

## *A Ten- (or Twelve-) Week Reflective Bible Study*

To the Women in This Study:

I'm excited that you are willing to ask, *What's it like to be married to me?* and to reflect on the other Dangerous Questions. You are taking a step forward in becoming a wife by design. This is exciting!

I've called this a reflective Bible study, because it is a bit different from a normal Bible study. It is:

- A time to think deeply about who you are as a wife—and who you are becoming.
- A time to be in God's Word, reading, pondering, and memorizing.
- A time to think, search your soul, pray, and plan.
- A time to do practical projects that will reveal to you much about you, your husband, and your marriage.

Before you begin, here are some things you need to know:

1. Each Bible study has the questions divided under five days. Some of these line up with the Dangerous Questions' insights; others do not. You can do the study all at once or over five days or three days or seven days, whatever works for you.

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2. Some sections have personal projects for you to do. If so, I alert you at the beginning of the study so you can have the entire week to work on the project.
3. What you put into the Bible study and the projects is what you will get out—growth takes work, reflection takes quiet, time, and thought.

Thank you for setting these weeks aside to reflect on your marriage and who you are becoming as a wife. I am asking the Lord to meet with you, to send His Blessed Spirit as Teacher, Encourager, Comforter, and Transformer!

I am praying for you!

*Linda Dillow, 2010*

## A TEN- (OR TWELVE-) WEEK REFLECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

To the Bible Study Leader:

I'm excited you are going to lead the reflective Bible study on *What's It Like to Be Married to Me?* Let me give you a little of my thinking about a few things in the study.

I stress memorizing God's Word because our minds are renewed when they are filled with God's truth.

I ask the women in the study to write out Scripture because when we write, we see things we missed by simply reading. For the same reason, I often ask the women to read the Word out loud.

In the first three studies I assign some projects. Be sure to alert the women in your study to the project so they will have the entire week to reflect, practice, and complete the project. In the second Bible study, the women are to wear a "Gripes Be Gone" bracelet all week. Every time they gripe, they have to change the bracelet to the other arm. Each day they journal about what they learn about themselves and about *when* they complain. In the third study, they will keep a "Thankful Bookmark" in their Bible or book to remind them to learn the language of gratitude. Both the bracelet and bookmarks are available at [www.LindaDillow.org](http://www.LindaDillow.org). The bracelet and bookmark will bring life changes but also add an element of fun.

I encourage wives to have a Thankful Journal where they can record what they are learning about growing in God gratitude and in husband gratitude. You can either buy some journals and have the women pay you, or let them get their own. In the future, I hope to have Thankful Journals

available on the website. On the website, you will find additional examples of Marriage Purpose Statements plus comments from women who have taken the Bible study. Please email the website with anything you or your group feel would be helpful for other Bible study groups.

The study can be either ten or twelve weeks. Ten of the lessons correspond to the Dangerous Questions in the book. The two additional studies are a time of thanksgiving, reflection, and celebration. These optional studies fall after weeks five and ten. My hope in having the study be ten or twelve weeks was to make it adaptable for every group, but if possible, I encourage you to do the two additional studies, as I believe they push God's truth deeper into hearts.

When I led the pilot studies for this book, I told the study groups that they could share anything about themselves as a wife, but they could *not* share anything about their husbands—unless, of course, it was positive. This study is for wives. It's an invitation for them to ask themselves Dangerous Questions, to seek God and His perspective. It is a place to begin to live, not by default, but by design. To look ahead and decide who you want to become, and then begin to grow toward that picture.

Know that I am praying for you as you lead your precious women to all God desires them to be as wives.

I trust the Lord to lead you as you lead them!

*Linda Dillow, 2010*

## **Week 1**

### *What Is Really Important to Me?*

Read “What Is Really Important to Me?”, Insight 5 now so you can be reflecting on it all week.

#### **“By Design, Not Default,” Day 1: By Design or Default?**

1. What did you learn (both positive and negative) in your childhood home about marriage?
2. Describe a woman who was a role model to you as a wife.
3. Why did you choose this woman as your picture of a wife?

Memorize and meditate on Song of Solomon 5:16

*“His mouth is full of sweetness  
And he is wholly desirable.  
This is my beloved and this is my friend.”*

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4. Write a paragraph amplifying what this verse says to you personally.

**“What Is Really Important to Me?”, Day 1: What Do My Choices Say?**

1. What do you say is most important to you? List your priorities.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How would your husband list your priorities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How would it help you to ask yourself, *Will I be happy with my choice in five years or twenty years?*

**Day 2: Marriage Matters and The Treadmill Won't Stop**

*It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.*

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*Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his.... So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. (Mal. 2:14–15 NIV)*

1. How would you explain these verses to a young woman about to marry?
2. How can you “guard yourself in your spirit”?
3. Reflect on Bethany and Chris’s marriage vows on pages 23–24. When you read these precious vows, do you feel joyful, sad, encouraged, or discouraged? What do your feelings say to you?
4. Which of the comments on pages 26–27 do you identify with? Why?
5. What can you do to get off the treadmill?

**Day 3: Live with the End in View**

1. Do you agree with Emily's statement in the play *Our Town* that no one ever realizes life while they live it? Explain your answer.

2. Are you living in reality, valuing each day with your husband, or are you walking through marriage as in a fog?

3. Read Psalm 90:12 and Ephesians 5:15–16. Write a paragraph describing how living these verses will help you realize life while you live it.

4. Find a block of time and a quiet place. Reflect on what you would want your husband to say at your funeral thirty years from now. (Refer to the questions on page 30.) Write your thoughts in a notebook or journal.



**Day 4: Aim for the Goal**

1. Define a goal
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Define a desire
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Have you had your goals and desires mixed up? If so, how?

**Day 5: Get a Vision for Your Marriage**

Now it is your turn to write your unique Marriage Purpose Statement.

Find a quiet place and time to reflect. Review what you wrote about what you want your husband to say at your funeral thirty years from now. These words describe who you hope to become. Think, pray, and form your thoughts into a Marriage Purpose Statement. It can be a:

- Resolution or declaration
- Prayer
- Scripture
- Poem or song
- Letter you write to yourself
- Acrostic
- List or paragraph

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Come prepared to share your personal Marriage Purpose Statement at the Bible study.

## **Week 2**

### *What Does It Feel Like to Be My Husband?*

Read “What Does It Feel Like to Be My Husband?”, Insight 5 now. Begin wearing your bracelet and journaling today.

#### **Day 1: Sophisticated Venting**

Memorize Philippians 2:14 in any translation of the Bible (and 15 and 16 if you can!).

*Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. (v. 14–15 NLT)*

*Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. (v. 15 NLT)*

1. What are your thoughts as you read what wives said was the worst thing they had done in their marriage (see pages 44–45)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you think you are a positive person, a griping nag, or somewhere in between? Explain your answer.

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3. If you haven't already, begin wearing your bracelet and journaling today. What do you learn about yourself as you wear and switch the bracelet? Be specific.

**Day 2: Where Did I Catch the Gripping Disease?**

1. Read page 47 and then write your own translation of Philippians 4:8.

2. List at least five things you learn from Jean's story on pages 48–49.

3. Do you think Christian women think it is okay to whine and complain? Give an example.

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**Day 3: God—on Gripping**

1. Read Proverbs 27:15–16 and write the verses here.

2. Read Proverbs 25:24 and write it here.

3. Give an example of when you have been “the nag.”

4. Read Proverbs 12:4 and write it here.

5. Read Proverbs 31:11–12 and write it here.

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6. Give an example of when you have been “the crown.”

**Day 4: Gripes Be Gone!**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–13. Write your own paraphrase of this passage.

2. Who were the Israelites really griping about? How do you do this?

**Day 5: Put on a Bracelet**

1. Read Psalm 142:1–5. List your complaints before the Lord. Write them here.

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2. Read Romans 15:5–7. Apply these verses by writing a prayer about accepting your husband.

3. Read Matthew 7:3–5. Pray and ask God to show you how to fill in the following chart.



4. Write a prayer, giving God permission to change you (instead of asking Him to change your husband).

Using a “Gripes Be Gone” bracelet, take the challenge for a week. Every time a gripe or complaint escapes your lips, switch the bracelet to your other wrist. Be sure to journal every day about what you are learning about yourself through this project.

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Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7



## **Week 3**

### *Am I Willing to Change My Attitude?*

Buy a special journal to be your Thankful Journal, or use any journal or notebook. Keep a Thankful Bookmark in your Bible or in this book.

#### **Day 1: Building a House of Gratitude**

1. Memorize Psalm 92:1–2. Write Psalm 92:1–2 here.

2. Read about Kaye on page 65. If you were going to list three things you would do to nurture an attitude of gratitude, what would they be?

#### **Day 2: Growing in God Gratitude**

Make Psalm 92:1–2 your daily practice this week. Thank and praise God in the morning for His lovingkindness and in the evening for His faithfulness. Journal what you are learning each day in your Thankful Journal.

#### **Day 3: Growing in Husband Gratitude**

Read about the Thankful Journal on pages 75–76. Chose one day this week

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to write in your journal about why you are thankful for your husband. (Consider sharing what you write with your husband.)

Read “Dwell on the positive” on page 76. Then list the following words from Philippians 4:8 in your Thankful Journal: *true, worthy of respect, right, pure, lovely, excellent, worthy of praise*. Each day of the week, dwell on one of these attributes and ask God the Spirit to reveal how your husband displays this quality. Write your thoughts in your Thankful Journal.

1. Gratitude creates an atmosphere where emotional sweetness can flourish. Write a paragraph describing what it looks like in your marriage when sweetness reigns.

**Day 4: Offer a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving**

1. Read Emma’s story of offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving on pages 82–83. Write a paragraph that describes the feelings and thoughts you have as you read this.

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2. Read Psalm 50:14–15, 23 and Hebrews 13:15. Write a summary of the four verses and how they apply personally to you and your marriage.

**Day 5: A Dangerous Prayer!**

The book of Colossians has four chapters, and each one talks about being thankful. Read each of these references: Colossians 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15–17; 4:2. In your Thankful Journal, personalize the thankful message to your husband.

1. What does it look like for you to devote yourself to prayer for your husband with an alert mind and a thankful heart? Write your answer here.

## **Week 4**

### *What Will It Take for Me to Get Close to You? Part 1*

#### **Day 1: Surprise! Men and Women Are Different!**

1. Memorize Genesis 2:18. Write it here.
2. Write your description of emotional intimacy.
3. Consider asking your husband how he would define emotional intimacy. Write his answer here.
4. List three ways you can move closer to your “shoulder to shoulder” husband.

**Day 2: We Both Have Gaps**

Prayerfully read Ephesians 5:25–32.

1. Do you see any conditions the wife must meet before her husband loves her sacrificially?

2. Do you see any conditions the husband must meet before the wife respects him unconditionally?

3. Fill in the commands you find in Ephesians 5:25–32 in the chart below.

Commands	Commands to Wife

4. Whose commands are the most difficult to live out, the husband's or the wife's? Why?

**Day 3: A Wife's Divine Calling**

1. How do you describe your "love gap"? Use at least five adjectives.
  
2. How do you describe your husband's "respect gap"? Use at least five adjectives.
  
3. Memorize Ephesians 5:33 in *The Amplified Bible*:

*And let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly].*

4. It is very difficult for some wives to live out this description of the word respect. Give five reasons why you think it is hard.

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**Day 4: A Wife's Divine Calling**

1. What did you learn in your childhood family about being a “helper”?

2. Write out the following verses about God being our Ezer, our strong Helper: Psalm 121:1–2; 124:8; 146:5. Then read them out loud as a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

3. Write a paragraph describing what it looks like practically for you to respect your unique husband unconditionally.





## **Week 5**

### *What Will It Take for Me to Get Close to You? Part 2*

#### **Day 1: Fill His Gaps with Encouragement and Respect**

1. Memorize Ephesians 4:29. Write it here.
2. In Ephesians 4:29, there is one negative command and three positive commands. List them.
3. Tell about a time when you encouraged your husband with your words.
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11 out loud. Ask God to show you at least five ways you can build up and encourage your special husband with your actions. List them.

TAKE THE RESPECT TEST!

- Find a quiet place.
- Spend ten or fifteen minutes making a list of things you respect about your husband.
- When your husband is not distracted, say, “I was thinking about you today and several things about you that I respect, and I just want you to know that I respect you.”
- Leave the room, and leave the response up to God.
- How did your husband respond? Describe how your words and actions impacted your husband.

Look at the acrostic of the word respect on page 105, then make your own acrostic of respect. Perhaps you would like to frame it or keep a copy in your Bible where you can reflect on it often. Consider sharing your acrostic with your husband and telling him you want to learn to live it.

**Day 2: Who Will Fill My Gaps?**

1. What do you think are your husband's five most basic needs?

2. What are your five greatest needs?

3. Do you think you and your husband understand each other's needs?

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Consider sharing the lists you wrote with him and asking for his input.

4. Read Matthew 20:28. How does this verse relate to you as a wife?

5. Read about changing your perspective from my right to God's gift on page 106. Write a paragraph explaining this concept to a friend.

**Day 3: Who Will Fill My Gaps?**

1. Read Michelle's story at least two times (pages 107–109). If you were making a list of things you were giving to God, what would be on your list?

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2. Write an email to a friend expressing what you learned from Michelle's story. Explain what difference you think this will make in your marriage.
  
3. Read Philippians 2:3–4. If possible, read these verses in other translations. Write the verses here.
  
4. Meditate on Philippians 2:3–4. Then write your own paraphrase of these verses, applying them to your role as a wife.

**Day 4: Who Will Fill My Gaps?**

1. Read “What Will It Take for Me to Get Close to You?”, Insight 6, “A Wife Can Set the Stage for Intimacy” (pages 109–114). Ask the Lord to speak to you personally from this insight.
  
2. Read the description of emotional sweetness on page 109. What do you think your husband would say is the opposite of emotional sweetness? Consider asking him.

**Day 5: A Wife Can Set the Stage for Intimacy**

Read again “A Wife Can Set the Stage for Intimacy” (page 109–114). You are a wife, and that means that just like Krista, *you* can set the stage for intimacy.

*Pray*, and ask the Lord to speak to you and reveal what will speak love to your husband.

Ask God to show you if a weekend away, a day hike, a once-in-a-lifetime vacation, just you two, or a day of cross-country skiing will build emotional intimacy between you and your husband.

1. Krista ministered to Caleb body, soul, and spirit. Write down how she did this, and ask God to show you if any of these ideas are right for your husband.

You, dear wife, with God’s guidance set the stage for intimacy. Step out and do it!

## ***Optional Lesson for a Twelve-Week Study***

### *A Time of Thanksgiving, Reflection, and Celebration*

You have been asking yourself Dangerous Questions for the last five weeks. You have searched God's Word and reflected on who you want to become. You are on the road to becoming a wife by design, not default, and that is exciting! This week will be a time of thanksgiving, reflection, and celebration.

THANKSGIVING (TO BE DONE ON YOUR OWN, PRIOR TO THE MEETING)  
Reflect on Psalm 92:1–2, the verses you memorized the week you reflected on the Dangerous Question *Am I willing to change my attitude?* In the morning, you thanked and praised God for His lovingkindness and in the evening for His faithfulness. Make this your habit again this week.

REFLECTION (FOR YOUR STUDY DURING THE FIVE DAYS OF THE WEEK)  
**Day 1:** Look through the first Dangerous Question, *What is really important to me?* Read through the first Bible study, thanking and praising God that you are living not by default, but by design. Ask God to show you one way you've grown because you asked, *What is really important to me?*

**Day 2:** Reflect on the second Dangerous Question, *What does it feel like to be my husband?* Page through the chapter and read over the Bible study. Put on your "Gripes Be Gone" bracelet and thank God that your venting and complaining is different than it was five weeks ago. Ask God to show you one way you've grown because you asked, *What does it feel like to be my husband?*

**Day 3:** The third Dangerous Question was about attitude: *Am I willing to change my attitude?* Think about how you've grown in God gratitude and husband gratitude. Be sure your Thankful Bookmark is where you will see

it every day. Look through the entries in your Thankful Journal and thank God that gratitude is growing in you. Ask God to show you one way you've changed because you asked, *Am I willing to change my attitude?*

**Day 4:** Reflect on the fourth Dangerous Question, *What will it take for me to get close to you?* Scan-read the chapter again and read through the Bible study. Remember that God has a special calling on your life—to be an *Ezer*, a helper to your husband. Encouragement and respect are beginning to flow from you to him. You are learning to fill his respect gap. Ask God to show you one way you are different because you asked, *What will it take for me to get close to you?*

**Day 5:** Continue to reflect on how to set the stage for intimacy. Reread how Krista set the stage and filled her husband to overflowing, body, soul, and spirit (page 110). Ask God to show you how you can set the stage for intimacy with your husband.

CELEBRATION (TO BE DONE PRIOR TO AND DURING YOUR GROUP TIME)  
As you look back and thank God and reflect on what He has been teaching you, think of something to prepare to share with the group during your celebration time.

Your time of celebration will be during your next Bible study. Decide in advance as a group how this time will look. You could have a brunch or luncheon or meet outside if the weather is nice. Allow time for each woman to share how this study has impacted her view of God and of her marriage. Here are six suggestions for what you could do to prepare:

1. Read something you wrote for an assignment.
2. Write a letter to your daughter (daughter-in-law, granddaughter, niece, special friend), expressing what you have learned as you've reflected on the first five Dangerous Questions.
3. Make an acrostic using a word like marriage, intimacy, or wife.

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4. Recite memory verses that have been meaningful to you.
5. Draw a graph that shows how you have grown.
6. Write a poem or a song or paint a picture that reveals what God has taught you.

End with a time of worship and prayer, celebrating what God has done.  
And you still have four more Dangerous Questions ahead!



## **Week 6**

### *What Is It Like to Make Love with Me? Part 1*

This week you will ponder and reflect on:

1. How your sexual mind-set developed, and what it is today.
2. What the Song of Solomon teaches about God's perspective of sexual intimacy.

#### **Day 1: How Did We Get Where We Are?**

1. What did you learn in your home about sexual intimacy in marriage?
2. How did this influence you when you married?
3. "A mind-set is a collection of individual thoughts that over a period of time influence the way we perceive life."<sup>1</sup> How have your individual thoughts over the past twenty years (or more) contributed to the sexual mind-set you have today?
4. Which of Satan's lies about your sexuality did you listen to (page 118)?

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5. How were you influenced by the media (page 118)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Did Christians influence you in a positive or negative way (page 119)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. After reading this chapter, how do you think your sexual mind-set differs from God's perspective?

**Day 2: Open the Gift of Sexual Passion**

God gave the gift of sexual passion for an intimate oneness.

1. Read and memorize Ephesians 5:31–32. Write it here.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Paraphrase these verses here.

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3. Ephesians 5:31–32 says that your sexual intimacy is a picture of the spiritual intimacy the Lord desires with you. How does this change how you view intimacy with your husband?

God gave the gift of sexual passion for exquisite pleasure.

4. Read Proverbs 5:15, 18–19. Paraphrase Proverbs 5:19 here.

**Day 3: Open the Gift of Sexual Passion**

1. Read Proverbs 5:15, 18–19 again. List five to ten adjectives that describe this wife as a sexual partner.

2. Read Song of Solomon 7:1–9. Write a paragraph describing what you see in this bride as a lover.

3. Make a list of what Claire did to open the gift of sexual passion.

4. If you put as much thought, prayer, and creativity into your sexual intimacy as Claire did, where would you be as a lover to your husband?

### **Days 4 & 5: Open the Gift of Sexual Passion**

Read the Song of Solomon. If possible, read it in a modern version like the New Living Translation.

The theme of the Song is found in Song of Solomon 8:6:

*Put me like a seal over your heart,  
Like a seal on your arm.  
For love is as strong as death,  
Jealousy is as severe as Sheol;  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
The very flame of the LORD.*

“This, the key verse of the Song, speaks of a love between a husband and wife that is white-hot, passionate, burning, and unable to be extinguished because it comes from God.”<sup>2</sup>

Here are three reasons given for why the Song of Solomon can be confusing:<sup>3</sup>

1. We don't understand how to read Hebrew poetry. It helps to realize that you are reading poetry and not prose. The beauty of God writing this love poem through Solomon exactly the way He did in poetic symbols is so precious; a child can pick up the Song of Solomon and not be offended.
2. The scenes in the drama are not in chronological order. The bride is seeing the scenes as a series of flashbacks so

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you will read about a sexual encounter before the couple is married.

3. Sexual references are explained through illusive imagery and symbolism. The word garden refers to the special place the husband enters. Mandrakes and pomegranates speak of fertility. Honey and wine convey intense, erotic desire.

What do you learn about God's view of sexual intimacy in the Song?

1. Write a letter to a young woman about to marry, detailing God's perspective in the Song.

## **Week 7**

### *What Is It Like to Make Love with Me? Part 2*

#### **Day 1: Open the Gift of God's Blessing**

Memorize Proverbs 5:18–19:

*Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.  
As a loving hind and a graceful doe,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
Be exhilarated always with her love.*

1. Would you feel strange if you had a picture of Jesus over your bed? Why do you think you would feel this way?

2. Read Song of Solomon 4:16—5:1. Describe God's blessing in 5:1 in your own words.

3. Have you received God's blessing on your sexual intimacy? If not, how could you do this?

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4. What did you learn from Megan's story (page 129)?

5. Write a paragraph describing what it looks like for you to be able to say:

- I am forgiven!
- I am free!
- I can delight in God's gift of sex!
- I can leave Jesus' picture over the bed!

**Day 2: Offer the Gift of Your Body**

1. Read out loud the three versions of 1 Corinthians 7:4 on page 131.

Choose one of the versions, write it here, and memorize the verse.

2. What were your feelings when you read about Kathy wrapping herself in a bow (page 132)?

3. Have you given the gift of your body to your husband? If not, how might you do this?

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4. Sadie moved beyond tolerable intimacy. Do you believe God can redeem the horror of sexual abuse in you or in your friend? Explain your answer.

5. Where would you be if you believed God, if you prayed to and begged God like Sadie did? Write a prayer asking God for more in your sexual intimacy with your husband.

**Day 3: What Does Everyday Lovemaking Look Like?**

1. Write a paragraph describing how you felt when you read the quotes on page 132 about the fun, closeness, and planning for sexual intimacy these wives enjoyed with their husbands?

2. Describe a time you “did sex right” and how it impacted your intimate relationship with your husband.

3. Describe a time you “did sex wrong” and how it impacted your intimacy.



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4. Write your own Dangerous Prayer to God about your intimacy with your husband.

**Day 4: Pondering God's Word**

Read through the Song of Solomon again. Ask the Holy Spirit, your Teacher, to reveal what it was like for Solomon to make love with his bride. Make a list of all you discover about her attitude, her creativity, how and when she communicated. (You will discuss this and make a combined list of what all the women found at the Bible study.)

**Day 5: Pondering God's Word**

Find a quiet time to be alone. Reflect on what you have learned from the Song of Solomon. Remember what you learned in the Dangerous Question "What Is It Like to Make Love with Me?" Write your declaration to God of who you desire to become as a lover to your husband.

## **Week 8**

### *Why Do I Want to Stay Mad at You?*

#### **Day 1: It Feels Good to Hold a Grudge**

Memorize Ephesians 4:31–32 and write it here. Also, write it on two 3 x 5 cards, and put one:

- In your purse (to pull out and meditate on at a doctor's office or waiting for your car at the repair shop).
- On the mirror where you put on your makeup each morning so you can get beautiful on the inside as you get beautiful on the outside!

1. On pages 144–145, five women expressed why it feels good to hold a grudge. Which woman do you relate to, and why?

2. What did you learn in your childhood home about forgiving? Spend time alone with God, seeking His wisdom about this for you, and then journal your thoughts.

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3. Describe a time you overreacted to your husband over an insignificant incident (like a bar of soap).

4. List three to five things God revealed to you through Dana's forgiveness story on page 147.

**Day 2: Three Shocking Truths about Forgiveness**

1. Read 2 Corinthians 2:11. Write it here, then pray it back to God.

2. Has Satan outsmarted you? Explain how.

3. List several things you can do to kick Satan out.

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4. Read the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–15) out loud. What does it look like for you to forgive your husband?

5. Is there anything you need to change about how you forgive?

6. Write a paragraph to a friend about the connection between forgiveness and intimacy with the Lord.

7. Read Proverbs 19:11 and write it here. What would give you honor and glory?

8. Make a list of the many things you learned from Katie's story on pages 152–155.

**Day 3: Strip Off Anger, Put On Forgiveness**

1. Go over your memory verses—Ephesians 4:31–32. List the six pieces of clothing in Ephesians 4:31 that you are to strip off, and give a definition of each one.
2. Which one is the hardest for you to “strip off”?
3. List your three new pieces of clothing in Ephesians 4:32, and give a definition of each one.
4. Which one is your “strong suit”?
5. Which one is hardest for you to “put on”? Why do you think this is difficult for you?

6. Write a short letter to a friend, expressing what you learned from Colette's story on pages 157–159.

**Day 4: Anoint with Forgiveness**

1. Describe the joy you feel over Connie's forgiveness anointing (pages 160–162). What delights you the most?

2. Describe your feelings about Sheryl's forgiveness anointing on pages 161–162. What grieves you the most?

3. Meditate on your memory verses, Ephesians 4:31–32. How will you be certain that you will never be saying, *If only I could have done this sooner...* ?

4. Read over quotes on pages 159–160 regarding the best things various women did for their marriages. Which one spoke to you and why?

**Day 5: Be a Proactive Forgiver**

1. Write a paragraph to a teenage girl sharing what a proactive forgiver is and why she should be one.
2. Write a prayer, telling God that you want to become a proactive forgiver.
3. Chose two of the practical physical symbols of forgiveness listed on pages 163–164, and explain how you will apply them in your relationship with your husband.
4. Ask yourself: What does it look like for me to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward my husband, just as God in Christ has forgiven me?

Spend some time (ten minutes or more) alone with God talking to Him about this Dangerous Question, *Why do I want to stay mad at you?*

5. Is there anything you need to ask your husband forgiveness for? How will you do this?

## **Week 9**

*Is it Possible to Grow Together When Things Fall Apart?*

### **Day 1: An Anniversary on the Danube**

1. Write James 1:2 from the three translations on page 170. Choose one of the versions to memorize.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read John 16:33, Psalm 141:8, Psalm 112:7, and Isaiah 26:3. Write your view of God's perspective of trials from these verses.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Copy my paraphrase of James 1:2–4 for my marriage on page 170. What would you add to this paraphrase?

### **Day 2: Trusting God When Life Hurts**

1. Read Proverbs 3:5–6 several times out loud. Write it down.



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2. Describe what “trust in the Lord with all your heart” means to you personally.

3. Write a paragraph about how you live out “lean not on your own understanding.”

4. What does it look like practically for you to “acknowledge God in all your ways”?

5. Write a prayer expressing your gratitude to God for His promise to make your paths straight.

**Day 3: Marriage Crisis!**

1. What three things did you learn from Tabi’s story on page 175?

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2. How was Corina creative in a hard situation (page 177)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What did you feel when you read what James wrote on pages 179 about why he loves Corina?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Read 1 Peter 5:7 out loud. Write this verse as a prayer, thanking God that your marriage is His personal concern.

**Day 4: A Long, Difficult Marriage**

1. What did you learn from Natalie's story on page 180?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Which of Natalie's "I wills" from her Marriage Purpose Statement do you want to write out and remember?

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3. What does Natalie's encouragement to a woman in a hard marriage mean to you (pages 181–183)?

4. Write Jeremiah 17:7–8 here.

5. How were these verses a reality in Natalie's life?

6. How can they be true in your life?

7. Write a note to a friend, sharing how hiding Jeremiah 17:7–8 in her heart can encourage her during time of trial.

**Day 5: The Integrity Walk**

1. Write out all the “I wills” you find in Psalm 101. Why do you think this psalm might have been David’s Life Purpose Statement?
2. Write a paragraph sharing how Job’s statement about integrity (Job 2:9–10) can impact you in times of trial in your marriage.
3. How would praying the Scriptures from this chapter help you during a trial? Write a prayer to God, based on what you read in James 1:2–4, Proverbs 3:5–6, 1 Peter 5:7, Jeremiah 17:7–8, and Job 2:10.
4. How can the four practical helps at the end of the insight (put on a “Gripes Be Gone” bracelet, write in a Thankful Journal, read the reasons you are thankful you’re married to your husband, and so on) on page 188 encourage you during times of trial?

## **Week 10**

### *The Woman in the Mirror*

#### **Day 1: Look at You ... a Wife by Design!**

Bring your Marriage Purpose Statement to the Bible Study to share.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:2. Then memorize it.

1. What does it look like for you to look in the mirror and say, “Yes, I’ve been faithful. I have fulfilled my assignment as a wife to \_\_\_\_\_”?
2. Read Psalm 119:30–32. Write it here.
3. Write a paraphrase of these verses, applying them to your marriage.
4. God says as you run the faithful road, He will enlarge your heart. List three ways you need God to expand your heart toward your husband.

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5. Read 1 Corinthians 4:2, write it here, and memorize it.

**Day 2: God Is the Re-Creator!**

1. Read pages 195–196, which talk about God being the Re-Creator. Write Proverbs 24:3–4 here.

2. What are the “precious and pleasant riches” that fill the rooms of your marriage?

3. Do you need God to re-create your marriage? Write a prayer with your specific requests for God, the Master Marriage Builder.

**Day 3: The Changing Seasons of Your Marriage**

1. Where are you on your marriage journey?

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2. In this insight, three couples shared about their marriage journeys. Which couple did you connect with, and why did you connect with this particular one?

3. Write 1 Corinthians 13:7 here. Explain how this verse applies to you as a wife.

**Day 4: Look at You: Learning! Growing! Changing!**

1. What were your thoughts as you read Renee's story and Marriage Purpose Statement?

2. Read Psalm 39:4–5. Write the verses here.

3. If you really believed these verses, what difference would it make in how you loved your husband today?

Read your Marriage Purpose Statement out loud to God. Spend fifteen to thirty minutes praying about your Marriage Purpose Statement. Ask God if there is anything He wants to add to your Statement.

4. Now that you have spent these weeks reflecting on Dangerous Questions, is there anything you want to add to your Statement?

Get your calendar or PDA and write yourself a “to do” on your anniversary. On this special day, take time to reflect on your Marriage Purpose Statement. Make this your yearly anniversary habit.

#### **Day 5: Questions to Ponder**

Who asks you the hard questions? Questions like:

Are you living your Marriage Purpose Statement?

Are you walking toward your husband in love, devotion, and faithfulness?

Are you being tempted to enter into an emotional or sexual affair?

Are you growing in deeper intimacy with the Lord?

Are you growing in deeper intimacy with your husband?

Who asks you the hard questions? A mentor? A friend? A Bible study leader or an accountability partner? If no one does, talk to God about this. Ask Him and your leader how you go about choosing someone who will.



## **Optional Lesson for a Twelve-Week Study**

### *A Time of Thanksgiving, Reflection, and Celebration*

For the past several weeks you've been reflecting on the question *What is it like to be married to me?* and other Dangerous Questions. You have searched God's Word and reflected on who you want to become. You are now at the end of this study, it is time to praise and thank God. This week will be a time of thanksgiving, reflection, and celebration.

THANKSGIVING (TO BE DONE ON YOUR OWN, PRIOR TO THE MEETING)  
Reflect on Psalm 92:1–2, the verses you memorized the week you reflected on the Dangerous Question *Am I willing to change my attitude?* In the morning, you thanked and praised God for His lovingkindness and in the evening for His faithfulness. Make this your habit again this week.

REFLECTION (FOR YOUR STUDY DURING THE FIVE DAYS OF THE WEEK)

**Day 1:** Look through the chapter on the Dangerous Question *What is it like to make love with me?* Read through the Bible study, thanking God that you have new understanding about how your sexual mind-set was formed. Rejoice that you are learning new and exciting things about God's perspective about sexual intimacy—and that you are getting creative and setting the stage for intimacy with your husband.

**Day 2:** Continue to reflect on *What is it like to make love with me?* Page through the chapter and read over the Bible study. Thank God that you are growing in all it means to receive His blessing on your intimacy. You've laughed about wrapping yourself in a bow but been serious about the deep meaning of giving your body as a gift to your husband. Ask God to show you one way you have grown as a lover to your husband.

**Day 3:** The next Dangerous Question was about one of the most important parts of marriage, *forgiveness*. Read through "Why Do I Want

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to Stay Mad at You?” again, and remember why it is so important to freely forgive. You are learning how to strip off the negative and put on the positive. Forgiveness is not always easy to give or to receive, but marriage is the union of two good forgivers. Ask God to reveal one way you’ve grown as a “forgiver.”

**Day 4** is about facing trials together and asks the Dangerous Question *Is it possible to grow together when things fall apart?* Reflect on the stories of couples who have grown closer in crisis. Meditate on the many Scriptures in the Bible study that will encourage you during difficult times. Reflect on what it means to walk the Integrity Walk. Ask God to continue to reveal how you and your mate can grow closer in crisis. Write one way you can see you have grown closer to your husband during a trial.

**Day 5:** God is a God of hope, and He says there is hope for you and your husband. Remember that God is the Re-Creator. He loves to bring beauty out of ashes. Reflect on what you will regret and what you will not regret as a wife. Thank God that you are becoming a wife by design!

CELEBRATION (TO BE DONE PRIOR TO AND DURING YOUR GROUP TIME)  
As you look back and thank God and reflect on what He has been teaching you, think of something to prepare to share with the group during your celebration time.

Your time of celebration will be during your final Bible study. Decide in advance as a group how this time will look. You could have a brunch or luncheon or meet outside if the weather is nice. Allow time for each woman to share how this study has impacted her view of God and of her role as a wife. Here are six suggestions for what you could do to prepare:

1. Read something you wrote for an assignment.
2. Write a letter to your daughter (daughter-in-law, granddaughter, niece, special friend) expressing what you have learned as you’ve reflected on the last four Dangerous Questions.

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3. Make an acrostic using a word like faithful, forgiving, or forever.
4. Recite memory verses that have been meaningful to you.
5. Draw a graph that shows how you have grown.
6. Write a poem or a song or paint a picture that reveals what God has taught you.

End with a time of worship and prayer, celebrating what God has done. God is faithful, and you are on the road headed toward the wife you long to become!