

simply relevant

Relational Bible Series for Women

Steadiness in God



Finding Balance | STEADINESS in GOD

simply relevant

{ FINDING BALANCE }

Relational Bible Series for Women



Loveland, Colorado

Group resources actually work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

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Photos on pages 9, 16, 19, 31, 43, 55, 67, 69, and 75 © istock.com

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ISBN 978-0-7644-4142-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10

Printed in the United States of America.

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Welcome to *Simply Relevant: Finding Balance*! This is your totally relevant six-week Bible series, which will help you develop relationships with other women as you grow in your relationship with God. This series is all about finding balance in our lives.

What does living a life of balance look like? As soon as you get out of bed and your feet hit the ground in the morning, you're practicing balance. Balancing your body, relationships, responsibilities, and your emotions. But circumstances, fears, and multiple demands can easily throw you off balance. How can you stay upright? How can you not fall down...or apart? Well, in this study you'll discover that nothing works better than reaching out for the hand of God to steady you!

Each week, you'll study a different aspect of balance and learn how relying on God can help you find more balance in your life. You'll explore the truth about personal life balance, learn where your strength comes from, recognize when you are juggling too many balls in the air, face your fear factors, learn how to adapt to change, and discover that living a balanced life with God is about living beyond your limits...and soaring like eagles! Whew! That's a long list, so we've given you little doses of balancing activities to deepen and enrich your learning in ways you can really understand.

You can do this Bible series with 5 to 50 women—or even more! To make sure women really grow in relationships with each other, always get in small groups of four or five for discussion. Women at any place in their faith journeys can feel right at home with this Bible series. The discussion questions can be understood and applied by women who don't know Jesus yet or women who are longtime friends with him. All the Bible passages are printed out for you, so those who aren't familiar with the Bible have the verses right in front of them.

So what will you be doing each week? Here's the structure of the sessions:

- *Note to the Hostess*

Your hostess will be the woman facilitating your Bible series. She'll read the session through before the meeting, prepare for the activities, gather any supplies needed, and get the snacks ready. This box contains special tips just for the hostess, such as supplies to gather for the Experience, the atmosphere for the week, and ideas for snacks.

- *Mingling*

Each week, you're going to start with snacks, mingling, and a short prayer. And this is key: Take time to share how you did with your previous week's commitment.

- *Experience*

You'll engage in an experience each week that will bring a new depth of meaning to the topic you'll explore. The experiences will get every woman involved and having fun. Experiences might require a little bit of preparation or a few supplies, which the hostess will provide.

- *The Word*

Each week, you'll read a Scripture passage together and then discuss what it means with questions from this guide. The questions are surprising, personal, and relevant to women today.

- *A Closer Look*

This look at the Bible passages you'll be digging into each week will help you develop a deeper understanding of the verses at hand while discussing their meaning in your lives.

- *Take Action*

This is where you put faith into action. You'll all commit to applying what you've learned in the coming week in a practical way. You can write your own commitment or choose from the suggested commitments. Then next week, you'll check in with each other to see how you did.

- *Prayer*

At the end of each session, you'll spend time in prayer together. You can ask for prayer requests and pray about the commitments you've made for the upcoming week. We've also given you a verse to read together to focus your minds for prayer.

- *Girlfriend Time*

If you want some more hangout time together after your session is over, we've given you fun suggestions for easy activities to do together to reinforce the session's topic or to just relax. This is an optional bonus that will help you grow deeper in your friendships.

• *Still Thirsty?*

If you want to explore the week's topic more, we've given you additional verses and reflection questions to read and consider in the coming week.

We pray that in the next six weeks, this experience will help you grow as friends of Jesus and each other and, most of all, find the balance to walk, run, dance, and soar through life!

—*Group's Women's Ministry Team*



The Personal Balance Test

Note to the Hostess:

What does living a life of balance look like? Is it static or dynamic? holding a statuesque pose or dancing on a balance beam? Is finding balance about doing less? resting more? Or is it really about resting more...in Jesus?

During this entire study on finding balance, make sure you have a room large enough that women can move around freely—because to study and practice balance, you will need to move around!

This first session will help women explore their different definitions and perspectives of what living a “life in balance” is all about. They’ll be challenged to evaluate attitudes, discuss feelings, and explore issues related to balancing their own lives as they participate in simple physical balance tests that illustrate biblical truths.



Get It...Got It?...Good.

- watches with second hands
- a yummy snack for women to enjoy during the Mingling time

Mingling

Get women connected, and help them feel comfortable right away by creating a relaxed atmosphere that's welcoming and supportive. Offer simple snacks and drinks, be sure to give a personal welcome, and use this mingling time for introductions and conversation starters.

A great conversation starter for this week is asking women to complete this sentence:

"My most embarrassing trip or fall happened when..."

Before starting the balance experience, pray something like this:

God, thank you for bringing each woman here. Help us discover together how to rely on you to find balance in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

Experience

Get into groups of four or five, and complete this activity and discussion. You'll need a watch with a second hand.

It's time to take a personal balance test. Take turns doing the test and timing each other. You'll each do the following steps:

Step 1: Take your shoes off, and stand 3 feet in front of a wall, chair, or person you can focus on.

Step 2: Stand with both ankles touching and with your hands crossed, touching the opposite shoulders.

Step 3: Look straight at the target 3 feet in front of you, and try to stay in this position for 30 seconds. (Someone else in your group will say "go" and keep time.)

Scoring: Time will stop before 30 seconds are up if you move your feet or change your arm position. Record your time inside the cover of this book.



After everyone has completed this test, discuss these questions with your group of four or five:

Q: How well were you able to balance?

Q: How is your performance with this test similar to or different from how well you balance your life right now?

Now it's time to do the balance experiment again—but this time with your eyes closed!

After everyone has tried the new experiment, discuss these questions:

Q: How was your personal experience different this time?

Q: Which test of finding physical balance was the most similar to how you experience finding balance in life? Why?

After your discussion, read the following:

Balance. As soon as we get out of bed and our feet hit the ground in the morning, we're practicing it. Balancing our bodies, our relationships, our responsibilities, and our emotions. Most of the time we do it without having to think about it.

Q: As you think about balancing your physical body, along with balancing relationships, responsibilities, and emotions, where do you feel most out of balance?

Practice this balance exercise throughout the week. We'll see how we improve over time! Each time you are tested, write your score on the inside cover of this book to see how your balance improves.

the Word

A decorative flourish consisting of two curved lines that meet at a central point, resembling a stylized bird or a winged shape, positioned below the title.

Read Matthew 22:34-42 together:

Matthew 22:34-42

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”

Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, Jesus asked them a question: “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

Matthew 22:34-42

What is balance?

The Message translation of Matthew 22: 41-42 says: “As the Pharisees were regrouping, Jesus caught them off balance with his own test question: ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?’”

“Jesus caught them off balance.” The Pharisees, in control, proud and strong in their knowledge of the law, were suddenly feeling a bit wobbly. Perhaps their knees went weak or their stomachs turned over as they looked to each other for the right answer. They weren’t prepared to be questioned. After all, they were the “experts” determined to throw Jesus off balance with *their* questions. But Jesus never even swayed. Not when the Pharisees challenged him, Satan tempted him, Judas betrayed him, Pilate sentenced him, or the soldiers crucified him. He knew the answer to his questions. And because he knew, he could never be thrown off balance by the challenges he faced or the burden of responsibilities laid upon him.

Could Jesus catch you off balance with these questions? The Pharisees didn’t know who Jesus was, and so they almost fell over. But you do! Faith in Jesus and love for Jesus are the stable center on which all else in your life can balance. And when you start to wobble, remember—he’s the one you can always rely on to steady you.

Tipping Point

There are two types of balance: static and dynamic. Static balance is achieved by maintaining steadiness when you’re stationary. Dynamic balance is maintaining stability when you’re moving.

Did you play the game Statue when you were a kid? If you lost your pose, you were eliminated from the game. To win you needed to have superior strength in static balance.

Now think about a sport or activity you enjoy. Perhaps it’s dancing, basketball, or snowshoeing. To perform these activities (without falling down repeatedly), you need good dynamic balance. (If you’re a gymnast or tightrope walker, you need stupendous dynamic balance!) Both static and dynamic balance can be improved through practice, so don’t give up the first time you fall!

scripture discussion questions

In groups of four or five, discuss these questions:

Q: In one sentence, share what “finding balance” in life means to you.

Q: Do you think finding balance is about learning to do less and being less busy in your life? Why or why not?

Q: Share two things in your life right now that are threatening your sense of balance and two things that help you keep your balance.

Q: Jesus said, “*The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.*” How can these commandments help you find and achieve a more balanced life?

Q: What would your perfect life of balance look like? Is it more static or dynamic? holding a statuesque pose or dancing on a balance beam?