

# Cook Chicken

BY KELLY LEVATINO

I am the type of person who reads all the directions before attempting to assemble something. I read every word of the syllabus when I start a new course. I Google how to do something if I have the slightest inclination that I might not know what I'm doing. I want to know exactly what is expected of me and exactly what I need to do to succeed. Give me the steps. Outline the goals. Leave out no detail. A classic example of this is that time I tried to cook something. (It doesn't happen often.) The first step of the recipe said "Cook chicken." I blinked at the recipe. For an amateur chef like myself, "Cook chicken" is far too vague. How in the world do I "Cook chicken"?! Do I boil it? How much water should I use, and how long should the chicken be in the pot? Do I bake it? On what temperature and for how long? Do I fry it? Wouldn't that require oil? How much oil? What kind of oil? Vegetable? Canola? Olive? MOTOR?! My blood pressure was high. I stood in the kitchen perplexed. I yelled at the recipe, "If I knew how to 'Cook chicken,' WHAT WOULD I NEED YOU FOR?!" It didn't respond. I ordered pizza. If the instructions for anything are lacking, I feel like I'm being told to "Cook chicken." I have no idea if I'm doing it the right way or if I'm going to give my family salmonella. I despair I might not achieve my goal with such shoddy directions. After despair comes frustration. "How can you expect me to do something without telling me how?!" Anger takes over, and nine times out of nine, I just quit. Jesus gives a lot of "Cook chicken" directions. In the gospels people are constantly standing around, listening to Jesus speak in parables, totally confused as to what they are supposed to do with his instructions. Even the disciples require

further explanation from time to time. How can God expect us to know what to do and how to do it if He isn't crystal clear? How can we succeed at following Him faithfully when our instruction manual seems to lack so much detail? If I know God, I suspect His directions are vague on purpose. Unlike the recipe people, He doesn't leave out details because He is assuming we know how to "Cook chicken." He knows full well we don't. I think He leaves out the step-by-step instructions to life because He wants us to realize we need Him. Don't get me wrong. Even if He gave us a detailed plan for our lives the day we were born, telling us what to eat, when to breathe, who to talk to, what to say, where to live, what to buy, who to marry, when to have kids, what job to take, when to retire, etc., etc., etc., we'd still need Him. It'd just be a lot harder for us to realize it. A lot of things He'd want us to accomplish, even though we'd know exactly what they were, would be un-accomplishable without Him. Despite our knowledge of the plan, we'd still be lacking the supernatural component that only comes by admitting our need for Him and willingly depending on Him. For example, suppose He told me He wanted me to go to my church on Sunday, June 5th, and teach a group of women about Exodus 3 at 11 AM in room 10. Suppose He gave me a script of what to say from the time I entered that classroom to the time I left it. And suppose He even stated His goal: each woman should grow closer to God as a result of the lesson. Even if I perfectly executed God's plan, I wouldn't be able to make the Holy Spirit connect with those women. I don't have the power within myself to grow them spiritually. God grows souls, not me. Even if I knew every detail of God's plan, I'd still need God. Back to my point... It's easier for us to realize we can't do life well without God if He doesn't give us all the directions ahead of time. We're more aware of our neediness. We're more motivated to read the Bible and pray and seek God's opinion on matters. And we're more apt to seek the Holy Spirit's direction in our daily lives. We learn that when God says, "Cook chicken", if we want it to be edible, we have to rely on the Lord.

