

## THE RHYTHM OF ROUTINES

BY THERESA BOEDEKER

I am absorbed in the rhythm. Mindlessly lost in the repetitive motion. My thoughts wander and land here and there—time-travel to and fro. I return to the present for a moment. Four carrots. One large onion. My thoughts re-gather and head elsewhere.

I am in the kitchen chopping uniform pieces of vegetables to throw into my stew. A task I have done so many times that it takes little thought or concentration. I can relax and slide into a sort of trance.

Grab, halve, line up, chop, chop, chop, empty into pan. Begin again.

There is comfort in doing repetitive tasks that don't require much brain power. I can slide into autopilot and my mind is free to wander. Whether it is raking multi-colored leaves, watering colorful flower beds, washing piles of dishes, cleaning grimy bathrooms, pulling covers up and fluffing pillows, vacuuming expanses of carpet, folding piles of laundry, wandering grocery aisles, paying bills, or cooking familiar dishes.

God gave us work to comfort, fulfill, and test us. To task our creativity, take pride in, and improve upon. Work can be a form of worship and to show love to those around us.

There are days, though, where I bemoan all my daily and insignificant tasks. When I feel so far behind, I don't think I will ever emerge into the light. Days I get frustrated with what I don't get done instead of rejoicing in what I did accomplish.

Yet I need work. I need the comfort of routines and rhythmic work to soothe me and provide respites. To bring a sense of accomplishment and make me feel a valuable part of the family. To remind me to serve and love those around me through my hands. To remember how much God has blessed us. To show that we live in an imperfect and messy world and that things never stay the same or clean for more than a few nanoseconds. To remind me of the mess of my soul. To know the joy in accomplishing a task. To give me something to do when I am hit with adversity or worried.

There are days I wish to retire and have nothing more demanding than read a book from cover to end without interruption. Days I want to sit in the shade doing nothing but thinking and drinking iced chai tea.

I dream of days filled with clean bathrooms, washed clothes, prepared food, no appointments, no teaching, no phones, and certainly no demands or disturbances. Where people are waiting on my needs, taking care of me, completing my menial and every possible task.

But how long would it be before I would start to get bored, feel useless, grow selfish, and have no direction.

Sometimes I joke about the daily grind of cleaning and shopping and cooking. Other times I balk against the hours it takes. I am in the kitchen from beginning to end for an hour or 90 minutes most nights.

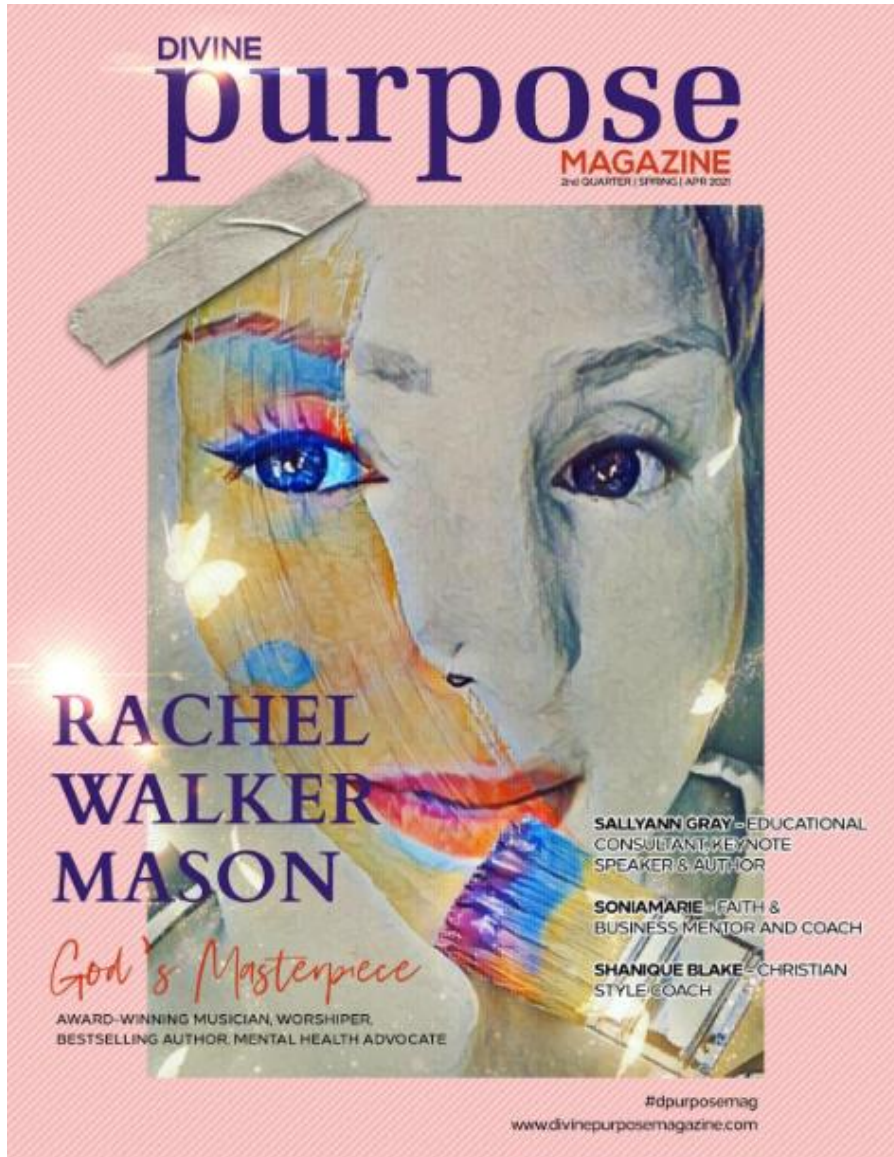
It is easy to look at other women and compare myself to them. They might be a scientist. A business owner. A travel consultant. They look to be doing important and exciting stuff. And yet, if I am honest, parts of their life and jobs are full of routine. Routines they may get tired of and bored with. No one's life is exciting all the time.

Or like my dad used to say. Everyone needs to eat, sleep, and put their pants on one leg at a time.

And so, I focus on my tasks and take comfort in them. Offer them to the Lord as my sacrifice. And carefully watch my attitude.

Part of being a good steward is faithfully showing up and doing the tasks with a cheerful heart and unto the glory of the Lord.

After dinner, I start washing the dinner dishes, swirling the stew juices from the bowls, chasing crumbs and bits of veggies down the aerator, bending over to load the dishwasher, and I think about the comfort of work. I thank God that I have work to do and the strength to do it, that I have dishes to wash and water to wash them in, and a family to dirty the dishes.



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Albana Tali Cullhaj is a Christian and she believes in the Father, the Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. So Albe that soul seeks God's spirit. She loves looking deep into things, what

she believe motivated her to study psychology a subject she loves dearly. Albana currently works as a freelancer for an Albanian Magazine, *Arbeka*, covering the psychology page. Her educational background includes a Bachelor degree in class of psychology from the University of Tirana, Albania.

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## Betty Predmore



Betty Predmore is a writer, blogger, speaker, ministry leader and Certified Christ-Sense Counselor. She is the founder of *More-Sense*, Inc., a ministry designed

for mentorship, connection and service to women of all life circumstances. Through this ministry, women are encouraged and supported with scripture and life application. *More-Sense* helps women overcome life struggles through small group classes with biblical curriculum, individual counseling, bible studies, and other areas of support.

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## Shanique Blake



Shanique Blake is a Christian Style Coach who studied at the London College of Fashion and also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Management Studies

from the University of the West Indies (UWI). She is continually asked "where do you find the time to see so much?" to which she replies, "I want to have a large family so I'm practicing seeing for them, none of them will miss any of my Instagram."

Her company *Sensap Style Consultancy* has a growing list of clients which includes Doctors, investment bankers and other professionals. Currently she is working on her own clothing collection which she hopes to launch soon.

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## Donna Wayles



Donna Wayles is a Christian wife, mom, teacher, and domestic abuse survivor.

She now lives in Rhode Island with her four spoiled bunnies, Skittles the cat, her amazing husband, and daughter. When not writing bestselling novels, Donna likes to create scrapbooks full of happy memories.

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## Karen Elias



Karen L. Elias is an author and entrepreneur from the Caribbean island of Trinidad. She wrote about helping young women in parts that

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## Nancy Bishop



Nancy Bishop has a passion for helping women grow in Christ. She loves teaching and speaking God's Word and watching others also over the power,

power, and hope in Jesus Christ. She loves to encourage women in their lives, whether in great times or trying times. Nancy is also a breast cancer survivor and an entrepreneur, teaching piano for 20 years and owning her own business in sales for 18 years. She has been married to Dan for over 40 years, is a mother to three, and a grandmother to six.

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## Mary Grace van der Kroef



Mary Grace van der Kroef was born in Newfoundland, Canada. Her love of writing started in her teen years and has never left.

She is a wife, mother, poet, artist, and follower of Christ. She believes the gift of words is precious, and endeavors to use it to encourage others.

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## Theresa Boedeker



Theresa Boedeker is a storyteller, humor writer, and encourager of others. It is hard for her to cook if her kitchen is dirty. When clean, she likes to bake cookies, make pies, and try new recipes.

She encourages life and faith. Theresa Boedeker cares and reminds you what's important about life, yourself, and grace.

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## Rachel Walker Mason



Rachel Walker Mason is a multi award winning singer, songwriter, vocal coach, public speaker, life coach, judge, bestselling author, mentor, philanthropist and

Rachel writes songs for herself and for African American artists. The *Vocal LPS* winners, Grammy nominees and more stars, her songs have been heard all over the world on tv and radio. In 2020 Rachel spent much of her time supporting charities with musical projects she created. Rachel wrote a song called *Illuminate: The Night* for maternal mental health charity *MINDS* which has raised money and awareness for the charity, she also wrote the song *Make A Start* with gospel members from *Harlem* which has received international play, multiple awards and is raising money for charities supporting black youth.

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