

APPENDIX

Practical Tools for the Time-Saving Mom

The resources in this appendix are designed to provide hands-on help as you implement my 4-Step System, beginning with the A Seven-Week Plan to Transform Your Life to get you started. I have also compiled a list of some of my favorite books and other recommended resources, Flare Prayers you can use at a moment's notice, worksheets for identifying your priorities, Habit Trackers, and more. These resources are also available to download or print at crystalpaine.com/tsm.

A Seven-Week Plan to Transform Your Life

In this book, I shared lots of practical ideas for ways to use your time more effectively and invest your life in what matters most, but just reading about these ideas will do nothing for you if you don't actually take action and implement them in your life.

This seven-week plan will walk you through how to slowly add each of the big building blocks for time management covered in this book. You'll add one new practice each week. Each week's activity builds toward the next. Take seven days to establish the practice, then add the next one. If that feels too fast or like too much, focus on one practice for fourteen or even twenty-one days. Progress is progress! Don't focus on how far you have to go, but on how far you have made it.

Week 1: Begin Your Day with Prayer

Every day during week 1, begin your day by acknowledging your struggles or areas where you are feeling burdened or overwhelmed. Invite God's presence, ask for His help, re-lease the burdens you are carrying, and pray for wisdom and strength for the activities and to-do's on your list. See page

41 for an example of what this looks like in my life. (On page 229 you will find a Daily Prayer Journal Page to guide your own prayers.)

When you find yourself feeling stressed or tense or worried or weary throughout the day, stop and send a Flare Prayer up to the Lord to ask for His help.

This exercise doesn't have to take thirty minutes—it could just be thirty seconds to stop, breathe, and quickly pray a short prayer. Something like “Lord, I'm really struggling right now with feeling overwhelmed by dealing with XYZ. I release this to you and ask you to help me. I trust that you will give me what I need to do what you have called me to do.”

For additional practical help, check out the One-Minute Pause app from John Eldredge. I also highly recommend his book *Get Your Life Back*.

Week 2: Design Your 6×2 Priority System

What are your top priorities? This week, in addition to beginning your day with prayer, sit down at the beginning of the week and use the worksheet on page 237 to map out your priorities.

Then, at the start of each day (or the night before!), decide which two priorities you are going to focus on. I recommend choosing based on what you have going on and which priorities you haven't focused on as much recently.

Don't feel like you need to have a perfect rotation for your priorities; some weeks you might need to prioritize certain areas more than others. But over the course of a week, make sure that you have made each one of your priority areas a focus at least one of the days.

Week 3: Set Up Google Calendar

This week, you're going to continue beginning your day with prayer and deciding two priorities to focus on, but you're also going to challenge yourself to start brain-dumping everything into Google Calendar.

If you haven't already, you'll need to set up Google Calendar. (If you have a Gmail account, it should already be set up for you.) Then, start adding all-day events for everything that comes into your head. Put it on a specific day if it needs to be finished by a certain date. If there isn't a deadline for when it needs to be done, add it to any day that doesn't already have a lot on it. Remember to break big tasks down into bite-sized pieces and spread these out over the course of a few days.

Keep adding everything that comes to mind to your Google Calendar—and I do mean everything! (But if it takes you longer to add it than it would take you to get it done, then just do it already!)

Get in the habit of making Google Calendar your one-stop shop for clearing out all the brain clutter and swirling thoughts and ideas as you go.

Next week, we'll work on taking your Google Calendar and turning it into a daily Time-Blocked To-Do List!

Week 4: Write a Daily Time-Blocked To-Do List

It's time to take the work you did putting everything into Google Calendar and start using it effectively! This week, continue beginning your day with prayer and choosing two priorities to focus on, and brain-dump everything that comes into your head onto Google Calendar.

Every morning when you wake up (or every evening when you go to bed), consult your Google Calendar and create a Time-Blocked To-Do List for the day. I try to put the most important things first and leave the not-as-essential tasks for later in the day. Make sure to include at least two to four hours of wiggle room where you don't plan anything—because there will be inevitable interruptions, and I also don't want you to pack your day so full that you don't have any down time or breathing room.

If the thought of writing out a very detailed Time-Blocked To-Do List feels overwhelming, start by just time-blocking a few hours or making a looser plan of what needs to be done in what order each day.

Week 5: Evening Routine

How are you doing on adding these new intentions to your life? If you're feeling a little overwhelmed right now and still trying to find your groove, I recommend waiting a few weeks before you start working on an evening and morning routine. The last thing you want to do is to set yourself up for failure by trying to take on too much too quickly.

However, if you feel like you're doing a good job of adding in these habits and you are ready to move on, it's time to talk about evening routines. Choose three to five tasks you plan to do in the same order every night before bed. I recommend picking things that will most help you set up your morning for success. So consider what your biggest stresses and pain points are when it comes to mornings and determine what you could do the night before to alleviate some of that stress.

Then, write out your evening routine, put it someplace you'll be reminded of it often, and commit to sticking with it every night. It might be helpful to set a reminder timer or alert on your phone for the time you plan to begin your evening routine every night.

Week 6: Morning Routine

Once you feel you've got a good handle on your evening routine, it's time to start working on your morning routine. Just like your evening routine, consider what three to five tasks would help set up your morning for success.

If you need to be out the door by a specific time each morning, plan what time you will accomplish each task. Make sure you allow enough time so you're not feeling rushed.

Week 7: Track Your Habits

You've come so far! This week, I want you to create your own customized Habit Tracker based on a few habits you want to work on developing.

Review chapter 6 and decide which habits will make the biggest impact on your day-to-day life if you practice them.

Use the blank Habit Tracker I've provided in the appendix (or create your own) to write them down and start tracking on a daily basis. Once you feel like you are doing a great job of sticking with them, add one or two more habits. You can keep adding habits slowly until you feel like you have hit the number that works well for you to consistently follow through with on a daily basis. (For me, I find that number is around ten to fifteen at any given time.)

You did it! What did you learn in the last seven weeks? What areas are you still struggling in? Focus on prioritizing those for the next few weeks if you feel like you still need to work on them; consider adding them to your Habit Tracker for extra accountability.

Recommended Resources

Books

168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think by Laura Vanderkam

Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones by James Clear

Breaking Busy: How to Find Peace and Purpose in a World of Crazy by Alli Worthington

Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World by Cal Newport

Eat That Frog: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time by Brian Tracy

Every Moment Holy by Douglas Kaine McKelvey and Ned Bustard

Get Your Life Back: Everyday Practices for a World Gone Mad by John Eldredge

Good News for Weary Women: Escaping the Bondage of To-Do Lists, Steps, and Bad Advice by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick

The Lazy Genius Way: Embrace What Matters, Ditch What Doesn't, and Get Stuff Done by Kendra Adachi

Recommended Resources

Off the Clock: Feel Less Busy While Getting More Done by
Laura Vanderkam

*The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and
Business* by Charles Duhigg

*Pray Confidently and Consistently: Finally Let Go of the
Things Holding You Back from Your Most Important Con-
versation* by Valerie Woerner

*Present Over Perfect: Leaving Behind Frantic for a Simpler,
More Soulful Way of Living* by Shauna Niequist

*Rhythms of Renewal: Trading Stress and Anxiety for a Life of
Peace and Purpose* by Rebekah Lyons

*The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally
Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern
World* by John Mark Comer

*Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore
Your Sanity* by Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith

*Say Goodbye to Survival Mode: 9 Simple Strategies to Stress
Less, Sleep More, and Restore Your Passion for Life* by
Crystal Paine

*The Ultimate Book of Outfit Formulas: A Stylish Solution to
What Should I Wear?* by Alison Lumbatis

Courses and Studies

Make Over Your Mornings course (MakeOverYourMornings
.com)

Make Over Your Evenings course (MakeOverYourEvenings
.com)

Recommended Resources

She Reads Truth and He Reads Truth Bible studies

Google Calendar

Google Calendar app

Link to free Google Calendar course: <https://crystalpaine.com/calendar/>

How to Find Time to Read (or Listen to) Books

Make reading a priority. In most every case, you can make time for what you truly want to do. Decide that reading is important and you'll be much more motivated to find the time for it.

Always have a book handy. I keep a few books I'm reading throughout different parts of the house. That way, if I have a few extra minutes, I have a book handy to pick up and read. When I'm headed out the door for an appointment, when I'll be riding in the passenger seat instead of driving, or when I'm going anywhere there's a potential I might have some down time, I bring a book along. Sometimes I don't get to crack it open, but other times, I end up having unexpected waiting time and finish the entire book!

Read a little bit every morning. Including reading as part of my morning routine has been very effective for me. After my Bible reading, I open up whatever spiritually encouraging book I'm working through and read a few pages from it. A few

pages might not seem like much, but it adds up over time. And some days, I'll have time to read a full chapter, which means that I can usually get through at least one inspirational book like this every month or so, depending on the length.

Set a timer. Challenge yourself to read for ten minutes a day. Set a timer and read until it goes off. If ten minutes feels like a lot, start with five minutes. Most everyone can find five to ten minutes in their day to read. You'll be surprised how much reading you can get in just by doing this daily.

Stack it with another habit. Is there something you do every morning (or every day) that could be your reminder to read a few pages from a book? Maybe when you sit down to breakfast or at your desk at work, or during your baby's nap or while you're waiting in the school pickup lane? Making it a habit—almost like brushing your teeth—means it's much more likely to happen without your having to think about it after a while.

Have multiple books going at once. I know some people are one-book-at-a-time people, but I've found I read a lot more when I have multiple books going at once. Why? Because I pick up the book that fits my mood. Sometimes I'm in the mood for light reading and know I have more time, so I'll pick up my current fiction read. Sometimes I know I just have a snippet of time, so I'll pick up my current deeper nonfiction read. If I only had one book going, I'd likely only pick it up when I was in the mood for whatever the topic was. (Note: I do recommend setting some limits on how many books you have going at once, otherwise you'll probably start a whole lot of books and struggle to finish any. I've found that I do best

by having no more than three to five books that I'm reading at any one time.)

Turn off electronics. If you usually spend an hour watching TV or online shows or thirty minutes scrolling the internet every day, challenge yourself to devote half of that time to reading instead.

Listen to audiobooks. Short on time to sit down and read? Audiobooks can be your new best friend. You can listen while you drive to work or when you're in the school drop-off line or while you're cooking or cleaning or folding laundry—or even while exercising! Many days, I've found I have at least an hour when my hands are busy but my mind is free when I can turn on an audiobook and enjoy it while doing activities I'd already be doing anyway. My favorite apps to get free audiobooks through your local library are Libby and Hoopla.

Read books that interest you. If you're trying to make reading more of a habit, then it's important to start with books that interest you. You want to look forward to reading! Yes, reading is designed to help you grow, improve, and be challenged. If you're trying to develop the habit of reading more, though, it's important to read books you love and don't want to put down. Once it becomes a regular habit, then you can shift to more challenging and thought-provoking books.

Read aloud to your kids. Reading aloud to kids is one of the greatest ways to get reading in. Sure, you don't necessarily read books to them that you'd have on your personal book list, but it's still enjoyable to all share a book together. Just ten

to fifteen minutes of reading aloud before bed at night, after dinner, or before nap time can add up to quite a few books finished during the course of the year. (Tip: If you have younger kids, try reading at mealtimes. As they get older, transition to having them do some sort of craft or building LEGO towers or coloring while you read. I've found that kids listen much better when their hands are busy.)

Set goals for your reading. I've been amazed at how much more I'm reading when I have clear-cut reading goals in place. I set a yearly goal for reading on Goodreads and then track my progress there. (Tip: You can edit your goal if it becomes too audacious or if you want to increase it!) I've found it helpful to break down the yearly goals into monthly goals and weekly goals to stay on track. It's so fun to go back at the end of the year and see all the books I finished!

Practical Ways to Find Time to Read, from Other Time-Saving Moms

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"Take a screen fast for 30 days and see how much you read during that time!"—**ELIZABETH**

• • •

"Charging my phone outside of my bedroom and keeping my Kindle Paperwhite on my nightstand has been a game changer for me. I have insomnia so when I wake up during the night, I read on my Kindle instead of my phone because that's what is next to me. If my phone was near, I'd grab it instead."—**AIMEE**

How to Find Time to Read (or Listen to) Books

• • •

"Don't be afraid to stop reading something if you don't like it. Go on to something else you DO like."—**PAMELA**

• • •

"Read or re-read a book with a friend or someone you are discipling or mentoring. Meeting someone provides great accountability (and fun!) for reading, and knowing it well enough to discuss or teach from provides deep understanding. It can even be something you do on Zoom or Marco Polo to connect with others far away."—**EMILY**

• • •

"The Goodreads app has helped me get back into the groove of reading. I love the community aspect and getting to see what my friends are reading and what they recommend. I have a list of future reads so I'm not stuck wondering what I should read next. And the app's goal-setting feature is really helpful in keeping a consistent reading pace throughout the year."—**BRIANNA**

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"I believe you have to focus not on the desire to read more but on the outcome of that. For example, when I think I need to read more it feels like a task, something else to do and something else I'm not getting to, and it becomes a burden. But if, instead, it is about learning (books that teach me something) or laughing (books that are fun) or gaining perspective (nothing is better for me than a little distance from the day in and day out of my own challenge)—reading provides those, so that's what I focus on to 'make time.'"—**CHELSEA**

Daily Prayer Journal Page

Use this page each morning to help you process what you are feeling and what burdens you are carrying, then turn this into a prayer to begin your day with and to cover it.

I'm struggling with _____.

I feel stressed by _____.

Today, I need your help with _____.

I'm thankful for _____.

I saw your hand yesterday in _____.

My prayer for today:

Daily Prayer Journal Page

Flare Prayers

"**Lord**, I need you right now.
Help me to know how to respond
with kindness and grace."

"**Heavenly Father**, go
before me as I _____.
Let me rely upon you and feel
your strength and wisdom."

"**Spirit**, infuse me with energy.
I'm feeling so exhausted and
weary today. Give me grace to
do what you've called me to do."

"**Jesus**, I give you _____.
I'm carrying the weight of it and
I want to release this to you."

"Help me, **God**. Without you,
I am nothing. I need you. I can't
do this in my own strength."

"**Lord**, give me wisdom right now in this moment. I feel so overwhelmed by all the choices and options and which one is the next right thing for me to do."

"**Heavenly Father**, let your love flow through me to my kids [or husband, co-workers, etc.]."

"**Jesus**, help me to have eyes to see the gifts and beauty in my circumstances right now."

"My to-do list feels too long and too much today, **God**. Give me wisdom to know what to say no to and what to say yes to."

Determining Your Priorities Worksheet

Answer the following questions honestly with whatever comes to mind. There are no right or wrong answers. This is just an exercise to help you think through what is important to you and what you want to wrap your time, life, and energy around.

What do I think will matter twenty-five years from now?

What will matter at the end of my life?

What are the things I must do every day?

Determining Your Priorities Worksheet

What are the hats I currently wear?

Who are the most important people in my life?

What am I most passionate about right now?

What are things I've always wanted to do but feel I never have time for?

Determining Your Priorities Worksheet

If I died tonight, how would I have wanted to spend my last day?

If I had all the time in the world, how would I want to be spending my days?

If I only had two hours per day to spend and money wasn't an obstacle and I didn't need to eat or sleep, how would I want to spend my time?

This Week's Priority Areas Worksheet

DAY	PRIORITIES
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

Six Priority Areas:

Time-Blocked To-Do List

Note: I make mine in a simple notebook. I try to be very generous with the time blocks to allow for unexpected things that come up, delays, and interruptions. I also always leave at least two hours of breathing room at the end of the day. And I suggest that you put the most important things first in the day. (See chapter 5 for more details on creating a Time-Blocked To-Do List.)

TIME	TASK
8 a.m.	
9 a.m.	
10 a.m.	
11 a.m.	
Noon	
1 p.m.	
2 p.m.	
3 p.m.	
4 p.m.	
5 p.m.	
6 p.m.	
7 p.m.	
8 p.m.	

To-Do List Habit Tracker Example

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1. Sleep— 7 or more hours							
2. 60 minutes exercise (2 walks)							
3. 30 minutes audiobook							
4. 10,000 steps							
5. 80 oz of water							
6. 15 minutes with Kathrynne							
7. 15 minutes with Kaitlynn							
8. 15 minutes with Silas							
9. 15 minutes with Jesse							
10. Take collagen							
11. Track food on MyFitnessPal							
12. Gratitude journal							
13. 5 servings of fruit/veggies per day							

Daily Habit Tracker

HABIT	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Daily Habit Tracker

HABIT	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY



100-Day Habit Tracker

100 days of _____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

start date _____ end date _____