

J O U R N E Y O F A M I L I T A R Y W I F E

Dedicated Steps of Faith in God's Plan

SMALL GROUP
STUDY GUIDE

(JOURNEY 1)



A Channel of Blessing (Week 1)

Waypoints 1–5 · Genesis 12:1–3

Stop and get your bearings

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

Turn to a partner and discuss the following questions:

- What was the most significant journey you ever took?
- What was one thing that made the journey memorable?

Read the map

How can you, as someone in a military community, relate to what God asked of Abraham?

Take time to explore

What are the promises listed in Genesis 12:1–3?

Read Genesis 11:29–30 in light of these promises. Was there any reason these promises to Abraham may have seemed a little far-fetched?

BLESS =

How has this definition of blessing played out in your life?

How have you been a blessing to others since you've become a military wife?

What are ways you and your family have been blessed by military life?

Travelogue

Read veteran military wife Ronda's description of her military life and underline anything that resonates with you. When everyone is finished we will take time to discuss our thoughts.

Ronda describes her life as a military wife as "blessed." She says, "I'm so thankful for all the amazing experiences I have had because I married a soldier. I have met some incredible people on this journey. Although I never thought leaving Hanover, Pennsylvania would be good for us, I was completely wrong. Leaving my hometown was and is the best thing that ever happened to me. It allowed me to experience people and places that I otherwise would not have. Even though I miss family and friends, I would not trade my life for anything else. I am blessed!"

Pack your bags

Join with no more than four people and have a five-minute brainstorming session on ways you can be a channel of blessing as a military wife. Have someone record your ideas to be added to the collective chart. Commit to praying for one another throughout the week and plan to report on a way you have put into practice one of the things on your list.

A Challenge to Faith (Week 2)

Waypoints 6–10 · Genesis 12:4–10

Stop and get your bearings

What action from last week did you put into practice?

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

Discuss with a partner the most challenging journey you have ever made.

- What made it challenging?
- Did the challenges override the pleasure of the journey?
- Were you tempted not to go, or turn around and go home?
- What made you keep going?

Read the map

What do you see as the challenges in Genesis 12:4–10 for Abraham and his traveling entourage?

What might the presence of Canaanites in the land mean to Abraham and the promise God made to him?

What did Abraham do in light of the challenge of a famine?

Do you think he made the right decision?

Take time to explore

Can you relate to any of the challenges Abraham faced in your own journey as a Christian?

Can you relate to any of the challenges Abraham faced in your journey as a military wife?

Psalm 37 emphasizes the security of those who walk by faith in God. What are the challenges and blessings that come to those who have their steps established by the Lord? (*Record your answers. You will be invited to add your discoveries to a group chart at the end of the activity.*)

Travelogue

Read the words of Bonnie about the challenges of being a military wife. Underline anything that stands out to you.

“When I’m asked about military life, I’m very careful not to paint a rosy picture. The challenges are real, the sacrifices are sure, and the headaches of living with a government system can be painful. But here’s the thing—I would do it all over in a heartbeat. The challenges of military life made me more adaptable, the sacrifices made me more compassionate, and the headaches made me more patient. I learned not to dwell on the negative, but instead to seek out friends who would help me find humor in the situation and point me to truth in God’s Word. God used the challenges to grow me. I’m forever grateful.”

Pack your bags

Is God asking you to take a step of faith in some area? What are the challenges that keep you from taking the first step? In the space below, write one word that represents your challenge. You will be invited to speak out your word during the closing prayer.

A Choice to Trust (Week 3)

Waypoints 11–15 · Genesis 12:11–13:18

Stop and get your bearings

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

Win or lose game: Choose a bag and share the contents with the group.

What did you base your choice upon? How did you feel when you made a poor choice? When you saw some of the prettier bags did not have the best content, were you more cautious in your choice?

Read the map

What were some of the choices you read about this week from Genesis 12 and 13?

Take time to explore

Join with two other people and read the verses below. Develop a plan for making the choice to trust God based on biblical principles found in these scriptures. Make a creative poster of your plan to share with the larger group.

- Psalm 119:44–45
- Joshua 1:8
- Proverbs 3:5–6
- John 16:13
- Proverbs 13:20
- Psalm 1:1

Travelogue

Young military wife Bethany writes about some choices she has made in her journey. Read her account and underline what resonates with you.

Being a military wife was foreign territory for me when my husband enlisted. However, being in unfamiliar territory was not new to me, due to mission trips, study abroad, and living overseas for the first four years of our marriage. I took what I learned from those experiences, and I purposed in my heart to trust God in the newest “unknown” ahead of me, to go forward open-minded and open-hearted. I truly have grown in my faith and my walk with God since my husband joined the Army. I have come to see how loved and accepted I am by God and that He really is sovereign and trustworthy.

My husband and I recently attended a marriage seminar. Spending that weekend together, along with putting into practice the tools we learned there have been one of the best things for our marriage. I believe it is important to be purposeful in doing things to strengthen your marriage. I have been very thankful we had that opportunity before my husband deployed, and I believe our communication through the deployment has been better because of it.

What are your observations?

Pack your bags

Waypoint 15 described two friends who walked in their military community and prayed for one another, their families, and their military community. If weather permits join with one other person and take a five-minute walk outside. As you walk, share and pray for one personal need and one need you see in your community.

A Champion of Righteousness (Week 4)

Waypoints 16–20 · Genesis 14:11–16:2

Stop and get your bearings

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

With a partner answer this question:

If prizes were given for _____ I would be the champion.

Give a brief reason why you chose your answer.

Read the map

What were some situations you read about this week that called for a champion?

How was God the champion in all these situations?

What words of greeting does God use in addressing Abraham in Genesis 15:1?

What cause would Abraham have to be fearful?

What does Genesis 15:6 say about Abraham?

Take time to explore

Join with two other people and read the following verses. What messages do these scriptures convey about God as your champion?

- Jeremiah 20:11
- Isaiah 19:20
- Isaiah 42:13
- Psalm 50:15
- Psalm 18:6
- Psalm 27:5

How do you see God acting in your life to show he is with you—even in the waiting?

Travelogue

Military wife Kristin writes about being a champion for others even when she felt like she needed one for herself. What do you think? What military wives have been your champions? How did they do this for you?

“As a twenty-something who had been married for all of three months, I complained to a retiree wife that nobody was mentoring me. She asked me if I was doing that for a younger wife. I looked at her blankly until she gently but firmly pointed out that there were already younger wives in the squadron whom I could be mentoring. So, I did more mentoring than I was mentored, but how else will it happen?” In the process of being a champion for another Kristin learned much about her role as a military wife. Today, she is a sought-after mentor and friend.

Pack your bags

Is there an area in your life in which you need God to be your champion? Write a brief prayer in the space below and commit that request to him.

A Change of Character (Week 5)

Waypoints 21–25 · Genesis 16–19

Stop and get your bearings

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

Turn to a partner and share anything you know about your name. Do you know why you were given the name? Do you know what your name means? How do you feel about your name?

Read the map

God Knew Hagar's Name

From your reading of Genesis 16, what do you know about Hagar?

God Knew Abraham's Name

What significant event takes place in the life of Abraham in Genesis 17:5?

God Knew Sarah's Name

What made Sarah laugh in Genesis 18:12?

Take time to explore

God Knows Your Name

Have a meeting with two other people and discuss the following: A true encounter with God Almighty changes a person. If you follow Christ now, how have you changed since becoming a Christ follower? What steps are you taking to keep your relationship with God growing strong?

Travelogue

Read the paragraphs below and underline anything that resonates with you. You will have an opportunity to share your thoughts when everyone is finished.

The words spoken to Sarah, “Is anything too hard for God?” are not meant to be a verse we claim in order to change our circumstances. God can certainly change circumstances, but sometimes the toughest thing for us is to accept our circumstances and grow through them.

Veteran military wife Judy encourages her military sisters to “Maximize the military experience instead of begrudging the sacrifices that come with the commitment.” Sometimes the sacrifice is hard—but it comes with the promise that God knows your name. God is aware of your situation and will use the difficult circumstances for good in your life.

Pack your bags

Read the verse below aloud together.

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1).

In the space below, write what it means to you for God to call you by name and tell you “you are mine.”

A Cherished Life (Week 6)

Waypoints 26–30 · Genesis 20–25

Stop and get your bearings

What highlights from the readings of the past week would you like to share with the group?

Where shall we go?

Imagine that after living twenty-plus years as a military wife, you have the opportunity to write the epitaph for that time period. On the paper provided, write an epitaph for yourself that says something about the kind of military wife you hope to be remembered as. Share your finished product with someone sitting close to you.

Read the map

Join with two other people and create a simple epitaph for Abraham and Sarah. Be ready to share your creation and explain why you chose your statement.

Take time to explore

Abraham died with a strong sense that he had pleased God. There can be no greater epitaph.

Join with two different people to read the following verses and discuss the questions that follow.

- Romans 4:13
- Galatians 3:9
- Galatians 3:14
- Hebrews 11:8
- Hebrews 11:17

What theme ties these verses together?

Tests of our faith can actually serve to strengthen our faith. Can you recall a time when your faith was tested? What was the result?

How does the example of Abraham and Sarah's faith encourage you in your own journey of faith?

Travelogue

This week you were asked “How satisfied are you with military life?” How did you respond?

A 2005 study by the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center reported, “Of all spouses, more than half (57 percent) are very satisfied/satisfied with the Army as a way of life and slightly less than one-fifth (16 percent) are dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.” Consider the branch of service you represent. Do you find this statement accurate? Why or why not? How does your relationship with God affect your overall satisfaction with military life?

Pack your bags

Abraham and Sarah became different people as they traveled with God. Sometimes faith has to go before it will grow. Write one thing you have gleaned through this journey of faith with Abraham and Sarah that will help you on your own journey as a military wife.