

she works
His way

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR DOING
WHAT MATTERS MOST
IN A GET-THINGS-DONE
WORLD

MICHELLE MYERS
+ SOMER PHOEBUS
FOREWORD BY
LISA WHITTLE

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DOING WHAT MATTERS
MOST IN A GET-THINGS-DONE WORLD

MICHELLE MYERS
AND SOMER PHOEBUS



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From Michelle:

James, your sacrificial leadership is a huge reason why this book exists—thank you. Also, consider this my unofficial citation of you because otherwise, footnotes would have gotten out of control. Your impact on me is woven in every word here.

Noah, Cole + Shea, I thought the worldwide pandemic that brought you home from school was going to make writing this book more difficult, but as I heard you playing outside my office while I wrote, it only made what I was writing more important. So much of what you see here are my prayers for you as you grow in Him. I love you the most, Team Myers.

From Somer:

Kent, your quiet, chill wisdom has been overwhelmingly loud to me. You've taught me more than anyone. I've never been so glad that we share the same last name (*as weird as it is*) because it's only fair you get credit here too.

Kennedi and Lizzie, writing a book designed to encourage working women to pursue Jesus above all else while you were both at the brink of adulthood making major life decisions was a gift only God could have orchestrated. These words aren't just dedicated to you, they're written to you. Just know I do not care in what capacity you choose to do it, but I care wholeheartedly that you spend every ounce of energy you have serving Jesus. Thank you for being my biggest inspiration.

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■ Foreword ■

Michelle Myers and Somer Phoebus are focused, energetic women who get a lot of things done.

But do not let their production level fool you. They are fueled by more than career ambition, passion, and fruit-and-nut power bars.

Jesus is their Source.

The first time I met this super-duo, I felt an immediate connection to them, despite their ability to wear cute overalls, which I do not share. Their joy is contagious. Their warmth, endearing. Michelle and Somer are the women you want in your corner—girls' girls, always cheering you on. That same spirit is felt in their She Works HIS Way ministry, and now in the pages of this book—a kinship to the struggle of every woman who has things she wants to do but doesn't want to sacrifice family on the altar of her goals and dreams.

They've been there, which makes them the perfect women to write this book.

I have been there too.

My daughter is now eighteen, but I'll never forget the day when she was about eight and walked into my office, innocently pronouncing a sentence that broke my heart: "I wish you

weren't one of those worker moms." I'm sure she just wanted my attention in that moment and didn't want to share it with my computer screen. But all I heard was utter disappointment that I wasn't the mom she wanted. In the one job I had always dreamed of doing well, I had obviously failed.

That moment was a real catalyst for me. It was around then that I began to truly give God my tug-of-war between hustle and home. That was when peace replaced both overworking and guilt.

Turns out that when Jesus is over everything, a lot of our daily complications get sorted out.

I never was a classroom mom, but I'm happy to report that over time I became a woman, wife, and mother who did the work God called her to, His way—despite my very human, very regular life struggles. It's one of the reasons I so strongly believe in the message of *She Works HIS Way*. The anthem of freedom it carries is one I've found beautifully possible.

If you are looking for a wise approach to productivity without frenzy, you've found the perfect book.

And in case you are still skeptical such a way exists, please allow me to say this last thing: Jesus would not call you to do work that would exhaust and deplete you, or demand that you sacrifice the abundant life He has promised. If that exhaustion is your reality right now, I'm particularly thrilled you're reading this book so you can be encouraged in a better way.

In a culture where everyone has an opinion and people are eager to sell you on their methods, know that there is but one tried and true model of success.

Jesus, first, always.

There is but One Way—*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.

I'm so grateful it is the Way in which Michelle and Somer are leading us.

—Lisa Whittle, bestselling author of *Jesus Over Everything*

1

His Story

Our Story

Michelle + Somer

 **Culture says:** Life balance is the solution.

God says: I am the Solution.

We (Michelle and Somer) have seen firsthand the deep desire women have for a “balanced” life. We’ve felt it ourselves. But we are pushing back on that approach because, although balance can be good for us, it isn’t God’s best for us. (Believe us—between the two of us, we’ve tried *everything!*)

And if you think about it, what does the word *balance* imply anyway? Usually some form of perfection—and we all know how pursuing perfection tends to go. So we’re here to take the modern-day mantra that the solution is a balanced life and test it against what God’s Word says.

Women are simultaneously striving to be who God says they are and who the world says they should be. That's not balance, that's *bondage*. And it's happening far too often.

We're all continuously exposed to the enemy's lies, which he often cleverly disguises as half-truths. At any turn, we are just as likely to encounter a deceptive false teacher as we are a well-meaning friend with a strong attachment to a flawed opinion. Not to mention, we have to deal with our own weak flesh and deceitful hearts. We're not living in a world with merely the extremes of good and evil to navigate. This life requires us to discern the difference between what is merely good and what is actually of God.

It's a confusing and frustrating place to exist . . . if our focus does not remain where it belongs.

That's what we're here to do: help you to refocus. We're going to expose culture's lies (especially the well-dressed, socially acceptable ones) and elevate God's truth above all else.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you,” Matthew 6:33 HCSB.

If you take nothing else away from this book, remember this: Better life balance is not the solution. *Order* is. We were divinely designed to put God first.

Deep down in the depths of our soul, we crave Him. And He won't tolerate being second because He can't. He's God. So it would make sense that if your priority order is mixed up or inverted, you'll feel anxious, discontent, and aimless. And to escape those feelings, you'll try to work harder, do more, and be better in all the ways the world tells you to because that is the promise culture makes us: More self-care, self-study, ambition, and all the good vibes you can muster up will bring you the happiness you desire, the success you deserve, and the balance you're desperate for.

But we're calling their bluff because "from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."¹ Everything starts, is sustained by, and will eventually end with God.

The world is trying so hard to convince you that you can do it all, be it all, and have it all. And part of you really wants to believe it. After all, you are a strong, smart, and capable woman.

But you also know you are not stronger, smarter, or more capable than God.

And while we *know* that's true, the real question is: Do we *live* like it's true?

Dependence on God is the foundation for following Him. That's why we must constantly remind ourselves that as believers, self-sufficiency is a deficiency. **Because you can't live in a way that is both God-dependent and self-sufficient.**

Proverbs 3:5 makes a distinction between the two, instructing us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." Trusting the Lord with all of our hearts also means we refuse to lean on our own understanding.

There is strength in being a determined hard worker—which we're certain you are. But being a hard worker without depending on God can transform this strength into a blind spot. If we're simply getting things done, but neglecting to do what matters, the world may call us super productive, but the truth is that we're actually spiritually lazy. (*Yikes!*)

Only what we do for Christ is what lasts. Everything else fades away.

Maybe you absolutely love your job. You are so passionate about your mission, and you can't believe this is what you get

**Better life
balance is not the
solution. Order is.
We were divinely
designed to put
God first.**

1. Romans 11:36.

to do. But you know you struggle with workaholic tendencies. *You belong here.*

Maybe you're currently working a difficult job and you spend your morning commute dreading the day ahead and your evening commute begging God to change your circumstance—but He has asked you to stay. *You belong here.*

Employer or employee? *You belong here.*

Paid or unpaid? *You belong here.*

Secular work or traditional ministry? *You belong here.*

At the peak of your career, retired, just getting started or even still in school? Say it with us this time: *You belong here.*

Our world needs women who work His way in our schools, hospitals, courtrooms, offices, churches, hair salons, studios, network marketing companies, spas, real estate agencies, gyms, stores, factories, corporations, and government buildings.

We need women who work His way serving as administrative assistants, CEOs, volunteers, creatives, and entrepreneurs, as well as in middle management and in every single support role that exists between.

What connects our mission isn't that we have a common career, but that we serve the same Savior. He designs us uniquely and scatters us to diverse places, but He gives us a unified mission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19–20

And while this verse is most commonly used in the context of a short-term trip or full-time missionaries, this is not a short-term verse for one vocation; this is an everyday calling for all who follow Jesus.

The mission field isn't some faraway destination or somewhere God may send us someday. His mission field for you is wherever He has you.

Your home is a mission field.

Your job is a mission field.

As a believer, the mission field is anywhere you go.

The She Works HIS Way Story

She Works HIS Way didn't begin as a brand or a book. We didn't have a social media account or a five-year plan. We certainly didn't have a logo, a membership, a partnership with YouVersion for daily devotions, a conference, or a website, as we do now.

It started with a few friends who loved Jesus fiercely, took our assignments as wives and moms seriously, and felt called to use our God-given gifts, talents, and abilities in our jobs. We met once a week at 5 AM on Google Hangouts.

Our conversations varied in topic, but we were consistent in sharpening one another as Christ-followers, wives, moms, and professionals. We asked each other hard questions. It even got uncomfortable at times. But being uncomfortable was better than the alternative of being seduced by the world to the point of becoming so "successful" and so wrapped up in our careers that we would be irrelevant in God's mission and at home.

We were watching it happen, and not to just anyone, but to women we really respected. Marriages and homes were unraveling. Priorities were shifting. And we knew that if it could happen to them, it could just as easily happen to us.

Praise God, we realized we couldn't rely on the strength of our own flesh, but we knew that to fulfill His purpose for our lives we needed His strength and the community of others who were following Jesus closely.

As each of us made our way through business training and personal development on our own, we realized it was hard to find advice we could fully trust, so we were constantly bringing the content we consumed to one another, asking the same four questions:

Does this keep me dependent on God?

Gifts, talents, and abilities are real, but the One who put them in us is more real. We want to be women who rely on God, not on our gifting.

Does this keep me dedicated to my family?

Jobs will likely fluctuate throughout our lives, but we never have to question the assignments God has given only to us. Our family roles offer us our greatest opportunity for significance. In a world that is constantly trying to define success for us as “bigger” and “better,” we need to be reminded of the high calling and the unique opportunity God has given us at home.

Does this make me effective at work?

Excellence matters to God, so excellence should matter to us. But it takes more than excellence or skill to be effective. Being effective requires open eyes and open hearts. Being effective requires love. Being effective means we must redefine success as obedience to God. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Does this hinder my commitment to the Gospel?

We live in the age of the side hustle, automation, and monetization—and the notion that more work must be better. Given the fact that technology makes us always accessible, work could occupy so much of your life and brain space that you have no margin left to simply be available to those God puts in your life, let alone serve your local church.

But God doesn't ask for our leftovers. He demands our firstfruits. To be honest, how we live this truth is probably the quickest way to determine whether we've joined His agenda or are attempting to use His name to push our own.

Today, our ministry calls these four questions the *SWHW filter*, and it's still the criteria for the content we create and promote.

After meeting for over a year on Google Hangouts, we felt God's prompting to invite more women to join us. Michelle started an Instagram account to share what God was showing us, and we were quickly blown away by how much women craved this conversation. Six months or so later we moved to an email list, and about a year after that we launched an online membership community.

We also have an app, an annual conference, a growing presence of trained local leaders in cities scattered around the globe, and now—a book. We continue to remain in awe of what God continues to do with this mission that started as friends holding one another accountable to work for the glory of the Lord and the good of others, and we believe He's just getting started.

**God doesn't
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Meet Michelle

I'm so grateful you're here! I'm Michelle, and I believe that in order for us to talk about some of the hard (but so important!) truths we're going to unpack inside these pages, we have to be able to get honest with each other, and we need to become real friends *fast*.

So here's a speed-dating version of what you really need to know about me that will get us to "talk-like-best-friends" level.

I don't remember a time in my life when I wasn't an approval junkie. Even in elementary school, I wondered whether my

teachers were mad at me if I didn't get an A. As I entered middle school, I looked at the way other girls dressed and the way the popular kids talked, and I caved to the pressure to be cool.

I wasn't boy crazy at as young an age as many of my friends, but I was once I had a boyfriend. From high school on, male approval became a critical part of how I viewed my worth.

Approval was the root of my four-year eating disorder.

Approval was why, middle school through college, I was frequently changing myself to act like whoever I was around.

And approval is *still* the reason why, without the appropriate boundaries and accountability, I have a natural bent toward being a workaholic.

Gaining the approval of others wasn't just a struggle, a battle, a conflict, or any other more palatable word I may have used as an attempt to mask the severity of my reality.

Others' approval wasn't just something that I *liked*. I was *living* for it. It is what determined whether I had a good day or a bad day. Approval is what I would look to as the solution when I was sad or disappointed.

So almost a decade ago, as a young pastor's wife with a toddler and another baby boy on the way, I found myself in a job where there was no limit to the amount of money I could make, the hours I could work, or the recognition I could receive. I also had a lot of freedom in terms of flexibility in my hours and even the ability to incorporate my faith into my work.

The rational part of my brain knows that sounds like a dream job, and honestly, in some ways it seemed like everything was working out more perfectly than I had ever planned. But inside, I felt an unsettled, familiar tug in my spirit: My work was beginning to take Christ's place as the main source of my joy, my worth, my contentment, and my purpose.

I had been down that road, and I did not want to go back. I knew how to go through the motions of my Christian life—sing

the right songs, quote the right verses, and attend every service and Bible study offered—but when it came down to how I was living my everyday life, my thoughts and actions proved I was worshiping human opinion instead of the God who made me.

As you look back on your life, do you see areas where you hungered for others' approval?

For me, the problem manifested itself almost my entire life, and it wasn't that I didn't realize it or never attempted to fix it. I tried to stress *less* about my grades. I tried to care *less* about boys paying attention to me, my appearance, and what others thought about me in general.

But none of my attempts to need approval *less* ever worked long-term.

Approval was my idol. A more painful way to put it is that approval was my god. It's uncomfortable to say it that way. If you're like me, it's much easier to call something a *struggle* than to call it a *sin*. But when we don't call sin what it is, it's much easier to overlook the idols in our lives.

Tim Keller puts it this way: "An idol is something that we look to for things that only God can give."¹

Maybe approval isn't your idol, but perhaps it's one of these:

Money	Control
Success	Stuff

Or even just . . . **Self.**

Money doesn't make a good god . . . because money gives false security. God is your Provider.

Success isn't a good god . . . because typically, when we chase success the world's way, we end up failing where it matters most.

Control isn't a good god . . . because God's in control, not you.

Stuff isn't a good god . . . because you came into this world with nothing, and you will be taking nothing with you when you leave it.²

And *you* certainly don't make a good god . . . because (even though I like you, and you're pretty great!) you are *still* a sinner in need of a Savior.

Filling our hearts with the love of our Father, picking up our cross, denying ourselves, following Jesus, and daily choosing to live in the power of the Holy Spirit—*that* is the only way to break free from the idols of this world. Otherwise, we'll spend our lives moving from idol to idol, rather than making God the sole Recipient of our worship and the primary Object of our affection.

Attempts to *reduce* our earthly idols never work. Idols must be *replaced*.

It can't stop at liking Jesus; we must follow Him. Jesus was never meant to be merely an addition to our lives, but to be our firm foundation. That's why I'm so passionate about this message. I'm a fixer, and I feel like I wasted many years of my life trying to use secondary solutions to solve my primary problem. I don't want to waste another second worshipping or living for anything except the God who made me.

Meet Somer

Hey! I'm Somer, a recovering chronic compartmentalizer with a pretty serious addiction to French fries, and I'm really glad you're here.

I'll be honest: I'm a bit worried what your first impression of me is going to be after reading about my worst qualities, but we're all about being real here so if you promise not to give up

2. 1 Timothy 6:7.

on me after this first chapter, I promise not to give up on you over the rest of this book!

My story is a little different from Michelle's. For me it wasn't others' approval I was after as much—I needed to prove myself.

I'm not really sure why. I could probably talk it all out and get to something in my childhood that made me feel like the underdog, but I don't know that it's necessarily beneficial because the bottom line is, it was pride. Pride disguised as ambition and a good work ethic, so it was a little hard to spot and definitely a lot harder to admit.

Well-intentioned sin is *still* sin.

I realized from a very young age that the best way to earn my place and prove that I was the best was to become an absolute pro at compartmentalizing everything in my life. (Another name for that would be *control freak*.)

I took this “skill” into my adult life and made sure to be a good pastor's wife at church, an ambitious businesswoman in my career, the fittest and healthiest trainer in the studio I owned, and a domestic queen/No. 1 soccer mom at home.

And probably, not much to your surprise, it was pretty exhausting.

As time went on, I got really good at switching hats. The strategy of compartmentalizing was proving to be the best way to achieve order and success in my daily life. A folder for work, a folder for kids, a folder for marriage, and a folder for God. It felt like I was running in a relay race in which I would circle around to the finish line only to pass the baton to myself—in a different hat of course.

It wasn't long before I started to feel the weight of things. I remember being asked by a woman for whom I was doing a team training, “How *do* you do it all?!”

I had no idea how to answer her because I was dying a little with every new business venture I couldn't say no to.

Finding the next big opportunity had almost become an obsession. Achievement was important to me. I told myself all of it would eventually glorify God and that's how I justified my pace, my mindset, and my striving. I even called my work *ministry* because as a believer, that's what I was taught to call it.

But I didn't work as though work was my ministry; I worked like my work was my *identity*.

And with work as my identity, I was empty. Emotionally, physically, and spiritually empty.

You see, I knew what it felt like to walk with the Lord, and this was not it. I had a deep discontentment in my soul. It was taking more and more in my career to satisfy me; my mood was directly impacted by my level of productivity, so I began to see the biggest blessings of my life as interruptions rather than as gifts. My work "folder" was stealing time and energy from the *areas* that should have been most protected. Specifically, my family.

Around that time, praise Jesus, I was invited to join three of my working-mom friends for a 5 AM Google Hangout. The goal was two-fold: discipleship and friendship with women who understood me. One of those friends was Michelle.

When we started meeting, I had no idea just how much I needed them.

All of my career, I had been praised for my hustle, my titles, and my accomplishments, but that's not what these friends were praising. That wasn't even the reason they were interested in talking to me!

We started asking each other hard questions and going to God's Word for the answers. And the truth that was being revealed to us was pushing back against most everything we had been taught in the personal development books and in the business world. It wasn't about compartmentalizing or controlling; it was about order.

His order: God *first*, family *second*, and work *third*.

So one night, in my driveway after an extra-busy day of work, I was prompted by the Holy Spirit (and time with these friends of mine at 5 AM) to ask my daughters what they thought about my job. I believe my question was, “Do you girls feel like Mom is too busy for you?” I quickly followed up with, “Do you think I’m on my phone too much?”

Now let me preface their answer with this: I have the kindest, sweetest daughters in the whole world. That might sound like a mom brag, and I guess it kind of is, but you have to know that in order to get this moment. The *last* thing they wanted to do was hurt my feelings.

But they did—in the most kind and gentle way. And I’m so thankful they did!

My oldest hesitantly spoke up: “Mama, we think you’re so good at your jobs, but sometimes, we feel bad because we have to interrupt you.”

My youngest quickly inserted, “But thank you for making money for our family. I know that’s why you’re on the phone all of the time, and it’s okay.”

But it wasn’t okay.

Yeah, that was my moment. The moment God used to change everything.

My file system was very flawed. Turns out, compartmentalizing put everything in my hands, not His, and that’s a dangerous place for anything to be.

The rest of this book is the story of how we traded the lies of the world for the truth of our loving Father: the lessons we learned that challenged culture’s “good things” so that we could find the greatest thing and the foundation that reshaped our desires and reordered our priorities as She Works HIS Way women.

I pray so deeply that when you read this, God meets you exactly where you are—like He met me in my driveway that night. And I

pray that He rocks you if you need rocking, comforts you if you need to be comforted, or redirects you if you've lost your way.

But most of all, I pray that He becomes way too big to fit into a folder, and instead He takes His rightful place as the Keeper of everything in your life, the One who holds it all.

What to Expect

Our goal is always to be known for what we're *for*, so we want to encourage you with how God has spoken truth into the struggle you're feeling. We want to equip you with practical ways to put His truth into action. But we do feel a responsibility to warn you when some of today's popular voices and work-based movements have flaws in the foundation that, when followed, can create distance between you and God.

The title of each of the following chapters indicates a daily choice we must make to work His way. The phrase on top is God's desire for us, while the phrase on the bottom is culture's half-truth, a blatant lie, or something that's okay as a result but spiritually dangerous when it becomes our goal. These are not one-time decisions, but daily choices we all make—*directly* or *indirectly*—some of which lean toward our actions, while others dig further to expose our motives.

Take a quick glance at our conversations to come:

His Way

My Way

Obedience

Success

Love

Skill

Lose Myself

Find Myself

You

Me

Listen

Be Heard

Know God

Be Known

Relationships

Achievements

Serve

Lead

Give
Earn

Approved
Approval

It's not that everything on the lower line is bad. You won't find any success shaming here. We're not saying that you're automatically evil if the world knows who you are. The question is: *What do you pursue?*

Within each chapter, you'll find:

Biblical foundation: These daily decisions aren't rooted in our opinion or our feelings but grounded in what God's Word says. His wisdom far exceeds human knowledge; it not only fills our heads, but His wisdom also has the power to change our hearts. Mere knowledge can quickly escalate into pride, and God's wisdom humbles our hearts to be more like Him.

Practical application: You can't truly encounter God and stay the same. Jesus changes everything—including how we act on what His Word says. Each chapter includes practical ways to put the principle into practice in everyday life—so we can be doers of the Word and not hearers only.³

Prayer: At the conclusion of each chapter, we're including a prayer—a raw, real, kind-of-hurts-to-say-out-loud prayer. Before we take action ourselves, turning to prayer means our first step is pursuing a posture of surrender. Prayer positions us to hear from God. And there's no better advice we can offer as an ending than encouraging you personally into His presence. Don't rush your reading of these prayers. Take the prayers as a starting point and personalize them. Search back through the chapter and look for words you underlined and wrote in the margin. Check the footnotes for supporting Scriptures. Turn what stood out to you into prayers. Prayer is the best catalyst for change because prayer is a transfer of power. Dream with

3. James 1:22.

us about what God can do when His daughters *pray* His truth and *live* His truth through His *power*.

Let's Go

We're coming to you as your spiritual sisters, not as experts. We love you, and we're in the trenches of living in this tension with you. Our goal is not to call you out, but to call you *up*. (Conviction is His job—not ours!) We're not above you, and we do love you.

The book you're holding in your hands is really a conversation—a conversation to counteract culture's way with a Gospel-centered approach to both work and womanhood, for the glory of God and the good of others.

Let's get to work. His way. We're really, *really* grateful you're here.

Rooted in Him and rooting for you,
Michelle + Somer

A Prayer Before You Read

Father, I come to You and confess
That it is all too easy to live my life as a simultaneous
attempt
To be all that You created me to be
And all the world expects me to be.

In Jesus' name, I ask for Your help to live my decision
That the dual pursuit ends today.
I'm trading life balance for full surrender.
I want to seek first Your kingdom and Your
righteousness;
I trust that You will provide everything else.⁴

Position my heart to hear from You.
Help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness.⁵
Give me discernment when I encounter half-truths and
blatant lies.
Do not allow me to be satisfied by counterfeit claims.

God, keep me desperately dependent on You.
Make me relentless in the pursuit of my family's hearts.
Give me open eyes to remain effective in my work.
And daily, give me opportunities to live out my
commitment to the Gospel.

Reveal to me any idols that have taken Your place,
And don't merely reduce my affection for them, Lord,
But replace my affection for them with an
unquenchable desire for You.
Set my mind on things above, not earthly things.⁶

4. Matthew 6:33.

5. Matthew 5:6.

6. Colossians 3:2.

she works His way

As I'm reading pages in this book,
I'm begging You to speak to me, God.
Convict me and correct me.
Encourage me and equip me.
Show me and shape me.
Change me and use me.
I'm all in for Your kingdom cause.

Soften my heart.
Open my eyes.
Give me willing hands.
My life is Yours.
I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.⁷
I'm picking up my cross and following You,
Today and every day after.⁸
I love You, and I trust You.

Amen.

7. Galatians 2:20.

8. Luke 9:23.