

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

Directed

Steps of Peace
in Times of Transition

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

(JOURNEY 2)



Peter: Stages of Transition (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?

In the space below, write the first word that comes to mind when you read the word *transition*.

Read the map

Peter went through stages of transition before he fully embraced the change God was making. In a small group or pair, discuss how you see the stages of transition represented in the Scriptures below.

Fear → Resistance → Disorientation → Anticipation → Acceptance

- Acts 10:4
- Acts 10:14
- Acts 10:17
- Acts 10:28
- Acts 10:47–48

Take time to explore

What fears have you experienced when faced with transition?

What connection to spiritual growth do you find with a physical transition (PCS, deployment, reintegration, etc.)?

One danger during transition is to “grow numb by avoidance and denial” during the stages of resistance and disorientation. Has this happened to you? What have you done to get past avoidance and denial during transition?

How has prayer prepared you for transition?

* Walter Brueggeman, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 22.

Travelogue

On the topic of going through transition, military wife Sandy wrote,

“During the many transitions we faced as a military family we had the attitude: If we cannot do anything about this—and evidently we cannot—then we are going to embrace this and make the very best of it. So, we will find the best of whatever and wherever God places us and find Him in the midst. Those times were treasures in hidden places that became lifelong jewels.”

Can you relate to Sandy’s experience? How? In what ways do you agree or disagree?

Pack your bags

What is one action step you will take because of this study?

Esther: Seasons of Transition (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 the ways you acknowledge a new season on the calendar.

Read the map

Read and report what you learn about Esther in Esther 2:5–7. What title would you give to this season of Esther's life? Why?

Read and report what you learn about Esther in Esther 2:8–14. What title would you give to this season of Esther's life? Why?

Read and report what you learn about Esther in Esther 2:15–20. What title would you give to this season of Esther's life? Why?

Read and report what you learn about Esther in Esther 4:12–17. What title would you give to this season of Esther's life? Why?

Take time to explore

Consider Esther's journey from orphan to queen. How do you think she may have struggled with discontent?

What indicators from Esther's story make you believe she learned to thrive in her situation?

Describe a time when God seemed hidden during a season of transition.

Travelogue

Military wife Claire Wood in her book *Mission Ready Marriage* writes, “I am a firm believer that when we walk through difficult seasons, there is purpose behind it. I think there is wisdom in reflection and looking to see how God is present in our times of trouble and difficulty. He uses our circumstances to draw us into a closer relationship with and dependence upon Him. It is through Christ we can walk in hope.”

How has your experience in times of transition drawn you into a closer relationship with and dependence upon God?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one action step you will take because of this study.

* Claire Wood, *Mission Ready Marriage* (Portland, OR: BookBaby Publishers, 2015), location 96 of 2483.

Naomi and Ruth: Unwelcomed Transitions (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?

It's a surprise!

Read the map

What caused the unwelcomed transition Naomi and Ruth faced in Ruth 1:1–5?

How does Naomi describe herself in Ruth 1:20–21? How do her circumstances justify this description? How can her attitude negatively impact outcomes?

What do you learn about Ruth in chapters 1:15–18 and 2:1–3?

What steps forward did Naomi and Ruth take in chapter 3:1–5?

What words would you use to describe the ending of the story in Ruth 4:13–22?

Take time to explore

When have you experienced unexpected and unwanted transition?

How did you get through the difficult time of transition?

What keeps you moving forward during times when it would be easier to quit?

Travelogue

Retired military wife Kim, offers this advice about transition:

A unique “sisterhood” is available amongst military spouses, and many very deep friendships develop. You have to dispense with civilian paradigms about developing friendships however. You no longer earn trust over time because time is short at a duty assignment, and trust must be a gift you give on the front end of a relationship. Lean on other women and rely on each other’s strengths during transitions.

How difficult is it for you to accept help during difficult times?

How has God used military sisters to help you thrive in transition?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one action step you will take because of this study.

Caleb: Transitioning to Retirement (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?

If you have attended a military retirement ceremony, what were the elements that made it meaningful?

Read the map

Join with one or two other people and discuss the following:

- What is Caleb's request in Joshua 14:12?
- What challenges will he face?
- How did Caleb's past experiences give him courage to face the future?
- (Caleb was present during the events described in these Scriptures: Exodus 14:21–22; Exodus 16:13–14; Exodus 19:18)
- How is Caleb described in Joshua 14:13–14 and Numbers 14:24?
- What does wholly following the Lord look like to you?

Take time to explore

How does Caleb's example challenge and encourage you as you look toward retirement?

What unique challenges do military families face upon retirement?

What unique opportunities do military families have upon retirement?

Travelogue

Retired military spouse Bev writes about her journey:

“From a grateful nation, we salute you.” It was official—military retirement was an end to a journey. I have the type of personality that does not embrace change easy. So, you can imagine I came into military life kicking and screaming. I went out silently kicking and screaming just as I did on the way in. The transition and change of military retirement has brought many challenges. Grieving over the loss of community, the military family, and its cultural lifestyle takes time. Adaptation to a civilian culture is ongoing. There is no going back. I have a patriotic sign that reads, *Home is where the Army sends you*, but I think it really needs to read, *Home is where God sends you!* I am learning to live “from a grateful heart . . .” God just happened to use the military and now military retirement to accomplish the change He was working in me (even in this change-resistant gal!).

What are your thoughts about Bev’s experience?

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one action step you will take because of this study.

Encounters on the Road: Heart Transitions (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?

What was the most exciting, frightening, or interesting thing you experienced on a trip?

Read the map

Describe the scene in Luke 24:13–17. What did Jesus say was the reason for their sadness, in Luke 24:25?

How has God’s Word brought you hope in times of transition?

How did the disciples finally recognize Jesus?

What do you learn about Saul in Acts 7:58–8:3?

Describe the scene in Acts 9:3–8. Why do you think Saul’s conversion experience was so dramatic?

Take time to explore

What was your life like before you encountered Christ? How have you changed?

Travelogue

God used military life to transition Alicia's heart toward him. She writes:

"I can come up with hundreds of daily life events that happened while my husband served 23 years in the Army, three deployments, countless TDYs, and nine PCSs to give example of God's love for me and strengthening my relationship with him. When I take a step back and add all those things together, I get one big clear message: God loves me, *he* is my portion, *he* is enough.

"My husband left for his second deployment and we knew it would be at least 12–15 months long. I stood in the bathroom one morning getting ready for my day. As I evaluated all that was going on, I became acutely aware that God had set into motion a series of events that would make this deployment different from the last. We recently moved, found a church home, and had friends in a wonderful neighborhood. Our children settled easily into a good school. We even had a great new rescue puppy, a pet I wanted for a long time. All was good, yet I could not shake the feeling of *waiting for the other shoe to drop*. My husband was in Iraq, the surge was ramping up, and I was scared. I was scared he would not come home. The time apart did not scare me, the separation was not the hard part. The hard part was the waiting for that dreaded knock on the door. As I stared at my reflection in the mirror that morning, I asked God why he set up the support around me, what was going to happen that I would need such support? His answer came with clarity: "Because I love you, and isn't that enough?"

"My husband came home safely but we knew there would be more deployments and TDY's. I began to anticipate how God would grow me in him. Times of separation are still difficult, but I learned that God would not separate me from my husband unless he needed us apart to do good work in us, individually and as a couple."

Pack your bags

In the space below, write one action step you will take because of this study.

Daniel: Tips to Thrive in Transition (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?

What's your best household tip?

Read the map

With one or two other people, read the passages below that illustrate how Daniel dealt with transition. Compare Daniel's actions to the New Testament Scriptures listed. Use these Scriptures to develop a list of tips to help you thrive in transition.

Tips to Thrive in Transition

	Daniel 1:3–8 Ephesians 6:13
	Daniel 1:17–19; 2:17–18; 2:48–49 Ephesians 4:16
	Daniel 1:12–14 Romans 12:1
	Daniel 2:20–23 1 Thessalonians 5:18
	Daniel 2:18; 6:10 Colossians 4:2

What do you learn about Daniel's transition in Daniel 6:28?

Take time to explore

What challenges have you found in practicing tips like those listed above during a transition?

Share a time when one of the tips listed above helped you navigate a successful transition.

Travelogue

Veteran military wife Cathy offers this tip on transition:

“Military wives must learn the art of flexibility—not just flexibility in adjusting long-range planning, but flexibility in daily living! No matter how prepared you are or how well you have planned for the future the future will always surprise you. The second most important art to develop is resilience. Let those well-prepared plans roll off your back and greet that new change with a smile!”

How has military life helped you develop a flexible and resilient spirit?

Pack your bags

What “tip to thrive in transition” would you like to integrate with more consistency into your life? Write it in the space below.