

HINTS FOR BUSY WIVES

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INTRODUCTION

My dear ladies, we live in a very fast-paced world today. There often just doesn't seem to be enough time for love, marriage, children, the church and work. And then to have a husband yet who is constantly on the go, always reaching out, ministering, and coming home tired if not exhausted. The phone is always ringing. He needs a clean shirt. One of the children gets sick. All of your plans for the day seem to go flying out the window. So what do you do? How are you going to survive this unending cyclone of activities and demands? Well, let's talk about a few hints that can bring life back into focus.

I. REALIZE THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE

No, you are not the only lady who feels overwhelmed. That's a fact that will bring you a lot of comfort. Sometimes we are so busy that we don't even have time to talk to other women in the same situation. Take the time to do that. Find women whose husbands are also active in ministry or will be very soon. Sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves because we think life is never this hard for anyone else. Take heart! You are not alone. There are lots of busy women out there. Not just busy, but successful in life.

But sometimes we look around at other women who are successful, and we begin to feel guilty because it seems like they are always able to handle everything. That brings us to our next hint.

II. DON'T DEVELOP A GUILT COMPLEX BECAUSE YOU AREN'T A "SUPER WOMAN"

Have you ever looked at the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 and become totally discouraged with your life? Now if there was ever a super woman, she was the one. However, you need to realize that you are seeing a summary of a whole life, not all of the details, not how she grew and developed and learned to set priorities.

Don't kid yourself. The fact is you **CAN'T** do it all. You have the strength, time, energy and capabilities that God has given you, but He didn't create you to be independent of Him. He just created you a vulnerable female human being with strengths and weaknesses. Nor does He expect you to "do it all." Many of these expectations we place on ourselves, or we let others put them on us. So how do we avoid having a guilt complex when it just seems like we can't get it all done?



III. HONESTLY FACE YOUR PROBLEMS

What are those things that are making life unbearable for you? What can actually be done about them? Most of us figure that if we only had more time, **then** we could get it all done. But the fact is we don't have more time. Each of us has exactly 24 hours a day with 60 minutes in every hour. Did God cheat us? No, He is very fair in this. He has given everyone exactly the same amount of time in a day. So what are the real problems? Possibly lack of health, unrealistic expectations of what you can actually accomplish in a certain amount of time, saying yes to too many responsibilities, duties in life that you hate to do. There are so many things. Sit down when you get home and examine your life. What are the real problems there that you are faced with? Write them down. Pray about them. Make a list of Life Priorities. Ask counsel from your husband and other Godly women for these problems.

As you do this you will quickly see that the first thing you will have to do is:

IV. DETERMINE YOUR PRIORITIES

What are the important things in your life? Make a list of **long-term Life Priorities**. Sometimes we say certain things are important, but we don't really live that way. Fill in your list of **Life Priorities** with some short-term goals and plans. Probably all of you would say, "Well, God is first, then my husband, my children, the church." That's good, but what does that mean in daily life? Well, number one is:

A. Put your personal devotions first

That means first thing in the morning. Don't leave the house if you haven't spent time with God. Maybe you think, "Well, I always wake up late and have to rush around. It's much better for me to have devotions at night before I go to bed." What is first on your list of priorities? God? If you really believe He is first then the only way to show that is to start the day with Him. And the benefits for you are untold. Getting up that little bit extra early and spending time focusing your thoughts on God and His character, what He has to say to you from His Word, committing your day to Him. There is nothing that will more quickly help you handle the demands of a busy day than that priority.



B. Then, get organized

"I've got so many things to do today that I don't know where to begin!" Is that how you feel many days? **Now** is the time to learn to set daily priorities. Get 3 pieces of paper and a pen. Label the first paper "**DAILY SCHEDULE**." On this paper write down the tasks that are non-optional for the day. Feeding your family is non-optional, etc., etc. Are you to lead a Bible study? That is non-optional. These are things you already have a commitment to.

Then label the second paper "**TO DO**" and list all the things you have been requested to do for today. When you are requested to do something, you need to ask yourself two basic questions:

(1.) Do I want to take advantage of this opportunity?

(2.) Should I take part in this particular activity?

After asking these two questions you may answer in one of three ways: **Yes, No, Maybe**. Then look over your list of Life Priorities once again. Do any of these “**YES**” items fit into your life’s priorities?

Now you only want to deal with the items which you have written YES next to. The NO or MAYBE items can wait for another day.

Thirdly, write each of these “YES” items onto a Do-Today list and put a little number beside them indicating what _____ they have and then, start doing them. **Concentrate on only one item** at a time. When it has been completed, cross it off and go on to the next. At the end of the day you can go back and read off all the various activities you have accomplished, and it will give you a real feeling of accomplishment. The ones you weren’t able to accomplish can go back onto the TO DO sheet for the next day, and you can evaluate its importance again.

C. Identify any unnecessary energy drains

How many long telephone calls do you have with an acquaintance who always has problems to pour out? How many unnecessary trips do you make to the shop because you forgot to get salt, or bread, or macaroni? How can you make better use of your time and energy? Try to identify the things that are wearing you down and then discuss solutions with your husband. Can one of the children run to the shop for you? Do you need to put a time limit on phone conversations which are not helpful to either of you?

D. Always have a little bit of breathing room for emergencies

Don’t schedule your life so tightly that if one thing goes wrong you are in an absolute panic the rest of the day. When you go over your TO DO list, allow extra time for optional activities. This will take a lot of emotional pressure off of your life.

V. FOCUS ON ANSWERS AND CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES--NOT YOUR PROBLEMS

Is there a problem that seems to overwhelm you? Do you feel despair? Probably you have the wrong focus. Why does God bring problems into your life—for your destruction? Of course not! **Look at your problems as challenges**. Don’t spend your time whining to friends about how difficult life is. Instead get your friends to help you come up with some new ideas, some creative solutions to your problem. Ask the Lord to give you fresh insights. Ask your husband for his ideas. Focus on finding a solution instead of being overwhelmed by a problem.

VI. MAXIMIZE YOUR ENERGY EXPENDITURE

How can you clean your apartment most efficiently? Do you wash the floors just before the children come in from school on a rainy spring day and then have to wash them all over again that night? When you are cooking, how about making a double portion so that you don’t have to cook the next day. You need to constantly examine more efficient ways of doing your daily tasks.

VII. MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTH AND PERSONAL GROOMING

Part of being a woman is being a nurturer, always caring for others. And often a woman will sacrifice her own health and personal well-being to take care of the family. However, if you let yourself become rundown, you will get sick, and then what will become of your _____? If you are always feeling tired and run down, plan in a naptime or an extra hour of sleep at night. If you feel there is something physically wrong, go to a doctor and get it taken care of. Don’t ignore your own needs.

And then make sure you take care of your personal grooming. Are your clothes clean and neat and mended? Do you spend time fixing your hair, making sure you smell clean and lovely for your husband and family? What do you see when you look in the mirror in the morning? Does it seem like too much bother to make yourself presentable when you spend all day at home?

As Christians we need to keep moderation in mind and not be out of balance, but we must also be aware that we often conduct ourselves based on how we feel about our personal grooming. Even if your husband has gone away on a trip and there is only you and baby at home, dress up, fix your hair, put on some scent. You will feel differently about yourself, and it will cause others to feel differently about you too.

VIII. DELEGATE SOME RESPONSIBILITIES TO ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

Don't carry the whole burden of the household yourself. Your children will benefit by one day becoming independent, responsible adults who are pleased with their accomplishments. Give clearly defined directions, keep the jobs realistic for the ages, and avoid criticism. You can even ask your husband to pitch in. But the key to success is ***praise, praise, praise***.

If you want your children to grow up believing that the mess belongs to the person who made it, don't teach them that they are helping mommy. Instead, applaud them for making *their* bed, dressing *themselves*, putting away *their* clothes. Thank them for doing a good job because they are such good workers. Help them to feel good about being a part of a family effort. Then they will learn that they are part of a family team in which each person contributes and each person appreciates the other.

IX. CONSIDERING ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

Now we will just consider a few ideas in individual areas.

A. Cleaning

Do you have the type of home where every room you go into contains so many odd jobs to do (picking up yesterday's newspaper, washing off the refrigerator door, folding the clean clothes) that you rush around all day never completing any one job. If you struggle with getting household chores done, try this time-tested technique: Break down big jobs into little jobs. Here are a couple of ideas.

- Commit yourself to accomplishing a chore that shows. Start by picking up and putting away items in the main room of your apartment. It will help you feel better if at least this one room is in order. Take a minute to make up a bed, or stack all the dirty dishes. The idea is to organize at least one thing, since this will take only a few minutes time.
- List on a piece of paper the jobs that can be done in 15 minutes or less. You may need to time your chores for a week so you can evaluate. Sometimes it is surprising how little time a hated task actually takes. Usually we group work into big tasks, for instance, clean the apartment. Take it apart and see how much time the different segments actually take. Then slot those into your day rather than biting off the whole thing at once.
- Improve a room's appearance every time you go into it. Clean the sink in the bathroom. Sweep up the kitchen floor. Put something away. It makes the room look better and will make you feel better about it. Remember, don't just set something down, put it away.
- Replace an item where it belongs after you use it. And train the whole family to do this! Instead of leaving the toothbrush on the sink, put it back in its holder. Don't throw clothes on the floor or bed, hang them up.



B. Laundry

- Train and delegate some laundry responsibilities to your family.
- Treat stains right away so they will come out easier when you wash.

- Put laundry away as soon as it is dry.
- Iron right away rather than letting it lay.
- Have family members put away _____ laundry.

C. Grocery buying and shopping

- Shop with a purpose and a list! Plan your menus and then organize your shopping list so that you don't run out of things in a day or two and have to make another trip. Plan where you need to go to get the items and arrange them according to that.
- Try to control your impulse buying. Studies have estimated that almost **50%** of purchases are entirely unplanned (that means they weren't on your list). Know ahead of time how much money you have to spend and how you are going to do that.
- Never shop when hungry. *Everything* looks good then!
- Check prices. Where is it cheaper to buy your vegetables, in the market or in the shop? And is cheaper better? Maybe you have opportunity to buy a whole sack of flour instead of a kilo at a time. Is that a good saving? Do you use a lot of flour? Is it a lot cheaper?

D. Meal Preparation

- Start by making a simple meal-planner chart. List the days of the week down the side and breakfast, lunch and supper across the top. Then write in what you plan to have for each meal. (This is the plan you can make your grocery shopping list from.)
- Post your meal-planner chart so all family members can see it. Should you be late coming home, older family members can check the planner and start getting things ready.
- Choose a day of the week when you usually have more time and do some of the cooking for the rest of the week.
- Be sure to plan a family favorite for every week.

E. Dish washing

Another task that should not be for mother only! Even if your children are too young to wash the dishes themselves, they can help under your supervision. That may not save you time immediately, but it will train them to do it by themselves later.

Don't let dishes stack up. When you are cooking or baking, wash pots and pans as you finish using them. Wash dishes after every meal. If you have a bad day, at least make sure all the dishes are washed before you go to bed so that you can start the new day fresh.



F. Church activities

Take time to evaluate which activities you should be involved in. What is a better use of your time and the talents the Lord gave you and what are the needs and activities of the church? Should you teach a Sunday School class or sing in the choir? You may not have the time to do both. Which will make the greatest spiritual impact on other lives? On your life?

G. Special activities, entertaining, etc.

Maybe you say, "I don't have time for special activities and _____." Actually you need special activities in your life and the life of your family. But how do you do it?

- (1.) Remember that 'special' can be very simple. A birthday doesn't have to include a party with 20 people and a full meal. But it does mean that the birthday boy or girl should feel special.

- (2.) Plan special activities ahead of time so that you don't have to do everything at the last minute. You already know when there is a special holiday or celebration coming. Think about it now. Make some plans and even preparations ahead of time.
- (3.) When you entertain, put the emphasis on making your guest comfortable, instead of focusing on the housework you haven't gotten done, or not having time to prepare fancy food.
- (4.) Relax and enjoy the people. Make the most of every moment.

CONCLUSION

Psalm 19:14 says, *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."*

These have just been a few hints of how to handle a busy life more efficiently, but the most important thing you can do is to commit yourself into the hands of the Lord so that you maintain your priorities and a joyous attitude knowing that He is your strength. You don't have to do it alone.

Focus on having a good day. Everyone can have a few good days. If you have a few good days you have a good week. A few good weeks give you a good month. Several good months give a great season. Before long it is time to look back one or two years and admit that they have been good years.

God's intent is to build a good life for you and if **you** build good days He will accomplish the rest. An exuberant exemplary life is His composite of your good days.

How He does it is a miracle! "It is a God thing!" Be ready for it, "be faithful in little things." And get started praising Him now. Hallelujah, thank you Jesus. You can do it and I believe you will. Amen and Amen!

End of Lecture

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical_assignment to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

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|---|--------------------------|
| ➤ Determine your priorities and then hang them somewhere that you can be reminded of them every day. Bring your list to the next meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ Make a list of responsibilities that you can delegate to family members. Be specific both in what is to be done and who is to do it. Begin to implement your list immediately. Be prepared to share it and your experience at the next meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ Choose a different routine activity to focus on every week. During the designated week discover more efficient ways to do that task | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Answer Key

- III. problems
- IV. B. priority
- VII. responsibilities
- IX. B. their own
- G. entertaining