

Kristin Funston

More *for*
~~from~~
Mom

Living
Your Whole
and Holy
Life



Praise for *More for Mom*

“I enjoyed reading this book so much; Kristin has a beautiful way of weaving powerful Scripture with everyday, practical life. She adds thoughts and application to stories and passages I’ve heard many times, but her unique take on them reminds us that our ultimate goal is to have priorities that reflect Jesus. I love the fact that she’s honest and forthcoming about her own struggles and frustrations and I felt invited into her life and her wrestling as a sister who feels the same. I’d recommend this to any woman trying to free herself from the distractions of this world in order to live a more peaceful, focused, and God-centered life as the woman Jesus created her to be.”

—**Angie Smith**, nationally recognized Bible teacher and best-selling author of *Seamless: Understanding The Bible as One Complete Story*, *Chasing God*, and *What Women Fear*

“Just when a mama thinks she’s going under with mothering (which includes All. The. Things.), Kristin Funston leads us to more. With a girlfriend-in-the-trenches voice, she shows us how to grow our souls while our kids are still growing.”

—**Amy Carroll**, Proverbs 31 Ministries speaker and writer, author of *Breaking Up with Perfect* and *Exhale*

“If you are a mom who feels tired, worn out, or a bit flustered with all you’ve got to get done, Kristin has a word for you! In *More for Mom*, Kristin makes us laugh and get serious all in the same paragraph. She boldly shares the truth but makes sure we know she’s right there with us as she leads us to the one thing we need to live a more whole and holy life as a mom—Jesus.”

—**Micah Maddox**, women’s conference speaker and author of *Anchored In: Experience a Power-Full Life in a Problem-Filled World*

“How is life? Read this book and it may change your answer. I work with Kristin at our church so I can tell you she is real, she is honest, and she is not just writing words on a page. Like you, she has a full life, but she is willing to ask honest questions and share honest answers. Take a journey with Kristin

through this book and learn what it means to experience a completely abundant and whole life.”

—**Mary Ann Ruff**, Executive Director & Director of Women’s Ministry, Hope Church, Memphis

“Kristin Funston is the best friend all hard-working mommas need in their corner. Her fun approach unmask the things we feel on a daily basis—unrelenting mom guilt. Instead of doing more and adding more to our already full plates, my friend encourages us to receive more of what we need from Jesus. It’s time for us to ask for more without hesitation from our Heavenly Father who longs to give us everything we need in life. When we feel like we are supposed to be doing more and be more, Kristin shows us that Jesus is the more we are looking for to help us live our whole and holy life.”

—**Jennifer Renee Watson**, speaker and author of *Freedom!: The Gutsy Pursuit of Breakthrough and the Life Beyond It*

“Frazzled moms, do you realize you are worth far more than the piles of laundry and homework and deadlines you’re hiding under? You most certainly will by the time you’ve finished this beautiful book. Reading *More for Mom* is like hanging out with a dear friend who sees your real and messy life and loves you all the more for it. Yet she cares enough not to let you wallow there. With her signature humor, candor, and wisdom, Kristin Funston shows us how we really can grasp the abundant life God offers us—right where we are.”

—**Becky Kopitzke**, author of *Generous Love: Discover the Joy of Living “Others First”* and *The SuperMom Myth: Conquering the Dirty Villains of Motherhood*

“Do you view the spiritual disciplines as daunting items to check off your list and get right? I sure did, until Kristin helped me realize that God uses them to give us more—not more pressures and demands on our time but more strength and more peace. As a busy mom, I’m relieved that God isn’t out to deplete us with added stress but desires to equip us for godly success. Here’s to more life, through Christ!”

—**Katie M. Reid**, mom to five and author of *Made Like Martha: Good News for the Woman Who Gets Things Done*

“All moms know that life can be exhausting and overwhelming, but Kristin Funston provides a new way forward in *More for Mom*. With sincerity and grace, Kristin illuminates a new way to see the good, beautiful, and holy life offered to all moms. Practical and helpful!”

—**Nicole Unice**, Discipleship Pastor, Hope Church, Richmond, VA; author of *The Struggle Is Real*

“Kristin Funston has great news for mothers who want to live a whole, holy life. In her book, *More for Mom*, she offers practical steps to throw off the performance metrics by learning how to listen and ask God for His assignment for your life. Kristin infuses hope in the heart of every mother. This book will start you thinking about how to apply scripture to everyday situations as you wisely navigate every decision. With biblical wisdom and common sense, Kristin encourages you to embrace the high calling of motherhood. You will find help and practical ideas through the pages of this book.”

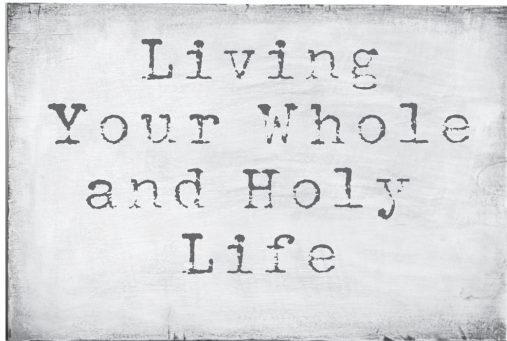
—**Connie Albers**, speaker and author of *Parenting Beyond the Rules*

“Using the perfect blend of humor and solid biblical teaching, Kristin does a fantastic job of pointing weary moms to the MORE that is available to us in Jesus Christ. She is clearly gifted at breaking down Scripture to make it more understandable and applicable for her readers and even helped me see some very familiar passages with fresh eyes! Reading *More for Mom* feels like having the BEST conversation with a wise and trusted friend.”

—**Amy Hale**, Bible teacher, speaker, online influencer

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Mom



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MORE FOR MOM
LIVING YOUR WHOLE AND HOLY LIFE

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To Bryant, McKenna, Meda, and Rockie May.

I love you more. I love you the most.

I love you the most-est in the whole wide world.

To my Hope Church family. You brought this unchurched girl to church.

To you, who—like me—are literally living on a prayer. And lukewarm coffee.

And the occasional glass of wine. You are so loved.



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A Quick Note to My Friend

Heeeyyyy! I am so, so glad you are here.

It may seem like you picked up this book on a whim or like this book just happened about out of nowhere. Maybe you're standing in the bookstore and saw this awesomely peaceful-looking cover—if I do say so myself—and read the title and thought, *Wait—more for me? I'm intrigued. Let me take a look.*

Maybe you are online shopping during your lunch break, trying to find a gift for your BFF, and this is the top option. Go ahead; click purchase. It's a *great* gift for your girlfriend.

Years of energy, thought, and prayer have gone into the pages that follow, along with real-life experience. The experience you probably know so well—the give, give, give of motherhood that leaves us exhausted and often physically, emotionally, and spiritually depleted because—*man, oh man*—kids. Maybe your own children are still in diapers or just beginning to experience the terrifying world of puberty, or maybe they're driving off to high school, college, or their first job. Wherever you are in your motherhood journey, I know you're a giver. That's what mothers are. We give and give and give, right?

A Quick Note to My Friend

I feel like we're friends already. Like we're sitting down to finally catch up after a long season of crazy. A long season of sleepless nights, busy days, long work hours, and a lot of responsibilities and others' expectations to manage.

But here we are, ready to meet up with each other and Jesus. Maybe through these pages we're meeting in a coffee shop or bookstore, in your comfy living room recliner, or maybe we're even in the car line together picking up your kids from school—because life don't stop, yo.

I can't wait for you to join me in this journey of learning how to live our whole and holy lives. And it's going to be a journey. We'll talk about some hard stuff, some easy stuff, even some goofy and totally random stuff.

But it's all *good* stuff. It's stuff that stems from a good, holy, and almighty God who doesn't need anything *from* us to make our worlds go 'round. It's stuff that when flipped on its head shows us our God has more *for* us.

Scripture tells us in Job 12 that “in His hand is the life of *every* living thing / and the breath of *all* mankind” (v. 10, emphasis mine). He is the God who gives everything to us—from the breath we breathe to the paychecks we cash, from the homes we live in to the feelings tugging at our hearts. He is the God who gives plentifully, so much so that what He gives can't be contained. Scripture backs this up throughout history. We also know according to Ephesians 3:20 that He “is able to do far more abundantly” than we could *even think or ask!* This is because His power at work inside us never ends.

Limitless giving can be so hard to imagine on this side of heaven, right? Especially because our daily grind begs *us* to keep giving and giving. Kids, dinner, homework, conference calls, softball and football practices, the PTA, the board of directors, spouses, parents, even siblings—each day brings another round of giving of our time,

energy, thoughts, love, and emotional and physical strength. And money. Don't forget the money.

Don't get me wrong; these are all great to give ourselves to. But I'm ready for us to give from a place of abundance where we can do more than just give; we can give in a celebratory way because we've *already* received more than *would ever* be enough. This perspective will shape what our daily grind looks and feels like because we'll finally recognize what it means to be whole and holy in the day-to-day.

Our individualistic and fast-paced culture tugs hard at us to keep on looking out for number one, but as believers, we simultaneously know that Christ desires for us to rely on Him. His timeless spiritual disciplines—such as fasting, prayer, and prioritizing time for Him—are obvious yet extremely underused strategies for getting more out of this life He has blessed us with. So we're going to go back to the basics with some of them in order to bring back space for more of Christ in our modern times.

In our journey through these pages, we'll chat about the mental games we often play and how to *recognize* and *strategize* a game plan for the times our minds—and Satan—try to win us over. This journey will also help reveal hidden truths about relationships and expectations we hold. Truths that will set us free from chains we didn't even know were binding us.

We're even taking the extra steps to learn how to make our hopes, dreams, and passions a part of our reality.

All of this together will empower each of us to start living our already whole and holy life in Christ. Because it's there already—just waiting. And it's more than we can even begin to imagine.

I can't wait for us to start believing God for more in this crazy-busy work, home, married or single-mom life we've got going on.

And I can't wait for all of us—all the moms of our

generation—to stop believing the lie that more is needed *from* us and start living the truth that more is available *for* us.



When I first sat down to write this to you, I got the overwhelming feeling that Jesus wanted us to know that *this*—the ride and awakening process throughout this book—is going to be fun. Fun for Him to watch and for us to live. Fun despite the hectic days, despite the screaming kids, despite the anxiety and overload of our stretched-too-thin lives.

I know and He knows that, in our reality as modern-day, work-hard mamas, a lot is expected from us daily. We're *moms* after all. We basically run the world.

But we can still have fun, despite all of this. I'm always down to have fun, so I say let's do this together.

Much love,
Kristin

Whole and Holy Mom





CHAPTER 1

The Whole Enchilada

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

Everywhere I turn women—friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, church members—are talking about the busyness of their lives and how, no matter what strategies they employ, they can't seem to get on top of it all.

I'm willing to bet it's the same with you and your friends too.

Whether you call yourself a stay-at-home mom; a working mom; a boy mom; a girl mom; a caffeinated mom; a purple, blue, or yellow mom; or a *whatever* mom, work-hard mamas are everywhere. Although the moms look different than they used to look, most tend to be responsible for more than what's inside the walls of their home, more than dinner on the table and tending the children.

A 2016 study showed that “69.9 percent of mothers with children under age 18 were in the labor force, representing over a third (34.2 percent) of working women.”¹ So stand with two other mom friends of yours, and the odds are that one or two of you are what most call “working moms.”

Can I be frank with you? The term “working mom” confuses me.

Because what mother *isn't* working? It seems ridiculously redundant. Though for the sake of our conversation here, we'll consider anyone with children and obligations beyond her home and family—paid or not—to be a working mom or, better yet, a work-hard mama.

So do you work full- or part-time for a large company or yourself *and* have full or shared responsibility for children in your home? Do you stay at home with your children during the day? Do you work from a home office or in a cubicle? Do you get a regular paycheck or volunteer your time for zero monetary payment? Do you work hard to keep your family safe, fed, and healthy each and every day?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you are welcome and safe here. You have a whole lot going on in your life, right?! You are a work-hard, modern mama.

Who else is too tired for big plans? (And all the mamas of infants and toddlers raised their hands.) While the idea of “big plans” is exciting, I’m too exhausted and worn thin to hear what they are, let alone do them.

I am too, and we are in this together. I have been in each of the scenarios listed above. I have worked forty-plus hours a week, both inside *and* outside the home. I have also been a part-time employee, splitting time between a remote office and an in-home office—all while being a mother. I even spent a short stint as a stay-at-home mom until we ran out of money and I ran out of sanity. But even then, I was still always working.

I am here to tell you something, although I venture to guess you already know what I'm about to say. None of the differences in the amount, place, or kind of work matter. Not one. Moms who work day in and day out—at home, in an office, in their cars, forty hours

a week, fifteen hours a week—all feel there’s something incomplete about their lives, and most are in need of a spiritual reset. They feel far from living the holy life they think they are supposed to live. They think whole is for someone who has all the pieces of her life figured out and placed neatly together. They think holy is for someone who prays or sings worship songs all day long or who remembers to teach her kids how to pray eloquent psalms.

You probably know what I’m talking about.

*It’s being content in the crazy and having
peace knowing that God’s in control, even
when I’m stretched thin and don’t feel like I
can do anything else.*

It’s the mixture of emotions, expectations, and our people all yanking on us while yelling so loud we can’t hear ourselves think. And more important—and more *unfortunately*—it’s the fear and dread that we aren’t living up to or doing what we believe to be God’s will for our lives because we’re so busy managing the day-to-day details.

If allowed, the daily grind can suck the life right out of us, leaving us too exhausted to live up to our godly potential. But the Bible tells us we can “do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

Yep. I just did it. I threw out a heavy Bible verse only a few pages into our time together. You should know that I think this verse is great, but gosh, sometimes I feel like I cannot do more than merely survive, let alone live up to huge expectations that God—or anybody else!—has for me. You with me?

Jeremiah 29:11 says He has plans for us—for you and for me—and they are big plans.

But who else is too tired for big plans? (And all the mamas of infants and toddlers raised their hands.)

While the idea of “big plans” is exciting, I’m too exhausted and worn thin to hear what they are, let alone *do* them.

*Each of us is a whole person with one whole
life, and we were designed to experience the
holy of this life now, on earth.*

This is a breaking point for me, and I dare say it is for you as well. How do we live the holy life Jesus brought to us? How do we live as whole women when our lives seem fragmented? I want to know how to balance being a work-hard mom on a scale tipping heavily back and forth, one side always heavier than the other. What about you?

If we look back at Philippians 4:13, where Paul said, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me,” we may want to also look at a few of the preceding verses in order to move on in this journey.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I
have learned in whatever situation I am to be
content. I know how to be brought low, and I
know how to abound. In any and every circum-
stance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty
and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all
things through him who strengthens me.

(Philippians 4:11-13)

We sometimes tend to latch on to this idea of doing, which Paul throws out in our favorite verse 13, as a catchall for dreaming big, doing the thing, and doing it well. But if we read the verse in context,

we see that Paul is more likely saying we can *endure* all things through Christ.

It's being content in the crazy and having peace knowing that God's in control, even when I'm stretched thin and don't feel like I can do anything else.

It sounds easier than it is, right? Where does this contentment and peace come from?

Well, it comes in the recognition that we are not pieces and parts, that we can move toward a whole, and therefore holy, life. **Each of us is a whole person with one whole life, and we were designed to experience the holy of this life now, on earth.**

It's funny how we get swept up into whatever is happening in our work life or mom life or social life, often without thinking of how one ripples the tides of another.

But our lives shouldn't be compartmentalized like this. All of the parts Jesus has given us to live allow us to move toward the *one* life He planned for us in the beginning.

Without Him, we merely give pieces to what could be a complete and abundantly WHOLE life.

I don't know about you, but in this game of life, I want to win big. I want the whole enchilada. Do you?

My Portfolio Life

In his book *The Art of Work*, Jeff Goins used the term "portfolio lifestyle" to describe how Americans live. My Type-A self loves this picture.

When I hear the word *portfolio*, I think of a briefcase or folder with organized documents and examples showcasing our best work. The achiever in me adores the idea of a neat, tidy, organized life, showing only my best work.

However, when I looked up the word *portfolio*, words such as

range and *varied* fell under the definition. It even mentioned “loose sheets,” which made me both laugh and nod my head in agreement in regard to the “loose and random” information filling my brain at any given moment.

As moms, we can very easily use these terms to describe our day-to-day lives. Activities such as changing diapers or cleaning toilets vary widely from conference calls or opportunity reports on profit and loss. Our lives are filled with “loose sheets” of soccer team contact information, sales projections, grocery lists, and mortgage due dates.

There is a lot to keep up with. Am I right or *amiright*?

*He has given us vocations, relationships,
friends, family, and Him to steer us toward
a whole life. These necessarily impact one
another and shouldn't be compartmentalized.*

Sure, there are contrasts in the day-to-day details of each of our situations. My crazy is going to look different from yours, but the level on which that craziness and the demands on our individual lives functions is the same. All work-hard mamas deal with emotional and physical hardship.

OK, let me clarify. Having children brings on the emotional and physical hardship. But I would never blame our beloved children for complicating our lives. *Never*.

Currently, I work part-time from home and part-time in an office. My days are spent running carpools, driving to preschool drop-offs, sitting outside art and gymnastics lessons, and supporting my cyclist husband at races. Simultaneously, I'm writing articles, supervising homework, building websites, running social media campaigns, emailing invoices, teaching classes, and cooking dinner

poorly, cleaning up after four—yes, *four*!—smelly pets, not including the eight chickens that recently moved into our suburban-farm backyard.

In the nine years I have been a parent, my life has become an overflowing bucket of random. Besides dealing with the kiddos 657 hours a day—I assure you, logging that number of hours in a day feels possible in my house so I am assuming it does in yours too—I have not even mentioned volunteering through church, small group gatherings, and other obligations I have added to the chaos. Needless to say, things are busy. Please tell me this sounds vaguely familiar.

I bet your life is pretty similar in the grand scheme of things, or you probably would not have opened this book.

Don't get me wrong; chaos is not necessarily a bad thing if handled correctly, because it offers growth and opportunities to stretch us. But chaos is hard. It is hard to juggle and package neatly into our box of life. And oftentimes, this juggling act can be a painful one.

The thing that's interesting about this "portfolio" idea is that all the randomness, all those loose and varied sheets together, create one *single* portfolio, one all-encompassing briefcase that portrays our work.

Guess what all this randomness and the messy details of our daily lives make up. Our *one* life that God has packaged together into one *whole* life. And from here on out, we're going to work to make our portfolios portray *complete* lives from what God has provided through Jesus Christ. Ready to see your life as not merely pieces but a complete picture?

Would you join me in beginning to believe we *can* live a whole and holy life even though we're bone tired? That we *can* believe God for more, even though we're stretched thin across all the pieces of our working-mom life?

He has given us vocations, relationships, friends, family, and

Him to steer us toward a whole life. These necessarily impact one another and shouldn't be compartmentalized.

Believing that we can live whole lives will lead to transformation for you and me, from the inside out. I know Jesus is waiting to hand us the prize at the end of this life. He's waiting to give us all of it—the whole enchilada.

Our lives are full, but are they whole? Do we offer our whole selves to our people and our God rather than leftovers from the day or week?

If the answer is no—if our lives are not whole—then something's got to give.

It's Time for a Change

It's changed millions of lives, leading to transformation inside and out, in both form and appearance. Nobody claimed it was easy, but millions of people have completed the program and changed their lives because of it.

I'm talking about the Whole30 program, of course. By removing sugar, alcohol, grains, legumes, soy, and dairy, people have cleansed their bodies and drastically altered all areas of their lives.

*Even if you are overworked and over capacity,
you can still ask for more. In fact, I say you
must ask for more. More for us instead of
from us.*

Now before you go on assuming I am one of these millions who are changed, don't. I love my soy sauce, beans, rice, and honey-drizzled baked brie too much to ever cut them out completely. Bring on the cheese, please!

So I'm not here to talk about dairy, soy, and diets, but I *am* here to talk about change, a change that steps us into a more whole and holy life. It leads to inside-and-out transformation. But this change doesn't start with a physical reset the way Whole30 or any of the other trendy diet plans pushed these days do. I'm talking about a complete spiritual change. And I believe busy moms are often the ones most in need of a reset. Can I get an amen?

Whole30 followers achieve a physical reset by eating only whole and complete unprocessed foods. What if, instead of working to be whole and healthy physically, we worked toward becoming whole spiritually, even holy, focusing on changing our relationship with God and other people in the same way we focus on what we eat? And what if we found more nourishment for the daily grind instead of feeling depleted, as relationships and effort normally make us feel.

Just as Whole30 focuses on what foods to eliminate in order to reset a person's physical bodies, we need to look at how we're living, what we are consuming and not consuming, to live how God intended for us to live. I believe we must consume only whole and holy thoughts and actions to spiritually reset. Only the thoughts from His voice, not man's.

This begins with asking God for more.

Join me in a collective groan right here. *More?*

Most of us are scared, hesitant, and even downright adamant about not asking for more on our plate. What possibly do we have time to add?

But even if you are overworked and over capacity, you can *still* ask for more. In fact, I say you *must* ask for more. More of the good stuff. More of life. More of Jesus.

More *for* us instead of *from* us.

More connection, more freedom, more joy, more peace, and more power to obey God's calling on our lives.

But how do we do this, and what does it look like in real life? In the life of laundry and cranky kids or bosses, burnt dinners, sickness and unpaid bills? How do we get to a place where we even want to ask for more from God in a less-is-more world? How do we even know what is affecting our abilities to do that?

The fixes we seek in an attempt to settle our souls often do nothing more than shake our spirits. They often don't fix our problem and can even worsen our feelings and add to our stress about the situation.

First, let's look at the goal. Let's look at where we want to end up after this journey together—to be whole and holy, to stand right before God and live our lives to the fullest potential He has deemed possible for us busy mamas.

So we'll start all the way at the very beginning—with *wholeness*.

What Does It Mean to Be Whole?

How often do you start something and then don't get to complete it? This happens all the time, which is why there are so many self-help resources for managing our lives. A quick search online will pull up thousands of books, articles, and blogs on how to better manage your time, be a good friend, declutter your home, be a great employee, make better decisions, take your marriage to the next level, and so on.

There is even a book on how to buy a self-help book. True story. What I am saying is there are a lot of fixes for our issues.

Have you tried any of them? Some work great. Last year, I found a cleaning schedule via Pinterest, and it was phenomenal . . . for the

first two weeks. Another time, I found a user-friendly system to streamline my finances and set a budget . . . until the system couldn't handle my varied sources of income and expenses.

The fixes we seek in an attempt to settle our souls often do nothing more than shake our spirits. They often don't fix our problem and can even worsen our feelings and add to our stress about the situation.

*The small pieces of our lives that seem separate
from one another actually work together
to complete who we are, because we have a
Creator who speaks through our pieces from a
place of true wholeness.*

So I have a different thought on the idea of “fixing.” While there are plenty of tactics to help manage life, can we completely fix our lives or get rid of the stress? I hate to say it, but no.

We live in a crazy, sin-filled world where reality is raw and messy. That, my friends, won't change until the day Jesus comes back.

However, I *do* believe we can learn to embrace the raw and messy and live a whole life now, not trying to find the next fix but navigating the essence of living wholly.

Because God's Truth is this universe's one true reality. Jesus is our fix.

Everything else we experience, see, and feel is filtered through the world and all it entails. We look at each segment of our day-to-day—the laundry, the women's brunch, the work conference call, the date night, the carpooling to gymnastics—and think these are different compartments and roles in our lives. While related, they are ultimately separate. This is how our human brains naturally work and are able to focus on more than one thing at a time.

Compartmentalization is a subconscious defense mechanism our minds employ to avoid cognitive anxiety or discomfort.

But the reality is that our lives are not split up into “working professional” or “mom” or “wife” or any other label, but instead are whole and holy authentic together as one. While it’s easier on us to separate each perceivably different compartment of our lives so life doesn’t feel so disjointed, God doesn’t see the separation, nor does He intend for anything about our lives to be compartmentalized. It’s all intertwined and directly related to make up who we are meant to be.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The small pieces of our lives that seem separate from one another actually work together to complete who we are, because we have a Creator who speaks through our pieces from a place of true wholeness.

Recognizing this is the first step in putting back the pieces of our lives into a wholly mended and eventually holy life.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.
(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

Before we move on, I want to mention that in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Paul talks about the whole person—spirit, soul, and body. You cannot have one without the other. Your spirit has a soul that must have a body to live in and through; all three are interwoven.

We know we need to strive to keep our bodies healthy, and there are plenty of books and experts on physical health, so here we're talking more about the health of our spirit and soul and what they crave, more than our physical bodies. Know, though, that they are all intertwined and related.

*Our bodies naturally crave to be whole, and
our spirit and soul crave the completeness they
lack on their own. They need the intervention
of God to bring them back.*

To be whole, each aspect of a person must be well. When one portion is wounded, injured, or impaired, the other portions are affected.

So, let's look at definitions to make sure we don't misunderstand one another in our discussion of what *wholeness* means.

The word *whole* means containing all components, not being divided or wounded, and the whole is a system made up of interrelated parts.

Did you catch that? It contains *all* components and is not divided. When did we learn to divide our thinking rather than look at the complete picture of who we are?

I know I keep referencing food and diets, but it's because they are a great example of what I'm talking about. Plus, I'm always hungry.

When planning a new diet or lifestyle to shape the health of our physical bodies, we can start with the common knowledge that the more whole foods we eat, the better. If you look up the term "whole foods" you'll find they are unprocessed and unrefined plant foods (or processed and refined as little as possible) before being consumed. Basically, they are still in their natural state, the

state nature intended for them to be in and the state our bodies naturally crave.

Our bodies naturally crave to be whole, and our spirit and soul crave the completeness they lack on their own. They need the intervention of God to bring them back.

I've been known to look to complete myself through all kinds of outside influences. When I was single, I looked for a husband to "complete me" (are you getting flashbacks from *Jerry Maguire* right now?). When I knew I had talents and skills to offer the world, I looked to complete that yearning through hobbies and work. When I was simply bored, I would fill myself with semitrashy television (Any other lovers of *The Bachelor*? Anyone?) or a new DIY project at home (I want to grow up to be Joanna Gaines someday) that would make me feel better about my own love life, work, and home.

He created us to have space inside that only His Spirit can fill. And He created everything surrounding that space to work toward that space. Even what we do.

But did they complete me? No.

We can and do look to fill the void areas of our lives with "things" and "fixes" that the world can offer us.

But the void can only be filled by Jesus. It is shaped just like Him because He is our Creator.

The void shape of loving on our slightly obnoxious neighbor, the mold of respecting our harsh boss because we know Jesus would, the shell of grace and compassion when our children screw up. He created us to have space inside that only His Spirit can fill. And He

created everything surrounding that space to work *toward* that space. Even what we do.

Created to Work

Psalms 139:14 says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” In the original Hebrew, “the word ‘fearfully’ means: with great reverence, heart-felt interest and with respect. The word ‘wonderfully’ means: unique, set apart, marvelous.”²

This is how God created both Adam and Eve and how He’s made each of us. Adam and Eve were both unique, different from each other, and He made them differently—He created Adam from dust and Eve from Adam’s rib. Similarly, He created you differently from me. He made all of us humans unique from all other creation because we were created in His image (Genesis 1:27).

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were whole.

Something to note when reading the Book of Genesis is that Adam and Eve were whole once *together and with* God. In relationship with each other and with Jesus.

I know, it was easy before sin entered our world, right? To be together and with God in harmony. Before we had jobs and babies and grumpy bosses and five o’clock traffic.

While babies weren’t in the picture yet for Adam and Eve—because we’re still really early on in this relationship with the two lovebirds—the Bible doesn’t shy away from the fact that they were set to work already. Genesis 2:15 says God put Adam in the garden of Eden to “work it and keep it.” He also made Eve in order to be not only a companion but also a “helper” to Adam (Genesis 2:18-22).

Not only was Adam created to work but Eve was as well.

And so are we. Whether that’s at home, in an office, in our church, or wherever.

Our situation is different, though, because we are on the other

side of Eve's sin. That same enemy who ninjaed her mind into thinking it was best to disobey God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the same enemy who ninjas his way into our lives. He whispers lies that tug at our thoughts, breaking us down emotionally, physically, and therefore spiritually while we live out this mom life.

These whispered lies chip off and scatter the pieces of our wholeness across work, home, and relationships. They break us and cause us to see the pieces of our lives as separate and not whole.

The sin in our world is what causes the brokenness and the pieces of our whole selves to come apart.

Picking Up the Pieces

Remember those details of our crazy day-to-day lives we talked about earlier? The loose sheets and varied range of things we deal with every day? They are the hundreds of tiny pieces that make up a whole life—a portfolio life.

Maybe you're still wondering what the pieces look like in your life. Not only do we know them by the crazy they make us feel, but we can recognize them by listening and feeling for the chipping away of our peace.

Pieces fall apart when we hear our coworkers or our boss make rude remarks about motherhood and how it affects work life, and we feel angry. I (often!) drop a piece here and there when on social media I see that other moms take fabulous vacations because they have jobs that allow them to afford these vacations or that other moms are at the park with their little ones *again* because their jobs don't require them to be in an office every day the way mine does. Pieces slip when our spouses forget to acknowledge how hard we worked on getting the house clean on our only day off, for the love. A forgotten piece is hidden in a corner when we rush through our daily and weekly checklists of what to do, where to be, and who to call.

It's hard. Sin causes emotions, thoughts, and even actions of ours to keep us from our completed lives in Christ. So, not surprisingly, after all of this we become timid, defensive, bruised, sometimes even resentful. But I think we're ready. Ready to pick up the pieces of our rushed day-to-day and mend them back into a whole life.

*He doesn't expect anything more from you
or me because He is the more. And He isn't
waiting for you or me to get it all together
because He knows He is the all we need to
have it together.*

Can I share a secret with you? I don't believe you and I are incomplete and *not* whole. I can't believe it. I believe we are already whole because Christ is in us. This is our truth, as believers and followers of Christ. But we need to live it out.

Is it that we have forgotten—or never been told?—who we are and why we're here? Do we not see all the pieces that make us whole? When I look around, I see things that make my heart hurt and my head angry for the moms of our generation.

I see women who believe life is meant to be always moving.

I see women who believe and live the lie that motherhood is the highest calling.

I see women who believe their worth is based on the quality of their work.

I see women who believe they are what people tell them they are—beautiful, ugly, skinny, fat, hardworking, lazy, simple, complex . . .

Again, have we forgotten who we really are and why we're here?

Mended and Whole

Allow me to remind you, my friend, of who you really are and what makes you whole.

You are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27)

You are filled with the breath of God. (Genesis 2:7)

You are not to be shamed. (Genesis 2:25)

You were created to work and keep God's creations.

(Genesis 2:15)

You are good. (Genesis 1:31)

Not only did God bless you, breathe His holy and pure breath into you, shape you into His likeness, and trust you to take care of His creation, He also called you “good.” The same “good” He called the sun that gives us light and the stars that rule the universe; the same “good” He called the majestic mountain peaks when He gathered dry land together, separate from the expansive oceans and seas; the same “good” He called every winged bird and every fruit-bearing tree.

You are good, *just like that*.

Everything that makes up you—the natural, unrefined-by-the-world, *real* you—is good.

The God of completeness doesn't call anything “good” that isn't whole and doesn't reflect Him.

This includes all aspects of your days—the laundry piles you tear down so your family has clean clothes, the sales calls you make to enhance a potential customer's life, the carpooling you navigate to help another mama out, the late-night emails you answer because you have clients waiting, and the dinner you prepare for the family.

These are *all good things* He made you for. Not just one or two of them, or whatever you have time for in any given day or season. He

has called you to *all of it*. All of it makes up the whole of your life and the calling on your life.

We will become whole by believing God at His Word. We don't need something or someone telling us there are separate sides to this thing we call life, because we have a Reality that offers this work-hard mom life peace, contentment, and joy through the whole of it.

It's sad, but I forget that God is the main character and I am—we are—the supporting cast. It's not just convenient to remember that; it's necessary.

Because God has got this—completely and wholly. He doesn't expect anything more from you or me because *He is* the more. And He isn't waiting for you or me to get it all together because He knows *He is* the all we need to have it together.

He is the whole enchilada. The One with the biggest influence on our lives, who wraps us up and hems us in, completing us.

When we accept Christ into our lives, we become whole. We are no longer the broken and scattered scraps of Eve's consumed apple. We are finally back to a quality or state of being without restriction, exception, or qualification, just as whole and unprocessed as nature intended.

So, no, it's not time to balance the scale, with mom on one side and everything else on the other. It's time to throw that scale out because there aren't *two* sides to your life. Your life is your *one* life.

We will be content and embrace our day-to-day, our relationships, our work, and the entirety of our reality. We will find peace in our wholeness through our proper perspective with God as the main character in our story. We will become whole by believing God at

More for Mom

His Word. We don't need something or someone telling us there are separate sides to this thing we call life, because we have a Reality that offers this work-hard mom life peace, contentment, and joy through the whole of it.

And it is good.

Notes

1. "Working Mothers Issue Brief," Women's Bureau: US Department of Labor, June 2016, www.dol.gov/wb/resources/WB_WorkingMothers_508_FinalJune13.pdf.

2. Craig A. Nelson, *The Physiology of Faith: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made to Live and Prosper in Health* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2015), chapter 2.