



READ THE MANUAL

By Joan Carey, Executive Director of Firstfruits Faith Center | Photo by Patricia Photography



Someone once told me the Bible isn't a museum piece to be displayed on a shelf. It isn't just a textbook to be studied. It is alive! It is the living word of God. It has the power to transform lives. It contains the wisdom we need to live our lives as they were intended to be lived. In short, it is our life's manual.

Well if that's the case, I went through the first thirty-three years of my life never having read the manual, which is typical for me. I'm the kind of person who doesn't read instructions or recipes thoroughly and then gets totally frustrated when the tent collapses during the first basement "camp out" or the chocolate chip cookies are hard as a rock. I never read the booklets that come with appliances; I'm sure my washer and dryer can do so many more things than I give them credit for, but who cares, as long as they wash and dry.

That's not a good habit to have when it comes to life. Doing life on our own without the wisdom of God

can lead to much worse than hard cookies and underachieving washing machines. It can lead to unnecessary hardship and suffering. It can leave us mired in anxiety, doubtful of our purpose, fumbling with decisions and caught in resentment to name a few. God's word addresses all these things and many, many more of the daily challenges we face in our worldly walk.

I experienced the "aliveness" of the Bible for the first time in my early thirties. Up until then I was doing life on my own. I had what I thought was a faith life, but now I see it lacked intimacy with God. I didn't really know God.

Then I met anxiety. It took residence in my life and refused to leave. I tried everything to deal with it on my own, but one day it just became too much and as a last resort I prayed. I immediately felt a peace that I knew was not of me. It was a comfort and a call.

God wanted me to know the wisdom He had for me in His

word. I opened the bulletin from our parish and saw that there was a Bible study starting, so I joined. I decided it was time to read the manual. My life hasn't been the same since. The word of God was opened up to me in a way that transformed my life.

We could all use a manual to navigate the strange and uncomfortable world we have been living in for many months now with the fear and anxiety it has brought. Maybe the time is right now to seek the wisdom that is waiting for you in God's living word.

As the kids are once again cracking open the books either in person or virtually, maybe its time we did the same. Maybe it's time to read the manual.

To read more of Joan's reflections, please visit Firstfruits.info. If you feel it's time you should "read the manual", join us at Firstfruits this fall for *Truth Be Told*, an online Bible study. For details see the Firstfruits website.

