



juggling
life's
RESPONSIBILITIES

BIBLICAL HELP FOR THE MARRIED WOMAN



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ANNE ELLIOTT

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D e d i c a t i o n

*To Kraig,
who sees past my imperfections and loves me anyway,
and to my grandmother, Ruth Root,
who, by living it before me, taught me that a
God-centered life is more fulfilling than any other.*

A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s

Thank You, Lord, for so many godly examples . . .

- for my mother, Virginia Haasch, who quietly reminded me over and over again that home is the nicest place for a woman to be;
- for Judy Sargent, who invested unselfishly into my teenage life and pushed me to seek You first;
- for Terri Jenkin, who trained up her children in the way they should go;
- for Anne Ortlund, whose obedience in writing Your words changed the course of my life;
- for my father, Stephen Haasch, who taught me to do right when “only the squirrels will see”;
- for Jodi Demerly, who was first to hear of the dreams for this book and believed that You wanted me to write it;
- for Anne Marie Ezzo, who stayed up late one night to help a young mom like me;
- for Eve Haynes, who wrote me notes each week and filled them with Your Word;
- for Claire Ulik, who saw the vision and helped me take off the rough edges;
- for Sherry Jo Wheeler, who laughed and cried with me and loves You with all her heart;
- for all my friends online, who let me into their hearts and gave me a reason to keep going;
- for Linda Glasford, whose encouragement kept me trying;
- for Valerie and Pat, my editors, who took a chance on this book so that women’s hearts could be touched;
- for my husband, Kraig, and our four children, who cheerfully ate Taco Bell so this book could be finished;
- for Jesus, Your Son, Who laid down His life that others might live.

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P R E F A C E

As women we have so many questions, and what do we do first? Should a busy mom place a priority on her home? her kids? a job to pay the bills? What about serving in her church? helping a sick friend? Where will she ever find the time to develop a close relationship with God among all her other responsibilities?

The answers? Look into God's Word. Perhaps you've been studying the Bible for many years. If so, *Juggling Life's Responsibilities: Biblical Help for the Married Woman* will not only be a good review for you, but hopefully it also will motivate you to share your wisdom with the women coming behind you. Or perhaps this is the first time you've ever considered what God thinks about women and their roles in society. *Juggling . . .* might radically challenge your views while showing you how to find fulfillment as a woman of God.

However, knowing what the Bible says is not enough. We need to put Biblical truth into practice. *Juggling . . .* provides Bible study and mentoring to help you do just that. Begin by asking the Lord to open your eyes and show you wonderful things from His Word. Ask Him to search your heart and challenge your mind so that you will never be the same again!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Juggling Life's Responsibilities is an introduction to what the Bible teaches about five major relationships of a woman. I have been praying that this book will minister to the following groups of women:

- Single women who are seeking God's priorities for their lives
- Engaged women or new brides
- Married women who need affirmation in their marriages, are struggling with their spouses, or have marriages that have failed
- Mothers, especially those with young children

- Ministry wives seeking for ways to encourage the women they influence
- Older women looking for opportunities to minister to younger women

Group Study. I am also praying that you'll read *Juggling . . .*, not just in the privacy of your home, but with other women in your church. Each woman in your study group could read the chapter at home, and then you all could meet weekly for encouragement, accountability, and additional study.

Personal Growth. At the end of each chapter you'll find ideas to help with personal growth. For instance, there are recommendations for verses to memorize. Perhaps each woman could write out the week's verse(s) on 3" x 5" cards and post them in prominent places at home or work. When you come together again, you can begin by saying the verses by memory, adding accountability to your group.

Study Guide. A study guide is also provided with each chapter. During your group meeting, read the Bible verses together and discuss possible answers. This is an excellent time for the older women to share their wisdom with the younger ones.

Group Project. At the conclusion of your meeting, review the group project and have a time of prayer (and maybe some light refreshments). Make goals for the following week and ask if certain women would visit the local library and read one of the books listed at the end of the chapter as a complementary resource.

A Study Partner. If a group of women from your church is unavailable, ask the Lord to give you someone! He may want you to read *Juggling . . .* with your husband or your mom. The possibilities are endless. You might have a close friend or a neighbor you hardly know who would enjoy studying with you. You might be able to start an Internet study group.

However you use *Juggling . . .*, may it challenge your heart and mind so that you, your family, your relationships, and even your church will never be the same again!

God's Design for You

POINT TO PONDER

*“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”
(Jeremiah 29:11).*

We had a monster thunderstorm in our town one summer. On a late afternoon, muggy and typical for June, the clouds rolled in, and we were afraid we wouldn't get our hamburgers grilled soon enough to avoid getting soaked. We ate our picnic in the living room instead of on the back porch, and after supper we watched *Wheel of Fortune* instead of playing in the backyard. Even the game show was interrupted by flashing thunderstorm warnings and messages about tornadoes.

Yet just as the winning contestant tried to guess the final puzzle, my oldest son looked out the window and exclaimed with delight. The brightest rainbows I have ever seen formed complete semicircles across the eastern sky. We all stopped worrying about the storm and ran to the front of the house to gaze at the sight (and to snap pictures with our cameras). The rainbows supplied the perfect ending to an otherwise disappointing day.

Later that night I walked outside and looked up at the sky. The moon was bright. Fingerlike clouds stretched between the

stars, and lightning bugs danced in the cool breeze.

On nights like that one I think about my life, about how God can reach into the storms I've created, paint a beautiful rainbow with His love, chase away the fears, and orchestrate a breathtaking design for the rest of my days. He longs to make my life beautiful. In response, He wants me to praise Him.

No matter where you are in life right now, God has such a plan for you. His ideas as expressed in the Bible may not be popular or politically correct. However, they are perfect, and because they are, they will fulfill you, delight you, and complete you as you learn to walk in obedience to them.

I believe any woman can become an expert on the home and family. How? By paying attention to the Chief Expert, God Himself. "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him" (2 Pet. 1:3). So we're going to talk together about the priorities God wants us to have and how we can fulfill our God-given roles. You can begin to work on having a living, exciting relationship with God. If you're married, you can have a loving relationship with your happy husband. If you have been blessed with children, you can begin to become a godly mother. No matter what your home is like, you can learn to make it a haven from the world, a true pleasure to come home to! Finally, you can begin to expand your vision of what God wants to do with your life by ministering to your spiritual family (the church) and by reaching those in your circle of influence who need the Lord.

God has a design for each woman. He does not want to stifle us; He wants to perfect us. He wants our lives to burst with color. Like those rainbows. He wants us to be a splash of beauty in a sky full of storms.

Are you curious to see what God's design is? Welcome! Let's explore this topic together.