

Nonvish

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Book Design: Tyler Bedwell | Images: iStock.com

Editors: Peggy Coulter, Debra G. Wright

Printed in the United States of America

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kathy McWhorter Kendall 1959—
pp. 130

13 chapters and study questions

1. Christian Spiritual Growth. 2. Inspiration – Women
3. Biblical applications.

I. Title.

ISBN 978-1-945127-25-0

248.8



Dedication



To Tony

I'm so thankful I get to do life with you.

Endorsements

Most of us at have stood at the crossroads of life, wearily asking, “Where am I going?” In her latest book, *Nourish*, Kathy Kendall explores the importance of finding the right diet for the journey. She frankly states, “I purposefully sat back and slowly filled myself up with truths from God’s Word.” Join Kathy to discover the importance of focusing on Jesus and the crucial relationships of marriage and friendship. Above all, learn how to take care of yourself and be joyful. Wisely she affirms, “I have no control over the number of years I’ll live, but I do control the degree which I will live them.” *Nourish* is a true blessing in answering our identical life’s questions and for pointing us to the Father’s answers.

—Becky Blackmon, author, *The Begging Place*, *Seek the Precious Moments*, *Precious Plans for Precious Women*, and others

Nourishing my heart, mind, soul, and strength is essential for any ministry to others. I hope my sisters will take the time to read this book and to internalize its assignments. The study will make us stronger, better, and more prepared for the opportunities that may be ours to “feed” each other through difficult times. Through nourishment comes comfort. Through our own comfort comes the ability to comfort others. And through that sharing comes glory for Him (2 Corinthians 1:4). That’s the goal!

—Cindy Colley, author, *Women of the Genesis*, *Women of Deliverance*, *Women of Troubled Times*, *Women of Scandal*, and others

Kathy’s book drives home the most important aspect of living the Christian life in a busy world—that of continuously filling ourselves up with God’s Word and nourishing our own souls. Women are caretakers and tend to neglect their own needs, but Kathy showed me that spiritual malnourishment is not pleasing to the Father. This book is a wonderful guide to get us back on track when we need it!

—Jeanny Gilpin, PhD

Kathy Kendall makes so much sense. Ancient truths alongside relatable illustrations, fascinating research, and homerun applications make this one of the best women’s studies I have seen from a Christian author.

—Celine Sparks, author, *Because I Said So*, *Whatever Happened to Fried Chicken*, and *How to Train Your Dragon*

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Introduction

A few years ago, I felt like I was at a crossroads. My job had become increasingly demanding of my time and energy. I jokingly remarked to some co-workers that our situation reminded me of the Israelites in Egyptian captivity. As Pharaoh became more angered by God's people, he required the Israelites to gather their own straw to make bricks, but the quota for output remained the same.

My life had become very one dimensional. Work seemed to consume every fiber of my being. No matter what my co-workers and I did, it was never enough, nor was it ever good enough. The demands crowded out down time, family time, even routine home time, such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry. It did not matter to my employer that I spent the evenings on work-related items. I often remarked in semi-jest that since my time at home was consumed with work activities, perhaps I should start taking my unfolded laundry to work.

I had always heard that you'll "just know" when it's time to retire. But the thought never occurred to me, and I worked many years past being eligible to retire. Eventually, my pace of life became more frantic and the element of work consumed every aspect of my being. I suddenly realized that the life I was living wasn't the life I wanted. I knew it was time to step back and reassess my life. Realistically, I was past the halfway point of life. What did I want for the rest of my days? Were there further chapters? What was the rest of my story?

I realized that I had to prioritize some things in my life, and that one of those things had to be me. Somewhere along the way, my sense of self had become defined solely by my job. I decided to do something drastically different with my personal Bible study. I chose a word to explore through Scriptures for an entire year. The word I chose spoke loudly to the point in which I found myself. My word was *nourish*. I felt so drained and empty and realized just how malnourished every aspect of my life had become. I purposefully sat

back and slowly filled myself up with truths from God’s Word. As I continued to study, this passage resonated loudly with me:

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1:9–12).

What results did I expect if I spent time deliberately nourishing myself? My goals were to:

- ✿ become filled with the knowledge of His will
- ✿ develop spiritual wisdom and understanding
- ✿ live a life worthy of the Lord
- ✿ please God in every way
- ✿ bear fruit in every good work
- ✿ grow in the knowledge of God
- ✿ be strengthened
- ✿ develop endurance
- ✿ develop patience
- ✿ find joy through thanksgiving

This study enriched my life by causing me to purposefully focus on several areas of my life and ask myself, “How can I enrich that aspect of my life?” I invested a lot of time exploring each topic. The study is an ongoing process and an exciting one. This is my journey—I invite you to join me.



Nourishing Our Lives

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

—Romans 12:2

Have you ever gone to a sports gathering at someone's home? Maybe several people got together to watch a college playoff game or the Super Bowl. What characterizes such an occasion? Why food, of course! You wouldn't dare invite other people to your home for such an event without providing ample food yourself or coordinating tasty dishes from your guests to ensure that there was plenty to eat.

As soon as the Christmas/New Year's holiday season ends, television and other types of media are dominated with ads for food for your Super Bowl party. Sometimes watching the actual game is secondary to sampling all the appetizing spread.

You will probably leave an occasion like this quite stuffed, but are you nourished? At one such event I couldn't help but notice that the food overflowed the kitchen, and desserts were moved to the

adjoining dining room. Yet with all that feast, another guest and I discussed our surprise that no one had brought Rotel cheese dip, which seems to be a staple on such occasions.

But as fun as the evening was and as wonderful as the various culinary offerings were, it was not a particularly healthy indulgence. If every meal were similar to this one, we would find ourselves quite overweight and in poor health. Being full does not mean that our bodies have been nourished.

Similarly, we tend to run around filling our lives with various events and tasks. We manage to stay busy constantly, but we have a nagging feeling that something is missing. Then we slowly realize just how malnourished our lives have become. Just as our appetites can rage out of control, it is possible to be so busy and hectic that one day we look up and realize that our lives are out of control. Nothing will change unless we intentionally take charge of the reins. Sitting back and passively wishing for circumstances to change for the better will not accomplish a thing.

We think of nourishment in the context of food, because a lot of media focus today is on eating healthier. But have you ever stopped to realize that nourishment can go beyond the context of food? It is possible for us to actively nourish other aspects of our lives. We must slow down enough to look within and get a sense of various areas of our lives. Then we can evaluate those areas and make changes to meet those needs. Just as the addition of certain nutrients to our diets will produce proven outcomes, we can anticipate that supplementation of our lives will have a similar enriching effect.

Understanding the Terminology

It's important to become familiar with some terms when talking about nourishing our bodies and our spirits.

1. *Nourish* is defined as to provide (someone or something) with food and other things that are needed to live, be healthy, etc.: to cause (something) to develop or grow stronger.

2. *Nurture*, a synonym for nourish, is defined as the care and attention given to someone or something that is growing or developing.
3. *Replenish* is defined as “to fill or build something up again.”
4. *Malnutrition* occurs in our physical bodies when there is an imbalance between what is eaten and what is needed to maintain good health. That is, there is a lack of sufficient nutrients in the body. Some of the effects of malnutrition include:
 - * loss of muscle function, which in turn effects mobility and stamina
 - * reduction in cardiac muscle mass, which impacts renal functioning
 - * breathing difficulty, which leads to increased risk of respiratory failure
 - * reduced gastrointestinal functioning
 - * suppressed immunity and delayed wound healing, which contribute to increased risk of infections
 - * difficulty staying warm
 - * greater risk of depression
 - * impaired intellectual development in children

Interestingly, malnutrition can be characterized as undernourished or overnourished. It isn't only a matter of not eating enough. It's not eating enough of the right things.

Take Action

Looking at the definition of each of these words we see that action is required. Being passive won't get the job done. We all recognize that babies and children need nourishment. We don't allow them a diet of cheese puffs, candy, and soft drinks, no matter how much they might protest. Those things will fill them up, but there is no nourishment in them. We insist that they eat fruits and vegetables and drink

milk because we know how important the proper nutrients are to their growth and development. How sad it is that we can't see the effects of our own poor nutrition on our personal lives! Our physical growth has stopped, but our spiritual growth never should. The dynamics of our relationships should not become stagnant. It is important that we stop and take the time to look inward and assess what changes we need to make. Then we need to be willing to become actively involved and committed to replenishing ourselves.

As women, I think we have the tendency to neglect our own needs. We try very hard to anticipate and meet the needs of our families, but sometimes we end up neglecting ourselves by not making self-care a priority. *Neglect* is defined as to fail to take care of or to give attention to someone or something. The full definition includes

*How often do
our own needs
get pushed aside?*

to give little attention or respect to; to disregard; to leave undone or unattended to, especially through carelessness. We would be horrified if someone even insinuated that we neglect our family, but how often do our

own needs get pushed aside, often due to a lack of time or a seemingly needed sense of self-sacrifice? The carelessness referred to isn't intentional, it's merely the result of trying to prioritize the needs of others above our own needs. We often learn the hard way that we can't nourish anyone else unless we are first nourished ourselves. It is our responsibility and only ours to fill ourselves with needed nutrients. It requires intentional effort on our parts.

When we make the determination that we are going to stop spinning out of control, it is encouraging to realize that we can make the changes that are so desperately needed. In Romans 12:2 we read that we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The very idea of being transformed sounds so appealing, doesn't it? It seems almost magical, like something a fairy godmother would do to us. Yet this transformation can take place when we make the effort to renew our minds. Transformation is the evidence that our knowledge is at work. Second Corinthians 4:16 tells us that our inward self is being renewed day by day. What an energizing thought! Every day we can become better and better! Ephesians 5:15-16 reminds us to make the best use of our time.

Opportunities for change are frequent, but often we are so busy running around that we miss them. An episode of a show called *Brain Games*¹ was about paying attention, showing skillful tricks employed by magicians and illusionists. Magic isn't actually used, but the performer diverts the audience's attention. We are so absorbed by the distraction that we miss the illusionist executing the trick right in front of us. A slick pickpocket can do the same thing by diverting your attention while stealing from you.

In one example, an audience was so absorbed in watching for particular elements of a staged performance that they never noticed a penguin on the stage. How often does this happen to us? How often do opportunities present themselves for us to provide some nourishment to our lives, yet we're so absorbed in other things that we miss the penguin as it walks by? Good opportunities escape when we aren't prepared. What we do with today is important because we cannot get it back. When our eyelids close the final time, we don't want to realize that we have only lived one dimension—the length of life. We want to have experienced the breadth, width, and depth of our days as well.

For One Who Is Tired

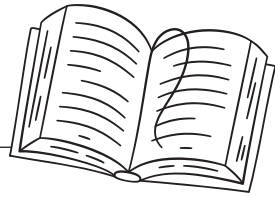
*Dear child, God does not say today, "Be strong";
He knows your strength is spent; He knows how long
The road has been, how weary you have grown,
For He who walked the earthly roads alone,
Each bogging lowland, and each rugged hill,
Can understand, and so He says, "Be still,
And know that I am God." The hour is late,
And you must rest awhile, and you must wait
Until life's empty reservoirs fill up
As slow rain fills an empty upturned cup.
Hold up your cup, dear child, for God to fill.
He only asks today that you be still.*

—Grace Noll Crowell²

¹ "Pay Attention!" *Brain Games*, season 1, episode 2, National Geographic channel, Oct. 9, 2011.

² Grace Noll Crowell, *Songs of Hope* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938).

Feed Your Soul



1. How many Saturdays do you have left? To find out, write down the number 4,160. Assuming you'll live until you are 80, that's roughly the total number of Saturdays you'll have in a lifetime. Take your current age and multiply it by 52. Write that number down. That's roughly how many Saturdays you've already lived through. Subtract the number you just figured from 4,160. That's about how many Saturdays you have left. Make them count!

2. Look at Matthew 22:39. Describe how caring for ourselves is essential before we can help others.

3. When you reflect on your past days, what spiritual transformations can you see? How will you plan for future daily mind renewal?

4. What aspect of your life do you think needs your focus at this time?



Nourishing Involves Saying "No"

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful.
—1 Corinthians 6:12

In our quest to fit everything into our already chaotic lives, we have to come to terms with the reality that we simply cannot do it all. The myth of Superwoman is just that, a myth. Research has pummeled the argument that we can multitask. Realistically, when we think that we are doing several things simultaneously, we actually aren't doing any of them well. A Chinese proverb says, "A person who chases two rabbits catches neither." We've become so focused on working hard and trying to be productive that we actually end up "shooting ourselves in the foot." Productivity goes down by forty percent when we attempt to focus on several things at once. Over time we become distracted and it takes an average of fifteen minutes to regain our focus. We ultimately allow our distractions to