Becoming the Proverbs 31 Woman

Believe • Behave • Become

God cares about the woman you are becoming.

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She didn't wake up that way. She became it.

An Invitation From Me to You

There was a version of me I knew I was meant to become, and I didn't know how to go in and get her.

I could collect information. I could make a plan. I could begin again on Monday. But when life became uncomfortable, I kept returning to what I had always done. And then I wondered why I kept ending up in the same place.

Maybe you know what that feels like.

I wrote this book because the Lord has shown me that He cares about our becoming. He cares about our Christian character, about the beliefs we agree with, and about what those beliefs produce in our lives. He has given us His Word and His Spirit, and He invites us to respond.

As you read, I'm going to ask you some questions. Some may encourage you. Some may make you uncomfortable. Take them to the Lord. Let His Word be the authority as you consider your answers. I want you to hear the conviction that invites you to grow without turning it into condemnation about who you are.

You'll find the teaching and the tools together. There is space to write, to identify what matters to you, and to begin putting what you recognize into practice. Bring your Bible and a pen. You may also want five index cards and ten sticky notes. Mine are pink. Yours can be whatever you have.

Take your time. Let this become a conversation between you and the Lord about your own becoming.

I'm glad you're here.

Sherrie

Your Journey of Becoming

Chapter	Where we are going
1 The Invitation to Become	My story, your invitation, and the woman of Proverbs 31.
2 Believe That God Cares	God's provision, our responsibility, and Faith's Ladder of Virtue.
3 Give Weight to What Matters	Your Christian values and the moral compass for your daily choices.
4 What Has a Grip on You	The beliefs, vices, and loyalties that keep pulling you back.
5 Learn to Believe and Behave Differently	Perspective, priorities, power, and the renewing of your mind.
6 Bring Truth Into the Moment	Your Scripture swords and Christian life coaching questions.
7 Your Daily Practice of Becoming	A way to bring these tools into your actual day.
8 Carry Your Becoming Into Your Life	Your commitment, a commissioning, and ways to continue with me.

Believe: God cares about my becoming and calls me to grow. 2 Peter 1:3–11.

Behave: I respond to Him through Christ's strength. Philippians 4:13.

Become: Godly character takes shape in the life I live. Proverbs 31:10–31.

CHAPTER 1

The Invitation to Become

I had a six-figure salary and designer everything. I worked in cybersecurity for a large, well-known financial institution. I had a business management degree, and I was a certified technology project manager. I was a rockstar there.

And I had something to prove.

I grew up believing that I was ugly, dumb, wrong, and that I never quite made it because of things that were spoken to me. Those thoughts took root in my mind. I believed them, and I behaved according to them. I spent my life trying to become the opposite. Proving that I wasn't ugly. That I wasn't dumb. That I wasn't wrong. That I had become something.

That was before the Lord got a hold of me.

We didn't start our family until I was 35. We had our last child, Landon, when I was 39. Suddenly, I had three children under the age of four, a demanding career, and a life I couldn't control. I couldn't control my time. I couldn't control the outcome of everything. The identity I had built around being a powerful executive was slipping through my fingers.

I felt like I was drowning.

I went to my doctor for depression and was prescribed medication. In the evenings, I drank alcohol to numb the pain. I woke up with no energy, not recognizing how much the drinking was affecting me. I felt stuck, defeated, frustrated, discouraged, and hopeless.

So I ran to food. I ran to alcohol. I bought more diet books than one person should have in her own personal library. I followed motivational speakers and people who could teach me how to lose weight quickly. I wanted to change, but it needed to be easy. Quick. And I couldn't be uncomfortable.

Do you see the problem? I wanted a different outcome while protecting the very patterns that kept producing the outcome I already had.

I collected information, but was void of transformation.

At that time, I was involved in the new age movement, studying Hinduism and Buddhism and searching for truth. I didn't know the Lord the way I know Him now. I was trying to be my own savior, and I couldn't change myself.

Until God.

One morning, before a day of meetings, I opened my journal and wrote, “God, show me how to lose this weight.” Immediately, I heard a voice in my heart: “Sherrie, you haven’t lost the weight yet because you haven’t written the weight loss program.”

I thought that was crazy. Why would I write a weight loss program? I only bought them.

Then I heard, “Sherrie, ask me any question, and I’ll give you the answer.” I went about my day, not knowing what to make of that conversation.

Later that evening, I was in our closet sorting baby clothes, overwhelmed and on the verge of tears. I still needed to get dinner on the table, get three little children bathed, get everybody to bed, and somehow get to bed on time myself. I was thinking about the wine I wanted downstairs. Then I heard that still, small voice again: “Just surrender.”

Surrender? Nothing within my type A personality welcomed that suggestion.

That night, when I put my head on my pillow, the question came again: “So what’s your question?” In my heart, I answered, “I don’t know the difference between Jesus, the Lord, and God.”

What I heard was, “I’m Jesus Christ, the Lord of the land, just like a landlord walks on the land. I’m Jesus Christ, the Lord of the land.”

I sprang out of bed and ran downstairs to Harry. “Harry, is Jesus Christ the Lord?”

Harry had grown up in church and immediately said yes. He wanted to know what I was doing awake. I told him, “He just told me that. Jesus just told me this.”

That encounter opened me to knowing Jesus. My life has never been the same. I bought a five-dollar Bible at Walmart and began reading. And I started applying what I read to my life.

Two passages shaped everything for me. James 4:17 confronted me with the responsibility to do the good I knew I should do. Romans 12:2 showed me that transformation involved a renewed mind instead of continued conformity to the world.

When I read James 4:17, I finished the thought with, “Even in weight loss!”

I began seeing my life in the light of Scripture. My eating. My drinking. My reactions. The things I kept excusing because I was overwhelmed. I had been asking God to change an outcome. His Word was showing me places where I needed to respond differently.

Soon afterward, I left corporate America. We downsized our home. The children and I were baptized. I began learning to become a life coach, including studying in the secular arena with Tony Robbins. But the tools I was learning weren’t shaping me the way I needed. How could I coach someone else with tools that weren’t working in my own life?

The Lord began showing me a different perspective: bring His Word into every area of my life and start walking by it. Reprioritize my time. Begin my day seeking Him instead of the gym.

Chasing number one instead of a number on the scale.

As my relationship with the Lord became what I valued most, something shifted. I began believing differently. Behaving differently. Becoming transformed. I wrote down what I was learning and put it into practice. That is where The Seeker's Method, my Christian weight loss program, began.

I hadn't set out to write a program. I had asked God for help. And He was doing far more than helping me lose weight. He was developing my Christian character.

Your struggle may be different from mine. Your marriage. Your reactions. Your fear of what people think. Whatever that place is, you can begin bringing it to Him.

When I was invited to speak at a women's retreat, I was reading through Proverbs. As I reached Proverbs 31, I sensed the Lord leading me to build the message around that woman. Honestly, I resisted. Wasn't Proverbs 31 already used at every women's event?

Then this thought changed everything: the Proverbs 31 woman didn't wake up that way. She became it.

The Passion Translation uses this phrase in Proverbs 31:31: "for she has become a radiant woman." That word, become, caught my attention. As I reflected on my own life, I began recognizing what the Lord had been developing in me. I hadn't stopped to see how far I had come.

Read Proverbs 31:10–31. Notice the character expressed through her decisions. She is trustworthy. She considers what she does. She works, gives, speaks with wisdom, and cares for the people entrusted to her. Verse 30 places the praise on a woman who fears the Lord.

Her strength and dignity are connected to the life she lives in reverence for God. I don't want you to read that portrait and immediately begin measuring how many activities you can accomplish. Pay attention to the character being expressed through them.

We aren't given the full story of her becoming. But we have the Word of God to guide our own becoming.

When I say "your own Proverbs 31 woman," I mean a woman growing in Christlike character in the life God has entrusted to her. You can practice that character right where you are.

What have you been believing about the woman you can become? Who told you that this is all there is for you? What might change if you understood that God cares about your transformation?

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

Consider Your Own Becoming

What beliefs about myself have been influencing my choices?

What have I become comfortable tolerating that God may be asking me to address?

Where can I already see evidence of God's work in me?

What could change if my daily prayer became "Spirit, lead me"?

CHAPTER 2

Believe That God Cares

Before we talk about the things you need to do differently, we need to look at what you believe. Because what you do cannot be separated from what you believe.

I knew I wanted to change. I didn't understand that the Lord cared about my becoming. I hadn't recognized that the uncomfortable choices in my everyday life could be places where He was developing my Christian character.

When I wanted relief, I saw a stressful moment I needed to escape. The Lord was teaching me to recognize a moment in which I could turn to Him and practice a different response. My perspective needed to change before I could see the opportunity in front of me.

Read 2 Peter 1:3–11. Look at where Peter begins. God's divine power supplies what we need for a godly life through knowing Him. He has given His promises. He has acted on our behalf. Before Peter tells us to make an effort, he points us to what God has provided.

Then he tells us to respond.

God has a part. You have a part.

You aren't being told to develop godliness apart from God. You are being called to put your faith into practice through the provision He has given. Depending on Him and making an effort belong together. Your dependence becomes visible as you respond to Him in the choice in front of you.

Think about the difference that makes. If I believe change is entirely my responsibility, I will keep returning to the willpower and motivation I have already exhausted. If I assume that my response doesn't matter, I can keep asking God to change me while agreeing with the same thoughts and practicing the same behaviors.

Peter gives us a different way to live. Know what God has provided. Make every effort to grow.

He names qualities to add to our faith: moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These are qualities of Christian character. God cares about the person we are becoming as we follow Him.

Peter also connects growing character with fruitfulness. Our growth matters to the way we live out our knowledge of Jesus. When you become more patient, more truthful, more loving, more willing to obey, the people around you experience the fruit of that growth. It reaches into your home, your work, and your conversations.

He warns about spiritual shortsightedness and forgetting the cleansing we have received. This calls us to pay attention. Have I become so accustomed to a pattern that I no longer recognize it? Have I stopped expecting my faith to affect the way I respond?

We do not earn salvation through character development. Ephesians 2:8–10 places salvation in God's grace, received through faith, and describes the good works He prepares for His people. Our growth is a response to His grace. It matters because we belong to Him.

You may have been saying, "This is just how I am." But if that statement closes every conversation about growth, ask yourself what you are agreeing with. Are you describing a struggle you need help with, or deciding in advance that the Lord cannot develop you in that area?

You can acknowledge where you are without making it the limit of where you will go with Him.

God cares about who you are becoming. He has supplied what you need to begin responding.

Faith's Ladder of Virtue

I use a ladder as a picture of the qualities Peter tells us to add to our faith. Faith is the foundation. The additions follow his order. You don't have to finish developing one quality before practicing another. They grow together as you continue following the Lord.

Read the list slowly. Think about the way these qualities would change an ordinary day if you practiced them.

Quality	What it looks like in practice
Faith is the foundation	Trusting God and relying on Him.
1 Moral excellence	Goodness, virtue, integrity. Choosing and doing what is right.
2 Knowledge	Understanding and spiritual insight. Learning truth that informs how you live.
3 Self-control	Temperance, moderation, restraint. Governing your response to desires and emotions.
4 Perseverance	Patient endurance, steadfastness. Continuing faithfully through difficulty.
5 Godliness	Devotion and reverence. Living with a sincere desire to honor God.
6 Brotherly affection	Mutual affection, Christian kindness. Caring for fellow believers as family.
7 Love	Unselfish love. Seeking the good of others through truthful, caring action.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3–8. Supporting passage: 1 Peter 1:14–16.

When I began my weight loss journey, I had no idea how much more the Lord would do in me. I thought about the weight. He was developing self-control and perseverance. I thought about whether I could make it through a difficult moment. He was teaching me to turn to Him and keep walking by faith.

That journey strengthened me. It shaped areas of my life that had nothing to do with the number on the scale. As I continued growing, I became stronger in my Christian character. Today, I weather storms differently because I have done hard things with the Lord.

This is what I mean when I talk about becoming strong enough to become her and remain her. The character you develop with the Lord helps you continue being that woman when everything around you isn't going well. You have practiced trusting Him. You have practiced governing your response. You have practiced continuing when you wanted to stop.

You will still need Him. You will still have opportunities to grow. But you won't be meeting every difficulty as the same woman who has never practiced a faithful response.

Choose two virtues to focus on in this season. All seven remain important. These two give your attention and practice a place to begin. Where is the Lord inviting you to grow? Be specific enough that you will recognize an opportunity when it comes.

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

Where Is He Calling You to Grow

My first focus virtue is

Where will I have an opportunity to practice it, and what will I do?

My second focus virtue is

Where will I have an opportunity to practice it, and what will I do?

What would growth in these qualities change about the way I respond under pressure?

CHAPTER 3

Give Weight to What Matters

You've identified two qualities of Christian character you want to develop. Now we need to look at how your daily choices can support that development.

What are you valuing?

The things you value influence the things you prioritize. The things you prioritize influence the decisions you make every day. You can say that something matters to you, but are you making choices that demonstrate it?

I said I wanted to lose weight. But in the moments that kept shaping my evenings, I was giving more weight to relief than to the outcome I said I wanted. I valued immediate comfort enough to organize my response around it. Then I felt defeated because I wasn't becoming the woman I wanted to be.

I needed to examine what was actually leading my decisions.

You might say you value your family. But when you are frustrated, do you give more weight to proving that you are right or to speaking in a way that honors the relationship? You might say you value integrity. But when the truth becomes uncomfortable, does protecting your image begin making the decision for you?

Those questions help us see the difference between what we name and what we practice. They give us something concrete to bring to the Lord.

Read Matthew 6:21 and 6:33. Ask Him to shape what matters to you. As you seek His kingdom and righteousness first, you begin considering your choices in the light of what matters to Him.

That is why I want you to identify your Christian values and keep them in front of you. They can serve as your moral compass. A compass helps you find your direction and stay on course. Your values remind you of the direction you have chosen under God's authority. Scripture remains the standard by which you examine them.

There is a practical difference between a virtue, a value, and a vice. The words relate to one another, but they help you notice different things.

Element	What it helps me recognize
Virtue	The quality of character I'm developing.
Value	What I choose to prioritize in my decisions.
Vice	The pattern that pulls me away from living those values.

For example, you might be developing perseverance, valuing responsibility, and recognizing avoidance as a pattern that keeps pulling you away. When a task becomes uncomfortable, your value can remind you why it matters to continue. Your focus virtue helps you recognize the character being practiced as you do.

You are beginning to bring your faith into a real decision.

The next list gives you words to consider. Some name qualities of character. Some name relationships, responsibilities, or things you appreciate. Ask what it means to live each one under God's direction. You may add your own word.

Choose 15. Narrow them to 10. Then choose your final five.

I know. You may be thinking, "I can't possibly narrow this down to five!" Other values remain important. Some of the five you choose will naturally support several others. You are giving your daily attention a practical focus for this season.

You don't become the Proverbs 31 woman simply because you want to. You begin making choices that support the character the Lord is developing. This assessment helps you name what you want those choices to reflect.

CHOOSE 15 THEN 10 THEN 5

Christian Values Assessment

Values to consider	Values to consider	Values to consider	Values to consider
Achievement	Authenticity	Beauty	Camaraderie
Community	Compassion	Competence	Courage
Creativity	Dependability	Encouragement	Enthusiasm
Equality	Excellence	Faith	Family
Forgiveness	Fun	Generosity	Gentleness
Gratitude	Health	Humility	Innovation
Integrity	Intelligence	Joy	Justice
Kindness	Knowledge	Legacy	Love
Loyalty	Mercy	Nurture	Obedience
Optimism	Perseverance	Leadership	Purity
Relationship	Respect	Resourcefulness	Responsibility
Security	Service	Spirituality	Strength
Stability	Trust	Unity	Wisdom

Which words stand out to me, and what do they mean in the life God has entrusted to me?

YOUR MORAL COMPASS

Name What Matters Most

Write your 15 values in the first column. Narrow them to 10, then choose your final five. Let God's kingdom and righteousness shape what you give weight to.

My 15 values	My 10 values	My final five
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	
7. _____	7. _____	
8. _____	8. _____	
9. _____	9. _____	
10. _____	10. _____	
11. _____		
12. _____		
13. _____		
14. _____		
15. _____		

What did narrowing this list help me recognize?

Let Your Values Lead Your Choices

Write each of your final five values on its own index card. One value per card. Keep them somewhere you will see them.

Now give each value a voice in your real life. What will it ask of you when you are tired? When someone disagrees with you? When the right thing is less convenient than what you want?

A word on a card can remind you of what matters. Your response is where you practice giving it weight.

Value 1 and one daily choice that will reflect it

Value 2 and one daily choice that will reflect it

Value 3 and one daily choice that will reflect it

Value 4 and one daily choice that will reflect it

Value 5 and one daily choice that will reflect it

How can living by these values support the woman God is calling me to become?

CHAPTER 4

What Has a Grip on You

It is one thing to name what you value. It is another thing to live according to it when something else is pulling at you.

What could be hindering you?

When I teach this in person, I hold up a vise. It grips something and holds it in place. The tighter you turn it, the stronger its grip becomes. The tool is a vise. The word we are examining is vice. They sound the same, and that physical tool helps us ask an important question: what has a grip on you?

A vice can be an attitude, habit, or pattern that pulls you away from living your values. It can become the thing you run to for what you want instead of turning to God for what you need.

For me, food and alcohol had become places to run. I wanted comfort. Relief. Escape from the heaviness of life. I didn't recognize how much I was depending on them or how that dependence was shaping me.

Was the wine going to solve the problems I needed to face? No. It could give me what I wanted in that moment. But what did I need? I needed to turn to God. I needed His strength, His wisdom, and His help learning to persevere through the things I kept trying to escape.

The very thing I kept running to for relief was keeping me from developing the character I needed to endure.

I want you to sit with that. What do you keep reaching for when life becomes uncomfortable? What does it promise you? What does it actually produce?

Food, comfort, and rest are good gifts. Feeling afraid or tired doesn't itself mean you are practicing a vice. Look at the role something has taken in your life. Are you receiving a good gift, or giving it authority to direct choices you know are pulling you away from what matters?

Sometimes these patterns become idols. We begin asking a person, possession, accomplishment, or habit to give us the security and satisfaction we need to receive from God. We protect it. We organize around it. We become unwilling to surrender it even when we can see what it is producing.

And sometimes we need to confront pride.

We know what is right, but we keep choosing what feels right to us. We have an explanation ready. We have always done it this way. We deserve it after the day we have had. We don't

want to hear correction from that person. We would rather defend our choice than examine it.

That is a place to stop and ask, "Am I willing to be shown something I don't want to see?"

Self-righteousness can hide here too. We become occupied with what somebody else needs to change. Their behavior becomes our excuse. But another person's wrong does not remove our responsibility to examine what we do.

Read James 4:17. Knowing the good we should do calls for a response. We can't keep treating awareness as though it were obedience.

Read 1 John 2:15–17. Consider how the desires and pride of this world have shaped what you pursue and protect. Then read Galatians 5:16–17. The flesh and the Spirit are in conflict. We need to recognize which one we are allowing to lead us.

What Are You Believing When You Turn to It

I want you to look beneath the behavior. What are you believing in that moment?

For me, a stressful day could bring the thought, "I have to have a glass of wine." If I keep agreeing that I have to have it, how will I begin believing that I can respond differently? I have already made a decision about what is possible before I have even asked the Lord to help me.

This is why I say, "Unbelief is caused by what you believe." I'm asking you to examine the agreement that is already there. What belief are you continuing to feed while asking God for a different outcome?

"I can't change." "I'm too old." "I'm too busy." "I can't handle the discomfort." "This is just how I've always been."

Those thoughts influence your behavior. Repeated behavior influences the woman you are becoming. You need to notice them so you can begin examining them in the light of God's Word.

Be specific with Him: "Lord, here is what I keep doing. Here is what I believe when I do it. Show me how to respond differently."

The list that follows combines biblical vice categories with practical patterns for reflection. The possible underlying beliefs are examples, not conclusions about you. Use your own words when you recognize something different in your heart.

Read prayerfully. Choose two patterns to address in this season. Ask the Lord where He wants you to begin.

Recognizing My Vices

Lord, show me what I keep running to. What is inhibiting my belief? What is influencing my behavior? Where am I resisting the growth You are inviting me into? Give me humility to see clearly and willingness to respond. Amen.

Notice the pattern, examine the possible belief, and consider what it produces. Choose two to focus on after you have read the full list.

What I recognize	A possible underlying belief	What it can produce
Fear of man	If they disapprove, I must be wrong.	Silence, people pleasing, compromised convictions.
Fear of failure	If I cannot succeed, I should not try.	Procrastination, perfectionism, abandoned opportunities.
Laziness	My comfort matters more than this responsibility.	Neglected commitments, choosing ease over necessary effort.
Control	I am only safe when I determine the outcome.	Manipulation, rigidity, difficulty surrendering.
Comfort seeking	If this is uncomfortable, I should not have to do it.	Avoiding necessary effort, delaying obedience, choosing immediate ease.
Turning to food for relief	Eating will give me the comfort or escape I need right now.	Eating beyond hunger, using food to numb or avoid addressing a need.
Perfectionism	It must be flawless for me to be acceptable.	Overworking, hiding mistakes, refusing to begin.
Comparison and envy	Her good means I am worth less.	Resentment, rivalry, overlooking my own gifts.

What am I recognizing in myself?

Recognizing My Vices Continued

Notice the pattern, examine the possible belief, and consider what it produces. Choose two to focus on after you have read the full list.

What I recognize	A possible underlying belief	What it can produce
Pride	Admitting I am wrong diminishes me.	Defensiveness, superiority, resisting correction.
Unteachability	I already know enough; I do not need correction.	Avoiding truth, dismissing wise counsel.
Complacency	I am fine as I am; growth can wait.	Stagnation, neglected spiritual practice.
Avoidance	Avoiding discomfort will keep me safe.	Excuses, unfinished tasks, delayed conversations.
Impatience	If it is not happening quickly, it is not working.	Pressure, shortcuts, quitting too soon.
Indulgence	Relief now matters more than the consequences.	Excess, drunkenness, unrestrained pleasure seeking.
Dishonesty	The truth will cost me too much.	Lying, concealment, cheating, stealing.
Compromise	A small departure from conviction will not matter.	Double standards, excusing known wrong.

What am I recognizing in myself?

Recognizing My Vices Continued

Notice the pattern, examine the possible belief, and consider what it produces. Choose two to focus on after you have read the full list.

What I recognize	A possible underlying belief	What it can produce
Selfish ambition	Getting ahead matters more than how I treat people.	Using others, rivalry, neglecting their needs.
Jealousy	I must hold tightly or I will lose my place.	Possessiveness, suspicion, restricting others.
Resentment	Keeping the grievance alive protects me.	Grudge holding, bitterness, rehearsing offenses.
Retaliation	They must hurt because they hurt me.	Payback, sabotage, deliberately wounding words.
Hostility and harshness	Force or anger will make people listen.	Rage, humiliation, threats, aggression.
Gossip	Sharing this will give me belonging or influence.	Rumors, unnecessary disclosure, damaged trust.
Divisiveness	Winning people to my side matters most.	Quarreling, factions, escalating hostility.
Greed and entitlement	I deserve more, regardless of the cost to others.	Grasping, demandingness, exploitation.

What am I recognizing in myself?

Recognizing My Vices Continued

Notice the pattern, examine the possible belief, and consider what it produces. Choose two to focus on after you have read the full list.

What I recognize	A possible underlying belief	What it can produce
Self-rule	My way is safer or better than God's direction.	Resisting obedience, insisting on my own terms.
Idolatry	This person or thing can give me ultimate security.	Giving something God's place in my devotion.
Sorcery	Other spiritual powers can give me needed control.	Occult practices, seeking guidance apart from God.
Impurity and lust	Feeding this desire will satisfy what I lack.	Degrading content, objectification, corrupt motives.
Sexual immorality	My desire justifies violating sexual faithfulness.	Adultery, sexual misconduct, broken commitments.
Injustice and contempt	Their dignity matters less than my advantage.	Favoritism, belittling, excusing exploitation.
Unbelief	I can only act when I can guarantee the outcome.	Withholding trust, resisting a known faithful step.
Irreverence	God's instruction can be dismissed when inconvenient.	Treating God casually, disregarding His authority.

What am I recognizing in myself?

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

Bring the Pattern Into the Light

My first focus vice is

When do I turn to it, and what am I believing in those moments?

My second focus vice is

When do I turn to it, and what am I believing in those moments?

What have these patterns promised me, and what have they actually produced?

CHAPTER 5

Learn to Believe and Behave Differently

You have named qualities of character you want to develop. You have identified values you want to live by. You have begun recognizing patterns that pull you away. Now we bring those things together in the decisions you actually make.

Imagine the moment I described earlier. I'm overwhelmed. There are children to care for, a house full of responsibilities, and more to do than I feel able to manage. I want relief. I begin thinking about wine before I have even finished the day.

What is my perspective? I'm seeing a situation I can't handle without escaping it. What are my priorities? Getting relief has become the most urgent thing. What power am I relying on? What I can arrange to make myself feel better.

Now bring in what the Lord was teaching me. I want to develop self-control and perseverance. I value my relationship with Him and the family He has entrusted to me. I can recognize that I'm turning toward an old pattern for relief.

That awareness gives me a place to respond. "Lord, I feel overwhelmed. Help me see what is mine to do right now. Help me respond to my family with love. Strengthen me to take the next step instead of running to what I have always run to."

I still have responsibilities. But I'm beginning to approach them with a different perspective, different priorities, and dependence on a different power.

That is the connection I want you to see.

What I am examining	How I respond	What is taking shape
VIRTUES The character I'm developing. VALUES What guides my choices. VICES What pulls me away.	PERSPECTIVE Seeing through God's truth. PRIORITIES Giving weight to what matters. POWER Depending on the Holy Spirit.	BELIEVE God calls and equips me to grow. BEHAVE Respond through Christ's strength. BECOME Godly character lived out.

You begin believing differently as you agree with God's truth. You behave differently as you respond to that truth through His strength. Over time, those faithful responses are part of the character being developed in you.

This is where Philippians 4:13 belongs in our lives. Read verses 11–13 together. Paul describes learning contentment through both need and abundance. He relies on Christ's

strength in changing circumstances. He isn't waiting for the circumstances to become easy before depending on Christ.

When I tell you that Christ strengthens you to do what you should, not simply what you want, I'm asking you to bring that dependence into obedience. The strength we need is for the life He calls us to live. It is not a way of getting every outcome our flesh wants.

Read Philippians 2:13 alongside it. God works in His people, shaping their desire and their action toward what pleases Him. You can ask for His help when even your wanting needs to change.

There were things I knew I should do that I didn't want to do. I wanted the result of obedience without the discomfort of responding. I had to begin recognizing that my feelings did not have to have the final authority.

I call that getting spiritually bossy with yourself.

You stop allowing your flesh to boss you around. You begin bringing your response under the authority of God's Word. You pay attention to what you are agreeing with and what you are practicing. You recognize the moment in which you can turn to the Lord and do something different.

The hardest part of your transformation is the mind renewal. I know that from experience.

You can behave differently for a moment and still keep rehearsing the belief that pulls you back. "I can't keep this up." "This is too hard." "I'll always struggle." If you keep agreeing with that story, it will keep influencing your response.

Romans 12:2 invites us to stop conforming and be transformed through the renewing of our minds. That involves learning to recognize thoughts we have treated as unquestionable. Just because you think a thought doesn't mean it deserves your agreement.

For years, I had lived according to words about being ugly, dumb, and wrong. Those words pushed me to prove myself. Even when my life looked successful, those old beliefs were still influencing who I was being. The Lord had to teach me to recognize what I was agreeing with.

You may need that same awareness in a different area. Notice the thought. Examine it. Bring it to Scripture. Ask what a response of faith would look like here. Then practice that response.

Your next step may be small enough to look ordinary. Tell the truth. Begin the task. Pause before reacting. Ask for help. Leave what is tempting you. Keep a commitment. Do what you know is right while depending on the Lord for strength.

That is where the bridge between believing and becoming is crossed: in a response.

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

Practice a Different Response

One situation where I keep returning to an old pattern is

The thought or belief that usually leads my response is

What do my two focus virtues and five values help me recognize about this choice?

What perspective, priorities, and dependence on God's power would change my response?

The next faithful response I will practice is

CHAPTER 6

Bring Truth Into the Moment

When you recognize an old thought or a familiar struggle, what will you do with it? This is where we put the next tools in your spiritual toolbox.

The first is the sword of the Spirit. Ephesians 6:17 identifies that sword as the Word of God. Scripture gives us truth by which to examine the thoughts, motives, and choices that are directing us.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. I began learning to bring my thinking under the authority of Christ. When a thought disagreed with God's truth, I needed to stop giving it permission to lead me.

So I wrote down Scriptures. I put the references and truths I needed to remember on sticky notes. I created a prayer closet wallpapered in them. My husband is so patient with me.

These were the truths I returned to when I wanted to chase my feelings. When I wanted to be who I had always been. When I felt weak and wanted to agree that I couldn't do what I knew I should do.

I call them my Scripture swords. The sticky note helps me remember. God's Word is the sword.

Sometimes, when I felt tempted at a restaurant, I would excuse myself and go into the restroom to pray. Isaiah 40:29–31 reminded me where strength comes from. I would pray something like this:

"Lord, I feel weak and powerless right now. Your Word tells me that You give strength to the weary. I believe that You can strengthen me to walk by faith. Help me take the next step and depend on You as I do."

Then I would rise up and take that step.

I didn't have to wait until I felt like a different woman. I could leave and practice a different response through Christ's strength. I was putting His truth into practice.

When you are afraid, return to what Scripture teaches about trusting God. When you want to react, remember what it says about listening and anger. When you stumble, turn toward confession and grace.

Read the Scripture swords that follow. These are personal responses to the passages, not exact quotations. Read the passages in your Bible so the truth stays connected to its context. For example, Isaiah 54:17 calls God's servants to trust His vindication; it does not promise a life without hardship or injury.

1 THROUGH 10

Swords of the Spirit

Choose five truths for this season. Keep the references with them. You can also choose passages from your own Bible reading.

1. When I feel powerless

Isaiah 40:29–31 | God gives me strength when mine runs out.

2. When I feel inadequate

2 Corinthians 12:9 | His grace is sufficient. His power meets me in my weakness.

3. When I feel under attack

Isaiah 54:17 | This weapon may be formed, but it will not prosper.

4. When I want to give up

Galatians 6:9 | I will keep doing good and trust God with the harvest.

5. When anxiety takes over

Philippians 4:6–7 | I can bring this to God in prayer.

6. When old thoughts start speaking

2 Corinthians 10:5 | Every thought does not deserve my agreement.

7. When shame tells me to hide

Romans 8:1 | In Christ, condemnation does not define me.

8. When I need wisdom

James 1:5 | I can ask God for wisdom.

9. When I am afraid

Psalm 56:3 | When I am afraid, I will trust in God.

10. When burdens feel too heavy

1 Peter 5:7 | I can give Him my cares because He cares for me.

Personal responses to Scripture. Read the passages in context.

11 THROUGH 20

Swords of the Spirit

11. When I hesitate to approach God

Hebrews 4:16 | I can come to God for mercy and grace right now.

12. When doing right feels hard

Philippians 4:13 | I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He gives me strength to do what I should, not simply what I want.

13. When I need the desire to obey

Philippians 2:13 | God is working in me, helping me want what pleases Him and giving me strength to do it.

14. When old patterns tempt me

1 Corinthians 10:13 | God is faithful. With His help, I can take the way out.

15. When I want to react

James 1:19–20 | I can pause, listen, and let God guide my response.

16. When I want to fix everything

Hebrews 4:15–16 | Jesus understands my weakness. I can ask for help before I act.

17. When one mistake makes me quit

1 John 1:9 | I can confess, receive forgiveness, and take the next faithful step.

18. When love requires courage

Ephesians 4:15 | With God's help, I can speak the truth in love.

19. When I cannot see the way

Proverbs 3:5–6 | I can trust God without understanding every detail.

20. When faith needs action

James 1:22 | I will do more than hear God's Word. With His help, I will live it.

Personal responses to Scripture. Read the passages in context.

My Five Scripture Swords

Choose five truths. Write the Scripture reference and the truth you want to carry into your day. Place them on sticky notes where you will see them. Speak them. Pray them. Put them into practice.

1. The Scripture reference and the truth I want to remember

2. The Scripture reference and the truth I want to remember

3. The Scripture reference and the truth I want to remember

4. The Scripture reference and the truth I want to remember

5. The Scripture reference and the truth I want to remember

Ask the Question You Need to Answer

The next tool in your spiritual toolbox is what I call a scalpel. These are Christian life coaching questions that help you pause and examine what is happening in your heart.

Read Hebrews 4:12–13. God's Word exposes what is within us. The questions help me bring my thoughts and motives into the light of that Word. I invite the Holy Spirit to show me what I need to see so I can agree and align with Him. The discerning power belongs to God and His Word.

Sometimes you need a question because you already know the Scripture, but you haven't stopped long enough to recognize how it applies to the decision you are about to make.

I could know that I wanted to lose weight and still find myself wanting a glass of wine after a difficult day. A question would bring me into the moment:

"Sherrie, does this choice give you what you want or what you need?"

Or, "How will this choice affect what you value?"

Or, "Will you be okay if you don't have this?"

Do you see what those questions do? They help me stop letting the desire make the decision. They remind me to look at what I'm believing, what I'm valuing, and what the choice will produce.

I needed to acknowledge that I wanted relief. Then I needed to ask whether the way I was seeking it agreed with the woman I was asking the Lord to help me become.

That pause matters. You can invite the Holy Spirit into the moment before you repeat the response you have practiced for years.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Look for the help and way of escape God provides in temptation. A question may help you recognize the step in front of you: leave the situation, ask for support, put a boundary in place, tell the truth, or pause before you speak.

You don't need to interrogate yourself with every question on the following pages. Read them and choose five that fit the places the Lord has brought to your attention. Choose questions you will actually stop and answer.

Then let the answer lead to a response. Insight matters, but we are practicing obedience. What will you do with what has become clear?

What does Scripture say? What am I noticing? What will I do next?

Christian Life Coaching Questions

Desires and Surrender

- Does this choice give me what I want or what I need?
- Am I allowing what I want to overrule what God says is right?
- What am I asking a person, possession, or accomplishment to give me that I need to receive from God?
- What desire has become a demand?
- What am I afraid to surrender, and what does that fear reveal?
- Am I seeking God's direction or asking Him to approve a decision I have already made?
- What am I protecting that may be keeping me from growing?
- Can I receive God's "no" and still trust His goodness?
- What am I calling a need that may actually be a demand?

My Motives and Values

- How will this choice affect what I value?
- In what way should my values influence this decision?
- What do my choices reveal about what I actually value?
- Where do my actions disagree with my stated priorities?
- What am I trying to prove, and to whom?
- Whose approval is shaping this choice?
- Am I choosing from faith, fear, pressure, or the need for approval?
- What would faithfulness look like here, even if nobody noticed?

Christian Life Coaching Questions Continued

Habits Vices and Virtues

- What do I know I should do that I keep not doing? (James 4:17)
- What do I keep doing that I know I should not do?
- What excuse keeps giving this habit permission to stay?
- What discomfort am I trying to escape through this behavior?
- What does this habit promise me, and what does it actually produce?
- What patterns do I need to stop conforming to so I can experience transformation?
- Am I seeking relief, or am I seeking lasting change?
- What habit am I feeding, and what Christlike quality do I need to practice instead?
- Where do I need support, accountability, or a practical boundary?

New Thoughts and Beliefs

- What new habits, thoughts, and beliefs do I need to practice to make transformation possible? (Romans 12:2)
- What belief keeps feeding the behavior I want to change?
- What am I treating as true that needs to be examined in the light of Scripture?
- What am I believing about God in this moment?
- What truth do I know but struggle to live as though I believe?
- Am I responding to what is happening now or to what happened before?
- What would change if I trusted that my worth does not depend on this outcome?
- What small act of obedience can I repeat until it becomes a new pattern?

Christian Life Coaching Questions Continued

Perseverance and Vibrant Hope

- What can I expect to be hard but worth it?
- How might God strengthen me through the trial I wish He would remove?
- Where do I need God's guidance to help me persevere?
- What would enduring with vibrant hope look like today?
- Am I interpreting difficulty as a reason to quit?
- What is mine to do faithfully, and what outcome must I entrust to God?
- Where do I need rest, wise counsel, or help to keep going?
- What evidence of God's faithfulness can I remember while I wait?

Temptation and the Way of Escape

- What temptation keeps overcoming me?
- What usually happens just before I give in?
- What could change if I ran to God when I was tempted?
- According to 1 Corinthians 10:13, what help does God promise?
- What way of escape might God already be providing?
- What boundary would help me take that way of escape?
- Who could I contact before temptation becomes a decision?
- If I stumble, what would honest repentance and a faithful next step look like?

Christian Life Coaching Questions Continued

Grace and Beginning Again

- Am I taking responsibility, or am I punishing myself?
- What would repentance look like beyond feeling bad?
- What can I learn from this setback without making it my identity?
- What would it look like to receive God's grace and begin again today?
- What responsibility do I need to take today?
- Where do I need to receive help instead of continuing alone?
- What conversation am I avoiding that love and truth require?
- What boundary would help me honor what God has entrusted to me?

My Next Faithful Step

- What has become clear that I can no longer honestly call confusing?
- What am I waiting to feel before I obey?
- What do I need to confess, surrender, begin, or stop?
- What is the next faithful step within my control?
- What is one specific step I can take today?
- How will I put this insight into practice?

My Five Scalpels

Write the five questions you will use in this season. Keep them where you will need them: on sticky notes, in your phone, or beside the truths you have chosen. Bring your answers back to God's Word.

My question 1

My question 2

My question 3

My question 4

My question 5

Where and when will I practice using these questions?

CHAPTER 7

Your Daily Practice of Becoming

Your spiritual toolbox has tools in it now. But I want you to consider something. Where will they be when you need them?

If your values stay in this book and your Scripture swords stay in a drawer, what will remind you to return to them when the familiar thought comes? How will you make room for the response you have said you want to practice?

This is where your becoming enters your daily routine.

I encourage you to begin each day with the Lord, thinking about the woman you want to be by the end of that day. For me, that time often begins at 4 AM. Your time may look different. The point is to give this your attention before the day begins making demands on you.

Keep your five values in front of you. Name the two virtues you are asking the Lord to develop in this season. Recognize the vices and old patterns you may be tempted to turn to today.

Then look at your actual day. What is on your calendar? What conversation are you anticipating? What responsibility have you been avoiding? Where do you already know you may feel tired, impatient, afraid, or tempted to give up?

You don't need to wait until you are in the middle of a familiar struggle to remember that you need help. You can bring it to the Lord now.

"Lord, I know that when I get tired, I tend to respond harshly. Help me remember what I value about my family. Develop self-control in me. Bring Your truth to mind before I speak."

Or, "Lord, I have been avoiding this responsibility. I know what I should do. Help me begin and persevere instead of waiting until I feel like doing it."

Those are examples of bringing your values, virtues, and awareness of your vices into a specific opportunity to grow. You are asking the Lord to lead you in the life you are actually living.

The practice that follows begins with three questions: What outcome do I want today? What do I need from God to have it? What will I believe and do today?

Bring even that desired outcome before Him. Some outcomes depend on other people or circumstances you cannot control. You can still decide how you will respond. If you want a peaceful conversation, you cannot decide what the other person will say. You can prepare to listen, speak truthfully, and govern your own response.

If your goal is to finish a responsibility, you can identify the first action and the excuse you are likely to make. If your goal is to respond differently to temptation, you can choose the truth, question, boundary, or support you will turn to.

Then consider your perspective, priorities, and power. What Scripture will anchor how you see this day? What matters most? When you need the Holy Spirit's strength, what will remind you to turn to Him?

This is intentionality. You are making room to remember what you believe before an immediate feeling takes over the decision.

In the evening, come back and pay attention. Did your choices reflect the woman you are becoming in Christ? Where did an old pattern show up? Where did you recognize an opportunity and respond differently?

Be honest enough to see both. You may need to confess, repair a conversation, or establish a boundary. You may also need to thank the Lord for growth you would otherwise overlook. I had to learn to notice how far He had brought me. You can notice His work in you too.

One difficult day doesn't mean you have become the woman you used to be. Return to the Lord. Receive His grace. Take responsibility for what needs to change. Practice the next faithful response.

I'm making no promise that this will be easy. But the practice can be this simple. Set your attention on what matters. Bring truth into the moment. Respond through Christ's strength. Reflect honestly. Return tomorrow.

You are planting something different as you practice a different belief and response. Keep returning to what the Lord is developing in you.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH THE LORD

My Daily Practice of Becoming

Date

My five Christian values

The two virtues I am focusing on in this season

The vices or old patterns I may be tempted to return to today

What outcome do I want today?

What do I need from God to have it and respond faithfully?

What will I believe and DO today?

STAY ALIGNED AND REFLECT

My Daily Practice Continued

PERSPECTIVE What Scripture will anchor my perspective today?

PRIORITIES What matters most today?

POWER How will I respond when I need the Holy Spirit's power today?

Evening Reflection

Did my choices reflect who I'm becoming in Christ, or the old patterns I'm putting to death?

Where did I recognize an opportunity to grow, and how did I respond?

What can I thank God for, and what is my next faithful step?

What I believe influences how I behave, and how I behave influences who I'm becoming.

CHAPTER 8

Carry Your Becoming Into Your Life

When the Lord began showing me this message, He also led me to reflect on my own becoming. I hadn't noticed how far I had come. I had been living the daily decisions, doing hard things with Him, and learning to respond differently. Looking back helped me recognize what He had developed along the way.

The woman I am today is not the woman I used to be.

There are things I weather differently now. Areas in which I stand stronger. I still need the Lord, and I still need to respond to Him, but I can see the fruit of the work He has done in me.

That matters as you consider your own life. You may have recognized something in these pages that you have been avoiding. You may also have recognized evidence of God's work that you hadn't slowed down to see.

Bring both to Him.

God cares about the woman you are becoming. I want you to carry that conviction into the next choice, the next conversation, and the next day. Your faith belongs there.

You have two virtues to focus on. You have five values to help guide your decisions. You have named patterns you are going to bring before the Lord. You have Scriptures to remember, questions to ask, and a daily practice to help you keep responding.

Now decide where you will put those tools and how you will return to them. What needs to be reprioritized? What value needs a stronger voice in your decisions? What pattern are you ready to stop defending? Who can support you as you begin practicing something different?

You don't have to wait for an impressive opportunity. Your next faithful response may be waiting in the life you return to after you close this book.

Take a few quiet minutes to write your commitment. Name the direction you are carrying into your life. Keep it somewhere you can return to when the familiar thought or temptation comes.

Then begin.

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

My Commitment to Becoming

WHERE I AM BEGINNING Here is what I know about where I am right now

WHO I AM BECOMING I sense God inviting me to become a woman who

MY COMMITMENT In this next season, I will nurture that becoming by

PAUSE WITH THE LORD

The Step I Will Take

One small step I will take this week is

Someone I can turn to for encouragement and support is

When life gets busy or this commitment feels difficult, I want to remember

Where I will keep my tools and how I will return to them

My name and date

A Commissioning for Your Becoming

May you go knowing that you are loved right where you are.

May you have courage to respond to God's invitation, grace for difficult days, and willingness to begin again.

May you receive support from those who walk beside you.

Go with a willing heart, trusting God to meet you in the everyday work of becoming.

Let's Pray

Father, thank You for what You have brought to light. You know what each woman has recognized and where she needs Your help.

When a familiar thought returns, bring Your truth to mind. When we want to react, help us pause and listen. When doing the right thing feels uncomfortable, strengthen us to follow through. When we are tempted to quit, teach us perseverance.

Develop in us the character of Christ. Help us live the values we have named and turn away from the patterns that hinder us. Give us humility to receive correction, courage to ask for help, and love for the people affected by our choices.

Let the fruit of this work grow in our homes, conversations, responsibilities, and relationships. We offer You our willingness. We bring You our weakness. Teach us to walk with You and put Your Word into practice. May our lives reflect Your goodness as You continue Your work in us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

God cares about the woman you are becoming. Turn to Him. Take your next faithful step.

Scripture for Your Continued Becoming

Where to return	Passages
The three anchor passages	2 Peter 1:3–11; Philippians 4:11–13; Proverbs 31:10–31.
Grace and growth	Ephesians 2:8–10; Philippians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:14–16.
Values and priorities	Matthew 6:21, 33.
Recognizing and responding	Galatians 5:16–17; 1 John 2:15–17; James 4:17.
Renewing the mind	Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12–16.
Strength and perseverance	Isaiah 40:29–31; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 6:9.
Temptation and obedience	1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:19–22.
Prayer and trust	Philippians 4:6–7; James 1:5; Psalm 56:3; 1 Peter 5:7; Proverbs 3:5–6.
Grace and truth	Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:15; Isaiah 54:17.

Read the surrounding verses as you return to each passage. Notice who is speaking, who is being addressed, and what the passage teaches before considering how to apply it.

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Unless a translation is identified, biblical explanations and personal responses to Scripture are applications or paraphrases, not exact quotations. The ladder, moral compass, swords, and scalpels are teaching pictures that help us remember and respond to God's truth.

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Let's Keep Walking Together

I started by asking God how to lose weight. I didn't know how much more He cared about transforming me. I didn't know that learning to respond differently in that area would strengthen so much of the rest of my life.

Maybe you opened this book thinking about one place where you feel stuck. My hope is that you can now see a way to begin bringing that place to the Lord, recognizing what you have been believing, and practicing a different response through His strength.

If you would like to keep walking through that process with me, I would love to stay connected. You can learn more about me and my work on my website.

Meet Sherrie at SherrieKapala.com

Click here or scan the QR code

Come Listen to the Podcast

Christian Life Coaching for Weight Loss with Sherrie Kapala is where I share teaching, practical questions, and encouragement for women who are ready to bring their faith into the choices they keep struggling to change.

If you recognized yourself in my story, come listen. Follow the show and keep giving these truths a place in your week. My own journey began with weight loss, and the Lord used it to develop far more in me.

Christian Life Coaching for Weight Loss

Click here or scan the QR code

THE SEEKER'S METHOD

If Weight Loss Is Where You Feel Stuck

If food, feelings, and weight loss are the area where you keep repeating the same cycle, I want you to know about The Seeker's Method, my Christian weight loss coaching program.

I know what it is to have plenty of information and still struggle to follow through when life becomes uncomfortable. I also know what changed as I began seeking the Lord, recognizing the beliefs beneath my behavior, and depending on Him in the choices I had kept trying to manage on my own.

The Seeker's Method grew out of that journey. It brings Christian life coaching into your weight loss so you can begin examining what keeps pulling you back and receive support as you practice responding differently.

If you are ready for more guidance and support in that area, visit the community page to learn more and see the current enrollment details.

Explore The Seeker's Method

Click here or scan the QR code

Chasing number one instead of a number on the scale.

And if the place where you feel stuck has nothing to do with weight loss, I want you to know that you can work with me there too.

PERSONAL CHRISTIAN LIFE COACHING

You Don't Have to Work Through It Alone

Sometimes you need someone to listen, ask the question you haven't asked yourself, and help you recognize what has been keeping you in the same pattern.

That is the work I do as a Certified Christian Life Coach. I partner with you and the Holy Spirit to help you get unstuck, examine the beliefs influencing your behavior, and begin changing responses you have struggled to change.

I don't tell you what to do. We bring what you are noticing into the light of God's Word. I help you ask honest questions, discern your next steps, and put what you recognize into practice. You name your goals and choose the steps you will take.

How Coaching Differs From Therapy or Counseling

My coaching focuses on your growth, choices, goals, and practical action. Therapy and counseling can address mental health concerns, trauma, and emotional healing through professional therapeutic care. My coaching does not diagnose or treat mental health conditions or replace that care.

In our work together, your faith is central. We seek the Holy Spirit's guidance as you begin practicing a different way of responding in your everyday life.

Begin With a Free Discovery Call

If you would like to explore working with me, schedule a free 15-minute discovery call. We will talk about what you are looking for and see whether we are a fit for one-on-one Christian coaching.

You don't need to have it all figured out before we talk. Bring the place where you feel stuck. We can begin there.

Book Your Free 15 Minute Discovery Call

Click here or scan the QR code