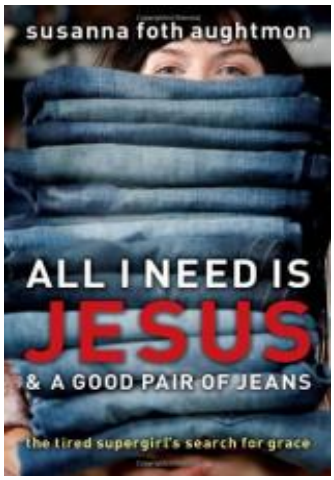
All I Need is Jesus and a Good Pair of Jeans

by Susanna Foth Aughtmon



About the Book

You know the pressure. To have the perfect Christian life and the perfect family. To be the perfect friend. To look perfect in those jeans. To be a supergirl. Instead of feeling good about yourself, you?re left stuck in the gap between who you are and who you long to be.

Susanna Foth Aughtmon knows what it?s like to be a tired supergirl, fighting the enemies of pride, worry, jealousy, busyness, loneliness, and many more. With humor and courage, she lays bare those times in her own life when she found it a challenge to live the life God wants for her. But even tired supergirls have a secret weapon: God?s Truth.

Discussion Guide

1. In what part of your life do you struggle with the Tired Lady? How do you feel like life is pulling at you? Do you identify with Peter and his struggles? What is your prayer as you ride the edge of imperfection and are caught on the cusp of crazy living?

2. Do you feel pressure to look a certain way? Where does that pressure come from? From yourself? Your peers? Your family? How do you think God views how you look? Do you give more care to your ?inner beauty? or your ?outer beauty??

3. What does worry rob you of on a daily basis? Why is it so hard to turn to God and trust him with your needs and concerns? Do you believe that God has the ability to meet your needs? How can you change the way you worry about things into a prayer that offers God your concerns?

4. What is your substitution of choice? Is there more than one? Do you identify with the woman at the well who keeps trying to fill her heart with the same thing over and over again but can?t seem to find what she needs? What is the hole

that you would like Jesus to fill in your life?

5. Do you have the unspiritual gift of judgment? Why is it so hard to examine our own issues, while finding fault in others comes so easily? How do you think your view of others will change if you concentrate on removing the ?log from your own eye? before judging them?

6. What are the areas in your life where chaos reigns? What disciplines could you incorporate in your life to help you invest in your future? What are some ways that you can say no to yourself that would add to your life? What are the reasons that you want to see past the momentary and look to the eternal by incorporating discipline in your life?

7. How can you go about having a ?devotional life? versus a ?devotional time?? What do you think about the JOY song and the idea of putting Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last? How did Jesus remain so secure in his purpose and remain unmoved by the Pharisees or the multitudes of religious expectations of him? How can you model yourself after Jesus and learn from his dealings with others?

8. Is it hard for you to admit that you are wrong or do you find it easy? Why? Is there an area of your life where you would rather pretend you are ?righteous? than admit that Jesus is right and change your behavior? Why is it so easy to become like a Pharisee when all you really want to do is follow Jesus?

9. Do you ever struggle with finding your life?s purpose? When you look at who Jesus picked to be his disciples, does it give you hope? Why or why not? What do you think ?the potter? sees when he looks at you?

10. Are you friends with people who don?t know Jesus personally? Who? When was the last time you talked to this person about Jesus? What are your fears about sharing your faith? What is your main motivator in sharing the good news about your relationship with Jesus?

11. In what ways do you feel lovable? In what ways don?t you feel lovable? How does John 3:16 change for you when you substitute your name for the phrase ?the world?? (ex: For God so loved ?Susanna? that he gave his only Son . . .etc.) Do you identify more with Simon the Pharisee or the woman with the bad reputation? How do you think Jesus feels about you and your ?lovability??

12. What is that moment you are waiting for in your life right now? In what areas of your life do you feel God has been pruning you? In what areas of your life do you feel God is trying to grow you? What hopes and dreams do you have this year as you are following Jesus and growing in him?

The following is an excerpt from the leader?s guide that will be available as a free download at RevellBooks.com.

Week 1: Why exactly is it that I am so tired?

Opening prayer

Tired Supergirl starter questions:

1. Growing up, who was your favorite super hero?

2. Who was your real life hero and why?

Chapter Focus: I am oh so tired

It truly amazes me how tired I am almost all of the time. I am physically tired after chasing three little boys around all day. I would be lying if I didn't say that they run circles around me. But even more than that I am emotionally tired. There are so many things that I would like to get done each day, so many people that I would like to connect with, so much work that needs to be done. I often feel like I've been run over by a small locomotive. And then there is the tiredness of the soul because if we are being honest with each other, and we are, there is a battle of sorts going on within me. The battle between the reality of who I am and who I long to be. And Tired Lady is trying to take me out. Sometimes it feels like she is winning the fight.

My friend Marie France claims that she appears right around 8:30. The children are in bed. A good two or three hours of free time loom before you. Time to clean. Time to think deep thoughts. Time to paint your toenails. Time to snuggle your husband. But Tired Lady sneaks in, crazy gluing your rear to the sofa, leaving your dishes unwashed, your man unsnuggled, your Bible reading undone. It is by no small act of God that you are able to drag yourself off to bed, promising that tomorrow will be a different day. You will vanquish Tired Lady to her Hole of Doom. You?ll be the woman God designed you to be. Or at least knock out a load of laundry so your husband doesn?t have to turn his underwear inside out anymore. You?ve got great plans . . . for tomorrow.

I walk the fine line of living between these two identities. I live in the tension of who I want to be and who I really am. It?s exhausting, lonely, and wild-eyed.

Jumping in - Action

Take out your journals. Draw a picture of your supergirl self, the way that you would like to be. Stick figures do just fine. I always give my supergirl super human abilities like the power to leap tall laundry in a single bound or extra energy to finish my to do list. List out all the fantastic attributes and special abilities you would like to have. Now, turn the page and draw a picture of how see yourself now. Your strengths and weaknesses, your good points and not so good points. This is the tension that we tired supergirls live in each day. Living in the space in between who we are and who we hope to become. Share these with each other.

Searching the Word ? **The story**

Peter found this tension equally disconcerting. He truly had visions of grandeur. But there was a rather large gap between who he wanted to be and who he actually was.

It reminds me of Peter. He runs willy-nilly through the Gospels, trying to figure out who and where he is supposed to be. Despite Peter?s inconsistencies, Jesus sees the space in between who he is and who he could be. He changes his name from Simon to Peter, ?The Rock.? He is going to be solid.

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to hang out with him. He just wants them to pray with

him. Peter is ready to live up to his name. To hunker down and pray like crazy for this man who radically changed his life.

That?s when Tired Lady, or maybe in this case, Sleepy Man, creeps in between the fig trees and fern, filling Peter?s head with swirly dreams and the inability to process just one tiny prayer. He barely bows his head to pray before the crumbles of wine-dipped bread begin settling in his tummy.

Earlier, Peter had sworn he would never desert the Lord. Jesus tells him that before the rooster crows twice that he will deny him three times. Peter is serious about dying for Jesus. He really believes he is that committed. Or maybe he?ll have a nap first and then die for him; it is better to die for someone when you are well rested. Peter?s betrayal begins long before the crowing of the bird. It begins with the whiffling snores of deep sleep that break the stillness of Gethsemane. Jesus finds Peter snoozing instead of interceding.

Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. ?Simon!? he said to Peter. ?Are you asleep? Couldn?t you stay awake and watch with me even one hour? Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak.?

Mark 14:37?38

I wonder if Jesus calls him ?Simon? because he just isn?t cutting it as ?the Rock.? Jesus returns to his prayers and Simon goes back to sleep. In all, Jesus wakes him up three times that night. Poor Peter. I have to say that I *love love love* Peter. Like me, he just can?t pull it together.

He had visions of being the Rock . . . which I imagine to be a fairly impressive Jewish superhero, comparable to my Supergirl. The Rock was going to rock Israel with his Jesus style, catch a ton of fish, lead a Torah study, bring a few pals to repentance, and squeeze in family time on the weekends, not to mention support Jesus, who simply asked him to stay awake, pray for him, and just be a good buddy the night before he dies a horrible death. And he couldn?t do it. And it gets worse after the nap.

When [Jesus] returned to them the third time, he said, ?Still sleeping? Still resting? Enough! The time has come. I, the Son of Man, am betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let?s be going. See, my betrayer is here!?

Mark 14:41?42

Keeping it Real ? Discussion

1. In what part of your life do you struggle with Tired Lady? Physically? Emotionally? Spiritually?

2. How do you feel like life is pulling at you?

3. Do you identify with Peter and his struggles?

Keep Looking Up - Reflection

My grandma Opal always used to say, ?Keep looking up!? No matter if it was a birthday card or note containing a little

pocket money, at the bottom of every hand written message, it always said, ?Keep looking up.? I always felt like there was a secret contained in those three words. They made me change my focus. Not heads down. Not looking to myself for answers. Just chin up and looking to Jesus. The psalmist says it best .

I look up to the mountains--does my help come from there?

My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth!

He will not let you stumble and fall; the one who watches over you will not sleep.

Indeed, he who watches over Israel never tires and never sleeps.

The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.

The sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon at night.

The Lord keeps you from all evil and preserves your life.

The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Psalm 121

I love that even though we are tired, God is not! And it is not up to us to keep ourselves from stumbling and falling. He says that is his job. And that is the essence of grace. His hand upon our life. Working in us and through us. He does not leave us in our tiredness. God's grace is about transformation. He sees us for who we are but he does not leave us there. He sees all the possibilities in us and he is taking us daily, moving us forward, if we let him, towards the person he designed us to be. Peter found this to be true.

Peter goes on to cut off a guard?s ear, denies knowing Jesus three times, and deserts him as he hangs on the cross. That is a rough forty-eight-hour ride, from the euphoric heights of the triumphal entry to the crash and burn of Christ?s crucifixion. Yep, it definitely gets worse after the nap.

So where does that leave us supergirls? Because we, too, in our heart of hearts long to be all that God created us to be. We are just so darn tired. We are kicked sideways by life, grounded by our expectations, and haunted by our dreams. Will we ever be who we were meant to be?

Well, by the time Acts rolls around, Peter is doing it. He is preaching to multitudes with authority. He has gotten it together. Or maybe, just maybe, he has gotten over himself. Peter could be the Rock because he let God be God.

Writing it down - Journal

Key question - How is grace at work in your life today?

1. What have I learned about God today?

2. What have I learned about myself today?

3. How do I incorporate this into my daily life?

Offer it Up - Prayer

Take prayer requests. Pray for each other. Encourage each other.

Verse for the week

Psalm 121 1:2

> I look up to the mountains--does my help come from there?

My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth!

> He will not let you stumble and fall; the one who watches over you will not sleep.

Quote for the week

I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am. **--John Newton**

Song for the Week

All That I Can Do ? Bethany Dillon *Imagination*

Author Bio

Susanna Foth Aughtmon is a pastor's wife and mother of three. She graduated from Bethany College with a BA in Social Science emphasizing psychology and early childhood education. After pursuing various careers, including her own interior decorating business, she decided to stay home as a full-time mom. She assists her husband, Scott, in various ministries at the church they planted in Palo Alto, California.

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