IDENTIFIED

Knowing Who You Are in Christ & Moving Forward in Your Purpose





COURTNAYE RICHARD

Christian Women's Blogger of Inside Out with Courtnaye

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Testimonials

"This book and bible study has brought me so much closer to God. Courtnaye is a great teacher and her love for the Lord comes across in a way that makes you hunger for more of His Word. I love being IDENTIFIED in Christ and finding out my purpose."

~Stephanie Adams

"As a new believer, coming to better know God, this has been a great blessing to me. I learned how to better understand how I am IDENTIFIED in Christ, God's Word, and His purpose for my life. It's just a blessing!"

~Maria C. Rodrigues

"Courtnaye's study has really strengthened my faith. Knowing that I am IDENTIFIED in Christ means knowing who I am. Knowing that I am His daughter and that I have been redeemed by His mighty grace, makes me shout, 'Glory to God!""

~Diana Marichalar

"After reading IDENTIFIED and going through this study guide, I am so excited about how God equips us to walk forward (or run) in our purpose! This gave me the guidance I needed to help me understand my purpose, gifts, and how to grow more intimately in Christ. It's so amazing!" ~Sara Lett

"IDENTIFIED, has made me see my importance of being a child of God, and how each thing I do needs to be done in Christ's name."

~Michelle Reyes

"Loved the fellowship! I learned more about my God-given gifts. This study has empowered me to serve others better."

~Shannon Jamison

"What truly spoke to my heart during this study and is etched in my memory forever, is the illustration Courtnaye gave about repentance being a 180, and not a 360 (to not return to the sin again)."

~Shelly Callahan

"I was inspired to be the best woman of God that I can be, and to shine bright and *believe* that I have been made in our Father's image."

~Molly Reyes

Introduction

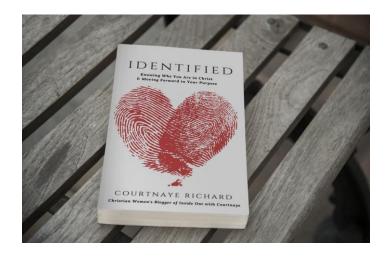
Welcome! I'm so elated that you've decided to participate in this Bible Study! Yay! God is so GOOD! Together, we are getting ready to embark upon an 8-Week journey of *knowing* who you are in Christ, while equipping you to move forward in discovering and walking in your purpose. It's going to be an exciting adventure in God's Word and in practical application!

You can use this Study Guide for personal growth or as a group study or book club. You can use it at home, your church, college campus, community, or online...basically, wherever the Lord leads you. I just pray that it not only ministers to you in ways that motivate and change *you*, but others around you as well! So, are you ready to dive in?

Let's talk about what it means to be **IDENTIFIED**!

~Courtnaye Richard Founder of Inside Out with Courtnaye <u>WWW.INSIDEOUTWITHCOURTNAYE.ORG</u> (Photo Credit: Biagini Photography)

How to Use this Study



INSTRUCTIONS

Okay, so before we dive in *officially*, we need to talk about some preliminaries. We need to talk about how to use and conduct this study. **NOTE:** You can use this Bible Study with or without the video sessions. Of course, it would be more beneficial to have the video series, but it is *not* a requirement. With that being said, here are a few instructions.

Personal Use:

If you are going to use this study on your own, I encourage you to read each chapter first - prior to answering the questions in the study guide. This will allow you to get the gist of what's being said in each chapter in the actual IDENTIFIED book, so that you'll be ready for practical application when you start using this study guide. Again, I pray that this added tool impacts your life and others around you *forever*!

Group Use:

If you are going to use this study as a group, I encourage you to read each chapter first on your own - prior to answering the questions in the study guide. This will help you when you come together as a group. Also, if you are the host, leader, or facilitator, encourage everyone in the group to answer the questions ahead of time, so that everyone will be ready for open discussion and dialogue when you come together.

PERSONAL & GROUP PARTICIPATION GUIDE

Word of Encouragement:

At the end of each session, there will be a "Word of Encouragement" from the author. It serves as an interactive way to simply encourage you and/or the group participants.

Time to Pray:

This is when you will be asked to lift up any prayer requests and/or pray for specific points brought up in the study. Prayer is so vital as it relates to growing in our Christian walk, and doing what God has called us to do.

Before You Meet Again:

If you are in a group setting, this is the part where you discuss what needs to be done *before* you come together again for your next meeting. It could be about finishing reading the chapter and answering the study questions, to what ice breaker you're going to do, to who's bringing what food dish for the fellowship! This section just helps everyone to be ready for the next session.

Memory Verse:

Lastly, but certainly not least, this is the part that will really help you grow in your walk as an IDENTIFIED woman in Christ. This is the part where you do what King David said in Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." We have GOT to hide the Word in our hearts, sis. Because when you and I do this, it helps us to not only be ready to be encouraged or changed from the inside out, it also helps us to be readily available to share God's Word with someone who needs it.



About the Author & Speaker

Courtnaye Richard is a devout follower of Jesus Christ, wife, mother, mentor, blogger, speaker, and author of the book *IDENTIFIED: Knowing Who You Are in Christ & Moving Forward in Your Purpose.* She is all about real life, real talk, and real faith as she teaches women across the globe from a biblical and practical perspective! For booking or more information about her ministry or blog, or to order more copies, visit www.insideoutwithcourtnaye.org TODAY!

Session 1/Chapter One

Spiritual Thumbprint: The Stamp of an **IDENTIFIED** Woman



Session 1 Chapter One



Spiritual Thumbprint: The Stamp of an IDENTIFIED Woman

"And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago." ~*Ephesians 1:13*

1.) When was the first time, according to the opening Scripture, that you were IDENTIFIED in Christ? After answering the initial question, what does knowing the answer do to your confidence level in regards to your identity and why?

2.) Why is knowing your identity upfront so important? Explain in your own words.

3.) What does it mean to be adopted into the faith, and how does that make you feel?

Now, let's talk about value.

4.) How do you feel about your value or worth right now? Circle the description which best identifies how you feel in this season.

- I feel valuable.

- At times, I don't feel valuable.
- I don't feel valuable at all.

5.) Explain why you feel this way here:

In the book, I talk about understanding your worth and value in the Kingdom of God. As His daughter, you need to know that *you* are very important to Him. Your voice is very important to Him. Realizing who you are in Christ includes knowing your value. The term itself means *importance, worth, or usefulness*. This is love from the Father! First John 3:1 reassures us of this great love saying, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" You are His beloved child. His precious daughter. You are valuable and worth every drop of Christ's blood that was shed for you. Don't ever forget that, sis.

6.) Now we're going to talk about forgiveness. Circle the description which best identifies the way you feel in regards to forgiveness.

- I accept God's forgiveness easily.
- Sometimes I am guilty of not accepting God's forgiveness.
- I really struggle in the area of accepting God forgiveness.

7.) Explain why it's easy or hard for you to accept God's forgiveness here:

Forgiveness is a choice, whether it's forgiving others, asking God to forgive you, or rejecting self-condemnation. It's all a choice. Once you have messed up in some way, form or fashion - ask for forgiveness and choose to accept it. Our great enemy Satan would love for you to wallow in self-condemnation, but don't do it. Instead, the next time you're tempted to hold onto your mistakes, choose to let them go, because God has. Learn from them, grow from them, and move forward, because you are forgiven.

Furthermore, Psalm 103:3 & 8-13 confirms this stating, "He forgives all my sins...The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all of our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him."

It's just like us with our own children. As parents, mothers in this case, when our kids mess up, we forgive them. We also don't want them to condemn themselves or hang their heads low for countless days or months. And no, we may not always agree with their decisions, choices, or mishaps, but we still forgive them and we don't hold grudges (at least we shouldn't). It's the same way with God, our heavenly Father. He forgives us and let's go. So praise Him for that!

But I need to say one more thing before we move ahead. Even though He forgives us, sometimes there are consequences or punishments for sin, as the Bible clearly mentions in several passages. Yet, notice the Scripture says "he does not punish us for all our sins." Let's thank Him again. Amen. Now let's keep moving forward.

8.) Have you ever found yourself doubting what God has whispered to you at one time or another due to life's circumstances, uncertainties, or what others may have told you? If so, how did that feel or what did that look like for you? Write about that experience here.

9.) List 3 things that could cloud someone's viewpoint of *knowing* who they are in Christ.

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)

10.) Many people, including Christians today, are finding themselves in an identity crisis. Why do you think this is happening more and more in our current culture and how can you help?

11.) The Bible tells us that Satan is a thief...Why do you think, the enemy tries to steal or distort the truth about who we are in Christ?

12.) Why do you think making your thumbprint or stamp in the world for Jesus Christ right now is so vital?

13.) It's time to be affirmed! Who does God say you are? Write out a few affirmations that encourage you the most. Replace the "you" with "I" (Refer to your IDENTIFIED Book):

Word of Encouragement:

It is *vital* for you to know who you are in Christ today more now than ever! The enemy is a thief and he wants nothing more than to distort or rob you of the truth. If you have believed and accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you are saved. You have the Holy Spirit living within you and you are IDENTIFIED! Own your spiritual inheritance. You have been adopted into God's family and we are sisters in Christ. You are valuable. You have a purpose. Also, accept His forgiveness when you mess up or do something crazy. Don't hang onto selfcondemnation. Instead, accept His amazing mercy, love, and forgiveness and begin moving forward. Stay free and affirm yourself through God's Word!

Time to Pray:

The Bible encourages us to, "Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2). Take a moment to join hands and lift up any prayer requests from the group (or if doing this study as a personal devotion, lift up your petitions to God). Also, after you've covered the prayer requests, lift up your fellow brothers and sisters all across the globe who are going through an identity crisis. Galatians 6:1 instructs, "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself."

Before You Meet Again:

Be sure to read the next chapter before you meet again. That way, you'll be abreast and ready for the next group discussion or time of personal reflection. Please try to answer the questions before your next group session, so you'll be prepared for open discussion.

Memory Verse:

"And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago." ~*Ephesians 1:13*

Session 2/Chapter Two

Spiritual Gifts: Identifying Your God-Given Gifts & Calling



Session 2 Chapter Two



Spiritual Gifts: Identifying Your God-Given Gifts & Calling

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath beforehand ordained, that we should walk in them." ~*Ephesians 2:10*

God made us...produced us. That's what the term *workmanship* means. As Christ Jesus lives within us, we must know that we were created to do good works; actually, even greater works than Him. Jesus said in John 14:12, "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father." What an amazing privilege we have been given!

1.) At this point in your life, what "good works" are you currently walking in?

James 2:14 tells us, "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith by itself save anyone?"

2.) Do you ever struggle to show your faith in action to others as James talks about? If so, explain why. If it's not a struggle for you, how do *you* show your faith in action in everyday life?

Let's move on to identifying your gifts, talents, and purpose. Did you know that there are many women across the globe who don't know their gifts, talents, and purpose? You may be one of them. If you are, that's totally okay. I believe it's one of the reasons why God chose you for this particular study. But guess what? No matter where you are on the subject, He knows everyone's gifts, talents, and purpose here on this earth; and He not only wants you to know them, but to cultivate and use them *well*.

So again, as mentioned in the book, I believe wholeheartedly that God is faithful to reveal and confirm your gifts and calling to you, especially when you pray and ask Him.

3.) Let's start here. We were all created with natural abilities/talents. Take a moment to identify your *natural-born* gifts and talents. Circle all that apply and write down others below.

- Singing

- Dancing
- Writing
- Speaking
- Acting
- Building or Creating
- Athleticism
- Other _

In the book "IDENTIFIED," I also talk about *spiritual* gifts. These are the supernatural gifts that God has given to you. (Also see Romans 12:6-8.)

4.) Take a moment to identify the spiritual gifts that you believe have been given to you. Circle each that apply to you.

- Prophesying (speaking for God, foreseeing the future, hearing a message & delivering it)
- Server (a special gift to serve)
- Teaching (gift of instruction, clarity of the Word, and more)
- The Gift of Exhortation (you can't help but lift up and encourage others around you)
- Giver (you feel compelled to give more than the average person)

- The Gift of Administration/Leadership (administrating, taking on leadership roles quite naturally)

- The Gift of Compassion (more ready to extend mercy, very compassionate, tries to see the good in nearly everything)

- Gift of Faith (possessing an abundance of supernatural faith...believing that God will move mountains regardless to what you see and no matter what others think or say and it happens!)

- Gift of Healing (a supernatural gift that when you touch someone or speak healing over them, they are supernaturally healed in the power of Jesus' name)

- Gift of Discernment (a sensitivity to identifying good and evil, right and wrong, or picking up what's going on in someone's life)

- Gift of Interpretation of Tongues (an ability to interpret messages spoken in a heavenly language)

- Gift of a Word of Wisdom or a Word of Knowledge (suddenly knowing what to do for yourself or others, as well as suddenly knowing what to tell someone in a time of need)

- Perform miracles (God gives supernatural power to perform miracles in the power of Jesus' name)

NOTE: I need to say here that God can choose to use anyone greatly at any time to accomplish great things, because He's sovereign. Yet, we are all created uniquely and have been given supernatural gifts as the Bible states. That's what makes the body of Christ work so well together

and in unity. We are His workmanship, created to serve in different ways for a united purpose. And we were created not only to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, but to also fulfill the Great Commission, reveal His power to others, and to glorify Him. We were born for this!

In this chapter, I recommended a great book that helps identify the spiritual gifts God has given to each of us. It's a pretty awesome and FUN book! Again, it's entitled, "*Discover Your God-Given Gifts*" by Don and Katie Fortune. I believe you'll be truly encouraged and motivated to flow in your gifts more confidently when you gain a better understanding of what they are and how to function in them *effectively*. You'll also be able to see how others operate around you because of their gifting as well (such as your husband or fiancé, friends, co-workers, or brothers and sisters in Christ whom you work alongside with at church or in your community, etc.).

5.) With that being said, in what ways can you use your spiritual *and* natural gifts to help others in your home, church, or community today?

Home:			
Church:			

Community: _____

In regards to your purpose...

6.) Do you know your purpose or calling yet? Have you prayed for God to reveal it to you? If so, has He answered and if so, how are you either preparing for it or walking in it?

7.) Ponder for a moment. Has God ever given you a dream, vision, or a burden to do something that you know came from Him? If He has, how and when did He reveal it to you?

8.) Have you ever created a "Vision" board or bought a "Vision" journal? If so, how have you used it and how has it helped you accomplish some of the things that God has shown you thus far?

9.) Do you have a *prayer* journal? If you do, has God already answered some (if not all) of the prayers you've written in it? If so, how have those answered prayers encouraged you?

Before we close out this session, we must cover one more important element as you discover and operate in your God-given gifts and talents. It's walking in "love." In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul tells us how vital it is to walk in love as we fulfill our purpose and use our gifts and talents in the world around us. He boldly states, "If I could speak all the languages of earth and angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift to prophesy, and I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing." Pretty serious, huh?

10.) So, how is your love walk, sis? What does walking in love or operating in love as we use our gifts and talents look like to *you* in real life?

Word of Encouragement:

Remember, you are IDENTIFIED in Christ. You are God's workmanship created to do good works! So do it, sis! You have been created for such a time as this. God wants to use each and every gift that He has placed inside of you to spread His love all across your home, church, community, social media networks, and quite frankly, the world! It's time to live a life of purpose.

Prayer Time:

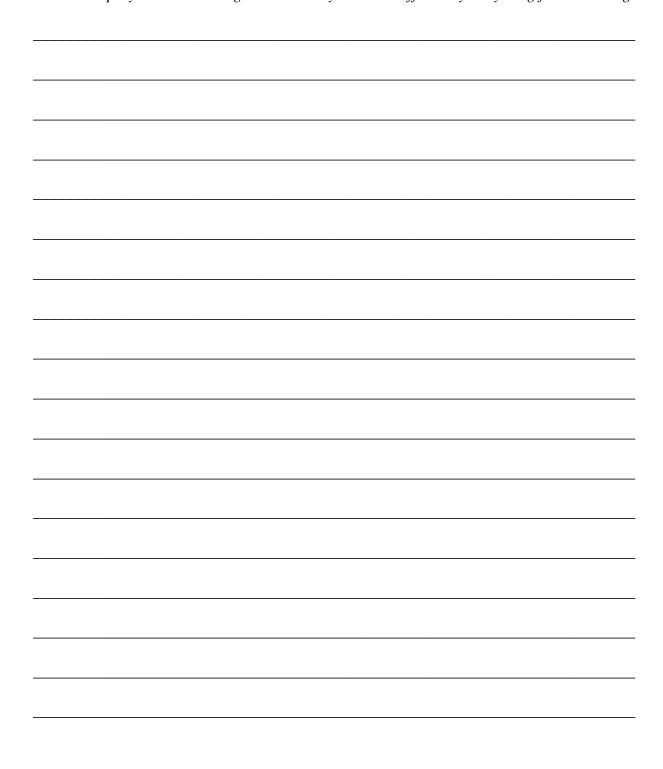
Take this time to ask the Lord to clearly reveal to you what He wants you to do in this season. Quietly ask Him to reveal His good, perfect, and acceptable will for your life as Romans 12:2 talks about. Ask Jesus to show you how to cultivate and utilize the gifts and talents that have been placed inside of you *well* and help you to walk in love more consistently.

Until You Meet Again:

After discussing the questions from this chapter in your next group meeting (which should be coming up), move on to the next chapter, and answer the questions ahead of time, so when you meet again, you'll be ready to become more spiritually prepared for your purpose through regular discipleship and personal discipline.

Memory Verse:

"A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." ~1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT) Write out a prayer to God asking Him to show you how to effectively use your gifts and calling.



Session 3/Chapter Three

Spiritual Preparation: Discipleship & Personal Discipline



Session 3 Chapter Three



Spiritual Preparation: Discipleship & Personal Discipline

"Jesus called out to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him." ~*Matthew 4:19-20*

1.) The term *follow* is defined as "to go, come after, or move." What does it look like for you to **follow** Jesus today?

2.) What did Jesus mean when He said, "I will show you how to fish for people?"

Jesus has chosen you, just as He chose His disciples. He has called you to follow Him. But He also wants to do more. He wants to show *you* how to fish for people. However, in order to do this successfully, it will start with preparing yourself spiritually through the Word of God, sound Bible teaching through discipleship, and developing your own personal disciplines to grow as a Christ follower. Remember, Jesus taught them and supped with them, and deposited the Holy Spirit within them, *before* He sent them out. He prepared them, and He's doing the same with you now.

3.) There is no doubt that we are living in the last days, and Jesus is coming back. But why do you think He hasn't come back yet? What is He waiting for (refer to 2 Peter 3:9-10 and discuss it with your group or meditate on this verse if you are doing this as a personal study)?

Jesus wants to use you to fish for people...*souls*. So how's your fishing going? Do you have any bait? The bait is God's Word. It's also the fruit of your life. As we share Christ and our testimonies with others and do what God has called us to do, we also need to make sure that we ourselves are staying connected to the Vine, which is Jesus Christ. We do this through prayer, discipleship, and personal disciplines. This will help keep you fresh, alert, and ready to share the hope that is within you when the opportunity arises.

4.) With that being said, remember the disciples spent time with Jesus. They fellowshipped with Him and learned from Him. Do you currently attend a discipleship class, women's Bible study/fellowship group, or home group study? If so, how has attending these classes helped you grow as an IDENTIFIED follower of Christ?

Spending time in God's Word with others can be refreshing, life-changing, and helpful in getting to know Christ better *together*! There is nothing like a good fellowship and drawing closer to God with like-minded believers as we grow in discipleship.

5) Let's talk about personal disciplines. How is your prayer life? First Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." In other words, don't stop praying. Do you pray regularly? Also, do you have a prayer closet or what some people call a *war room*?

6.) Have you ever fasted and prayed before? If so, what types of fasts have you tried and how have you seen God move through fasting and prayer?

7.) When is the best time of day for you to start your devotion (i.e. Bible reading, prayer, and/or study of God's Word)? And what does your devotional time look like (i.e. sitting on the sofa, at a table, in the break room at work, etc.)? Write both answers out here and talk about it.

When we read God's Word, its purpose is not only to show us who God is, but to also teach us and equip us to do what He has predestined us to do. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Apostle Paul teaches, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." Amen!

8.) How has the Word of God challenged your life lately in the area of personal change and growth? What is He showing you or teaching you in this season?

9.) Can you *see* or sense how the Lord is preparing and equipping you in your life today to do what He has called you to do? Explain.

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is crucial for spiritual and natural success. Joshua 1:8 says, "Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do." This Book of Instruction is the Bible, which most of us have either on our phones as an app or in our homes. When we read and study the Word, as well as memorize and meditate on it, its effects for daily living, application, and sharing it with the world around us can simply be life-changing!

10.) When was the last time you memorized a Scripture for yourself personally? An example might be when you memorized a key verse that you needed for the season you were in? Write it out and talk about how it helped you in the past or how it is helping you now?

As you prepare to do what God has purposed you to do, you also need to have some personal and practical disciplines incorporated in your life. These may include things like creating your daily/weekly schedule, maintaining balance in your home life, managing or taking care of any stress factors, as well as exercising and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Let's talk about it.

11.) How do you plan your work week? In other words, do you have a Day Planner, phone app with your schedule in it, or a To-Do-List? What does planning your week usually look like for you?

^{12.)} Now, let's talk about stress for a moment. How do you typically handle stress? Talk about it here.

As I mentioned in this particular chapter, stress and anxiety are just not good physically, mentally, or spiritually. If you ever get stressed out, take a step back and pray. Ask God to take over and trust Him to take care of whatever is bringing you undue stress and anxiety. Remember what Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Release it, sis!

13.) How's your home life? Are you married? Single? Do you have kids? Are you an Empty Nester? Let's go deeper. Are you balancing ministry, work, or volunteer hours around your family - *well*? Here's a question to ponder and discuss. What does *balance* look like for you?

When it comes to maintaining balance in your life, I believe, a part of being imbalanced has a lot to do with what you say, "Yes!" to becomes extremely important. In this chapter, there is a part written about, "The Power of Agreement." Make sure that you are saying a God-ordained, "Yes," before you find yourself screaming, "NO! What have I gotten myself into?!" Pray, seek wisdom, and ask the Lord if you need to add anything else to your plate. If you're married, don't forget to talk to your hubby, too. Again, there is power *and* peace in agreement. This is indeed a *personal* discipline.

14.) How is your exercise regimen? Do you workout? Do you try to maintain a healthy diet? If so, what does this personal discipline look like in your life?

Word of Encouragement:

No guilt here for any of these personal disciplines written out or discussed. The sole purpose is for you to consider the fact that you NEED to be prepared, practice continual discipleship, and have personal disciplines that you follow on a regular basis. It all works together for your spiritual and natural health, but also for others who need you to stay strong.

Time to Pray:

Take time to pray and ask the Lord to help you continue growing in your faith as a Christfollower, but also to give you a boldness to win souls for the Kingdom of Heaven. Furthermore, if you have a Bible Study group, that's great! However, if you do not have one yet, pray and ask God to show you where to go and grow in a weekly discipleship environment - where the Word of God is being *soundly* taught. Also, pray that the Lord would help you develop and maintain a healthy life as it relates to all that has been discussed in this session. (NOTE: If you are in a group setting, have two women partner together to pray for this subject of discussion).

Until You Meet Again:

Read the next chapter and answer the questions ahead of time. Don't forget to find a Scripture for the season you're in and try memorizing it. A great idea for the group is to come back and recite your verse to the class! Don't be shy. This will help you be more accountable for memorizing verses. It's all about personal discipline *and* life application! ;-)

Memory Verse:

"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."

~ Hebrews 10:25

Take a brief moment right here to plan out tomorrow's schedule (**NOTE:** If you are doing this is a group setting, you can do this on your own later, for time-sake. The point here is that you get in the habit of disciplining yourself to stay on task at home and at work and/or ministry).

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Session 4/Chapter Four

Spiritual Evidence: The Character of an IDENTIFIED Woman



Session 4 Chapter Four



Spiritual Evidence: The Character of an IDENTIFIED Woman

"Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character." ~Psalm 105:19

As we read in this chapter, Joseph was favored by his natural father, but also by God. The Lord showed him in his dreams that his brothers would one day bow down to him, because he would become second-in-command to Pharoah. Now Joseph was very excited about his dreams. However, his brothers certainly were not! Not only that, but Joseph would soon find out that before these dreams would come to pass, his character would first need to be tested.

1.) We know through Scripture that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and lied on by Potiphar's wife when she falsely accused him of trying to rape her (See Genesis 39). Also in his hurry to get out of jail, he asked one of his jail mates (the cup-bearer) to put in a good word for him to Pharaoh. Yet, it didn't work. That was pretty loaded! How about you? If any of these things would've happened to you, how would you have responded?

2.) Think about Joseph again. By asking his jail mate to put that good word in for him, he was really trying to get out of the test that he was in at the time. Looking at your own life, have you ever tried to shortcut a test or go ahead of God's timing to do something because you were tired of waiting? Explain that experience.

Again, when God adopts you into the faith and places a dream, vision, or burden inside of you, that's only the beginning. The story of Joseph is a great biblical example of this truth. There is cultivation, training, experience, and tests and trials to go through and overcome, but there is also

character building. Good, godly character is something that will identify you. It's your spiritual DNA and evidence to the watching world and the church that you are who you say you are - an IDENTIFIED woman in Christ.

3.) So, how is your character these days? Better yet, what areas are you personally struggling with as it relates to godly character and need help with? Circle every one that applies.

- Loving others
- Keeping your joy tank full
- Being peaceable or accepting God's peace
- Being patient
- Being gentle and kind
- Showing God's goodness to others (in action)
- Faith or trusting God
- Being humble/meek
- Practicing self-control
- Personal integrity
- Pride or arrogance
- Forgiving others

4.) How can you grow in the areas that you circled? Write it out here and discuss it in your group.

5.) Philippians 2:12-13 says, "Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." How does this Scripture make you feel? How can you show the results or evidence of your salvation to others around you?

The term *character* means a distinctive mark, a figure or symbol used in writing or printing; also a distinctive trait, quality, attribute, characteristic, moral strength, pattern of behavior, personality, or reputation. Again, your character is similar to your thumbprint. It's what identifies you to others. And it's HUGE to God. He wants us to bear much fruit. Jesus said in John 15:8, "When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father." There are three distinctive words here and they are "much fruit" and "glory."

6.) Why do you think bearing much fruit brings great glory to God?

7.) As you prepare or begin to move forward in your purpose, your character is going to be tested, mainly because God is proving you to see if you can obey Him, follow His instruction and timing, and handle tests and trials that come your way. How do you handle tests and trials when they strike your life? And could you grow in this area? If so, in what ways?

8.) How's your character at home? Could you show more love, patience, or self-control? What area of your character at home could use a little "Holy Spirit" help?

9.) How's your character in church? Is it caring, loving, helpful or could it use some work? If so, in what way?

10.) If you are a leader in your church, ministry, community, or on your job, people and God are watching your leadership and servant skills. As a leader, do a self-inventory check. Where do you think you can use some help as it relates to having better character as a leader?

11.) As we prepare to close out this session, have you ever sensed or heard the Holy Spirit whisper or lead you to bear the right type of fruit? If so, write down that encounter.

In the book of James, God gives it to leaders pretty straight. James 3:1 warns, "Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly." Ouch! This particular verse is specifically referring to the mouth (in its context). So if you are a leader, watch that mouth, sis and serve God's people well.

Word of Encouragement:

You can have delicious, evidential fruit! You can have godly character that glorifies God. And you can learn to forgive those who have trespassed against you and have integrity, just as Joseph did with his brothers and Potiphar's wife. That's godly character in action. The Holy Spirit will willingly help you. Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" We have supernatural help. Remember, we are IDENTIFIED! So let's act like it, my sister!

Time to Pray:

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make you more sensitive to His voice and leading, but also to help you yield to God's Word and direction. Possessing godly character is important to our Father, because the watching world *and* our fellow brothers and sisters need to see our faith in action, especially in these critical days. It's time to shine brighter than ever before, so lift this up in prayer.

Until You Meet Again:

Go onto the next chapter in the book and answer the questions for the next session. Get ready to lay aside doubt, insecurities, comparison, and fear.

Memory Verse:

"So be careful how you live. Don't act like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do." ~*Ephesians 5:15-17*

Session 5/Chapter Five

Spiritual Courage: Laying Aside Doubt, Insecurities, Comparison, and Fear



Session 5 Chapter Five



Spiritual Courage: Laying Aside Doubt, Insecurities, Comparison, & Fear

"This is my command-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." ~Joshua 1:9

When God calls you, just as He did with Joshua and so many others in the Bible, He equips, prepares, and gives a word or command to move forward. I want to remind you that when God begins to unravel your purpose, it will unfold little by little, and day by day. Along the way, He will give you noticeable signs, confirmations, glimpses of His presence, and speak to you loudly through His Word and through others with sound, biblical advice and encouragement. It will be a supernatural process of revelation regarding His will for your life.

1.) Have you experienced any of what you've just read? In other words, how do you see God equipping you right *now* to be ready to move forward in your purpose (or when it's time)?

2.) Where are you in this season of walking in your purpose? And do you know it yet? Are you in preparation mode or are you currently in the trenches of it? Write out where you are or how it's going so far here.

Okay, let's move forward a bit. In the book, we've read about overcoming and laying aside doubt, insecurities, comparisons, and fear.

3.) Have you ever struggled with doubt? Are you struggling now? If so, what caused it or how is it affecting your life at this current time?

4.) Have you ever had any issues with insecurity? If so, what does that feel like to you and when did it begin? (NOTE: There's typically a root cause for insecurity.)

5.) In the book, I talk about playing the comparison game. Have you ever compared yourself to others? If so, how did you get to that place? Talk about it here.

6.) Why do you think so many women struggle with comparison today?

Let's talk about fear for a moment. Unfortunately, fear within itself can be paralyzing at times.

7.) Does fear ever grip you? If so, in what ways?

8.) Reflect back to a time in your life when you were afraid, but saw God move on your behalf. How did He move to help you get through your fear?

9.) What are some ways that you think we, as women, can overcome these issues to help us move forward courageously?

Personally, I believe "faith" is actually the answer for demolishing doubt, insecurity, comparison, and fear. It's the antidote (or prescription) for overcoming them all. When you purposely activate your faith, you *will* begin to have spiritual courage. But it's a choice. Moving forward in whatever God is calling you to do in this season and beyond, will take an act of spiritual courage. If you can grasp this now, you'll begin to see that great things happen when you press past your doubts, insecurities, comparison, and fears.

10.) In your own words, what does it look like to trust God? Write it out and discuss it in your group.

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

11.) Now let's break down this verse into bite-sized pieces. The purpose in doing this is to help you personally activate this Scripture into real-life application. Complete each sentence, and then write out in your own words what God is telling you through this verse, after breaking it down.

a.) Trust _____ the _____ with all thine _____.

b.) And lean not unto thine own _____.

c.) In all your ways _____

d.) And he shall _____ thy paths.

Write it out here: _____

Now, take a moment to do this physical exercise. You're going to literally take a *leap of faith*. So stand up straight, think of something that you're afraid of doing, close your eyes, and take a big leap forward. Ready? Go for it! Okay. If you did it, I want to tell you, "That's courage in action." It's leaping forward in spite of what you see, hear, or feel. When you activate your faith, it releases freedom and courage to do anything that God has commissioned you to do. That's how this works. It's a conscious choice to move beyond your feelings of apprehension and *be courageous!*

Word of Encouragement:

You can do this! If God says, "Be strong and courageous, I will be with you wherever you go," believe it! It's His Word. So don't doubt it, sis. It's totally safe to take Him at His Word. Jeremiah 17:7 says, "But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence." So be a blessed woman and walk in your God-confidence today, because He *is* with you.

Time to Pray:

Pray for spiritual courage. Pray that you will be able to activate your faith by trusting God when you begin to doubt what He's told you or when you feel insecure, or compare yourself to others, or become afraid. Give it to Him. The Bible tells us to, "Cast our cares upon Him." Do it, sis.

Until You Meet Again:

Read the next chapter, answer the questions, and be ready to discuss what it means to get ready for battle. We're going to talk about spiritual warfare. Don't miss this next one!

Memory Verse:

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." ~2 Corinthians 5:7

Session 6/Chapter Six

Spiritual Warfare: Get Ready for Battle



Session 6 Chapter Six



Spiritual Warfare: Get Ready for Battle

"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be ready to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm." ~*Ephesians 6:13*

As you prepare to move forward in what God is calling you to do, gird up, my sister! Because the devil will be ready for you! Again, as I mentioned in this chapter of the book, this is not to scare you. Instead, it's to prepare you for the battle up ahead.

1.) For starters, have you ever experienced spiritual warfare? If you have, what did it look and feel like in your life at the time? Are you there now? Explain.

Spiritual warfare can come in so many forms. It can come in the form of sickness, overwhelming fatigue, doubt, being lied to or cheated on, something being stolen from you, or even people coming against you in your house or outside of your house. Granted, everything is not caused by Satan. Yet, when it comes down to doing God's will, it's best to have a ready mindset that you know he's going to try to stir something up. That's why you have to be on guard in every way...*spiritually*.

2.) I want to pause here to ask you this question. Have you ever encountered people acting strange or striking up unnecessary fights or arguments with you when you're doing what God has called you to do in a particular season? If so, what you have you encountered and how have you dealt with it?

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 6:12, "For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." In all actuality, your fight is not with people. The real fight is with the unseen world. It's an invisible war. So in order to win in this type of fight or warfare, you have to shift your thought process towards thinking, "Wait a minute. I'm not fighting this person. This is the enemy working behind this individual to throw me off course or to get me to respond out of character." When you understand this, you are dressed for battle! It's all about making a conscious choice to *put on* your full spiritual armor.

3.) What is your full armor? Refer to Ephesians 6:13-17. (Hint: There are 6 pieces to your armor.)

1.)

2.)

3.)

4.)

5.)

6.)

4.) What does it mean to put on the belt of truth?

5.) We know that putting on the breastplate of righteousness is all about knowing that your righteousness comes from God when we accept Christ as our personal Lord & Savior, but it also means protecting your heart. How can you protect your heart in your everyday life against the enemy's tactics (i.e. skillful methods, strategies)?

6.) As you encounter battles in your life, the Bible promises to give you strength and peace. Knowing these promises is huge, especially in a spiritual attack. The shoes of peace are all about walking in strength, peace, and standing your ground as you share the Good News, and as you do what He has called you to do. How does this piece of armor reassure you that God is with you?

7.) As an IDENTIFIED woman in Christ, it's important for us to walk in faith. When you raise up your shield of faith, how does it protect you from the fiery darts thrown at you by Satan?

8.) The helmet of salvation is about deliverance, but it's also about putting on the mind of Christ and *protecting* your mind. When you put on this piece of armor, how can you guard your mind when you are going through a test, trial, or assignment?

9.) Alright! Here comes the weaponry - the sword of the Spirit. We know what having the Word of God means, but in what way can you use this mighty weapon against the spiritual attacks aimed at you as you do what you've been commissioned to do?

10.) Prayer is crucial when you are dealing with spiritual warfare. When you are under attack, how do you fight in prayer? Explain here.

11.) Do you quite naturally recognize when you are under a spiritual attack, meaning, do you know what being spiritually attacked feels like? Describe that feeling.

The Bible tells us to resist the enemy. Deny him. Fight him. James 4:7 instructs, "So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." When we humble ourselves under God's Word, we have power. We have power when we resist the enemy's thoughts by putting on the helmet of salvation and rejecting what he whispers to us against God's very Word. When we do these things, he has no choice but to flee. Amen!

Word of Encouragement:

Watch the devil's schemes, sis. He's very clever and subtle. But the good thing is, he's not smarter than God or you when you put on your full armor. Wherever you are at this time, get dressed! Prepare yourself and be ready to be on guard as you move forward in your purpose. Stay sober and alert!

Time to Pray:

Pray about WINNING! Pray about defeating the enemy with the sword of the Spirit. Pray that you will be able to recognize when you are going into spiritual warfare, by being sensitive to how you're acting, or what you're speaking, or what's happening in your life at the time. The Holy Spirit will help you. Remain prayerful.

Until You Meet Again:

Read the next chapter and answer the questions. Now that you know more about preparing for battle, it's time to learn more about unleashing the Holy Spirit's power within you.

Memory Verse:

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith." $\sim 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NIV)$

Session 7/Chapter Seven

Spiritual Empowerment: Unleashing the Holy Spirit Power within You



Session 7 Chapter Seven



Spiritual Empowerment: Unleashing the Holy Spirit Power within You

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere-in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ~Acts 1:8

Do you know that you have power within you? As an IDENTIFIED woman in the Lord, you have the power of the Holy Spirit. And He lives inside of you to lead, help, comfort, and guide you, but also to give you supernatural power to do great and mighty things for Kingdom advancement!

1.) Before reading this book and doing this study, did you realize that you had the Holy Spirit power within you? If so, how did you come to know this truth?

2.) In the Book of Acts, the disciples, as well as the Apostle Paul preached, taught, healed the sick, cast out demons, set people free, all in the name of Jesus, because of the power that was within them. How can you unleash this great power from inside of you today?

3.) What does fulfilling the Great Commission mean to you? And how can you do your part in fulfilling this great task before Christ returns?

4.) The Apostle Paul taught young Timothy the ropes of teaching and preaching the Word of God to others. How can you preach the Word of God in your life in your community or church?

5.) What do you think "Preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season" means? (Refer to 2 Timothy 4:1-2.)

Paul also said in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths."

6.) Do you see this happening today (what is described in 2 Timothy 4:3-5)? Are you ever tempted to water down the gospel message for the sake of how others might view you or because of popular acceptance or fear of persecution? Explain.

7.) You have been empowered to turn this world upside down for Jesus Christ, just as the early church did in the Book of Acts! Have you felt empowered lately to do great things for God? If so, write it out and talk about *how* here.

8.) God will lead you to those who need to know and accept Christ. Can you think of someone right now whom you can share the gospel with? Write down their name and try reaching out to them soon.

God's Word cannot be hindered. When Peter and the apostles were arrested for preaching the Good News, they were thrown into jail *for the Word*. We call that persecution. However, Acts 5:19 declares, "But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 'Go to the temple and give the people this message of life!" Amen! The Gospel of Christ *must* be shared. It cannot be hindered. The Lord tells us through the Bible that before Christ returns, the gospel will be preached throughout the world. And He wants to use you and me to accomplish this Great Commission.

9.) Have you ever felt hindered in any way to share your faith? If not, great! But if so, in what way? Explain.

You have more power available to you today. It's the power of praying in the Spirit and for some, the power of speaking in tongues. As written in the book, Paul distinguishes between the two. In 1 Corinthians 12:30 he states, "Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not!" In this first part, he was talking about the public gifts of tongues and interpretations, which some people do have. However, anyone can pray and ask God to enable oneself to be uplifted through praying in tongues, which builds you up and supernaturally strengthens you and intercedes for others. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 14:4 saying, "A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church." That's the difference.

10.) Now, even though this is a controversial topic for many professing Christians, nevertheless, it is a *biblical* truth. So let's talk about it for a moment. Do you have the gift of speaking in tongues or prophesying in tongues? If so, how has God used your gift to help others in your church?

If you don't have the gift to speak in tongues or interpret them, don't feel pressure in any way to have these gifts or feel pressured to pray in the Spirit. But if you do have these gifts or extra power, use them well and in decency and in order as 1 Corinthians 14:40 cautions.

11.) The Bible tells us in Romans 8:26-27, "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's will." Again, this is different than having the gift of speaking in tongues or interpreting tongues. This is specifically talking about personal edification or intercession for others. So, it is totally okay to pray in the Spirit.

Now, if you do pray in the Spirit, how has praying this way strengthened you or helped others?

No doubt, praying in the Spirit does give you that extra power! If you ever want to receive it, pray and ask God for it. You can also ask someone to join you in prayer about it as well. But by all means, don't be afraid of it, don't forbid or scoff at it, and don't quench it, because it *is* for today and it is biblical.

Acts 2:17-18 says, "In the last days' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will

dream dreams. In those days, I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants-men and women alike-and they will prophesy."

Word of Encouragement:

God wants to use you. You have been chosen. You are IDENTIFIED. The Holy Spirit lives within you and has empowered you to accomplish great things. So unleash that power as you move forward to advance the Kingdom of Heaven through your gifts, talents, and calling. He will lead and guide you every step of the way!

Time to Pray:

Pray. Pray in every way that you can. Colossians 4:2 says, "Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart." Also 1 Peter 4:7 states, "The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers." And Romans 8:26 says, "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words." Pray that you will have a greater boldness to preach the Word in due season, share your faith more by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and pray more diligently and earnestly for yourself and others in these last days.

Until You Meet Again:

Read the next chapter. Answer the questions. Prepare yourself to move, as you learn more about how to occupy until Christ returns.

Memory Verse:

"And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ." ~1 Peter 3:15-16

Session 8/Chapter Eight

Spiritual Movement: Occupy Until He Comes



Session 8 Chapter Eight



Spiritual Movement: Occupy Until He Comes

"And he called his servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." ~Luke 19:13

It's time to get ready to MOVE! Because as an IDENTIFIED woman, Jesus is telling you and me, "Occupy until I come." The word "occupy" means to engage the attention or energies of, to take possession of, to seize, or to take up place.

1.) Read the parable of the ten servants in Luke 19:11-27. How have you been using your talents to occupy until Jesus returns?

Jesus purposely gave this parable to help those who were listening (including us today), to be busy utilizing what was given, *before* He returns with our rewards.

2.) What gifts and talents has God given you to use while you occupy your time here on earth? List them below.

3.) There are 8 Subtitles in Chapter 8. Write them out here and then speak them out loud. **NOTE:** The purpose for writing these down and speaking them out loud is so that you can begin declaring it in your own way, as words of affirmation, encouragement, and movement. Go for it!

1.)

2.)

3.)

4.)5.)6.)

7.) 8.)

4.) How is God commissioning you right now? In other words, what are you feeling compelled to do right now...*today*?

5.) After reading the book, what does, "Don't lose sight of your identity" mean to you now?

6.) Are you ready to flow in your God-given gifts and talents that He has given you, yet? If you

are, write down how you can operate in your gifts in your local church and/or community?

Now, here are a few recap questions regarding what you've read and learned from the book...

7.) Are you preparing yourself spiritually when no one is watching through your personal disciplines? If so, how?

8.) Are you going to purpose in your heart and actions to live out godly character in your home and outside of the home? If so, in what new ways? (Remember, we're constantly growing.)

9.) Are you going to make it your personal business to walk out your life and calling courageously, without doubt, insecurity, comparison, and fear? Write down how here.

10.) Are you going to make a decision to put on every piece of God's armor to win in spiritual warfare when it strikes your life and as you do God's will? If so, what will that look like for you?

11.) Jesus Christ is coming back soon. What are you doing to prepare for His swift return, and how are you helping others be ready for that day as well?

12.) Over the course of this study, which points or chapter triggered the most change or lit a fresh fire within you? Explain here.

Word of Encouragement:

I pray that this book and study has ministered to you and encouraged you in ways that have truly helped you to *know* who you are in Christ as you prepare to move forward in your purpose. If you still don't know what your purpose is yet, it's okay. You will know in God's perfect timing. So don't stress. He's got you completely covered. In the meantime, just keep praying and doing what you know to do. Use the gifts and talents that He has given you right where you are and in the season you're currently in. We can all be used in some way or another to spread the Good News in life, word, action, and deed. Just move, sis! And if you *do* know your purpose, continue to be led by the power of God's Holy Spirit and continue moving forward in faith. I love you, sis (or sisters if you're doing this as a group). Let's continue occupying until He comes!

Time to Pray:

Pray that you *will* occupy until He comes. Pray about those eight subtitles in this chapter. Whatever you do, just don't stop praying as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 states. If you are in a group, have eight women pray from each subtitle, and then the leader or facilitator will close out in prayer for the entire study.

Until We ALL Meet Again:

Let's "occupy until He comes" and fulfill the Great Commission! It's time to be about our Father's business and shine bright like never before. And don't forget...you are IDENTIFIED!

Memory Verse:

"So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day or hour your Lord is coming." ~Matthew 24:42

You Úre... IDENTIFIED





Thank you for participating in my Bible Study!

I'd love to stay connected with you beyond the study. For more life-changing teachings, videos, articles, resources, and my blog that comes out every Monday @ 7:30am, visit <u>www.insideoutwithcourtnaye.org</u> TODAY! Let's keep growing *together!*

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God bless you! And remember, Jesus is coming back soon! Let's be ready from the *inside out*!

~Courtnaye Blogger, Author, & Speaker <u>www.insideoutwithcourtnaye.org</u> (Photo Credit: Victoria Steelman Images)

