is wrong with these things, but putting our wants and desires over what the Lord would have for us is wrong.

The enemy does not like us to take time to slow down and spend time with the Lord, daily seeking His will for our lives. The world can be alluring, and the enemy does everything he can to distract us from experiencing the power and strength that comes from communing with the Lord. Communion with God does not happen by chance; it is a decision of the will.

*Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know. — Jeremiah 33:3*

### On Your Own

How do you make communion with God a top priority? How are you seeing His mighty hand at work in your life?

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Read John 15:1-8.

In this illustration, how does Jesus describe himself, the Father and us?

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In agriculture, what is the purpose of a vine? What is the purpose of the branches?

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Have you seen branches or leaves that are not attached to a vine, plant or tree? Describe how they look. Are they functioning in the way they were meant to?

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Read John 15:1-8 again, and also read verse 11.

Why are we instructed to abide in Christ?

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What are the benefits of abiding in Christ?

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Read Psalm 1:1-3.

What does it mean to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the path of sinners or sit in the seat of scoffers?

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In verse 1, notice the progression of movement from walking, to standing, to sitting and the corresponding nouns: counsel, path and seat. What does this progression describe?

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Examine your life. Are there any places you are practicing this behavior?

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Verse 2 contrasts the behavior of a blessed man or woman.

Describe his or her behavior.

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What are the results of this behavior?

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### Discussion Questions

- Share some ways you make communion with the Lord a priority.
- What are some things that are keeping you from spending time with the Lord? What are some ways you can remove these distractions from your life?
- Share how you have benefitted from spending consistent time with the Lord.



### Chapter 4: Obedience

In nature, growth comes as the result of health and nourishment. Plants and animals have to follow the laws of the Creator in order to grow healthy, strong and beautiful. The same principles apply to spiritual growth. As Christian women, our spiritual growth depends on our health, and our health depends on our obedience to God's rules. We can never bloom into our potential unless we are obedient. As long as we're alive, we never stop growing. But the season of growth is a special time in our lives when we go through an intense process of obedience, service and preparation for the future God has designed us for.

Obedience to God's plan is rarely easy. It often requires us to do the last thing we ever wanted to do. It may mean wrestling with unruly emotions. It may mean overcoming prejudices and preconceived notions. It may mean humbling ourselves before God and pleading with Him for the strength to carry on. But if we are to grow into the women He intends for us to be, we have to obey.

The first step toward obedience is being obedient to the Lord's written Word. In the previous chapter, we talked about having communion with Him, spending time alone with the Lord and getting to know Him. This is essential to our obedience, for unless we know what His Word says, how can we obey it?

We also obey God so we can cooperate with His work within us. As God changes us on the inside, we work together with Him by making changes in our outward behavior. We find that we don't want to keep doing the same old wrong things we used to enjoy. Instead, we learn to delight in doing His will, but we don't reach that point unless we cooperate with God's growth process through obedience.

Esther obeyed the instructions of Mordecai, even though it could result in her death. Abraham obeyed the Lord's instructions to sacrifice his son Isaac, even though it didn't make sense, and it broke his heart to do it. Jesus obeyed the Father to the point of death. Sometimes our obedience can be costly, requiring us to sacrifice something that is dear to us. But in order for us to grow, we must be willing to obey. Obedience is how we demonstrate our love for the Father and will open the way for us to realize the purpose God has for us.





**On Your Own**

Describe a time when obedience was difficult for you. What did He ask you to do? Why was it hard to obey?

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Read Jonah 1:1-17.

What is Jonah called to do?

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Describe in detail Jonah's response to God's call, including his actions. How would you describe Jonah's temperament? Make note of words and phrases that are repeated.

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Do a search in Google maps of the distance between Jaffa, Israel (modern-day Joppa) and Gibraltar, Spain (an approximation of modern-day Tarshish). What is the distance between these two cities? Read Jonah 1:3 in the Amplified Bible. What is Jonah trying to achieve by going to Tarshish?

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Examine your life. What lengths have you gone through to avoid doing something the Lord asked you to do? What was the outcome? How did your decision affect those around you?

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How will you act in obedience the next time the Lord asks you to do something?

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### Discussion Questions

- When you surrender your will and obey God, how does that impact your future decisions? Why?
- What price have you recently paid to obey God? What was your reward?

## Chapter 5: Service

During seasons of growth, we often find ourselves serving in ways which we don't always see the value or enjoy. As we saw in the last chapter, that is often the case when we obey—we don't necessarily enjoy doing it. Obedience doesn't always feel good, and neither does service. Sometimes service can hardly seem "spiritual" or "glorious." We may find ourselves changing diapers, cleaning bathrooms, helping out in the church nursery, balancing the checkbook and scouring pots and pans. We get caught in a seemingly endless cycle of tasks that have to be redone again and again. How can we find satisfaction or fulfillment in endless, mindless activities like that?

Part of our growth comes from serving the Lord in the mundane things of life. It is being faithful where He has us, which causes us to develop the character traits that will be needed for the next season. Service is all about perspective. Sometimes we get too focused on the tasks we are being asked to do, instead of the One we are serving. He knows us inside and out. He knows where He is taking us and gives us assignments to utilize our gifts and skills. He also places us in situations that uncover gifts we didn't know we had! All of this is done as we cooperate and obey the Lord's leading.



Service is also how the Lord uses us to minister to and bless others. God's gifts to His people are certainly not limited to completing mundane tasks. He has also gifted us with spiritual gifts that He intends for us to use in His service to one another. We are to use our gifts, according to Ephesians 4:12-13 (KJV), "for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

During Esther's time, she was given unique gifts for use among her people. She was given a prestigious role in the royal household. She was given access to the king. She was given favor in his sight. All of those things came from God and were to be used to deliver and bless His people. However, when God's gifts are beneficial to us personally, we may be tempted to use them for our own benefit. Esther faced the challenge of whether she would use her God-given position for her own comfort alone or for the benefit of others. Would she be selfish or a servant?

**On Your Own**

How do obedience and service intersect in your life? Describe what it means to serve in your current season of life. Do you find it easy or difficult to serve? Why?

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Read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:1-13 and 1 Peter 4:7-11.

List the spiritual gifts mentioned in these passages.

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List the common words and themes found in these verses.

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How are spiritual gifts to be used?

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List your unique gifts, talents and spiritual gifts. How are you using them for the Lord's service?

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If you are unsure of your spiritual gifts, you can take one of the following spiritual gift assessments to help you discover them.

[gifts.churchgrowth.org](https://www.gifts.churchgrowth.org)

[https://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcf\\_pdf\\_discover\\_your\\_spiritual\\_gifts.pdf](https://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcf_pdf_discover_your_spiritual_gifts.pdf)



### Discussion Questions

- Describe how you are serving in this season of your life. What changes, if any, would you like to make?
- Share how obedience and service intersect in your life.
- Do you find it easy or difficult to serve? Why?



## Chapter 6: Preparation

Do you feel that life is standing still? Does it seem that day after day nothing changes and that God has forgotten you? No, He hasn't forgotten; He is simply taking the time to prepare you for a special task—for a future opportunity. Preparation, along with obedience and service, is part of God's process in the Season of Growth.

Because we don't always understand God's ways, at times, we may think we are ready for anything. We've been reading the Word. We've been in prayer. We've been listening to good teaching. What else do we have to do?

When we begin our walk with Jesus, His blood cleanses us from all sin, and because of His holiness, we are declared holy too. But there are stains on our characters that can lead us back into sin and failure. God has to do a work of cleaning to remove our flaws. This process is called sanctification, and it goes on throughout our lives. In the Season of Growth, an intense time of cleansing is necessary before we fully enter into the future He has planned for us.



The purification of our thoughts and motives is part of this process of cleansing. Because we live in the world's system, we have learned certain patterns of thinking and acting that may not be in accordance with His will. God wants to transform our thought life, so that the motives that lie behind our actions will be pure and godly. And God wants to anoint us for life in His kingdom. We need to utilize the anointing of the Holy Spirit so God can send us out into the world ready and able to use the spiritual gifts He has given us.

All of this takes time, and we have to believe that God knows what He is doing while we go through the preparation process. While God prepares you, and it seems that time is standing still, it's helpful to remember whose we are and where we are. It is better to be standing still in His will than moving around at high speed outside of it. God's timing is a mystery. If we start comparing the time we spend waiting with the time others spend, we will be terribly frustrated. God has a unique design for each of our lives. And because He is a God of variety, our time of preparation and our Season of Growth will be unlike that of anyone else.

### On Your Own

How do you respond to times of waiting? Think of a specific situation. How did you respond to God? To others? Was there anything you were purified from during that season?

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Read Esther 2.

What is happening in this part of Esther's story?

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In what ways is Esther prepared for her first encounter with the King Ahasuerus?

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Read Esther 4-7.

How is Esther's preparation for her first encounter with King Ahasuerus different than her preparation for her encounter with him in chapter 5?

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Look up the definition of the words “equip” and “prepare.” List the ways Esther is equipped for her purpose. What tools does she have at her disposal? How has God created her for this role? How does she have to prepare?

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Think about your own life—your purpose and calling. Write down how God has equipped you for the purpose He has called you to. Think about your background and upbringing, your gifts, talents and skills, personality and temperament, and anything else that makes up who you are. Think of these as the tools and equipment needed for your purpose. You can also use them to help you achieve your purpose.

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List the ways you need to prepare or get ready for your purpose. What is the Lord teaching you that you will need for the next season of life?

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### Discussion Questions

- Share how God is preparing you for your purpose.
- What gifts and talents has God equipped you with to be used for your purpose?
- What areas of your life still need refining before moving into your next season?



### Chapter 7: Contentment, Not Complacency

The word contentment describes a feeling of satisfaction. It means we are happy enough with what we have or with what we are doing. Contentment implies that we don't desire something more or crave something different. First Timothy 6:6-8 says, *“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”*

Contentment is a good thing — a godly thing. But at times, our contentment can lull us into a different experience: complacency. Complacency is a state of self-satisfaction or smugness. It takes our eyes off the Lord and His plans and fixes them on ourselves and our comfort zone. Complacency can take us away from the source of our blessing. We can fall so in love with our surroundings that we lose sight of our call.

Complacency causes us to become lazy in our current situation, and therefore we miss out on the future blessings God has prepared for us. First Timothy 6:6-8 says that if we have the basic needs of life met, we should be content. An “attitude of gratitude” honors what God has already done for us. Contentment does not mean, “I do not wish to better my lot in life.” That’s complacency. It does mean that I am going to enjoy what I have and be grateful for it while I’m waiting and working for my lot to change.

Contentment is trusting that God has His hand on you and has placed you where you are for a reason. It may not be easy or desirable, but contentment says, “While I am here, I will praise and honor the Lord and believe that He will meet my needs.” Choosing to not be content in your current season can cause frustration, complaining and an ungrateful heart.



### On Your Own

Think of a time when contentment led you to complacency. What person or situation triggered you out of your spiritual lethargy? What is helpful to prevent complacency to take root once again? Are you content? Why or why not?

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Read Philippians 4:10-14

What phrase is repeated twice in these verses?

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Investigate the life of Paul. Make note of all the changes in his life such as difficult situations, changes in economic status and relationships. Make note of anything else that stands out to you.

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Read Philippians 4:10-14 again.

How has Paul learned to be content despite the difficulties he has experienced throughout his life?

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Read Exodus 15:22-16:33.

Describe what happens in these verses.

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How is the Israelites' reaction to difficult times different than Paul's reaction?

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Why aren't the Israelites content with God's provision?

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Examine yourself. When you experience difficult situations do you respond more like Paul or the Israelites? In what ways?

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### Discussion Questions

- Share a season in your life when it was hard to be content. How did you overcome this?
- Share a time when being content turned into complacency. What is helpful to prevent complacency from taking root again?
- How are you learning to be content in every situation?

## Chapter 8: For Such a Time as This

One of the things that can hinder us from thriving in whatever season we're in is fear. Fear is a valid emotion. We need fear to warn us of danger—to alert us when things aren't quite right. But fear is not valid when it begins to control us. Our minds need to set the course of our lives, not our emotions. And fear is a very unpredictable emotion. It can manifest itself in many ways, and if left unattended, it can rob us of joy, immobilize us in our homes and destroy our lives.

Fear can be destructive to both inner and outer beauty. It can produce tension, which keeps us uptight and irritable. It can create mistrust until we are always questioning the motives of everything and everyone. Fear begets unhappiness because it causes us to focus on negatives and to always look to see what is going to go wrong next. Fear instigates nervous reactions to everything. When we are afraid, a genuine smile can become the most difficult exercise. Instead, our faces are lined and our brows furrowed. Fear even changes the way we walk and move our bodies.

Fear can often be satanic, and just like the deceiver himself, it can come at you in different forms and disguises. Have you ever struggled with fear? It can attack you in your home. You start to think, is my husband having an affair? Are my kids on drugs? Do I have cancer? Am I a liability to my husband's life and ministry? Would he be better off without me? Fear can be a problem on a very personal level. Will anyone every really love me? Is something wrong with me—something everyone sees but me? Will I ever get married? Will I ever have children? Will I die young?

The devil's game is to distract us from the things of the Lord and to cause us to doubt that the Lord really cares or will do what He has promised. Giving in to fear and allowing it to control us, takes our eyes off of Jesus and limits His power in our lives. When we give in to fear and the onslaught of negative thoughts that come with it, we no longer are living the victorious life we are meant to live in Christ.





### On Your Own

Name your biggest fear. Turn to your Bible, and find a passage that speaks to that fear and memorize it. Journal your experiences as you use this Scripture to fight your fear. What are you learning?

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Read Matthew 14:22-33.

List all the things that made this a frightening situation. Despite the chaos surrounding him, what is Peter able to do? How does he accomplish this?

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What causes Peter to sink after he has experienced the supernatural?

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What is Jesus' response to Peter's fear?

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Read the definitions of fear and faith.

Fear: A distressing **emotion** caused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined.

Faith: **Acting** like God is telling the truth.

What does Jesus' response teach us about the relationship between faith and fear?

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## Discussion Questions

- Share a time when fear hindered you from doing what the Lord was asking you to do.
- Is it possible to be full of faith even though you are fearful? How so?
- Are you beginning to feel less fearful? Why or why not?



## Chapter 9: Fulfillment

What time is it in your life? Are you busily planting new seeds? Are you enduring (or enjoying) a prolonged period of preparation? Are you restlessly waiting for new life to burst up through the soil, gradually growing into healthy strong plants?

Living in our seasons requires us to learn lessons in patience. Sometimes we think of patience as a virtue we need in dealing with difficult people or circumstances. And that's true.

The Bible also tells us that we need to wait with patience on the Lord (Psalm 37:7). As our seasons pass and we grow weary of the responsibilities and requirements they entail, we become anxious to move on. We can't see any reasons to remain in our present season except for one small detail: He hasn't yet told us to move into the next one.

Remember that our seasons are all about getting us to fulfill our purpose. Maybe this acrostic will help you remember God's intentions for us as we allow Him to work in our lives, according to His calendar.

**S**overeignty of God  
**E**levation by God  
**A**ssistance from God  
**S**ubmission to God  
**O**pportunities from God  
**N**eeds met by God  
**S**alvation by God

Esther fulfilled her purpose when she was able to stand before King Ahasuerus and intercede on behalf of the Jews. God took Esther through different seasons to get her to that point. She had to be fully engaged and present in each step so that she would learn and be prepared for what the Lord wanted to accomplish through her. Like us, Esther was tempted to give in to fear and not act in faith. But thanks to the advice of Mordecai, she moved forward despite her fear.

### On Your Own

In what way is your ability to be patient being stretched in this season? What joys are you discovering in this same season?

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Think through the seasons of your own life. Write down how you've seen God operate in the following ways to get you to your purpose. Include a verse that describes this action.

**Sovereignty of God.**

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**Elevation by God.**

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**Assistance from God.**

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**Submission to God.**

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**Opportunities from God.**

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**Needs met by God.**

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**Salvation by God.**

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## Enduring the Difficult Seasons

There may come a time when you find yourself in a long wilderness season. It may seem like you are circling your Promised Land, just as the Israelites did. You may feel like you are close to realizing the promises God made to you, but you're not sure how much longer you have to wait.

Perhaps your season isn't a hopeful one. You have spent years battling pain and grief. You may be caring for elderly parents or chronically ill children or relatives. Maybe you, like the woman with the issue of blood, are experiencing health challenges that are not improving. You have seen doctors, specialist and experts, and you literally need a miracle.

While you are waiting for your season to change—for the fog to lift and the sun to shine again—lean in even more to Jesus Christ, your lifeline. John 15:5 says we can't do anything without abiding in Him, and it is during these difficult seasons when we need to be intentional about drawing our strength from Him.

Here are some words of encouragement from our Father:

- I am with you. (Matthew 28:20)
- I will strengthen you. (Isaiah 41:10)
- I will carry you. (Isaiah 46:4)
- I will comfort you. (Isaiah 66:13)
- I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)
- I will listen. (Jeremiah 29:12)
- I will give you peace. (John 14:27)





Whatever it is that might be taking longer than you anticipated—whichever season that you are in that you are ready to be out of—focus on God. His timing is perfect. In the meantime, here are some practical suggestions you can do in those seasons of waiting or challenging seasons:

- Take time to get alone with Jesus.
- Drag yourself into his presence, not away from Him.
- Function in an area that is consistent with your spiritual giftedness.
- Use this time as a season of expecting spiritual and physical renewal.
- Get and stay organized.
- Manage your time effectively.
- Understand who you are and who you are not. Also, know your limitations.
- Don't try to be everything to everybody all the time. Let yourself say no sometimes.
- Don't be a couch potato. Don't stay home from church, and don't host or attend pity parties.
- Keep praying and praising.
- Exercise.
- Rest, relax and enjoy some recreation.
- Save more, and spend less. That will cut down on your stress level.
- Speak good things into your life.
- Get people around you who can relieve you for periods of time.

## Discussion Questions

- Share what the Lord has been teaching you in your current season.
- Share how you've seen God work in miraculous ways throughout the seasons of your life.
- Share a word of encouragement with someone who is going through a long and difficult season.
- Share what you have learned from this study. Is there anything you are going to do differently? How are you preparing now for the next season?

Some portions of this Bible study are adapted from *Seasons of a Woman's Life* from Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2013.



# Thank you

for participating in the *Seasons of a Woman's Life* Bible Study.

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