

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

Devoted

Steps of Love
Toward Healthy Relationships

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

(JOURNEY 1)



Adam and Eve—Traveling Toward Intimacy (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?

Show your keychain to someone sitting close to you. Can you tell her what each key opens?

Read the map

When God created the world, he looked at everything he created and pronounced it “good.” How does that compare with what God says in Genesis 2:18?

What idea is conveyed in Genesis 2:19–22?

Take time to explore

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 and Mark 10:7–9. How do these verses confirm the relationship God planned for marriage?

Emotional intimacy =

Travelogue

“If you want to experience the truth of Genesis 2:24, just marry a soldier, sailor, airman, coastguardsman, or marine. You will then understand to the fullest what God had in mind when he gave the instruction to leave and cleave!” These words from veteran military wife Carol ring true. Cleave is an old-fashioned sounding word packed with meaning that needs to stick in the minds and hearts of every married couple. In fact, that is exactly the translation of cleave: *to stick with*. The word describes the “inseparable relationship between the man and the woman in marriage as God intended.”

Carol recalls the emotions she experienced when after nine months of marriage her husband received military orders to Germany. She said, “The idea of going to another country made me think I might never see my parents again.” She questioned whether the love she and her husband had for each other would be strong enough to withstand the adjustment of life without having her mom and dad close. How might Carol’s experience encourage or discourage emotional intimacy in her marriage?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one thing you will put into practice because of today’s study.

* NET Notes on Genesis 2:24, <https://lumina.bible.org/bible/Genesis+2>, accessed 4/27/15.

Joseph and Mary—A Journey of Trust (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?

“Few delights can equal the mere presence of one whom we trust utterly.” —George MacDonald

What role does trust play in marriage?

Read the map

Read the passages below and note the ways May and Joseph exhibited trust in one another. What role did their trust in God play in their relationship?

- Luke 1:26–38
- Luke 2:1–6
- Matthew 1:19–25
- Matthew 2:13–15

Take time to explore

What unique areas of trust do you find challenged by military marriage?

How can you combat these challenges?

How do you build trust with your words?

Examine the last things you shared about your husband with someone else. How safe would he say his name is in your mouth?

Travelogue

Read the story below and underline anything that stands out to you.

Karen, a veteran military wife, recalls a PCS move from Texas to Georgia. She had an energetic toddler and was pregnant with her second child. Her family was more than ready to move from Texas, but there was no hurrying the process. Karen recollects, “It took forever! My husband’s out-processing was delayed. We had car trouble. My sister was coming to help me, and her flight was late. We did not even make it out of Texas when our car threw a rod. We had to buy a new vehicle en route. I describe that day as they day we made it to Waco, but I was wacko!”

What role did trust play in Karen’s PCS move?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one thing you learned from this study that you will put into practice in your marriage this week.

Isaac and Rebekah—Failure to Communicate (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?

How would you describe “intentional communication” with your spouse?

Read the map

Describe the scene in Genesis 25:21–28.

What important information did God share with Rebekah?

Why do you think she did not tell Isaac?

What were the results of the poor communication between Isaac and Rebekah as seen in Genesis 27:41–44?

Take time to explore

What are some of the unique communication challenges that can arise in a military marriage? How do you combat these challenges?

Travelogue

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

Military wives learn to withhold information—for good reason. For instance, consider the important practice of OPSEC (Operation Security). OPSEC is the process to protect unclassified information that an adversary can use to harm us. There are safety measures we must consistently observe to keep our military husband and our family from risk.

A military wife may also purposely withhold detailed information from her husband during a deployment in order for him to stay focused on his military mission. In daily normal life however, withholding information from a spouse is not the best practice for a successful marriage.

Pack your bags

Relationship specialist John Gottman instructs couples to learn the ratio of five positive interactions to every one negative. Positive interactions include such relationship builders as a smile, a touch, changing the course of negative conversation, and positive, affectionate, encouraging comments. How will you put these into practice in your marriage this week?

Jacob and Rachel—You Marry a Family (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?

Share with another person a few of the positive characteristics of your husband's family, (your in-laws).

Read the map

Read Genesis 31:44–55 and describe the scene.

What extended-family issues did Jacob encounter?

Take time to explore

In their book *Loving Your Relatives: Even When You Don't See Eye-to-Eye*, authors David and Claudia Arp suggest ways to navigate the often complicated in-law relationship:

- Be proactive and look for ways to connect.
- Don't compete with other family members.
- Refocus your perspective by looking for the positive.
- Accept reality.*

Military families often find it challenging to navigate how and when to include in-laws in deployment, R&R, or reintegration. How have you managed these situations?

What boundaries have you set or do you see the need to set with your extended family?

* David and Claudia Arp, John and Margaret Bell, *Loving Your Relatives: Even When You Don't See Eye-to-Eye* (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family, 2003), 50.

Travelogue

A navy wife wrote the following on an online forum for military spouses:

“This is our first homecoming and my husband’s family wants to come and then stay at our house for a week. I don’t mind them coming, I just prefer they stay at a hotel. My husband would rather we go on a long weekend away. Any ideas on how to make them both happy?”

How would you respond?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one thing you will put into practice because of today’s study.

Proverbs 31—Stewardship In Marriage (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?

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), where would you rate money as a stressor in marriage?

Read the map

Read the following Scriptures and develop a biblically based financial strategy. Create a poster to “advertise” your strategy.

- Hebrews 13:5
- Matthew 6:19–21
- Matthew 6:24
- Matthew 6:31–33
- Proverbs 13:11
- Proverbs 13:22
- Proverbs 22:7
- Malachi 3:10
- Proverbs 11:25

Take time to explore

How do you combat the craving for immediate gratification?

What is your family plan for major purchases?

“Research confirms that generosity within a marriage begets generosity outside of marriage. Couples who are generous to one another will in turn be generous to others.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Travelogue

An article posted on Military.com names three money challenges for military families.

- Spouse employment
- Uncertainty in military life
- Potential benefits changes*

How do you deal with these challenges?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one thing you will put into practice this week because of this study.

* J.J. Montanaro, "3 Money Challenges for Military Families," [www.military.com](http://www.military.com/money/personal-finance/3-money-challenges-for-military-families.html), <http://www.military.com/money/personal-finance/3-money-challenges-for-military-families.html>, accessed May 29, 2015.

Aquila and Pricilla—The Roles We Play (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?

With a partner, create a poster with two columns. Write the word MOTHER atop one column and FATHER atop the other column. List the things your parents did in your home under their respective column. When you are finished, hang your posters around the room.

Do you see patterns? Are there specific and definite roles that emerge?

Read the map

Join with one or two other people and read the following references to Priscilla and Aquila. List all the things you learn about them.

- Acts 18:1–3
- Acts 18:18
- Acts 18:24–26
- Romans 16:3–4
- 1 Corinthians 16:19
- 2 Timothy 4:19

What do you discover about their marriage roles?

Take time to explore

In what ways do you and your spouse demonstrate partnership and teamwork?

Who might you consider as marriage mentors?

What questions would you want to ask a marriage mentor?

Travelogue

Read the stories of Stephanie and Jennifer below. Underline anything that stands out to you.

Stephanie had a mentor who showed her and her husband what it was like to work as a team in the military. “She and her husband took us under their wing. Despite their busy schedules, they made time for others as a team, always supporting one another. I thank God for her friendship and sisterhood.”

Jennifer credits author and military wife Judy Rossi as a mentor. Through Judy’s Bible study, *Enhancing Your Marriage*, Jennifer realized it was not her job to be her husband’s personal Holy Spirit.

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one thing you will put into practice this week because of this study.