

A watercolor illustration of a squirrel in profile, facing right. The squirrel has a large, bushy tail with shades of purple and brown. Its body is primarily brown with a lighter tan underbelly. It is holding a small, orange-brown nut in its paws. The background is a soft, textured wash of colors including yellow, green, and blue, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the illustration in a white, hand-drawn font.

Living Life

One Word at a Time

written and illustrated by Janis Cox

LIVING LIFE – One Word at a Time

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This is a sample chapter of 4 devotionals from *Living Life - One Word at a Time*.

I keep hearing over and over again, “I don’t have time to read the Bible. I can’t understand it.” And it is for that reason I decided to make it easier for all women to read the Bible “one word at a time”.

Words that I have chosen are linked to stories and Scriptures to challenge, extend and present the Word of God in small snippets.

There is a page for journaling with questions that will allow the Holy Spirit to speak to each woman from the Scripture and help her to understand how to let Scripture help her to experience God and hear from Him.

Each group of stories is introduced by a watercolour picture with a Scripture to help you focus on that thought for the month.

The first chapter is called Seek Your Face. There are four devotionals:

Anger

Armour

Attention

Aware

Chapter One - Seek His Face



1. Anger

Read: James 1:19-20

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

I slammed the door. The noise reverberated around the house, followed by silence. I ran to the bed, threw myself across it and pounded my fists on the mattress.

How dare he? Why wouldn't he listen to me?

I cried out in a loud voice, "I hate you!" as tears trickled down my cheeks.

Anger is one of Satan's landmines – one way to distract us from godly living.

In James 4:1, James asks: "What causes fights and quarrels among you?"

James continues: "Don't they (quarrels) come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it." (James 4:1, 2)

My anger stemmed from not getting my own way. I had a deep desire to control. The difference in the new me is in how I relate to people. Since finding the love of Jesus, my deep desire has been to learn how to be like Him. Still, there was no quick solution. It was, and continues to be, hard work.

My capacity for anger is still there. It is how I deal with that anger that matters. Every day holds challenges and the possibility of plans being interrupted and feelings hurt. I pray each day for God to guide me, to help me learn to live in love and at peace with everyone.

Prayer:

Lord, I see my anger now. I feel it when it surfaces. Help me to control the reactions I have and remember that You want me to be at peace. Teach me to watch for triggers so I can be aware and escape the trap of anger. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

Journal Questions:

Are there times when you get angry? Write down what happened just before the anger came. Can you see the trigger? Ask God to help you find ways to approach the situation in a different way.

Do you try to get your own way? Or do you feel slighted when things don't go as you planned? Remember that God is in control, not you. Ask Him to show you how to look at the situation from his eyes.

2. Armour

Read: Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

My husband has many tools in his workshop. Two years ago, he refinished our front doors. He tried his best to get the doors sanded down to their original state, but wasn't able to go as deep as he would have liked. Recently, he found a new tool – a rotary brush – which enabled him to sand much deeper than before.

Having the right tool is crucial to get the best result.

God gives us the tools we need – His Word, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

We are also told to put on the armour of God.

From Ephesians 6: 14-18:

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:14-18).

As we tackle decisions, work with difficult people, and deal with our personal lives, let us remember to put on God's armour. Remember to ask God for help to tackle anything the world might throw at us.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your gift of Jesus. Help me to rely on Him – to remember to clothe myself in His armour – in everything I do. May the Holy Spirit bless me and may I be armed in His strength, wisdom and truth. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

Journal Questions:

How have you used the belt of truth this week? Has your faith been strengthened by something you read in your Bible? Has your knowledge of the truth helped you deal with difficult situations this week? If so, write about your experience. Write a prayer with all the requests that are on your heart this week.

3. Attention

Read: Hebrews 2:1-4

We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away (Hebrews 2:1, NIV).

My father-in-law never paid attention to road signs. For over fifty years his wife acted as his co-pilot and successfully led him across the continent on many trips. After her death, he found it harder to travel because he had to focus on both driving and directions.

On his first long trip to visit us without his beloved co-pilot, he ended up thirty miles north of his destination. He had missed the sign to our village.

I sometimes find myself living the same way in my spiritual life. I continue on with my agenda, enjoying the surroundings, but not watching what God is showing me. I ask Him for directions but I don't watch or listen for the answers.

We learn in the Old Testament:

*Listen and hear my voice;
pay attention and hear what I say (Isaiah 28:23, NIV).*

Focus – that's what I need to do.

When I ask God a particular question, I now begin to look for the answer.

My father-in-law needs to start to look at the road signs if he is going to navigate on his own. I also need to listen for God as He speaks to me. In every minute of my day, through reading the Bible, through my conversations with people, by a series of unexplained circumstances, I can hear His voice. Even in nature and on television and other media what I hear could be a message from God. If I hear a message repeated; if others confirm what I am thinking; if I read a passage in the Bible and it answers my question, I know He has spoken to me.

I want to pay attention so that I don't drift away.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to listen to You through Your Word and through others. Help me to pay attention to the signs that you give me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Journal Questions:

When you ask God a question are you looking and listening for His answer? How can you make a point of doing this? Ask Him something this week and then record His answer.

When God is at work around you – watch what He is doing and follow His lead. He can give you the words, actions and help that you need to make a significant impact on the life of another person. Pay attention this week and record what happens.

4. Aware

Read: 1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

Head down, I concentrated on finishing editing my article. The deadline loomed ahead of me. Could I get this finished in time? When my husband entered my office to ask a question, I snapped at him. He turned away, mystified.

As I work on intentionally trying to see what God is showing me, I know I have to be more aware of people, their body language, and their underlying words. I am trying not to be so agenda-driven as I allow myself to be more in tune with the Holy Spirit.

This is not easy. When I have things to do, places to go and people to see, I want to just do, go and see.

I struggle to let go.

Each day gets a little easier as I try to focus on what needs to be done in the time I have and let all the rest fade away. It is easy for a task-oriented person to say, "I can do that". I have to learn to listen to God and do what He wants.

"If you are God-centered, you will adjust your life to what God wants to do" (Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby).

God can interrupt what I am doing anytime He wants.

But I have to be aware of God and what He is doing so I can change my focus and obey Him.

This is working in my relationship with my husband (I think). I am trying very hard not to be totally into my work all the time so that I actually have time to listen to him.

God wants me to do the same thing in our relationship. I try to listen to the Holy Spirit and His nudges. I take time to be in prayer and quiet so that I can hear His voice.

Prayer:

Father, help me to become more aware of those God-interruptions, when You are revealing something about Yourself to me. Help me to be ready to drop my tasks and focus on what You are showing me. In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN.

Journal Questions:

Are you focused on completing your agenda or are you becoming aware of what God is doing – and following Him?

Think back through this past week. Did God ask you to do something and you ignored Him because you were too busy? Can you still go back and do it? If not, what can you do so that next time you can reschedule your tasks and do God's will instead? Remember if you pray for Him to help you, He will give you the extra time needed to finish those other tasks. Do God's will first.