

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

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*Dedicated* Steps of Faith in God's Plan

**SMALL GROUP  
STUDY GUIDE**

(JOURNEY 2)

# A Calling and a Mission (Week 1)

## Waypoints 1–5

### 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?

Choose an object nearby that represents your “mission.” Find a partner and share with her what you chose and why you chose the object.

### Read the map

How does the occasion and purpose of the Gospel according to Mark make a study of this book relevant today? Does anything make it especially relevant to a military spouse?

### Take time to explore

What do these three passages teach about calling and discipleship?

- Mark 1:16–20
- Mark 3:13–19
- Mark 6:7–13

Read Janna’s story and underline anything that stands out to you.

At 19 years of age, Janna married Billy, her high school sweetheart. Soon after the wedding, Billy’s employer laid him off from work and he could not find another job. One day, in desperation, Billy found the recruiting office and signed up to join the military. Billy’s first assignment, following his initial training, was to a unit that deployed almost immediately after signing in to his duty station. Now, Janna lives in a state far away from home as she navigates a strange culture called the military. Janna is on her own to find her way. She does not have a church background, so church is not a place she will likely look to fill the void of her life.

Who will be the hands, feet, and voice for Jesus to the Jannas that make up the U.S. military population? If you are a Christ-follower, *you* are the hands, feet, and voice for Jesus wherever you find yourself.

## Travelogue

When asked if Audrey viewed military life as a calling she said: “You bet! The military has truly been my mission field. When I came to the Lord in junior high school, I thought I had to be a foreign missionary. However, when I earned a full ROTC scholarship for college, I realized that God was pointing me towards the very specific mission field of the military. That only continued to hold true when I transitioned from active duty personnel to active duty military wife!”

Shellie was not so quick to view military life with a sense of calling. “I did not see being a military spouse as a calling in the beginning. That sense grew over time as the burden or weight (in a good sense) for my family and women associated with the military increased. As I grew in the knowledge of The Lord, the weight of the calling--to serve my husband, my children, soldiers, spouses, and families grew. What an incredible privilege and I am deeply grateful.”

*Can you relate to Audrey or Shellie's story?*

## Pack your bags

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions:

What difference might it make in your attitude if you saw military life as a “calling”?

What difference might it make in your service in your military community if you viewed each assignment as your mission field?

## On Mission in Ordinary Time (Week 2)

### Waypoints 6–10

#### 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 in 30 seconds describe an ordinary day in your life.

#### Read the map

What do you learn about “ordinary” from Acts 4:13 and 2 Corinthians 4:7?

#### Take time to explore

How do people use *ordinary* as an excuse for not serving God?

What might it look like to allow God’s “grace and power to be evident in the ordinary and mundane events of life?”

#### Travelogue

Veteran military wife Merial says military life was an extraordinary adventure.

“For me the military was an unexpected fulfillment of a desire I harbored since childhood. My life was very ordinary. I didn’t realize how much I longed to be ‘special’ until I had the privileges that accompanied a military ID card. Military life gave me a sense of belonging to something special. Our family viewed the military journey as more than just my husband’s calling—this was a family calling. The ‘we’re all in this together’ really helped the children understand and accept the sacrifices we all made. For us, the Lord entwined military, ministry, and mission to make a great life!”

What can you learn from Merial’s story?

## Pack your bags

Read this paraphrase of Romans 12:1–2.

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, **ordinary** life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (Romans 12:1–2, *The Message*)

From this passage, what do you see as the dangers of ordinary days?

What opportunities can you find in ordinary days?

What is one thing you look at as a part of your ordinary day that could become an opportunity for God to use you?

# To Choose or Not to Choose God's Mission (Week 3)

## Waypoints 11–15

### 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?

Which candy did you choose and why?

### Read the map

What kind of choices did you read about this week?

Read Mark 3:13–19

What happened in this passage?

### Take time to explore

In small groups of no more than four people, read the following Scriptures and discuss what you discover.

- John 15:16
- 1 Corinthians 1:26–31
- 2 Corinthians 12:9

Why is being able to tell your story about following Christ important?

Think about what you would say if you were to tell your story. A simple outline to follow is:

- What was your life before you knew Christ?
- How did you come to know Christ?
- What changes has Christ made in your life?

## Travelogue

God used military wives to draw Martha's heart back to Jesus:

"I was a lonely, stressed out young mom, far away from home. I wandered into a chapel Bible study that advertised free childcare. There I heard stories of God's faithfulness. There I watched women encourage one another in their struggles. There I encountered a personal Savior who cared about me, invited me on mission, and I said yes!"

What can you learn from Martha's story?

## Pack your bags

"Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul" (Psalm 66:16).

What has Jesus done for you?

Ask Jesus to help you be willing to share what he has done for you with someone else this week.

# Rest and Training for the Mission (Week 4)

## Waypoints 16–20

### 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?

What is your idea of a restful morning? Share your thoughts with one other person.

### Read the map

Describe the situation in Mark 6:7–13 and Mark 6:30–31.

Read the following quote and underline anything that stands out to you:

Jesus reminded them of their frailty and humanity. They had been used. They were excited. They were also probably tired. Jesus helped them to face their humanity without being ashamed of it. He seemed to have resources hidden from them, as the feeding of the crowd and the walking on the water were to show. They were not to imagine that they could keep going endlessly. They needed quiet, and re-creation, and more opportunities to learn. So do we.

In small groups of no more than four people look up these Scriptures and discuss what you glean about mission and rest.

- Matthew 14:13
- Matthew 15:21
- Mark 3:7
- Mark 3:20
- Luke 5:16

### Take time to explore

What do you learn about rest from Isaiah 28:12?

“Rest does something powerful within our souls. When we stop, we are in a better position to allow God to move in our lives. Rest is a physical reminder that we are not in control of everything and, at the end of the day; we are not the ones who have to hold it all together. That is God’s job. Rest reminds us of our place, not just in life, but in him.” —Margaret Feinberg



## Travelogue

During her husband's deployment, Patti struggled with being able to rest. "My greatest challenge was taking time for myself. For some reason I could hardly get in bed before midnight no matter what, but had to still get up very early. I got very little sleep, ate a lot of chocolate, drank a lot of coffee, and always felt tired."

Patti was open to learning a lesson about rest. She reports, "I started going to the gym. I got involved in a Bible study with other wives in the unit. I took more time to rest. I found when I made time to get the rest I needed it affected every other area of my life. I realized that the self-care I incorporated into my routine is something that was my responsibility, not a luxury."

Do you relate to Patti's story?

## Pack your bags

In Mark 6:31 Jesus told his disciples to "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while."

What makes this a challenge for you? What is one thing you can do to make it happen this week?

## A Mission Interrupted (Week 5)

### Waypoints 21–25

#### 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?

Have you ever played the “Interruption Game”?

#### Read the map

In small groups of no more than four people look at a few of the interruptions to Jesus’s schedule found in Mark’s Gospel and note your observations.

- Mark 1:35–39
- Mark 2:1–12
- Mark 5:22–24
- Mark 5:25–34
- Mark 6:33–37

#### Take time to explore

Read the following excerpt by Mark Buchanan from his article “A Theology of Interruption.” Underline anything that stands out to you.

We have placed such a high value on convenience and efficiency that any interruption—a traffic obstruction, a bad Internet connection, a sick child, a flat tire, a phone call when you’re in the middle of something—is seen almost as a personal affront. My habitual thought at such moments—and sometimes what rushes from my lips—is “Why me? Why this? Why now?”

Another word for that is whining...

It happens so often in the Bible, it starts to look like interruptions are anything but. They bear uncanny resemblance to God-appointments, holy ambushes. The mess of human efforts and schemes, it appears, is continually overridden by divine choreography. God hides in the seeming randomness of things. God lurks in the inconvenience of the unplanned. God skulks in the surprise of the unexpected.

## Travelogue

“A few years ago, I met an old professor at the University of Notre Dame. Looking back on his long life of teaching, he said with a funny twinkle in his eyes: ‘I have always been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I slowly discovered that my interruptions *were* my work.’ This is the great conversation in life: to recognize and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruptions of our projects, but the way in which God molds our hearts and prepares us for his return.” —Henri Nouwen

Do you see interruptions as a tool God uses to mold our hearts and prepare us for his return?

## Pack your bags

How would your view of military life change if you viewed the interruptions it brought as part of God’s mission for you?

## The Two Sides of Mission (Week 6)

### Waypoints 26–30

#### 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 someone close by and answer this question: What would you say is your main mission to accomplish today?

#### Read the map

Read Mark 12:28–34 and note the details of this encounter.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (*Shema* = Hebrew for “hear”)

Read Leviticus 19:18. What word connects this passage with Deuteronomy 6:4–5?

How do these scriptures from 1 John affirm the connection of loving God and loving our neighbor?

- 1 John 2:9–11
- 1 John 3:15
- 1 John 4:20

#### Take time to explore

In a small group of three or four people, create a T-chart with the label LOVE for GOD on one side and LOVE for NEIGHBOR on the other side. List the ways you see these two missions carried out in these scriptures: Mark 10:13–16; Mark 10:32–34; Mark 10:41–45; Mark 11:22–25; Mark 12:41–44; Mark 14:3–9.

### Travelogue

Lisa believes being a military wife has helped her live out the two commandments to love God and love others. “My love for God has grown as I have trusted him to hold our family in the palm of his hand through each transition. My love of neighbor has grown as I have watched the way the military family cares for one another. The opportunities to serve the people in my military community are abundant.”

How can you relate to Lisa’s experience?

### Pack your bags

For personal reflection: Is there anything you need to adjust in order to live out the mission to love God and to love others in your current situation?