

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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*Directed*

Steps of Peace  
in Times of Transition

# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

(JOURNEY 1)



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

# David: Stressed or Blessed? (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?

Share with one other person the places to where you have moved since becoming a military wife.

### Read the map

Read 1 Samuel 16:10–13 and describe the scene.

Consider these questions as you discuss the psalm assigned:

- How does David express his feelings toward God?
- What promises do you discover in the psalm?
- What application can you make to PCS from David's words?

### Take time to explore

What does 1 Samuel 16:7 tell you about how God views you?

What are some of the things PCS season reveals about your heart?

What have you done to combat the negative revelations?

### Travelogue

Retired Navy wife Amy offers this advice on dealing with PCS moves:

Have an upbeat perspective and look at it like an adventure! Your kids will be watching your response and attitude toward the move. Anticipate God's unexpected blessings as you make new friends, find a new church home, meet new neighbors, discover new ministry opportunities, and explore fun places. Moving adds patches to a colorful life quilt and no patch is quite the same!

### Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.

## Psalms of Ascent: Determined to 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?

Share with a partner your favorite road trip traditions.

#### Read the map

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
2. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
3. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
4. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
5. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
6. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
7. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
8. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore (Psalm 121).

What word does the psalmist repeat throughout the psalm?

#### Take time to explore

How is moving from one place to another like an ascent or climb?

Psalm 121 is a psalm about trusting God to get you safely to your destination. What obstacles keep you from fully trusting God during a PCS move?

## Travelogue

Military wife Marta shares honestly about an unwelcomed assignment. Underline anything that resonates with you:

“It’s okay to admit it! Not everything we face as military spouses comes up as roses. For us to try to say otherwise is a huge disservice to our fellow military spouses. When we pretend to be happy with everything the DoD hands us, we undermine the legitimate feelings of those who struggle. If, our reactions and responses are authentic we show others that while not everything is always hunky-dory, we can overcome the trials. Some military orders will upset us, but we cannot stay in that place of anger or disappointment.

In my fifteen years as military wife, our current assignment is the first one to which I have balked. I am not happy! But guess what I’m doing? I’m looking for houses, researching the area, connecting with friends there—I’m doing what I need to do to support my Soldier, prepare myself, and brace my family for impact. In the midst of my frustration, I’m making sure I’m handling my military spouse business. I don’t like everything Uncle Sam hands down, but I remind myself that I chose this life. I need to own what comes with it.”

## Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.

# Elijah: Overwhelmed But Not Overcome (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?

What do you enjoy about a PCS?

## Read the map

Scripture focus 1 Kings 17:1–17

Why do you think God first sent Elijah to Cherith?

How did God care for Elijah in Cherith and Zerephath?

How do these stories challenge you to trust God during a PCS move?

What do these Scriptures offer during overwhelming times?

- Psalm 3:4
- Psalm 34:17
- Psalm 50:15

## Take time to explore

Have you ever questioned the Lord's timing of a PCS move? If so, describe the scenario.

What lessons did you learn as the plan unfolded?

## Travelogue

Read the following PCS advice from Holly, Renée, and Christine and underline anything that resonates with you:

“Try to enjoy the ride! Focus on one thing at a time when possible, build in vacation time on the way to your next assignment and stop at roadside attractions when you can. Make memories on the way, in guest housing, instead of trying to rush the process.” —Holly

“If you feel overwhelmed by all that must be done, pray as Elizabeth Elliott did: ‘Lord, show me the next thing.’” —Renée

“*Always* take leave en route. Take every travel day allowed and spend that per diem! Enjoy the stops along the way! Who knows when or if you will pass that way again?” —Christine

## Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.

## Elijah: Never Alone (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?

Divide into pairs (preferably with someone you don't know well) and discover five things you have in common.

### Read the map

Summarize the outcome of the competition in 1 Kings 18:38–40.

Why do you think Elijah's faith shifted so drastically?

How does Elijah feel, according to 1 Kings 19:10?

What do these Scriptures tell you about being/feeling alone?

- Hebrews 13:5
- Proverbs 18:1
- Psalm 73:23
- Psalm 23:4

In what ways does God care for Elijah physically, emotionally, and spiritually during his time alone?

### Take time to explore

Join with one or two other people and develop a strategy for dealing with isolation following a move. Create a poster listing your "tips."

## Travelogue

Read the following PCS advice from military spouses. Underline anything that resonates with you:

Brenda from Italy offers some great advice on connecting following a PCS move: “On our last move, I did a ‘reverse Welcome Wagon.’ I made up gift bags for my neighbors filled with little items, some baked goods, and a card with my name, address and phone number. Then I dragged my husband door to door and we introduced ourselves to our neighbors. We were renting in a nice neighborhood and I knew people would be nervous about the new folks. I made some great friends and ended up working with one of them to start a community hospitality committee.”

Sandy offers this suggestion: “Ask your friends if they know somebody who lives where you are moving. Ask them to connect the two of you so you have an initial contact on the other end to pose specific questions about details.”

## Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.



## Paul: A New Address Spells Contentment (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?

How many times have you moved in your lifetime?

How many times as a military spouse?

#### Read the map

What does the apostle Paul write about contentment in Philippians 4:12–13?

Join with another person and discuss what you learn about contentment as presented in the following Scriptures:

- Hebrews 13:5
- 1 Timothy 6:6–8
- Matthew 6:33
- Philippians 4:19
- Isaiah 26:3

#### Take time to explore

What has military relocation taught you about contentment?

Susan Miller in her wonderful book, *After the Boxes Are Unpacked*, writes:

To let go allows God to mend you.

To start over allows God to mold you.

To move forward allows God to mature you.\*

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\* Susan Miller, *After the Boxes are Unpacked* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 183.

## Travelogue

Here's some wisdom from fellow military spouses. Underline anything that resonates with you:

Remember that it's just stuff and stuff can be replaced. Nothing you own is more important than the people in your family, so learn to laugh off the inevitable and focus on the relationships and the adventure. —Tracy

Tell yourself, "It's all just stuff." Don't worry about losing things or having broken items when you get to your next duty station—just enjoy the adventure! —Kristina

## Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.

## Paul: Blessed Are The Flexible (Week 6)

Waypoint 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?

Share with a partner the last time you had to change your plans. How did it make you feel?

### Read the map

Join with two other people and read Acts 16:6–10 and discuss the following questions:

- How many times did Paul have to change his plans?
- What phrases illustrate Paul's response to the change of plans?
- How did Paul's awareness of his calling affect his willingness to be flexible in his circumstances (Acts 16:10)?

### Take time to explore

What is your normal response to unexpected changes?

What do you learn about flexibility from Philippians 4:12–14?

What relation does flexibility have to contentment?

### Travelogue

What do you think about the following PCS advice from fellow military sisters?

Plan, then be flexible! —Jennifer

Keep a sense of humor. —Janice

“Nothing done or said 30 days before and after a PCS counts against the marriage.’ I heard this early on in our 30 years of Army life and it served me well. Moving is stressful and this helped us to keep perspective—any arguments during a PCS would never be revisited.” —Lisa

### Pack your bags

Write an action step you will take in response to this study.